

# Covingham Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2016  
In Covingham Park Primary School, The Harriers, Covingham

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**Present:** Cllr Osbourn (Chair), Cllr Benfield (Vice Chair), Cllr Kennedy, Cllr Wilkinson, Cllr Foss (left the meeting at 20:45), Cllr Curtis, Cllr Sandle, Cllr Paginton, Cllr Hawkes

**In attendance:** 7 members of the public, Ward Cllr Heenan

**1. Apologies**

Received from Cllr Haigh and Cllr Short.

**2. Declaration of Interests**

None declared.

**3. Consider Co-option of new Parish Councillor**

The Clerk informed members that a local resident had enquired about becoming a Parish Councillor, although this item is now not applicable as the resident is not in attendance.

**4. Approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2016**

Minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2016 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

**5. Matters arising from the previous minutes**

None.

**6. Public forum**

The Chairman welcomed 7 members of the public to the meeting and asked them to address the Parish Council. The Treasurer of Dorcan Church and Friends of Covingham Library introduced themselves to members and explained that they were in attendance for agenda item 10, Covingham Library – current status and future.

One member of the public raised the issue of a tree that had been half cut down at Gantletdene and reported that the branches had been put on the pavement. The branches were subsequently removed after a few days.

**7. Clerk's Report**

Members received and noted the following report from the Clerk:

<b>Update on Benches</b>
2 benches have been refurbished by John, Parish Handyman. The benches have not yet been installed on Covingham Park by Lee Wells as agreed at the October Parish Council meeting.
<b>Audit Update</b>
Notice of Conclusion of Audit, including Section 3 (Auditor's Certificate and Opinion) has been uploaded on the Parish website, in accordance with auditing procedures.
<b>Handyman Report</b>
Key notes to report from John this month: 1. 7 rivets replaced in skateboard park 2. Drain cover recovered & replaced twice. 3. Attended site meeting re new benches 4. Lee repinned drain cover in skateboard park 5. Cleaned Dog excrement off skateboard ramps twice & from play areas once 6. Removed dog bin closest to skateboard park

7. Following Rospa report, measured all chain swings
8. Checked Rospa report findings and identified parts that need to be purchased
9. Refurbished the 2 park benches purchased from the bowls club
10. Travellers moved onto Covingham Park, 28/10/2016
11. Removed 19 NO2 cartridges from Smitten Brook Park

Signed: John Ricketts

Date: 31st October 2016

I would like to thank John for his work on tidying up the dog mess this month, as well as cleaning up after the travellers.

#### **Parish Van**

Unfortunately the Parish Van failed its MOT test in October on 3 counts, including the back brakes. The issues were resolved and the van subsequently passed. Details of costings are included in the November Finance Statement. The payment was approved by the Chair of the Finance Committee and the Chairman.

#### **Shed Roof**

Lee has been awarded the work as actioned at the October Parish Council meeting. Lee has emailed a guarantee that I circulated to all councillors. Currently waiting for a date to complete works from Lee, as he has been on holiday.

#### **Quotations for additional services – hedge cutting**

Any quotations received will be presented at the November Parish Council meeting. The deadline for tenders is Friday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

#### **Council Tax Referendum Principles – Policy Consultation Document**

A draft response was circulated and agreed by members. Our response has been sent to NALC stating our full support of their opposition to proposals.

#### **Correspondence sent:**

As actioned at the October Parish Council meeting:

- Email response sent to Sandra Beale re. adult exercise equipment location complaint.
- Email sent to Environmental Inspector re. flower boxes.

#### **Update on play park inspections:**

The Clerk informed members that Rospa had carried out inspections of both play parks, including the skateboard park on Covingham Park. No urgent matters were noted. The Clerk pointed out that the Handyman carried out regular routine repairs and checks. **Members resolved** for the Clerk to purchase necessary equipment as advised within the report to keep the parks to a good, safe standard.

The Clerk informed members that an inspection was not carried out at the park at Redrow, as Swindon Borough Council are still responsible for the maintenance and checks.

#### **8. Verbal update from the Chairman**

- Travellers – future prevention:

The Chairman thanked Cllr Benfield and the Handyman for working hard to clean up the mess on Covingham Park after the travellers had moved on. The Chairman also thank Cllr Foss for liaising with the lead traveller, for providing the travellers with black sacks for rubbish and for making the necessary legal arrangements on behalf of the Parish Council.

