

Minutes of the Annual meeting of the Parish Council held on:

**Monday 12th May 2025**

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

**Present:** Cllr Curtis (Chair) Hawkes, May, Ricketts and Wichall.

**Also in attendance:** Laura Evans (Clerk) and two members of the Neighbourhood Policing Team.

**1. Election of Chair**

This item is deferred until the next full Council meeting due to insufficient members present to have a meaningful vote.

The meeting proposed Cllr Curtis to Chair this meeting

**2. Election of Vice Chair**

This item is deferred until the next full Council meeting.

**3. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Bacon (unavailable), Cllr Bates (unavailable), Cllr Kay (unavailable) and Cllr Sandle (unavailable). Apologies were **not** received from Cllr Walker.

**4. 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.

**5. Minutes of previous meeting**

**Resolved:** The minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2025 were approved and signed as a true record.

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

Dorcan Brook Bank – no update

Naming of a footpath- no update

Creation of a natural flood alleviation area in Covingham Park – Wiltshire Wildlife Trust Conservation Lead met with Cllrs Hawkes Curtis on site to discuss the possibility of creating a natural flood alleviation area to improve the drainage and create a wildlife area.. A number of suggestions were made with regards to the types of plantings and the associated benefits, the extent of the area to be included and the need for a flowing wavy fence for protection against anti-social behaviour. As part of the school grounds are next to the designated area and affected by similar issues, the School to be approached to be involved in the project. The Conservation Lead to provide draft plans with comprehensive suggestions for the Council's consideration.

Noticeboard, Covingham Square- no update received from the Chair of SLCF. - Cllr Curtis to chase.

**Action- Cllr Curtis**

Cole Close noticeboard – No progress.

Footpath opposite bus stop in Cornmarsh Way – The footpath is being repaired by SBC.

Allotments – Cllr Hawkes confirmed that The Allotment Society has not held an official meeting since the last update received in April.

ATB skateboarding event- Cllr Curtis spoke to the owner of ATBShop who confirmed that full public liability insurance was in place. All staff were DBS checked, had received Safeguarding Training and were experienced in holding these events.

**Resolved:** In light of this information Cllr May proposed holding four events, one during the May Bank holiday week, one in the last week of July and two in August, subject to availability. Cllr Wichall seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed. Clerk to check the availability for the sessions.

**Action- Clerk**

**7. Public forum**

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

**8. Police Matters**

The Neighbourhood Policing Team confirmed speed checks had been conducted in the area and the stats will be shared with the Parish Council. A lot of work is being done to reduce gang related crime and to divert young people away from crime. Recent spates of shoplifting have occurred in the shops at Covingham Square. The recent bike marking event that was held in Covingham Park was very successful.

The Neighbourhood Policing would like to know when the skate events will be taking place. Cllr Wichall confirmed that anti-social behaviour in the area appears to have reduced.

**9. Chairs Verbal Update**

Nothing to report.

**10. Clerks Verbal Update**

Nothing to report.

**11. Parish Maintenance Engineers**

- **Monthly Reports** – another busy month.
- **Grounds Maintenance Matters**  
No matters need to be addressed.

**12. Planning Matters:**

**a) To consider any planning applications.**

**Application:** S/HOU/25/0443 (14<sup>th</sup> May)

**Location:** 5 Swanbrook, Covingham, SN3 5AJ

**Proposal:** Erection of two storey side/rear extension

**Resolved:** The meeting agreed there were no objections 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/25/0164

**Location:** 15 Peregrine Close, Covingham, SN3 5BJ

**Proposal:** Erection of two storey side extension - Granted

### 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 Hawkes seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.
- b) To receive the monthly accounts reconciliation  
**Resolved:** The meeting noted the accounts were in good order.
- c) To formally agree and approve amounts to be identified as ear marked reserves for 2024/25 costs outstanding, projects and contingency funds  
**Resolved:** Cllr Ricketts proposed that for 2024/25 £650.00 had been identified as outstanding, a commensurate amount needed to be ear-marked for settlement of the invoice: Additional Services contingency - £26,000, Election cost accrual - £8,750, Allotments - £5,000 Reserves - £40,000, Projects - £40,040, Cllr Wichall seconded the proposal which was unanimously agreed.
- d) To approve final budget for 2025/26  
**Resolved:** Cllr May proposed the budget for 2025/26 be approved. Cllr Ricketts seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

### 14. Insurance Renewal

To discuss the Insurance Renewal quote

The price, duration and updated terms of the Insurance Renewal were discussed.

**Resolved:** Cllr Hawkes proposed acceptance of the Insurance Renewal and to enter a 3-year long term agreement. Cllr Wichall seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

### 15. Limited Assurance Review

It was **resolved** to approve and sign:

- a) Annual Governance Statement 2024/25
- b) Accounting Statements 2024/25
- c) To confirm period of Public Rights and Publication of Annual Governance & Accountability Return. The meeting noted that the period of Public Rights would commence on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025 through to Monday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2025.

### 16. Standing Orders

Version 4 of the Standing Orders were reviewed.

**Resolved:** Cllr Ricketts proposed the approval and adoption of version 4 of the Standing Orders. Cllr Wichall seconded the proposal, and it was unanimously agreed.

### 17. To re adopt:

- a) Covingham Parish Council Financial Regulations
- b) Covingham Parish Council Code of Conduct

**Resolved:** Cllr Wichall proposed the Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct be re-adopted. Cllr May seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

### 18. Appointments to and roles for Working Parties and Committees

To agree the roles and responsibilities and identify representatives of the Parish Council for outside meetings – **deferred until the next meeting.**

- Data Protection & Governance
- Planning Working Party
- Personnel Committee
- Swindon Local Councils Forum
- Chairs & Clerks Engagement Meeting

**19. To confirm the dates of meetings to be held for 2025/26**

The dates of meetings to be held for 2025/26 were confirmed as:

- Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2025
- Monday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2025
- Monday 4<sup>th</sup> August 2025
- Monday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025
- Monday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2025
- Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2025
- Monday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2025
- Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2026
- Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026
- Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2026
- Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026
- Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026

**20. Great Western Community Forest - Oaks at '80' project**

The Meeting discussed the invitation from Great Western Community Forest to participate in the project by planting an Oak tree to commemorate the upcoming 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II.

The meeting agreed that as Covingham already has an Oak tree as a Memorial and that new trees may be planted in the flood alleviation/wildlife area, it did not wish to take part in the project.

**Resolved:** Cllr Hawkes proposed to decline taking part in the planting of an Oak tree. Cllr Wichall seconded the proposal and was unanimously agreed.

**21. The Handy Mag**

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

- Cllr Curtis not standing for re-election of Chair
- Casual Vacancies

**22. Salary Increases**

The meeting to note that the value of the salary scale points has increased with effect from 1st April 2025. These increases are contractual as per the Terms & Conditions of the Contract of Employment and that the Personnel Committee recommends approval of the increment increase.

**Resolved:** The meeting noted the change to the salary scale points.

**23. Matters for consideration**

No matters for consideration or future agenda items were raised.

The meeting closed at 8:18pm

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