

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

Monday 13th July 2026

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

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

Also in attendance: Laura Cutter (Clerk & RFO)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Anupindi (unavailable) Hawkes (unavailable), Walker (unavailable), Wichall (unavailable).

2. Declaration of Interests

Cllr Curtis 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 8th June 2026.

Proposed: Cllr J Ricketts;

Seconded: Cllr R Bacon

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 9th June 2026.

4. Action Review Summary / Matters arising from the previous minutes

Members gave updates under the Action Review Summary and revisited the minutes from the previous meeting. Completed items included:

- Integration to the new accounting package
- Thermofisher air conditioning enquiry
- Website maintenance – missing minutes from February and April 2026
- Annual Governance and Accountability Return – submitted
- To book three skate events – confirmed 3rd & 24th August & 26th October

5. Public Forum

There were no members of the public present.

6. Police Updates

No personnel from the Police were present.

7. Chair's Verbal Update

Nothing to report.

8. Clerk's Verbal Update

Big Town Centre Clean Up - Swindon Borough Council will deliver a targeted programme of town centre public realm improvements during the final two weeks of August, including repairs, deep cleaning, weed and graffiti removal, and other visible enhancements using existing resources.

The Council is inviting local councils, community groups and volunteers to support the programme by contributing resources and taking part in a community volunteering day to maximise its impact. If interested, please email the Clerk.

9. Parish Maintenance Engineers

- **Monthly Reports** – Members noted the reports.
- **Grounds Maintenance** –
 - **Weed Spraying:** The parks and footpaths have been completed. The current programme is expected to conclude by the end of July, after which the weeds will die back.
 - **Road Sweeping:** Road sweeping is scheduled to commence in early August.
 - **Grass Cutting:** The contractor is considering whether an additional grass cut is required due to the warm weather. If this is not undertaken, the equivalent budget may be reallocated to additional maintenance works later in the season.
 - **Tree Maintenance:** Planting within Covingham Park will be reviewed, with replanting undertaken where necessary.
 - **Hedge Cutting:** The first round of hedge cutting has commenced, with works beginning in Kestrel Drive.

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

- **Data Protection & Governance** – None. *Action: Chair & Clerk to organise a meeting with the Webmaster to progress forward.*

11. Planning Matters

a) To consider any planning applications:

None received.

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

Application Ref: S/HOU/26/0717

Description: Erection of proposed single storey rear extension.

Site Address: 14 Lapwing Close, Covingham, Swindon, SN3 5EB

Parish Comments: No objection.

c) To note any decisions made by Swindon Borough Council:

No decisions have been made.

12. Financial Matters

a) Members approved the Schedule of Payments for July 2026.

Proposed: Cllr J Parsons;

Seconded: Cllr S May

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

Resolved: To approve the Schedule of Payments as presented.

b) Members received the monthly accounts reconciliation as at 30th June 2026.

c) Members noted the Q1 (April – June 2026) budget for monitoring.

Action: The Clerk explained that a new system has been implemented and currently working out the reports, will circulate the spreadsheet accordingly.

13. New Policies

Members received and approved the following policies:

- Social Media Policy

Proposed: Cllr S May;

Seconded: Cllr J Parsons

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

Resolved: To approve the social media policy.

- Co Option Policy

Proposed: Cllr S May;

Seconded: Cllr J Parsons

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

Resolved: To approve the Co Option policy.

14. Speed Indicator Devices

Members received an update from Cllr S May regarding the Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs). It was noted that the current Lead Acid Batteries are no longer suitable, requiring frequent replacement and recharging several times each week.

Members discussed the available options, including replacing the existing Lead Acid Batteries on a cyclical basis, changing to lithium batteries, or purchasing new Speed Indicator Devices. Options and costs were presented for:

- **New Lead Acid Batteries:** £45.00 x 8 – includes spare set for charging and replacing, this is the current method of charging, and the same issues may reoccur.
- **New Lithium Batteries:** £500.00 for two batteries and two chargers.
- **New Solar Panels:** £650.00 per panel – the manufacturer previously advised that solar panels are not recommended for the portable units, as new poles would be required to meet the installation specifications.
- **Upgrade Speed Indicator Devices & batteries:** £3,773.00 + VAT per sign.

Cllr May proposed purchasing four lithium batteries and two chargers at an estimated cost of £500.00 to undertake a one-month trial. The outcome of the trial will be reviewed and reported back to a future meeting before any decision is made regarding the remaining devices.

Action: Cllr May will obtain the final quotation and forward it to the Clerk to arrange the order.

Proposed: Cllr S May;

Seconded: Cllr J Ricketts

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: To purchase 4 x Lithium Batteries and 2 x Chargers to trial the method on the Speed Indicator Devices for one month.

15. Trees for Climate Initiatives

The Chair reported that approximately 30 tree planting suggestions have been received to date. The Chair will collate the submissions and circulate a list of proposed locations by the end of July.

16. Wanborough Allotments Draft

Members noted there is a meeting taking place with Wanborough Parish Council on Wednesday 22nd July 2026.

17. The Handy Mag

- Hedge Cutting/ Mid-Season Update from the Contractor showcasing the hard work for the season.

18. Matters Arising

Cllr R Bacon: Noted that the fir trees within the Memorial Area in Covingham Park and Covingham Square are approximately 3 feet in height. It was suggested that consideration be given to lightly trimming the trees to maintain a neat and well-presented appearance within the memorial areas.

The meeting ended at 20:24

Signed.....

Date.....