



Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council on;
Monday 9th January 2023
At 7pm in the Small Hall at St Paul's Church and Community Centre, Covingham

Present: Cllr Bacon, Hawkes (Chair), Kay, Ricketts, Sandle, Wichall

Also in attendance: Laura Evans (Clerk)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Curtis (Unavailable), Cllr May (Unavailable), Cllr Khan (Unavailable) and Cllr Walker (Unavailable).

2. Declaration of Interests

Cllr Hawkes 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 5th December 2022 were approved and signed as a true record.

4. Matters arising from the previous minutes

Covingham Park extension of lease – no progress. Cllr Kay suggested that SBC are contacted again and to explain what Covingham Parish Council require in regards to the extension of the lease.

Speed Indicator Devices – Delivered. Awaiting delivery of poles.

How Healthy is your Parish initiative – Ongoing

Firecrest wooded area and the play area – Identified works now completed. SBC inspected the play area and confirmed that repairing was not a viable option. SBC has padlocked the area with the intention of removing it this year. The work in The Owlets has also been completed.

Redrow Estate and HGV's – The temporary signs installed do not appear to have had the desired effect in all cases. Reports and video footage received of lorries now using the parking space area in front of the houses between Pheasant Close and Mallard Close, to negate the need to reverse out.

Footpath to play area – The paving slabs that the Parish Council has been offered have not been taken up as yet due to the recent weather conditions.

Grass verges, Piccadilly roundabout – No further update provided by Ward Councillors.

5. Public forum

No questions or comments received from members of the public, as none were present at the meeting.

6. Police Matters

No Police personnel were present at the meeting so no update provided.

7. Chairs Verbal Update

Chairs & Clerks Engagement Meeting – Financial position of SBC – Government settlement was expected within days of meeting (12th December). Revenue amount for 22/23 was £157m, similar amount expected for 23/24. Every Council was facing same sorts of issues and inflation was the biggest threat. The pay award of £1,925 per FTE, average of 6.5%, was quoted as an example where only 2% had been budgeted. All income from whatever stream is being reduced. Do not underestimate the pressures the Council is under. Did this provide a good opportunity to work together with the Parish Councils?

Transfer of additional Services – No immediate plan. Highway Safety and Social Care to stay as core provision. Swindon Local Councils Forum would be used as the sounding board with individual Parishes to possibly decide. Chief Operating Officer believes that nothing can be transferred due to the different sizes and capabilities of the Parishes. Two possibilities were mentioned: trees and flood alleviation facilities maintenance. SBC are aiming for fuller discussions in the next financial year with implementation in 2024.

Thermofisher – A walk around the area with the General Manager where the excessive parking occurred to look at any damage that remained, took place on 12th December. Two areas were identified: the green area between Cole Close car park and the green area at the front of the building on Kingfisher Drive. The majority of the grass verges on St Pauls Drive had bounced back, which the Contractor had already confirmed prior to the meeting. The area on Kingfisher Drive has been cleared of the temporary hardstanding, levelled off and topsoil laid before spreading grass seed and would remain fenced off until the grass had established itself in the spring. Thermofisher has been given the option to extend their boundary to encompass this area by SBC, although there is no current need. The area at the back of Cole Close carpark will be tilled and the damaged areas made good in the spring. An area inside the boundary fence was being made into an HGV holding bay, to reduce the incidences of having lorries parked up on St Pauls Drive. The power generator has been placed on the backburner for the time being.

Street Sweeping Contractor to return on Tuesday 10th January to complete the four main routes, i.e. St Pauls, Kingfisher, Merlin Way and Covingham Drive. An excellent job was done on the side roads last month.

8. Clerks Verbal Update

Nothing to report.

9. Parish Maintenance Engineers

- **Monthly Reports** – As usual an excellent job done. Cllr Ricketts raised concerns that there is an increase in the large N20 cartridges being found. The amount of cartridges and locations found are reported to the Police.
- **Grounds Maintenance Matters**
The second hedge cut will be carried out at the end of January/beginning of February 2023.

10. Reports from Parish Council Working Parties and Committee's

- **Environment Working Party**
Nothing to report.
- **Data Protection & Governance**
Server Migration- The server migration is on track to be updated in February, Cllr Hawkes will be emailing Cllr's individually regarding the password reset. Cllr Hawkes explained that the migration to the new Website server will be completed at the end of January.

- **Planning Working Party**
Symmetry Park – The Supreme Court ruled against SBC, meaning SBC cannot adopt the road as part of their transport plan.

11. Planning Matters:

a) To consider any planning applications.

The meeting noted that no applications received

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

Application: S/HOU/22/1751

Location: 6 Robinsgreen, Covingham, SN3 5AY

Proposal: Erection of a single storey rear extension and front dormer window.

Resolved: The following comment was submitted: Covingham Parish Council has no objections to this proposal.

c) To note any decisions:

The meeting noted that no decisions received.

12. Handy Mag

To review continuing to pay for the Handy Mag article.

The Clerk explained that residents regularly respond to the points raised in the article directly to the author.

Resolved: Cllr Kay proposed to continue paying for the Handy mag article and to review in 6-months. Cllr Sandle seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

13. Financial Matters

a) To approve Finance Statement and payments approval list

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

b) To receive the monthly accounts reconciliation

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

c) Q3 Budget Monitoring

Resolved: The meeting noted that the budget was on track.

14. Draft Budget and setting of the Precept 2023/24

To approve the draft budget and agree the precept amount for 2023/24

Resolved: Cllr Sandle proposed the approval of the draft budget that was discussed, and the informal decision agreed at the December meeting. Cllr Wichall seconded the proposal which was unanimously agreed.

Cllr Sandle proposed that the precept be set at £131,810, Cllr Wichall seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

Action - Clerk

15. The Handy Mag

The meeting agreed to put the following into the Handy Mag article.

- Precept
- Speed Sign Indicator

16. Correspondence

The meeting noted that no correspondence had been received.

17. Matters for consideration

Cllr Kay enquired as to whether there was an update on forming a working party to seek allotment locations for the Parishes’ own allotment site from the discussion held in December 2022. Cllr Hawkes suggested that creating the working party should be an agenda item for February 2023.

Cllr Bacon raised concerns that the Memorial plaque is not central to the Memorial tree. Cllr Bacon to contact Cllr Curtis as contact had been made with the Funeral Directors expressing this concern.

The meeting closed at 7:34pm

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