

# Covingham Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2017  
In Covingham Park Primary School, The Harriers, Covingham

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**Present:** Cllr Hawkes, Cllr Curtis (Chair), Cllr Benfield (Vice Chair), Cllr Willis, Cllr Paginton, Cllr Sandle  
**In attendance:** Gemma Cheal, Clerk

**1. Apologies**

Received from Cllr Bacon and Cllr Kennedy.

**2. Declaration of Interests**

None.

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

Minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2017 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

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

Community Speedwatch: The Clerk informed members that contact had been made via email with the Speedwatch Coordinator for the Covingham area, through Wiltshire Police. The group are currently inactive due to lack of interest and said that they would be grateful if the Parish Council could generate some in interest in recruiting volunteers.

**ACTION:** Cllrs Benfield, Sandle and Hawkes expressed an interest in taking part in the Community Speedwatch. The Clerk will pass this on to the Speedwatch Coordinator.

Parish van: The Chair informed members that it has been difficult to find a suitable replacement petrol van. Members recognised the need to purchase a new parish van and unanimously agreed to revert the previous resolution made to purchase a petrol van, to enable the purchase of a diesel if required.

Parks signage: Members noted that out of date signs around the parks have been removed by the parish handymen.

**5. Public forum**

Four members of the public were in attendance. A local resident queried the issue of vehicles parking on grass verges. The Chair pointed out that the Parish Council have no enforcement powers.

Members noted positive comments received from a local resident about the appearance of the Parish since the Parish Council have taken over the grass cutting from Swindon Borough Council.

A local resident informed members about two pieces of conflicting information in the Handymag and queried members' allowances. Members noted confusion regarding wording in an article from Ward Cllr Parry and wording within the Covingham Parish Council report. Cllr Benfield clarified the difference between expense payments for Covingham and Nythe/Liden/Eldene Parish Councillors. Unfortunately the two articles had appeared in close proximity which may have caused confusion. Clarification will be given in the next addition of the Handymag.

Former Parish Councillor, Mr Foss commented about positive appearance of the Parish website, although some contact details are out of date. Cllr Hawkes informed Mr Foss that the website is a work in progress. Members noted reports of large branches that have fallen in the Parish, some of which may be too large for the Parish Handymen to remove without assistance.

**6. Consider relocation of adult exercise equipment and receive quotation**

The Chair circulated a quotation from the manufacturers of the adult exercise equipment for the removal and replacement of one group of the equipment.

Three options were considered by members: Re-siting of the equipment, complete removal of the equipment, to leave equipment in current location.

Four residents have complained about the siting of one group of the equipment. Issues of anti-social behaviour have been reported to the Police by residents. The Police had told the Parish Council previously that they do not believe that the equipment has attracted any more anti-social behaviour to the park. Cllr Benfield clarified that one group of the equipment was installed and then moved without prior consultation from the Parish Council.

**ACTION:** Members resolved unanimously to postpone the decision until members have had an opportunity to have a site visit to look at alternative sites on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> October, 3pm in Covingham Park. The Parish Handyman will be in attendance.

**7. Receive inspection reports for Covingham Parish parks**

The Parish Handyman, attended the meeting to report on the findings of the play park inspections for parks in Covingham. The parks inspected were the two play parks on Covingham Park, the skateboard park and the small park at Firecrest View that was previously maintained by Swindon Borough Council. John informed members that the reports are advisory only. The Parish Council are not required to act on recommendations. John explained the difference between the two terms hazard and risk. Members noted that lots of issues have been identified that are comments, rather than concerns to rectify. John reported on the key areas that required action. Members relayed thanks to the Handyman and unanimously agreed for any equipment to be purchased to make necessary repairs.

**8. Clerk's Report**

Members received the following verbal from the Clerk:

- Parish Council signatories: The Clerk thanked Cllrs Curtis, Benfield and Paginton for presenting their signatories to the bank. The Clerk is currently waiting for confirmation that the set-up of signatories has been successful.
- External Audit: The external audit report has successfully been completed. The Parish Council has passed the audit. The Clerk read comments made by the auditor that had not affected their opinion of the audit outcome.
- Parish Van insurance: The Clerk informed members that the parish van had been reinsured for another year with A-Plan Insurance. The new parish van may be transferred over to the current insurance policy.

- **Report from the Handymen**

Members noted reports received from the Parish Handymen with thanks. Member commented on the number of N20 cartridges found in the Parish. Members were disappointed to hear about vandalised benches on Covingham Square. The Chair has reported this to Swindon Borough Council.

**9. Verbal Update from the Chair**

The Chair informed members that a number of hedge cutting issues had been received from local residents that require action. The contractor has informed the Chair that hedge cutting is due to start this week. Members unanimously agreed for the Chair, Clerk and Cllr Kennedy to have a review meeting with the contractor to discuss grass cutting, hedge cutting and street cleaning.

**ACTION:** Chair, Clerk and Cllr Kennedy.

The Chair has contacted Swindon Borough Council (SBC) to request an update on the removal of the recycle bins on Covingham Square, stating that the Parish Council has been more than patient. Members noted that the contact telephone numbers on the bins have been removed.

