

# Covingham Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2017  
In Covingham Park Primary School, The Harriers, Covingham

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**Present:** Cllr Hawkes, Cllr Paginton, Cllr Benfield (Vice Chair), Cllr Curtis (Chair), Cllr Sandle, Cllr Willis

**In attendance:** Gemma Cheal, Parish Clerk

**1. Apologies**

Received from Cllr Bacon and Cllr Kennedy

**2. Declaration of Interests**

Cllr Curtis declared an interest in agenda item 12 (Personnel Committee, approval of recommendation to increase the Salary of the Parish Handyman).

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

Members welcomed local resident Sue Willis to the meeting. Sue read a poem to members about Covingham. Members resolved unanimously to Co-opt Sue onto the Parish. Cllr Willis completed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office form in the presence of the Parish Clerk.

**4. Approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2017**

Minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2017 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

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

Item 13 of previous minutes, Community Speedwatch: Cllr Paginton commented on the speed and increase of high powered vehicles on Kingfisher Drive.

ACTION: Clerk to find out information about Community Speedwatch.

**6. Public forum**

No members of the public present.

**7. Clerk's Report**

Members received the following report from the Clerk:

**Audit Update**

Currently awaiting outcome of the external audit. One telephone query received regarding the use of petty cash –which we do not hold.

**Pensions Update**

Declaration of Compliance has been submitted and received by the Pensions Regulator.

**Councillor Training Record**

I will be keeping a record of all training undertaken by members of Covingham Parish Council for our information, and also to forward to Swindon Borough Council. Please complete and return to the Clerk when circulated. Please note that Code of Conduct training is required for all councillors.

**Working hours for the Clerk**

With recent changes due to the taking over of additional services –My working days will be formalised to help to inform the public and Swindon Borough Council. Please note that from 4th September, I will be mostly working on a Wednesday and a Friday. Although this is not set in stone and requires a degree of flexibility, it will hopefully be helpful for all. Please note that emails will be checked regularly outside of these days.

**Play park inspection**

Please note that our play parks are due to be inspected by Rospa in September.

Findings will be reported upon receipt of reports.

Members acknowledged reports received via email from the Parish Handyman. Cllr Hawkes enquired about an item within the Handyman report regarding damage of one of the piece of skate park equipment. The Clerk pointed out that this was picked up on the last external play park inspection. The Clerk will follow this up, but pointed out that the repair was not a cause for concern.

**8. Verbal Update from the Chair**

The Chair commented on the positive response received from the recent Chair's article in the Handymag. One resident has made contact regarding overgrown paths on Smitan Brook. The Handymen will sort the issue during winter months.

Members noted a safety issue on Smitan Brook Park involving a motorcyclist driving across the park near to where children were playing. The Chair reported the issue to the Police. Several similar incidents have also been reported to the Police in recent months.

Members noted that the Parish Council Financial Regulations are being re-written using the NALC model for financial regulations. To be reviewed by the Website Working Party prior to approval by the Parish Council (ACTION Website Working Party and October Parish Council meeting agenda item).

The Chair proposed to meet with the Grass cutting contractor to discuss the current contract and areas for improvement, such as missed areas of cutting, strimming, hedge trimming, street sweeping and contract review. Members agreed unanimously for the Chair to contact the contractor to arrange a review meeting, with the Clerk and Cllr Kennedy.

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

No report received this month.

**10. Agree replacement of Parish Van**

Members noted that the Parish Van is due for an MOT in October/November and is likely to fail. Members discussed the previous visit to the M4 Van Centre reported by the Chair. The M4 Van Centre would be willing to sponsor the Parish Van. Free servicing will be included in the purchase of a van with the Parish Council paying for any parts required. Members resolved for a new Parish Van to be purchased with a £9,000 limit (ACTION Chair).

**11. Signs around the park**

Members resolved to remove the current signage by parks in Covingham as they are not fit for purpose. The Clerk had previously found out that signs are not required for insurance purposes. ACTION: Parish Handymen to remove signs.

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

- Environment Committee (Chair Cllr Sandle):

Cllr Sandle thanked councillors that helped to clear growth and nettles around St. Paul's Drive pathway recently. Cllrs Benfield and Sandle are continuing with Sunday morning tasks which include strimming around bollards and under street name signs. This is on-going. Members discussed the parking of vehicles on grass verges. The Chair will contact the Highways Inspector to check what action can be taken (ACTION CHAIR). Cllr Benfield will put a comment in the Parish Handymag. Members noted that a decision will be made about the Parks becoming Community Assets in October 2017.