The Chairman informed members that Ward Cllr Kevin Parry had been in touch to talk about future prevention. Members noted that the Chairman has scheduled a meeting with Ward Cllr Parry on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> November to discuss what can be done to prevent this happening again. A possibility could be to have bollards at the entrances to the park.

Members discussed the issue of the travellers driving across front gardens and enquired about a 'local trespass order'. ACTION: The Chairman agreed to investigate. The Chairman agreed to enquire about 'no camping' signs.

9. **Police Matters** (Update from local neighbourhood policing team)  
No report from the Police this month.

10. **Covingham Library – current status and future**

The Chairman informed members that Ward Cllr Heenan had sent him an email presenting a business case for the 'Covingham Library Trust', including financial projection.

Members noted that the email had only recently been circulated to all parish councillors and pointed out that that Parish Council needed time to look at the 2 documents in detail, giving due diligence to the business case, before any decision making can take place.

Members noted that Swindon Borough Council had not yet formally made a decision to close Covingham Library and pointed out that it would be unwise to make any decision prior to the decision of Swindon Borough Council.

Members noted that further clarification would be needed about the proportion of rental income from the Library to St. Paul's Church and the proportion to the Diocese. Cllr Foss asked whether or not the Diocese will be making a financial contribution to the Library? The Church Treasurer pointed out for information, that details of accounts for the last financial year are on the Church website.

Cllr Benfield pointed out that members need to be mindful of future spend, due to the increase of the Parish Precept in order to take over services such as grass cutting from next year.

Members agreed that further financial clarification is needed in order to aid future discussions and decision making. **Members resolved** to form a Working Party for the Library, to include Cllr Curtis, Cllr Hawkes, Cllr Wilkinson and Cllr Benfield. The Working Party agreed to meet and report back at the December Parish Council meeting.

11. **Appearance of Covingham Square**

Cllr Kennedy reported that the appearance of Covingham Square has improved since the October meeting of the Parish Council. Cllr Kennedy will monitor the appearance of the square and will report any issues to the Parish Council.

Members noted a current proposal on the table at Swindon Borough Council to remove 12 recycling sites across Swindon. This is currently pending. Members noted an email from Ward Cllr Kevin Parry stating that the Covingham recycling area will not be removed.

Cllr Benfield informed members that Covingham Parish Council had negotiated the adoption of the 'crescent' planting area and will improve the appearance of the area in the Spring of 2017.

12. **Reports from Parish Council Committee Chairs:**

- Environment Committee (Chair Cllr Sandle):

Cllr Sandle informed members that over 400 bulbs had been planted over the weekend at Smitan Brook around the trees on the parks and by the shops. Cllr Sandle thanked everyone that came to help on the day.

Cllr Benfield informed members that permission had been sought from Swindon Borough Council for installation of a Christmas tree within Covingham Parish. Despite chasing a response, confirmation of approval has not yet been received.

ACTION: Cllr Benfield to pass correspondence to Ward Cllr Heenan. Ward Cllr Heenan agreed to chase this up.

Members noted that the Salvation Army are due to play Carols.

ACTIONS:

- Letter to be sent to Patheon regarding responsibility of land maintenance. (Clerk).
  - Investigate land transfer with Swindon Borough Council for Covingham Park and Smitan Brook (Clerk).
  - Written procedure required for maintenance of flower boxes in the Parish for circulation to members and residents (Cllr Sandle). December agenda item (Clerk).
- Finance Committee (Chair Cllr Benfield):  
Discussed under Item 14.
  - Recreation (Chair Cllr Haigh):  
No report this month.
  - Parish Plan/Highways Committee (Chair Cllr Curtis):  
Cllr Curtis confirmed that the next Parish Liaison meeting is scheduled for Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2017. Cllr Curtis will report back to members following the meeting.

Cllr Paginton raised concern about traffic implications for Covingham as a result of the Redlands development. Cllr Curtis reassured Cllr Paginton that the Parish Council had responded strongly to Swindon Borough Council with regards to this and there is nothing more that the Parish Council can do. Ward Cllr Heenan updated members about the future traffic implications of the Redlands Development. Ward Cllr Heenan confirmed that the weight restriction on Merlin Way is now permanent with a key change regarding restricted hours. The planning application for the Southern Connector road is due for submission in April which will alleviate traffic pressure. Six million pounds has been set aside for the Southern Connector road. Infrastructure will be completed first. 2018 will be the start date for construction.

