

# Covingham Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2016  
In Covingham Park Primary School, The Harriers, Covingham

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**Present:** Cllr Curtis, Cllr Haigh, Cllr Foss, Cllr Short, Cllr Paginton, Cllr Wilkinson, Cllr Kennedy, Cllr Sandle, Cllr Benfield, Cllr Osbourn (item 16 onwards), Cllr Bacon, Cllr Hawkes.

**In attendance:** Gemma Cheal (Parish Clerk), members of the public

## 1. Apologies

Received from Cllr Osbourn for part of the meeting.

Cllr Benfield (Vice Chairman) took the Chair in the absence of Cllr Osbourn.

## 2. Declaration of Interests

None declared.

## 3. Consider Co-option of new Parish Councillors

Cllr Benfield welcomed Roy Bacon to the meeting. Roy had sent an expression of interest to the Clerk in becoming a Parish Councillor. Roy introduced himself to members and explained that he has lived in Covingham for over 3 and half years and has an interest in the local area.

Members resolved unanimously to co-opt Roy Bacon onto the Parish Council. Introductions were given.

## 4. Approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2016

Minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2016 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

## 5. Matters arising from the previous minutes

Cllr Foss fed back to members regarding an on-site meeting at Covingham Park with Cllr Osbourn, Cllr Curtis and Ward Cllr Parry to discuss the possibility of installing bollards/creating mounds.

A combination of mounds and lockable bollards will be required. Residents in close proximity will need to be contacted. Ward Cllr Parry agreed to take away points from the meeting and agreed to come up with a design and costing (ACTION Ward Cllr Parry).

Cllr Hawkes informed members that he attended the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils AGM meeting. Members noted that Cllr Hawkes also attended the last meeting of the Swindon Area Committee.

## 6. Public forum

One member of the public present. Members noted an issue with fly tipping in the Parish at the back of Osprey. Members noted that Ward Cllr Parry had been contacted regarding the amount of silt in the River Cole. Cllr Curtis clarified that the site in question is actually Dorcan Stream. All reports/issues should be sent to the Environment Agency. Cllr Curtis informed members that maintenance of the River Cole is on the Environmental Agency maintenance schedule for this year.

## 7. Clerk's Report

- Update on meeting with SBC re. transfer of services, including next steps.

The Clerk circulated notes from the meeting with SBC Officers Rob Core and Martin Hambidge, including a 'summary of Parish Council service delivery' sheet, produced by Swindon Borough Council.

Members discussed the service delivery descriptions on the sheet, including the services to be retained by Swindon Borough Council and services that the Borough would like to transfer over to the Parish Council.

Members reiterated that Covingham Parish Council have only agreed to take over responsibility for grass cutting, hedge cutting and street sweeping from April 2017. Members stated that any future decision to close the public toilets in Covingham would need to be taken by Swindon Borough Council.

**ACTION:** Members resolved for another meeting to be held with Swindon Borough Council Officers prior to the January Parish Council meeting. Cllr Short and Cllr Benfield agreed to attend the meeting. Clerk to contact Rob Core and Martin Hambidge to arrange.

**8. Verbal Update from the Chairman**

None.

**9. Police Matters (Update from local neighbourhood policing team)**

Members noted recent vandalism on Ravenscroft, including property and vehicle damage (broken windows). The Police had been on site and arrests have been made.

Unfortunately the Parish Council have not received a report from the Police this month.

**ACTION:** Clerk to contact the Police for an update. Cllr Kennedy to report back any further information relating to recent vandalism to the Parish Council in January.

**10. Feedback from Library Working Party – for discussion and decision**

Cllr Curtis informed members that 2 meetings of the Library Working Party have now taken place and subsequent questions have been asked of Ward Councillor Heenan, of which plausible answers were given. Cllr Curtis informed members for information, that Covingham Library is the 5<sup>th</sup> busiest in the Borough of Swindon, with 620 local residents using the library.

The Library Working Party recommended that the Parish Council support the library initially for a period of 2 years with the view to offer on-going support upon any future recommendation of the Working Party.

Members debated the proportion of the rental income received from the library that is paid to the Diocese and commented that further clarification is needed in this area.

Members noted that it was ultimately the responsibility of Swindon Borough Council to take any decision to close Covingham Library.

**Members resolved** for Cllr Curtis to attend a meeting of the Covingham Library Trust on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016 at 6pm as a representative from Covingham Parish Council.

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

• Environment Committee (Chair Cllr Sandle):

- **Agree written procedure for maintain the flower boxes:**

Cllr Sandle tabled a written procedure for on-going maintenance of the flower boxes, for local residents. **Members resolved** to agree the procedure.

