

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Covingham Parish Council held on:

Monday 3rd November 2025

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

Present: Councillors Bacon, Bates, Curtis, Hawkes (Chair), Kay, May, Parsons, Walker and Wichall

Also in attendance: Laura Cutter (Clerk & RFO), Maintenance Engineer

1. Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Sandle (unavailable) and Ricketts (unavailable).

2. Declaration of Interests

Cllr Hawkes reminded all 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 held on Monday 6th October 2025

Proposed: Cllr D Kay

Seconded: Cllr J Parsons

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 6th October 2025 were approved and signed as a true record.

4. Matters arising from the previous minutes

- **Flood Alleviation Area** – happy with latest proposal to put in a bid for the Trees for Climate. The Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) needs to be completed prior to tree planting. Funds for the project are secured via the bidding process.
- **Annual Review Walk Around** – the grassed area near Thermo Fisher, where hoardings had been placed, has been reseeded and the grass is coming through nicely. No further additions to the contractor's work programme are required.
- **Dorcan Brook Bank** – surveys along the length of the bank have been done on two separate occasions by Swindon Borough Council (SBC). The Environment Agency has also been observed working in the area.
- **Basketball Court** – Order placed on 22nd October 2025. The next step is to do a site visit with the Project Manager. The build time is approx 8 – 9 weeks.
- **SBC Public Space Protection Order** – Answered email supporting the proposal and giving insight to locations within Covingham's parish boundary.

5. Public Forum

The Maintenance Engineer expressed concerns about the line markings in the Covingham Mini Market/ Cole Close car park. Over the years the line markings have faded and the paint switched colours which may confuse residents over the parking duration. There has also been a few near miss accidents with community buses due irresponsible parking obscuring the view for people trying to exit the church car park and in Covingham Square car park. Residents share same concerns and enquiries have been made directly. Further enquiries will be made with the community bus company about storage in their yard.

Action – Cllr V Curtis to investigate further and make contact with the Church about the suggestion of double yellow lines, to mitigate against visibility and access issues, prior to submitting a formal request to SBC Highways.

Action – Clerk to contact SBC Highways, to explain the inconsistent line marking colouring in Coles Close Car Park.

6. Police Matters

No update was received as no Police personnel were in attendance.

7. Chairs Verbal Update

None.

8. Clerks Verbal Update

Thanked Cllrs Curtis, Hawkes & Ricketts for the thorough induction and support thus far.

9. Parish Maintenance Engineers

- **Monthly Reports** – Members agreed that the Maintenance Engineers continue to do a good job. As there have not been any N20 cannisters reported for a while, this will be monitored, but not reported unless there is an increase.
Proposed: Cllr R Bacon **Seconded: Cllr S Wichall**
Vote: Agreed unanimously.
Resolved: To continue to monitor the cannisters, but not report monthly unless there is a significant increase.
- **Grounds Maintenance Matters / Additional Works** – Members received recommendations for additional work identified on a walk around with Cllr Ricketts and the Contractor, the total sum for the additional work is £2,567.50.
Proposed: Cllr R Bacon **Seconded: Cllr S May**
Vote: Agreed unanimously.
Resolved: To approve the cost of the additional works as presented to the value of £2,567.50.
- **Annual RoSPA Report** – Members noted the Annual RoSPA report and agreed there were comprehensive findings from the report. Members discussed repairs to the Skate Park as the plate has bowed. This is marked as a low risk, advice could be sought on making good without changing surface as it may be an environmental factor because of the weather.
Action – Cllr V Curtis to take advice from the installer to have a look and consider repairs.
Maintenance Engineers will continue to monitor in the meantime.

Members noted that loose bearings have been picked up on the ROSPA report for the adult exercise area, although these have been checked and tightened by a Contractor recently, documented in a through report. Clarity needs to be received to ensure the two reports are aligned.

Action – Clerk to send the report to the Contractor and ask for comment on the findings within the RoSPA report.

The adult exercise area ground is often monitored and repaired by the Maintenance Engineers. Consideration was given to a more permanent replacement to reduce the need for maintenance. Options will be explored and reported back at a later date.

- **Vehicle Update** – Members received the outcome from the recent MOT and service for the Council's vehicle, whilst the vehicle passed the MOT this time there are many advisories and therefore it is likely to fail future MOT's and incur maintenance costs. A small Working Group comprising of Cllrs May, Walker & Ricketts was set up to investigate further, explore options and bring proposals back to a future meeting.

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

- **Data Protection & Governance**

Members noted a training requirement on the website for the newly appointed Clerk & RFO. Changes to the email circulation list for Ward Councillors. Query about the Information Commissioner's Office Certificate' certificate on the website being out of date.

11. Planning Matters:

a) To consider any planning applications.

The Meeting discussed application reference S/HOU/15/1375 for the erection of a single storey extension on the rear elevation on 23 Robinsgreen, Covingham and concluded there were no objections.

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

No decisions have been made within the parish boundary.

12. Financial Matters

a) To approve Schedule of Payments October 2025

Resolved: Cllr Wichall proposed approval of the Schedule of Payments October 2025. Cllr Curtis seconded the proposal which was unanimously agreed.

b) Members received the monthly accounts reconciliation.

Resolved: No comments were made.

c) The Clerk & RFO requested that Councillors start to propose budget aspirations in readiness for budget setting 2026/2027 and beyond.

- Vehicle Replacement (if not purchased prior to the end of the financial year)
- Accounting & Payroll Software

13. Parish Equipment

The Maintenance Engineer and Clerk & RFO's mobile devices need to be updated as nearing 7 years old. The plan is to stick with Android as is compatible with the Council's other website security features. Members agreed to allocate £40.00 per month for each device.

Proposed: Cllr V Curtis

Seconded: Cllr D Kay

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

Resolved: To update the two mobile phones on contract to the value of £40.00 per month for each device.

Members agreed to purchase a larger laptop bag for the Clerk & RFO to house the Parish Council's kit.

Proposed: Cllr S May

Seconded: Cllr L Walker

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

Resolved: To purchase a new laptop bag for the Clerk & RFO of a cost of up to £30.00.

14. Environment Agency – Flood Risk Awareness Project

Cllr G Hawkes will take the lead on the communications bringing updates back to the Parish Council where necessary.

15. The Handy Mag

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

- Season's Greetings (Cllr Hawkes)
- Weed Spraying (Cllr Curtis)

16. Matters for consideration

- Weed Spraying: Members expressed disappointment that Swindon Borough Council undertook additional weed spraying despite requests not to, as the Annual Grounds Maintenance Contract covers this work. SBC justified the action as supporting parish councils, but the method used caused overspray, damaging grass and leaving yellow patches. The Council clarified this was not the work of its contractor and will raise concerns with SBC regarding the unnecessary expense. Swindon Local Councils Forum meeting on 20th November 2025 will be discussing this issue as it is affecting parishes Borough-wide.
- Report on the Southern Connector Road: The Southern Connector Road is unfit for purpose and SBC do not appear to have a plan to remedy the faults so the road can be used. In the meantime, Covingham residents suffer due to construction traffic and residents coming through Covingham. During all stages of the New Eastern Villages planning the Parish Council insisted that all construction traffic and residents should only use the Southern Connector Road and not come through Covingham. With no solution coming from SBC the situation will become worse.

Action - Cllr Hawkes to propose a strategy to try and influence a resolution to this problem.

- Flower boxes raised previously have been built and have been replaced. Two more for Passmore Close will be replaced in the morning.

The meeting closed at 20.27pm

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