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

Monday 5th January 2026

At 7.00pm in the Small Hall at St Paul's Church and Community Centre, Covingham

Present: Councillors Bacon, Curtis, Hawkes (Chair), May, Parsons, Ricketts and Sandle

Also in attendance: Laura Cutter (Clerk & RFO)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Bates (unavailable), Kay (unavailable), Walker (unavailable) and Wichall (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 the previous meeting held on Monday 1st December 2025

Proposed: Cllr May;

Seconded: Cllr Ricketts

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 1st December 2025 as a true record.

4. Matters arising from the previous minutes

- **Flood Alleviation Area:** Trees 4 Climate application has been partly completed. The Parish Council has actions to progress, in relation to the finances and approving the form.
- **Dorcan Brook:** No further updates.
- **RoSPA and Caloo:** Clerk will continue to chase a response.
- **Weed Spraying:** No updates, no response yet received from Swindon Borough Council.
- **Southern Connector Road:** Response received from Swindon Borough Council's Chief Executive was circulated to Members and noted.
- **Environment Agency Flooding:** No response has been received.
- **Inconsiderate Parking:** Relocated to a different area on St Paul's Drive, but is not causing as much danger as drivers can see around the vehicle.
- **Web Space:** Some Members had issues accessing the documents on the website, others followed the link within the email and were able to locate the documents with no issues.
- **Speed Indicator Devices:** Spreadsheet circulated by the Chair with the statistics. Chair to pursue a way to present these in future.

5. Public Forum

There were (3) three members of the public present.

One Member of Public attended in relation to the – public liability insurance. Part of the area to be used is designated for the new Multi Used Games Area and due to the flood alleviation area there will be a tree planting exercise. Public land, can continue to use but be aware some will be fenced off.

The Parish Council can not advertise the event or publicise.

One member of public, who is also a Church Warden for St Paul's and wished to thank everyone for the work.

Presented a key for a filing cabinet to store Parish Council documents – access 9am – 4pm
Crossing the road outside the Church is becoming difficult, crossing the road is difficult and many road users cut corners. Also there is a stepped kerb to the bus stop is steep and difficult for elderly Members of the Public. Made some enquiries and will reporting to Swindon Borough Ward Councillors to consider – paths to be constructed on both sides on the road and a pelican crossing to be installed. SBC Highways has advised there is nothing they can do there, as there is no yellow lines. The Parish Council is in favour of supporting the request for a pelican crossing and footpaths. Target response date is the 16th January 2026, will keep the Parish Council updated.

19.17 Cllr Curtis; temporarily left the meeting.

Swindon Half Marathon – most got collected, when will the last two be collected? These are over by the Messenger pub. *Action: Clerk to write to Swindon Borough Council and ask for these to be collected.*

19.27 Cllr Curtis returned to the meeting.

6. Permission to use Covingham Park

The item was covered during the public participation section of the meeting.

7. Police Matters

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

8. Chairs Verbal Update

- **Named Footpath** – Swindon Borough Council has responded to advise, that it does not name footpaths against policy. Reading through policy it also states that road signs in memory of a deceased person cannot be done for 20 years after they have passed away. *Action: Cllr Curtis to respond to the resident who requested this with the outcome from Swindon Borough Council.*
- **Generic Email** – Following changes in line with Assertion 10, proposed to create a generic Chair address (chair@covingham-pc.gov.uk) so that when the role holder changes the emails will go to the new role holder. Clerk is main point of contact on most enquiries.
- **Wanborough Allotments** – Response received, the Chair will continue to liaise and find a resolution.

9. Clerks Verbal Update

Nothing to report.

10. Parish Maintenance Engineers

- Monthly Reports: Noted.
- Play Inspection Reports: Noted.

Members thanked the Maintenance Engineers for all their hard work and acknowledged the positive comments received lately via social media and resident emails. The new vehicle appears to be working well.

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

- **Data Protection & Governance** – The Chair has advised that he attended the National Association of Local Council's Assertion 10 webinar which outlined some of the objectives for accessibility on websites. Some amendments and upgrades will need to be made for the website to be fully compliant, and these have been circulated via email to the Working Party for further discussion. Accessibility statement needs to be updated. *Action: Chair to raise a report to discuss the error bug in the operating system noting the issues that this will cause to the sector.*

12. Planning Matters:

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

S/HOU/25/1625	Erection of ground and first floor extension to existing dwelling	2 Popplechurch Drive, Covingham, Swindon	No objection
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- b) **To note any comments from the Planning Working Party submitted between meetings.**
No comments had been submitted between meetings.

- c) **To note any decisions made by Swindon Borough Council.**

S/HOU/25/1375	Erection of single storey extension on the rear elevation	23 Robinsgreen, Covingham, Swindon	Granted
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13. Financial Matters

- a) To approve the Schedule of Payments for January 2026
Proposed: Cllr Curtis; Seconded: Cllr Sandle
Vote: Agreed unanimously.
Resolved: To approve the Schedule of Payments as presented.
- b) Members received the monthly accounts reconciliation.
- c) Members received the Q3 budget analysis (Oct-Dec).

14. Budget Setting 2026/2027

Members discussed the draft budget for 2026/27; inflation captures most of the rising costs and after discussion agreed to a 7.79% on a Band D increase which equates to £8.92 per annum.

Proposed: Cllr May; Seconded: Cllr Bacon

Vote: Agreed unanimously

Resolved: Agreed to set the budget at a 7.79% increase on a Band D property which equates to £8.92 per annum.

15. Setting of the Precept 2026/27

Agreed to set the precept at £184,802.00 which equates to £123.56 per annum, *which equates to a rise of £8.92 per annum per Band D property for 2026/2027.*

16. Swindon Borough Council: Statement of Licensing Policy Update 2025

Members noted the live consultation until 10th February 2026. Defer until the next meeting for Councillors to give due consideration.

17. The Handy Mag

Members agreed to the contents for the Handy Mag article to include:

- Precept

18. Matters for consideration

None.

19. Exclusion of Public & Press

Members resolved in accordance with Standing Order 3(d) that 'in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, and in the public interest, that the press and public be temporarily excluded and instructed to withdraw'. Reasons: Contractual.

20. Multi Use Games Area: Covingham Park

Members received an update from Cllr May regarding matters arising from the project.

Due to the location of the Multi Use Games Area in a large open green space, it was omitted from the estimate that a trackway would need to be temporarily installed for construction vehicles. The Contractor has offered to pay 50% of the cost.

Originally agreed for the project was £55,000.00 and this came down to £53,150.00 so there is some contingency budget.

Proposed: Cllr Curtis;

Seconded: Cllr Parsons

Vote: Agreed with one (1) against.

Resolved: Continue to push back on the cost of the trackway but if no avail use the contingency fund towards the cost.

Scrape the topsoil back and weed kill the area, asked Grounds Maintenance Contractor to quote for suppression. Cost of this will be £60.00 + VAT.

Proposed: Cllr Curtis;

Seconded: Cllr Ricketts

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

Resolved: To approve the cost of £60.00 + VAT for weed suppression under the base.

The meeting closed at 20.22

Signed.....

Date.....