- **Consider request for 2 x flower boxes for Cornmarsh Way:**

**Members resolved** for the Parish Handyman to make and install 2 flower boxes for Cornmarsh Way.

- **Gardening Vouchers for maintaining flower boxes for the benefit of parishioners – agree amount.**

**Members resolved** for the purchase of vouchers for maintaining flower boxes for the benefit of parishioners and agreed for the Parish Council written procedure to be included with the voucher.

Members noted the following report from Cllr Sandle:

### **Floral Boxes**

The flowers are slowly starting to diminish in the 7 parish boxes. Instead of leaving the boxes empty during the winter period or until the spring bulbs begin to bloom, fresh plants have been purchased & will be planted in due course to continue to give a colorful display & to brighten up Covingham through the winter months.

### **Christmas tree**

Permission has been granted by Swindon Borough Council, allowing us to plant a rooted Christmas tree in Covingham square. The Borough is requesting a fee of £1 a month for this privilege. G & L Evans Funeral Service have stated that they may be willing to take on this payment.

The tree has now been planted and any suggestions regarding decorating our Christmas tree would be welcomed. One idea is for it to be used as a wishing tree, for children to display their Christmas messages. I would like to propose that a plaque is sited under Christmas tree, inscribed 'planted by Covingham Parish Council' together with date.

The Salvation Army will be playing carols in Covingham Square on 20<sup>th</sup> December at 12 noon all welcomed

**Comments from members:** Cllr Foss agreed to take back suggestions regarding the children making decorations for the Christmas tree in future years to the school, and to enquire about publicising the carol service on 20<sup>th</sup> December. **Members resolved** unanimously for a plaque to be placed by the Christmas tree with the date of installation by Covingham Parish Council.

Members noted the decision announced by Swindon Borough Council for plans to remove all 15 recycling sites. Members noted the amount commercial waste that has been dumped recently, including 7 televisions.

- Finance Committee (Chair Cllr Benfield):

Members resolved for a meeting of the Finance Committee to take place at 7pm, prior to the January Parish Council meeting to discuss the budget and precept for the next financial year.

Members noted that money will be required for the upkeep of the play parks and basketball area in the future and should be set aside for such works. Members discussed the previous idea of re-surfacing the basketball area and the possibility of having a wild flower area in the future however; previous surface water issues were noted. Although remedial works have previously been carried out, further drainage works are required prior to any changes.

- Recreation (Chair Cllr Haigh):

No report this month. Cllr Haigh commented on the possibility of kicking wall, as raised at previous Parish Council meetings for the future.

- Parish Plan/Highways Committee (Chair Cllr Curtis):

Members received a Parish Plan report from Cllr Curtis and noted that Cllrs Paginton, Hawkes and Curtis attended a meeting with an SBC planner and transport planner regarding the New Eastern Villages on 17 November 2016 which covered planning applications received, current status for each and an update on Highways. Regarding the Southern Connector Road – A planning application is due to go to Planning during 2017. Delays caused by landowners, of which there are more than

100, the majority of which are on board and conveyancing. SBC prefer the route to go across Wanborough Road with the Southern Connector Road having priority.

- Covingham Flood Group report (Cllr Curtis):

No report this month.

- Parish Website Working Party (Cllr Hawkes):

Cllr Hawkes reported that the previous action to create parish email addresses is currently on-going.

## 12. Planning Matters

No Planning Application notifications received this month. Members noted a 'Notice of making an order' received from Swindon Borough Council for footpaths 31 and 36 in Covingham (cycle tracks order).

## 13. Financial Matters

- **Approve financial summary and cheque list**

Members unanimously approved the financial summary and cheque list.

- **Consider and grant requests received (current grant money available £675)**

Members noted a letter had been received and passed to the Chairman and resolved to defer this item until the January Parish Council meeting.

## 14. Correspondence

Members noted the following received correspondence

| Received from                           | Subject  |
|---|--|
| Swindon Borough Council                 | Precept and related matters 2017-18  |
| Lee Wells                               | Enquiry about possible purchase of Parish Council line marker  |
| Wiltshire Association of Local Councils | CiLCA training for Parish Clerks – information and flyer   |
| Roy Bacon                               | Expression of interest regarding becoming a Parish Councillor  |
| Swindon Borough Council                 | New Eastern Villages (NEV) Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and the NEV Framework Travel Plan SPD – notice of publication |

## 15. Matters for consideration

- Cllr Osbourn arrived at the meeting at 20:50.
- Cllr Benfield informed members that contracts had been drafted for the grass cutting/hedge cutting/street sweeping approved contractor.
- Members resolved unanimously for Cllr Curtis to attend the forthcoming Community Governance Review meeting at Swindon Borough Council.
- Members discussed the idea of a Facebook page for Covingham Parish Council and agreed that this could be looked into further by the Website Working Party.
- Cllr Hawkes informed members that he had recently attended training for new councillors, hosted by the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC). Members noted a 'Good Councillors Guide' produced by WALC.

Meeting closed at 21:00.

*Signed (Chairman):*