



Minutes of the meeting of Covingham Parish Council

**Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020**

At 7pm via Zoom Conference Call

**Present:** Cllr Bates, Bacon, Benfield, Curtis (Chair), Hawkes, Ricketts, Sandle, Wichall

**Also in attendance:** Laura Evans (Clerk)

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Waywell (unavailable)

**2. Declaration of Interests**

Cllr Curtis reminded Members that they should declare any known interests in any matter to be considered at the beginning of the meeting and during the meeting if it becomes apparent that they have an interest in the matters being discussed.

**3. Minutes of previous meeting**

**Resolved:** The minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020 were approved, and will be signed at a later date due to the current Covid-19 social distancing regulations

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

**Flowerbox St Katherines Green-** This has now been completed and installed.

**Hedge to the side of Cole Close Minimart-** The work for the area to be cleared completely and grass seed laid is scheduled for February 2021.

**Smitanbrook Park –** In the process of removing the bench for storage.

**Face to Face meetings-** Dorcan Church was happy to accommodate the request but due to the new government guidance on Covid-19 the rule of six, this has been put on hold.

**5. Public forum**

Resident raised concerns regarding youths gathering in Covingham Park breaking the government guidance and using drugs. The Clerk responded and advised the resident to call the Police on 101 when the illegal activity is taking place.

**6. Chairs Verbal Update**

**Junior play park –** attended pre installation meeting. Work due to commence later in October

**Trees -** all branches, i.e. on the ground or hanging, due to storm damage reported to and removed by SBC. Two ash trees on St Pauls Drive identified by SBC removed completely due to a 'near miss'. Large willow overhanging the bus stop pollarded by SBC. Resident reported a damaged wall due to a large tree in Robinsgreen to SBC – removed. A tree that has been 'grafted' onto a different tree root stock in Falconscroft that was leaning badly has been trimmed by the Maintenance Team at the request of SBC, up to the permitted height levels. The remainder of the tree to be dealt with at a later date by SBC. Large branch from a willow came down on Friday 18th September and crossed the

footpath on St Paul's Drive, reported and dealt with immediately. SBC tree gang returned on the Monday and removed other branches that posed a risk from the offending tree.

**Covingham Park** – extension of area covered by the lease. Original request to include the peripheral areas around the park submitted in November 2018. To date it has not been actioned, reasons given by SBC were due to Covid and other priorities?? Understand that any lease agreements now include responsibility for all trees, which is a concern. SBC to formally respond in October 2020.

**Firecrest Play area** – original 'tenancy' agreement signed prior to 1st April 2017. A Tenancy at Will was put in place detailing responsibilities. It has not been possible to grant a lease agreement due to other priorities?? SBC to respond formally in October 2020.

## 7. Clerks Verbal Update

No update given.

## 8. Parish Maintenance Engineers

- **Monthly Reports** – Cllr Bacon wished to thank the Maintenance Engineers for their hard work and to say what a brilliant job was done on Kingfisher Road on Saturday clearing the drains of debris.

Cllr Benfield proposed printing the Maintenance Engineers report and putting onto the noticeboards for the residents to see and was unanimously agreed.

**Action- Cllr Curtis**

- **Grounds Maintenance Matters**

Replacement of the moveable plates for the body twist adult exercise equipment piece.

**Resolved:** Cllr Bacon proposed buying replacement moveable plates. Cllr Sandle seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

**Action- Clerk**

**Rospa Inspection Report** – Cllr Curtis confirmed the Rospa play park inspection had taken place and that there is nothing unforeseen in the report. The biggest issue is the missing signage on the skateboard park. Cllr Curtis to look into new signage.

**Action- Cllr Curtis**

## 9. Reports from Parish Council Working Parties and Committee's

- **Environment Working Party**  
Cllr Benfield explained that prior to the stormy weather there had been regular watering and deadheading of the flower boxes.
- **Data Protection & Governance**  
Nothing to report
- **Planning Working Party**  
Nothing to report

## 10. Planning Matters:

### a) To consider any planning applications

**Application:** S/HOU/20/1156 (15<sup>th</sup> October)

**Location:** 24 Gilling Way, Covingham, SN3 5EQ

**Proposal:** Erection of a single storey side extension

**Resolved:** The meeting agreed that there is no objection to this proposal

### b) To note any comments from the Planning Working Party submitted between meetings

The meeting noted that no comments had been submitted.

**c) To note any decisions**

**Application:** S/HOU/20/0930

**Location:** 4 Larksfield, Covingham, SN3 5AD

**Proposal:** Erection of a single storey rear extension- Granted

**11. Financial Matters**

a) To approve Finance Statement and payments approval list

**Resolved:** Cllr Sandle proposed approval of the Finance Statement and payment approval list. Cllr Hawkes seconded the proposal and it was unanimously agreed.

b) To receive Monthly accounts reconciliation

**Resolved:** The meeting noted the accounts were in good order.

c) Q2 Budget Monitoring

**Resolved:** The meeting agreed the budget is on track

**12. Limited Assurance Review**

a) To receive the external auditor report and certificate for the year ended 31 March 2020

**Resolved:** The Meeting acknowledged that the Auditors had noted that on the basis of their review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in their opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. The meeting congratulated the Clerk on achieving this result.

b) To confirm Notice of conclusion of audit and inspection of audited accounts period

**Resolved:** The Conclusion of Audit notice was published on 28th September for a limited period of time as required. The AGAR will remain published for 5 years.

**13. Flowerbox Request**

To agree installation of two flower boxes by the street signs for St Ambrose Close. This item was deferred until the next meeting.

**14. Admission of Public and Press: To resolve in accordance with Standing Order 3 (c) that 'in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded, and they be instructed to withdraw'.**

*Reason: Grass cutting contract 2021/22, future responsibilities*

**15. To receive the proposed costs for the grass cutting, hedge cutting, dog bin emptying and street cleaning contract for 2020/21**

**Resolved:** Cllr Benfield proposed acceptance of the costs for 2020/21. Cllr Wichall seconded the proposal, and it was unanimously agreed.

**16. To discuss the limitations of any additional responsibilities that the Parish Council may want to take on or be transferred from SBC**

As the report required to be able to discuss this item has not yet been received, Cllr Curtis suggested holding an extraordinary meeting to discuss, which the meeting agreed.

**17. Correspondence**

The meeting noted that no correspondence had been received.

**18. Matters for consideration**

Cllr Bates raised the issue of the faded street signs. Cllr Curtis asked whether the signs may just need a wash. Cllr Bates to carry out a survey on the street signs and report back. **Action- Cllr Bates**

Cllr Bacon asked if there were any updates regarding the reinstatement of the Gateway. Cllr Curtis explained there had been no further updates from Highways. Cllr Curtis to chase. **Action- Cllr Curtis**

Cllr Hawkes sent photos to the Cllrs of the 2 rivers within Covingham, to show the effects of the rain over the three days which resulted in 3 inches of rainfall. Cllr Hawkes explained that it was fortunate that the rainfall was light as it meant the rivers had coped.

Cllr Sandle raised concerns regarding the gaps around the Covingham Park footpath. Cllr Curtis explained that footpaths are classed as part of the Highways network but will take photos and report to SBC. **Action- Cllr Curtis**

Cllr Benfield raised a planning enforcement issue – as this is not within the Parish Council’s remit it will be forwarded to Swindon Borough Council Planning Enforcement for investigation.

Meeting closed at 8:55pm

Signed.....Date.....