



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

Monday 6th October 2025

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

Present: Cllr Bacon, Bates, Curtis (Acting Clerk), Hawkes (Chair), Kay, May, Parsons, Ricketts, Sandle, Walker and Wichall

Also in attendance: Maintenance Engineer

1. Apologies

No apologies were received as all Members were in attendance.

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

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 1st September 2025 were approved and signed as a true record

4. Matters arising from the previous minutes

Flood Alleviation Area - Cllrs Curtis, Hawkes & May held a meeting with Neil Pullen from the Trees for Climate project to discuss changes that would need to be made to the natural flood alleviation area due to the proposed MUGA. An amended plan was submitted and shared with the Councillors for any comments, none were made. The installation of the MUGA will need to be completed before any of the planting can be started.

5. Public forum

The Maintenance Engineer asked if the area at the side of Thermofisher where the hoardings were recently removed could be re-seeded with grass seed as it was currently in a poor state and uneven underfoot when litter picking. The Meeting agreed that it would be added to the Grounds Maintenance Contractor's additional works programme and completed later in the year

Concerns were also raised about the condition of Dorcan Brook bank, the situation worsening and the perceived lack of action by SBC. Cllr Hawkes confirmed that the matter had been raised directly with the Cabinet Member responsible and Swindon Local Councils Forum. Cllr Curtis stated that photographs were being taken on a monthly basis as evidence of the changes being experienced and passed to the relevant authorities.

6. Police Matters

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

7. Chairs Verbal Update

Cllr Hawkes confirmed that the Parish Council had advertised for a new Clerk. Two responses had been received and one applicant had been interviewed. A job offer had been made and accepted with a proposed start date of 13th October.

8. Clerks Verbal Update

No update was made.

9. Parish Maintenance Engineers

- **Monthly Reports** – The Meeting agreed that the Maintenance Engineers continue to do a good job.
- **Grounds Maintenance Matters**
Noticeboards - The Meeting noted that the two new Noticeboards had been installed. Thanks were given to Cllrs May and Ricketts and Simon, the Maintenance Engineer whom had carried out the works.
Grounds Maintenance Contract Annual Review Walkaround will take place on Monday 13th October at 10 am starting in Covingham Park.
Action – Cllr Ricketts

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

- **Data Protection & Governance**
Nothing to report

11. 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 no comments had been submitted.
- c) **To note any decisions**
Application: S/HOU/25/0775
Location: 2 Popplechurch Drive, Covingham, SN3 5DE
Proposal: Erection of 2 storey side extension with porch to front elevation - refused.

12. Financial Matters

- a) To approve Schedule of Payments October 2025
Resolved: Cllr Sandle proposed approval of the Schedule of Payments October 2025. Cllr Wichall seconded the proposal which was unanimously agreed.
- b) To receive the monthly accounts reconciliation
Resolved: No comments were made
- c) Q2 Budget Monitoring
Resolved: The Meeting noted that the budget was on track.

13. Basketball Courts

Cllr May confirmed that the Basketball Court/MUGA has been ordered. He is waiting for the Installation Project Manager to carry out a site visit.

14. Limited Assurance Review

- a) To receive the external auditor report and certificate for the year ended 31 March 2025
Resolved: The Meeting noted that the Auditors had stated on the basis of their review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in their opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have been brought to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

- b) To confirm the notice of conclusion of audit and inspection of audited accounts period
Resolved: The Conclusion of Audit notice was published on 11th September 2025 for a limited period of time, as required. The AGAR and External Auditors Report will be publicly available for 5 years.

15. Salary Increase

The meeting noted that the value of the salary scale points has increased with effect from 1st April 2025, is a contractual obligation and not for agreement. All three employees' salaries have been adjusted accordingly, and appropriate back pay has been paid.

16. Swindon Borough Council Public Space Protection Order

The Parish Council fully supports Swindon Borough Council in gaining a Public Space Protection Order to curb Car Meets throughout Swindon and is in agreement for metal notices to be attached to the two Parish boundary signs, i.e. Wanborough Road and Merlin Way. The brick gateways at each end of Kingfisher Drive would also be suggested as possible locations. A suggestion was made for SBC to be informed about the use of Dorcan Industrial Estate by the Car Meet organisers and the close proximity of some residents to these meets, which is a major issue.

Action – Cllr Curtis

17. The Handy Mag

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

- Public Space Protection Order
- Dog Poo
- Skateboard Event

18. Admission of Public and Press:

To resolve in accordance with Standing Order 3 (c) that 'in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded, and they be instructed to withdraw'.

Reason: to review and consider the recommendation from the Tender Panel for the Grounds Maintenance contract from April 2026 – March 2029

19. To receive the recommendation for the Grounds Maintenance Contract April 2026 – March 2029

The Tender Panel provided an analysis of the six bids received of which four were discounted for price, location and mainstream business interests. This left the Parish Council's current Contractor and one other. Based on the criteria identified and the past service received, the recommendation from the Tender Panel is for the Grounds Maintenance Contract to be awarded to the current Contractor.

Resolved: Cllr Kay proposed acceptance of the recommendation made by the Tender Panel. Cllr Wichall seconded the proposal which was approved by a majority with one abstention.

20. Matters for consideration

Cllr May informed the Meeting that he had reported some issues with the footpaths in Covingham Park to Swindon Borough Council due to the severity of the cracks and the hazard that they pose. Several of the Councillors agreed that the condition of the footpaths in both parks was a real issue and concern. All Councillors were encouraged to report instances via My Account and make it known that the footpaths were the responsibility of Swindon Borough Council.

The meeting closed at 7.52pm

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