



Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on:

Monday 6th February 2023

At 7pm in the Small Hall at St Paul's Church and Community Centre, Covingham

Present: Cllrs Bates, Curtis (Acting Clerk), Hawkes (Chair), Kay, May, Ricketts, Roy, Sandle, Walker, Wichall

Also in attendance: Two members of the Neighbourhood Police Team

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Bacon (Unavailable). Cllr Khan resigned from the Council due to moving away from Swindon.

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 9th January 2023 were approved and signed as a true record.

4. Matters arising from the previous minutes

Covingham Park extension of lease – Staff shortages. Several Parish Councils are in the same position with regards to asset transfers and lease issues.

Speed Indicator Devices – Installation imminent

Cllr Bates asked if a H&S policy or risk assessment of working by a Highway could be considered, which the meeting agreed. Cllr Wichall volunteered his services. **Action – Cllr Wichall**

How Healthy is your Parish initiative – all information now received. Needs to be added to website.

Redrow Estate and HGV's – Situation appears to have improved.

Footpath to play area – Maintenance Engineer is on the case.

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

Street Sweeping Contractor – All roads completed to the best of his ability, generally the standard was excellent. The Contractor was booked for 3 days. Due to amount of debris, especially on the main routes that it is believed to have not been attended to by SBC for at least 18 months, he returned for a 4th day.

Banked amount in lieu of grass cuts – additional works in Firecrest and The Owlets plus no charge made for the second tranche of hedge cutting.

Memorial stone – G&L Evans has given the Parish Council permission to rectify the stone's position.

Memorial bench for Cllr Benfield – Derek’s family has chosen a bench and are currently considering the wording for the memorial plaque.

Public forum

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

5. Police Matters

A new Neighbourhood Policing Inspector has been appointed to Swindon North, East & Rural area, Inspector Joe Senior, due to the retirement of the previous post holder.

A brief update was provided on the current activities, with ongoing investigations in Eldene, specifically around the underpasses, being the main focus. They are aware of the ongoing drug related activity and anti-social behaviour in Smitanbrook Park and Covingham Park and had seen for themselves gangs of youths on the seat in the basket ball court in Smitanbrook and suggested it be removed. If a written request could be made to the Parish Council removal of the bench would be considered.

Days of action by the Roads Policing Team are currently being planned. The Parish Council was asked to identify areas of particular concern. Kingfisher Drive and St Pauls Drive were put forward with relevant times of when excessive speeding etc. had been witnessed.

Cllr Bates asked if there was any action that could be taken to stop the electric bikes and scooters as legislation did not seem to be of use. The Police can only work with the current legislation and that is a matter for the Government. Written warnings were issued and if a re-occurrence of the ‘crime’ occurs, the vehicle can be and is seized. If the rider can be identified, which is not always possible due to the face coverings, a home visit can be arranged.

Cllr Curtis had been spoken to by several of the regular dog walkers around Smitanbrook Park who had witnessed drug use and blatant drug dealing during the late afternoons. They had made a suggestion to help the Police identify the culprits. The two PCSO’s would take the suggestion back and see what might be possible. Emails had also been received from residents from the Redrow Estate and one of the side roads off of Covingham Drive regarding the increase in drug runners.

6. Chairs Verbal Update

Nothing to report as all matters covered under Matters Arising

7. Clerks Verbal Update

Nothing to report

8. Parish Maintenance Engineers

- **Monthly Reports** - Excellent work as always. The Parish Council would like to pass on their thanks for the wonderful work they undertake on behalf of the residents.
- **Grounds Maintenance Matters**
All additional works identified by the Contractor during the annual review walk around had now been completed, to an excellent standard. No other matters needed addressing.

9. Reports from Parish Council Working Parties and Committee’s

- **Environment Working Party**
Cllr Sandle asked if the flower boxes that are the responsibility of the Council could be repainted. A request will be passed on to one of the Maintenance Engineers.

- **Data Protection & Governance**

Cllr Hawkes asked if everyone had been able to log in to the new webmail server ready for the migration that will be completed by Seiretto on 20th February. If anyone has any issues please contact him and he will provide any help needed.

- **Planning Working Party**

Nothing to report.

10. Planning Matters:

a) To consider any planning applications.

The meeting noted that no planning applications had been received.

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

The Meeting noted that the following comment had been submitted between meetings:

Application: S/HOU/23/0022

Location: 22 St Ambrose Close, Covingham, SN3 5EG

Proposal: Erection of a two storey side extension

Resolved: Covingham Parish Council has no objections to this proposal.

c) To note any decisions:

Application: S/HOU/22/1568

Location: 15 Pheasant Close, Covingham, SN3 5HT

Proposal: Erection of a single storey side extension - Granted

Application: S/LDP/22/1262

Location: 9 Falconscroft, Covingham, SN3 5AF

Proposal: Certificate of Lawfulness (Proposed) for the erection of an extension to existing rear dormer window - 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 Wichall seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

b) To receive the monthly accounts reconciliation

Resolved: The meeting noted that the accounts were in a healthy position.

12. Oakfield Project Fund

To discuss submitting an Expression of Interest Form for the fund aimed at investing in regenerative community related improvements.

The Meeting believed that the need to provide an allotment site for Covingham residents would be a suitable project to apply for the funding. As this was proving extremely problematic and not easily or quickly resolved, a speculative email response would be sent explaining the situation, for advice.

Action – Cllr Curtis

13. Political Awareness Training Session

There was no interest in attending the Political Awareness Training session being held by Haydon Wick Parish Council.

Action – Cllr Curtis

14. Allotments

Two historical documents, one dated 28th March 2010, had been located detailing a potted history of the agreement with Wanborough Parish Council to permit Covingham residents to have access to an allotment site and the quest by Covingham Parish Council to obtain land for their own allotment site. It was clear from one of the documents that the only piece of surplus land identified in Covingham, between the A419 and Peregrine Close, was not only deemed unsuitable currently, but it was also unattainable. The second document also confirmed that the agreement with Wanborough was verbal and no written confirmation could be found. In light of this four suggestions were made and discussed at the meeting and they would be investigated. Cllr Hawkes would also write to Ward Councillor Dale Heenan to see if he could offer any assistance or guidance.

Action – Cllrs Hawkes/Curtis

15. Flowerbox request

Resolved – Cllr Sandle proposed approval for two flowerboxes to be provided for The Buntings. Cllr Kay seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed. As the resident that looks after the flowerboxes in Cornmarsh had given notice, she would be approached before the new boxes were constructed.

Action – Cllr Curtis

16. The Handy Mag

The meeting agreed that the following should be included in the article:

- Completion of the additional works by the Grounds Maintenance Contractor
- Flower boxes

17. Correspondence

The meeting noted that no correspondence had been received.

18. Matters for consideration

Cllr Sandle asked about the bollards in Martinfield that were damaged and in need of repair – these would be deemed a Highways asset and SBC should be contacted.

Cllr Kay said that she would be in Covingham Square about 10am on Saturday 11th February to tidy the Crescent if anyone would like to join her. Cllr Ricketts reminded everyone that the maintenance of the Crescent was included in the new Grounds Maintenance Contract that came into effect on 1st April 2023.

Cllr Kay also commented about the poor condition of the footpath in Covingham Park that went out to Dorcan Way. She believed that there were accessibility issues, posed significant safety risks and needed major works to rectify. SBC to be informed.

Action – Cllr Curtis

The Meeting closed at 8.20 pm

Signed.....

Date.....