- Covingham Flood Group report (Cllr Curtis):  
Cllr Curtis reported that Swindon Borough Council were between consultants so all issues and investigations previously raised were still outstanding. A new consultant was due to commence work imminently and they would carry on where the previous provider had left off.

Cllr Benfield asked about maintenance of the River Cole and Cllr Curtis was able to confirm that the Environment Agency had stated that the annual maintenance of Dorcan Stream and the River Cole would be completed in November.

The Wilts and Berks Canal Trust were keen to present their vision for the canal route through the NEV to Covingham Parish Council. However, Covingham Flood Group had suggested that it would be more appropriate for them to see it and asked if any Parish Councillors would like to be included, of which 3 expressed an interest. The Flood Group would arrange a date and time and advise the Councillors when this had been organised as the main contact for the Canal Trust was out of the UK for several weeks.

- Parish Website Working Party:  
Cllr Hawkes informed members that he is now able to access the supporting sites for the Covingham Parish website. Login details have been created for Cllr Benfield. There is enough email capability to create an email address for all councillors, including the Clerk. **Members resolved** for Cllr Hawkes to create new email addresses.

Cllr Hawkes informed members that documents can be changed to make them more user friendly. ACTION: Cllr Hawkes to create a sample for councillors to view.

**13. Planning Matters**

**Application Number:** S/HOU/16/1804

Re: Erection of single/ two storey side and single/ two storey rear extensions.

At: 17 Finchdale, Covingham Swindon SN3 5AL

PC Response: No comments.

**14. Financial Matters**

• **Approve financial summary and cheque list:**

**Members resolved** to approve the financial summary and cheque list, subject to the addition of reimbursement to Cllr Benfield of £21.99 for the purchase of plants and bulbs for flower boxes for the end of Covingham and Kingfisher Drives.

• **Approve Q2 Finance Statement:**

Members approved the Q2 Finance Statement.

• **Consider any grant requests received (money available £675):**

None received.

• **Receive any quotations for hedge cutting (as part of consideration for taking on additional services):**

Members noted and received 2 quotations for cutting hedges in Covingham Parish, as marked on electronic map produced by Swindon Borough Council. Quotations received as follows:

Company 1	£7,000 plus VAT
Company 2	£3,000 plus VAT

**Members resolved unanimously** to accept the quotation from Compact 2 for £3,000 plus VAT.

• **Update signatories on Parish Council bank account**

The Clerk informed members that the Parish Council signatories had been updated to reflect changes to Parish Council membership and requested the addition of 2 more signatories for Parish Council bank accounts. The Clerk informed members that Cllr Osbourn, Cllr Sandle and Cllr Haigh are current signatories on the account, plus the Clerk.

**Members resolved** for Cllr Curtis and Cllr Benfield to be added as additional signatories to be added to the Parish Council bank accounts.

• **Consider training course for new Councillors (12<sup>th</sup> November - £90+VAT per councillor):**

**Members resolved** for Cllr Hawkes to attend the training course for new Councillors at the cost of £90+VAT.

- **Application for and approval of dispensation:** The Clerk informed members that all councillors are required to apply for a dispensation to be able to participate in any discussion or vote concerning the setting of the Precept. The Clerk distributed a copy of the dispensation form to each Parish Councillor present at the meeting. Councillors present signed and returned dispensation forms to the Clerk.

**15. Correspondence**

Members noted the following received correspondence

Received from	Subject
Wiltshire Association of Local Councils	Annual General Meeting – Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> November 2016. Councillor training – 12 <sup>th</sup> November 2016. ACTION: Gareth Hawkes to attend.
Jane Mungai, Swindon Borough Council	Re. Parish Council emergency and flood plans. ACTION: Cllr Curtis to make contact with Jane.
WALC Swindon Area	Next meeting – Thursday 17 <sup>th</sup> November 2016 at Blunsdon Village Hall.

Committee	
County Ground Bowls Club	Receipt of £150 for purchase of 2 benches.
Sue Tucker, Friends of Covingham Library	Letter to Chairman regarding future of Covingham Library.
Swindon Borough Council	Consultation on BT programme of intended public payphone removals. Members noted that SBC have proposed to remove the payphone on St. Paul's Drive.
Vicki Yull, Swindon Borough Council	Re. Ethical framework or code of conduct training for all councillors. ACTION: Clerk to circulate dates when applicable.

**16. Matters for consideration**

None.

Meeting closed at 21:00.

*Signed (Chairman):*