The Chair attended the Swindon Area Committee (SAC) meeting on behalf of the Parish Council. SAC are now correctly affiliated to the Wiltshire Association of Local Council and the National Association of Local Councils. Each Parish Council can send 2 delegates to meetings, although they only have one vote. Members noted that SBC have begun a consultation on the draft Consultation Policy 2017. This has been circulated via email. SAC have agreed that no objections would be made as there was no course for redress and the policy was to fill a statutory duty. The date of the next SAC meeting is 14<sup>th</sup> December at 7pm.

Members noted that the Chair attended Planning training with Phil Smith, Policy Manager at SBC. The Borough are working on SBC's Local Plan which is due to be submitted in the first quarter of 2020. Parish Councils will have an opportunity to inspect and comment on the plans in 2018.

The Chair has had correspondence with Ward Cllr Heenan as a new Library Coordinator has been appointed. Cllr Heenan has asked if the Parish Council meetings could be held in the Library in future.

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

Members discussed recent changes to the Police Force and the implications this has had on communication with Parish Councils. The Police no longer have the resources to attend Parish meetings so a Community Safety Forum for South Swindon has been set up with the first meeting due to be held on 31<sup>st</sup> October at 6.30pm in Broad Green Community Centre. **ACTION:** Lorraine and Sue to attend on behalf of Covingham Parish Council. The Clerk will inform Joyce Holman.

Members noted recent vehicle break-ins in the Parish.

**ACTION:** Clerk to remove Police Matters from agenda. Cllr Sandle to produce a brief report of the Community Forum Meeting for councillors for the November meeting.

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

- Environment/Recreation Committee (Chair Cllr Sandle):

Cllr Sandle thanked the Parish Handymen as well as councillors that took part in the recent clean- up day in the Parish. She said that it would be positive to have a clean- up day on a monthly basis. Areas that could benefit from a clean-up were discussed, including Firecrest View. The date of next clean-up day was confirmed as 4<sup>th</sup> November 2017, 9.30am at Covingham Square.

- Finance Committee (Chair Cllr Benfield):

No report this month.

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

Members noted a Parish Plan report circulated via email. Members noted that a letter been sent to the Ward Councillors regarding access for the White Heart Roundabout redevelopment, stating that the current plans are unacceptable.

The Lotmead Farm development planning appeal opens on 7<sup>th</sup> November for 8 days. Houses should not be built before infrastructure is in place first. The Parish Council are in favour of the southern connector road.

- Personnel Committee (Chair Cllr Bacon):

No report this month.

- Covingham Flood Group update (Cllr Curtis):  
Members noted that the next multi-agency is scheduled for 10<sup>th</sup> October. Due to the issue of Himalayan Balsam and the impact this has on the surrounding native plants and wildlife, an expert in the removal of Himalayan Balsam will be at meeting. Sue commented on Dam area in Dorcan Brook – this will be included on the agenda.
- Parish Website Working Party update (Cllr Hawkes):  
Members noted that the website is continuing to be updated by Cllr Hawkes.

## 12. Planning Matters

**Application No:** S/HOU/17/1563  
 Re: Erection of a single storey rear extension and dormer window to the rear.  
 At: 11 Swallowdale, Covingham, Swindon, SN3 5AZ  
 No objections.

**Application No:** S/HOU/17/1255  
 Re: Erection of single storey rear extension and detached garage.  
 At: 13 Dobbin Close, Covingham, Swindon, SN3 5EN  
 No objections.

**Reference No:** Lotmead Appeals 3154437 and 3154441  
 Re: Notification of tree removal/retention plans.  
 Re: Notification of preliminary landscape strategy.  
 Noted.

## 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 £760)  
No grant requests received this month.
- Agree replacement of Christmas tree in Covingham Square  
Members noted that the Co-op are expected to award money to the Parish Council from sale of plastic bags. This money is to be used to benefit the local community. Members agreed that all money will be spent on Covingham Square area, as it is the focal point for Covingham. Members resolved for a professional outfit to supply and plant a good sized Christmas tree to replace the old one.

Members noted that G&L Evans, funeral directors will be repeating the Christmas Carol event on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2017. Members agreed that a Christmas tree will be purchased and planted before the Carol Concert.

## 14. Review and Adoption of Parish Council Standing Orders

Members received and noted that significant changes have been made to the Parish Council Standing Orders, to bring them up to standard, using the NALC model.

Members resolved to accept and adopt the updated Standing Orders, subject to amendments to the index page.

**15. Review and Adoption of Parish Council Financial Regulations**

Members received and noted the amended Parish Council Financial Regulations, which have been updated to keep in line with the Parish Council Standing Orders. Members noted that salary pay date will be moved to 28<sup>th</sup> of each month, to be effective from October.

Members resolved to accept and adopt the Parish Council Financial Regulations.

**16. Correspondence**

Members noted the following received correspondence

<b>Received from</b>	<b>Subject</b>
Swindon Borough Council	Media skills awareness training, 16 <sup>th</sup> October at Civic Offices (Cllr Curtis to attend).
Swindon Borough Council	Waterside waste and recycling tours, various dates (Cllr Benfield to attend November tour).

**17. Matters for consideration**

Cllr Sandle will organise a Parish Council Christmas meal at the White Hart in Stratton. The date of 18<sup>th</sup> December was agreed.

Meeting closed at 21:00.

Signed (Chair):