

Covingham Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 4th December 2017
In Covingham Park Primary School, The Harriers, Covingham

Present: Cllr Curtis (Chair), Cllr Hawkes, Cllr Bacon, Cllr Willis, Cllr Sandle, Cllr Pagington, Cllr Benfield (Vice Chair)

In attendance: Emma Kingsley (Parish Clerk), 1 Member of the public

1. Apologies:

Received from Cllr Kennedy.

2. Declaration of Interests:

None

3. Approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 6th November 2017

Minutes of the meeting held on 6th November 2017 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

4. Matters arising from the previous minutes

Community Speedwatch - Cllr Barbara Parry has confirmed that there are enough volunteers for the Police to come to Swindon to provide training, rather than at Police HQ. Councillors Bacon, Benfield, Hawkes and Sandle, have volunteered to participate.

Action – Cllr Curtis

Adult Exercise Equipment – The Chair had emailed the resident to advise of the Parish Council's decision. A response has been received stating that they will not contact the Police to report any troubles.

Children's slide - Replacement has been ordered and due to be delivered mid to late December

Bollards – The Chair had emailed Nythe, Eldene and Liden Parish Clerk for reasoning behind increased costs. They will review and come back to us in due course.

Action – Cllr Curtis

Grass cutting contract - Contractor has the map and is happy with the details. He has confirmed that he has quoted sufficient amounts for both hedge cutting and grass cutting.

Action – Cllr Curtis

Recycle Bins in Covingham Square - Paperwork has been completed for the enforcement process which was due to start mid-November. If the bins aren't removed within two weeks by the 'owners' SBC will do it, update on the situation has been requested.

Action – Cllr Curtis

Covingham Square benches - The Handymen have cut the damaged backs off and turned them into armless and backless benches.

New Bench – A new bench has been ordered using the funds awarded from the Co-op Good Causes Fund. It is due to be delivered week beginning 29th January. The Co-op have chosen the words and company have agreed to have the commemorative plaque engraved as requested which will be fitted during manufacturing process.

5. Public forum:

One member of the public was present at the meeting to enquire about adding an additional flower box to the entrance of Heronscroft. This will be covered in item 9.

6. Clerk's verbal update:

The Clerk reported that there was no update as such as she is currently finding her way around the role.

7. Verbal Update from the Chair

Neighbourhood Watch - Cllr Kevin Parry is promoting a new version of Neighbourhood Watch for the area that he is Borough Councillor for. First meeting was held on 30th November. He has asked if Covingham PC would like to join in? New signs can be ordered at a cost of £30, replacement signs for £5.

ACTION: Cllr Curtis to find out more information

Footpaths/Wind tunnel areas - A request was forwarded from SBC to the Parish to clear a large pile of leaves at the side of a house at the resident's request. The Handymen have cleared them, but it took them over an hour. The resident was informed nicely that this was a one-off, as a gesture of goodwill as it didn't present a safety hazard and due to the extent of the footpath network around the area, the PC does not have the resources to cope. The footpath from Smitanbrook (road) to Robinson Close was also cleared as that was considered a possible safety issue.

Residents Email - A local resident emailed the Clerk to which I replied about the unloved play equipment in Covingham Park. He works for a brick manufacturing company and is seeing the equipment being installed on new developments. I explained about the policy requirement that formed part of the Local Plan when it was adopted in 2015 (3.2 hectares per 1,000 population for outdoor children's and teenager's play, general recreation and allotments). As he is a Parent Governor at the school and with Cllr Fosse's resignation, I have suggested he come along and join the PC as he could become the PC link with the school.

8. Council Tax Care Leavers Consultation 2017

Following the proposed 100% tax exemption for Swindon care leavers until the age of 21 and 50% discount for those with joint council tax responsibility. Cllr Benfield would be in favour of the proposition if this was to be funded by SBC.

Cllr Hawkes followed recognising good points for backing the grant but felt as though the grant given should be based on merit and not root. The Council were in agreement with this statement and resolved for this to be the response to the borough.

