

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on:

Monday 3rd April 2023

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

Present: Cllrs Bacon, Bates, Curtis (Chair), Hawkes, Kay, May, Ricketts, Sandle, Wichall.

Also in attendance: Laura Evans (Clerk) and a member of the Neighbourhood Policing Team.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Walker (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 6th March 2023 were approved and signed as a true record.

4. Matters arising from the previous minutes

Covingham Park extension of lease – No progress. Next steps to be discussed under Item 14

Speed Indicator Devices – Additional backing plates received and will be attached to remaining posts in due course.

Footpath to play area – Pavement slabs have been collected. Path to the play area to be re-laid week beginning 10th April, weather permitting.

Grass verges, Piccadilly roundabout – Ward Councillor contacted again and asked to provide a definitive answer about the action that will be taken.

Memorial Bench – The bench that was donated by former Covingham Parish Councillor Derek Benfield's family has been installed.

Oakfield Community Fund – Unfortunately the Expression of Interest that was submitted has been declined due to a clause concerning the ownership of the asset – 'In principle, any assets funded by the Community Fund remain within ownership, or be at the direction, of SBC'. This has been challenged as the prospective site is understood to be on SBC land.

Allotments – Cllr Hawkes emailed Ward Cllr Heenan and will provide an update shortly.

Thermofisher's request to plant 9 trees in the piece of ground outside of the main gate directly opposite the mini mart was refused permission by the SBC Officer responsible for the Trees for Climate project. The main reasons were that the piece of green is Highways land and any planting would need Highways blessing. As it almost certainly contains drainage facilities, utilities pipework

and cables he did not think that it would be agreed to and furthermore it would be of no major benefit. He also thought that 9 trees was too many, 5 would, maybe, be more acceptable.

Metal basketball nets – The Chair of the local Sport England committee was asked to recommend a brand. He has been chased for an answer

5. Public forum

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

6. Police Matters

A brief update was provided on current activities, some of which have been in the press. Lots of proactive work is being done in the area with frequent operations also taking place. The Neighbourhood Policing Team member urged residents to report any incidents/ suspicious behaviour via 101 or online, as this type of information is key and urged residents to always air on the side of caution when suspicious/anti social behaviour is taking place. Social Media posts from the Police will be more active and these will be shared to the Covingham Parish Council Facebook page.

7. Chairs Verbal Update

Following on from the research to respond to Thermofisher's request, the Chair and Clerk had a telephone call with the new Officer responsible for the Trees for Climate project. He has been tasked with increasing the tree cover in the Borough from the current 8% to 30%. Any planting comes with the sum of £19,000 per hectare to cover labour and 15 years of maintenance costs. He had identified some suitable locations along Dorcan Way but is interested in looking at other sites in Covingham. A walk around has been arranged for Tuesday 4th April at 11am.

Wanborough Allotments Committee Meeting – 27 Covingham residents now have plots, with 7 on the waiting list. As Wanborough Road is closed until at least the end of July 2023, there are concerns about the possibility of Covingham residents not tending their plots. Interim plan for security is to replant the hedge that was removed to make way for the footpath.

Swindon Local Council Forum - The new Planning Policy Manager gave an overview of the revised timetable for the Local Plan. They have stepped back from the current plan and therefore initiated a new one. A Consultation will be carried out in the Autumn with the aim of the interim full document being submitted to Cabinet for approval in December 2023. The final plan needs to be submitted to the Government by 30th June 2025. The current Call for Sites is not just housing and employment land, it is also looking for open spaces and nature areas.

8. Clerks Verbal Update

Tree Preservation order for the Memorial Tree - This is still with SBC and no further update has been provided. The Clerk has chased.

9. Parish Maintenance Engineers

- **Monthly Reports** – Cllr Bacon asked whether the disgarded N20 cartridges could be recycled. Cllr Curtis to look into this. **Action- Cllr Curtis**
- **Grounds Maintenance Matters**
The first grass cut has been delayed due to the recent wet weather.

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

- **Environment Working Party**

Nothing to report.

- **Data Protection & Governance**

Nothing to report.

- **Planning Working Party**

Nothing to report.

11. Planning Matters:

a) To consider any planning applications.

The meeting noted that no applications were received.

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

The meeting noted that no comments had been submitted between meetings.

c) To note any decisions:

Application: S/PHOU/23/0107

Location: 27 Popplechurch Drive, Covingham, SN3 5DE

Proposal: Prior Approval Notification for the erection of a single storey rear extension measuring 7.00m (from original rear wall), 3.60m (maximum height) and 2.15m (height to eaves)- Prior approval is not required.

Application: S/HOU/23/0022

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

Proposal: Erection of a two storey side extension – Granted.

12. 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 the accounts were in a healthy position.

c) To review and approve Asset Register

Resolved: Cllr Ricketts proposed approval of the Asset Register. Cllr Sandle seconded the proposal and was unanimously approved.

d) Internal Auditor – to agree that Auditing Solutions be appointed the Internal Auditor for Financial Year 2022/23

Resolved: Cllr Hawkes proposed appointing Auditing Solutions for the Internal Auditor for the Financial Year 2022/23. Cllr Wichall seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

13. S137 Grant Request

To consider a contribution request from 21st Swindon Scout Group.

Resolved: The meeting agreed to invite the Lead from the 21st Swindon Scout Group to the Annual Meeting held in May so the Parish Council can better understand what fundraising the Scouts are undertaking before a contribution is considered.

14. Call for Sites

To discuss identifying relevant sites.

Resolved: The meeting agreed that this would be the best opportunity to make SBC aware, again, that Covingham Parish Council have been asking for an extension of the lease for Covingham Park for over four years, as this is Green Infrastructure which is used for leisure and community purposes. The meeting also agreed that Cole Close car park be retained as a car park. A response to the Call for Sites submission to be drafted and submitted highlighting the key points above.

15. Risk Assessment and Method Statement for Speed Indicator Device Activity

To review and approve.

Resolved: Cllr Hawkes proposed approval of the Risk Assessment and Method Statement for Speed indicator Device Activity. Cllr Wichall seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

Cllr Curtis thanked Cllr May for producing the Method Statements.

The latest Speed Indicator data reports were circulated to all Cllr's prior to the meeting, and it was noted that 85% of vehicles were driving at 30MPH or below, giving the desired effect of having the speed signs in situ. The maximum speed recorded was 82MPH.

Cllr Kay raised the issue that on one of the graphs on the report showed the speed as 0-40MPH which will need to be changed as the roads are 30MPH. Cllr Hawkes will look into this.

Action-Cllr Hawkes

The suggestion was made that each month the Speed Sign Data for each of the roads be available on the website with key bullet points of information.

Resolved: Cllr Wichall proposed a monthly report be generated and published at the same time as the agenda. Cllr Kay seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

Cllr Hawkes to circulate a schedule of dates for the data downloading and moving of the Speed Signs.

Action-Cllr Hawkes

16. The Handy Mag

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

- Speed Sign Data
- Grass cutting
- Memorial Bench

17. Correspondence

The meeting noted that no correspondence had been received.

18. Matters for consideration

Cllr Wichall had received a complaint about individuals roller blading in Smitanbrook Park and as the path is narrow due to the overgrowth, elderly residents feel they need to move onto the grass.

Cllr Bates asked if Great Stall Bridge is still in the plan. Cllr Hawkes confirmed that there was no further update.

The meeting closed at 9:03pm

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