- Green Day 23<sup>rd</sup> September: Apologies received from Cllrs Paginton, Willis and Hawkes. Tasks for the green day to include gutter clearing, cleaning and the tidying of floral boxes. Focus will continue to be on Covingham Square area.

- Finance Committee (Chair Cllr Benfield):

No report this month. Items for discussion under Item 14, Financial Matters.

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

Members noted that Cllr Hawkes has been appointed as the Chair of the Parish Plan/Highways Committee. Cllr Hawkes will report on the forthcoming Parish Liaison meeting, scheduled for 7<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

- Personnel Committee (Chair Cllr Bacon):

In the absence of the Committee Chair, Cllr Curtis reported that the Personnel Committee have now met twice. A One-to-one meeting has taken place for the Assistant Handyman and an Appraisal has been carried out for the Handyman.

Agree and adoption of:

- **Terms of Reference:** Members resolved to approve and adopt the terms of reference.
- **Grievance Procedure:** Members resolved to approve and adopt the Grievance Procedure.
- **Disciplinary Procedure:** members resolved to approve and adopt the Disciplinary Procedure.
- **Approve recommendation to increase the salary of the Parish Handyman:** Members resolved to approve the recommendation to increase the salary of the Parish Handyman.

Members noted that the Parish Council require a sickness policy. This will be looked at by committee members, ready to be reviewed and adopted by the Parish Council. Members noted that the Chair has almost completed work on re-writing the Parish Council Financial Regulations and Standing Orders, for review by the Website Working Party and adoption of the Parish Council.

- Covingham Flood Group update (Cllr Curtis):

Members noted that the next meeting of the Covingham Flood Group is scheduled for 8<sup>th</sup> October 2017. Cllr Curtis has contacted the Environment Agency regarding the sheer drop behind a bus stop on St. Paul's Drive, now that the nettles have been cleared. No response received to date.

- Parish Website Working Party (Cllr Hawkes):

Work on the website is still on-going with current focus on ensuring policies and procedures are up to date and in line with current practice. Cllr Hawkes is currently looking into how the website is housed, as it would be preferable to have a web address ending in '.gov.uk'.

### 13. Planning Matters

**Application No:**

**S/HOU/17/1358**

Re:

Erection of single storey side/front extension

At:

20 Popplechurch Drive, SN3 5DE

Comments:

None.

**Application No:**

**S/EIA/17/1338**

Re:

Request for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) scoping opinion for proposed Highway Link (Southern Connector Road)

At:

Eastern Villages, Southern Connector Road, Swindon

Comments:

Cllrs Hawkes/Paginton to feedback any comments to SBC.

**Application No:**

**S/HOU/17/1319**

Re:

Erection of single storey front extension

At:

23 Dovetrees, Covingham, Swindon, SN3 5AX

Comments:

Clerk to contact Cllr Parry to enquire about rules for building beyond front building line.

**14. Financial Matters**

**Approve financial summary and cheque list:**

Members approved the financial summary and cheque list.

**Approval of Q1 Finance Statement:**

Members approved the Q1 Finance Statement.

**Agree expenditure of donation from Co-op store:**

Members resolved to use the money to be donated from the Co-op store towards the purchase of lawn edge fencing, bulbs and replacement Christmas tree for Covingham Square area.

**Agree and add signatories for Parish Council bank account:**

Members resolved to add Cllrs Curtis, Paginton and Benfield as signatories on the Parish Council bank accounts.

**Consider and grant requests received (current grant money available £760):**

None.

**15. Correspondence**

Members noted the following received correspondence

Received from	Subject
Vicki Yull, SBC	Training for Councillors (Code of Conduct, Chairing skills, decision making) – Clerk informed members of dates and times of training and informed members that all councillors are required to take part in Code of Conduct training.
SBC	Planning Session 2 (21 <sup>st</sup> September 2017).
Data Protection	Registration certificate for Covingham Parish Council.
SBC	Confirmation of cycle track order for Covingham.
Aon	Parish Council insurance changes.

**16. Matters for consideration**

Members noted that Patheon has been acquired by another company. Cllr Sandle pointed out that members need to be mindful of grass cutting in the area now that the fence has been moved.

Meeting closed at 21:00.

Signed (Chair):