ACTION – Clerk to respond to SBC

9. Agree Flower Boxes for Heronscroft

All members were in favour for the proposed flower box for Heronscroft

ACTION: Clerk to inform Handymen

10. Community Tree Planting to commemorate first world war

Cllr Curtis informed members that the community forest officer has responded regarding the community tree planting to commemorate WW1. This is a Wiltshire project and SBC haven't made any firm decisions whether to be a part of this. Cllr Curtis will keep members informed if there are any changes.

11. Reports from Parish Council Committee Chairs:

- **Environment/Recreation Committee**
Cllr Sandle informed members that she had continued to maintain the parish flower boxes and leaf clearance. Cllr Sandle also thanked Mr Waywood for taking responsibility for another box.

- **Finance Committee**
Cllr Benfield had nothing to report

- **Parish Plan/Highways Committee**

Chair Cllr Hawkes reported that he and Cllr Curtis had attended the Lotmead Appeal and gave the Parishes view on Education with regard to problems which could occur with access to Covingham Primary School; Transport- difficulties accessing major roads via Covingham; and Flood Risk.

Cllr Hawkes along with Cllr Curtis, attended a consultation meeting concerning the update to the Swindon Local Plan. Cllr Hawkes informed members that there is a mechanism to comment and he believes we should seek to use the plan to protect our green infrastructure. Parish Councils will be consulted about the lists of land that is suggested as being suitable for development. The list has not yet been published.

Covingham Parks

Cllr Hawkes advised members that both parks have been given the status of Community Asset. Although this does not guarantee the parks will be totally protected, it does make the process of changing their use more complicated, giving us more opportunity to object should a change of use ever be suggested.

- **Covingham Flood Group Update**

Cllr Curtis informed the Council that the EA had undertaken the annual maintenance on the River Cole and Dorcan Stream from the trash screen at the Flood Storage Area by Wanborough Bridge all the way through to Shaftesbury Lake. They appeared to have carried out a more thorough clear out than had originally been communicated. Cllr Hawkes commented that SBC and the EA needed to remain efficient in maintaining waterways to eliminate flooding on the NEV.

- **Website Working Party Update**

Cllr Hawkes informed members that the planning decisions over the Lotmead appeal have taken priority, and therefore will resume work moving the website to a new URL in the New Year.

12. Planning Matters

Application No: S/HOU/17/1935

Re: Erection of a first floor rear extension

At: 1 Smitan Brook, Covingham, Swindon, SN3 5BX

The Parish Council has no objections to this application

16. Financial Matters

- Approve financial summary and cheque list
Members unanimously approved the financial summary and cheque list.
- Grant Request
No grant requests had been received
- Approve payment to Covingham Library trust, see letter
Majority of members agreed for the grant to be paid to the Library Trust
- Draft budget for 2018/19
Cllr Benefield proposed a 6.5% increase for the precept 2018/19 stating that this will ensure it is possible to maintain the current appearance of Covingham, and also for the parish to fulfil the objectives for the year.
All members were in favour and agreed to the 6.5% increase for the next tax year 2018/19.

ACTION: Cllr Benfield to prepare draft budget

17. Correspondence

The meeting noted that no correspondence had been received

18. Matters for consideration

Cllr Bacon suggested Swindon Stratton Reclaim as a possibility to purchase retrieved wood at a low cost for flower boxes.

Cllr Bacon informed members that he had spent a morning out with John, one of the handymen, and was amazed at how much they get done in the time they are out. Cllr Bacon also made members aware that he had personally thanked Kevin Edmonds, on behalf of the Parish Council for the letter that had been published in the Swindon Advertisier.

ACTION: Cllr Benfield to write letter to Handymen

Cllr Sandle reminded members about the Christmas meal on the 18th December and looked forward to seeing everyone there.

Meeting closed at 20.35pm

Signed.....

Date.....