

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

Monday 10th August 2026

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

Present: Councillors V Curtis (Chair), May (Vice Chair), Bacon, Bates, Hawkes, Ricketts, Walker and Wichall

Also in attendance: Laura Cutter (Clerk & RFO), A Hughes & M Stratan (Maintenance Engineers)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Anupindi (unavailable) and Parsons (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 13th July 2026

Proposed: Cllr R Bacon;

Seconded: Cllr J Ricketts

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 13th July 2026 as a true record.

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

- **Dorcan Brook Dams** – still some blockages, will continue to chase the Environment Agency.
- **Speed Indicator Devices** – batteries ordered, further update on the agenda.
- **MUGA Covingham Park** – new bin installed and good feedback continues.
- **Road Safety Seminar, Trowbridge** – interesting to attend, will send the slides out for information.
- **Social Media & Co Option Policies** – both uploaded to the website.
- **Covingham Park Memorial Area** – Chair to discuss with the Contractor directly.

5. Public Forum

There were two members of the public present who wished to observe the meeting as very interested in community organisations and the work that the Parish Council does locally.

6. Police Updates

No personnel from the Police were present.

Update received Police Bike Marking Event to be held on Friday 28th August between 1100 - 1300hrs at the new Multi Use Games Area in Covingham Park. *Action: Clerk to share Police news of the event on social media.*

7. Chair's Verbal Update

Welcomed and introduced the new Maintenance Engineer, Andy, to the Councillors and thanked both Maintenance Engineers for their sterling work during the busy summer months.

Interviewed by Swindon 105.5 on Saturday, with all parish Chairs taking part. Student work experience placements are also researching local borough issues and asking good questions. The 60-minute

interview was recorded and will be edited for broadcast. Radio Host, Shirley Ludford, was very welcoming and offered valuable connections and future media training. Members agreed this was worthwhile for sharing local news. Shirley will be invited to a future meeting to discuss regular news opportunities, including recording items via WhatsApp. Given the significant fundraising required, a donation may be considered for regular publication.

Attended Heidi Alexander MP's coffee and chat morning on 1 August 2026. No other Parish Councillors attended, although some invitations were not received. Parish Council attendance was helpful in answering some of the local issues raised.

The Structures Fund, covering bridges, roads and major infrastructure projects, may provide an opportunity to bid for funding towards repairs to the Southern Connector Road. The Parish Council has previously been active regarding the New Eastern Villages, with particular interest to the repairs to the Southern Connector Road. Swindon Borough Council expects the road to reopen in autumn. 20mph restrictions on main roads are increasingly becoming the norm. Assurances were given by SBC Planning in the early stages of the development that all later planning applications, when granted by SBC, would include a planning condition that all construction traffic would be forced to use the Southern Connector Road for access to and from the individual developments, therefore restricting the use of Merlin Way and Covingham in general. Due to the problems associated with the Southern Connector Road, Covingham Parish Council has objected to all planning applications citing the early conversations and assurances. Cllr Sumner to be invited to discuss the options.

8. Clerk's Verbal Update

Nothing to report.

9. Parish Maintenance Engineers

- **Monthly Reports** – Members noted the reports.
- **Grounds Maintenance** – Contractor advised that the parks and footpaths have been weed sprayed, this should be completed at the end of July, once the weeds drop the road sweeping will commence. Estimated early August.

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

- **Data Protection & Governance** – Meeting organised for Tuesday 18th August at 2pm to progress items.

11. Planning Matters

a) To consider any planning applications:

None received.

b) To note no comments from the Planning Working Party submitted between meetings.

c) To note decisions made by Swindon Borough Council:

- **Application Ref: S/HOU/26/0501 Outcome: Granted.**
Description: Erection of a single storey rear extension and conversion of garage into habitable space. (Variation of condition 2 from planning permission S/HOU/24/0113).
Site Address: 3 Poltondale, Covingham
- **Application Ref: S/HOU/26/0699 Outcome: Granted.**
Description: Erection of single storey front/side extension
Site Address: 19 Merlin Way, Covingham

- **Application Ref: S/PHOU/26/0780 Outcome: Prior approval not required.**
Description: Prior Approval Notification for the erection of a single storey rear extension measuring 3.10m (from original rear wall), 3.7 (maximum height) and 2.50m (height to eaves).
Site Address: 14 Martinfield, Covingham
- **Application Ref: S/HOU/26/0717 Outcome: Granted.**
Description: Erection of Proposed single storey rear extension.
Site Address: 14 Lapwing Close, Covingham

12. Financial Matters

- a) **Members approved the Schedule of Payments for August 2026.**
Proposed: Cllr S Wichall; **Seconded:** Cllr G Hawkes.
Vote: Agreed unanimously.
RESOLVED: To approve the Schedule of Payments as presented.

- b) **Members received the monthly accounts reconciliation as at 31st July 2026.**

13. Purchase of a new Laptop

Members approved the purchase of a new laptop for the Maintenance Engineers up to the value of £750.00. Will need a review of the Office 365 packages and licences.

Proposed: Cllr G Hawkes; **Seconded:** Cllr S Wichall

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: To approve the purchase of a new laptop for the Maintenance Engineers up to the value of £750.00.

14. Speed Indicator Devices

Members received an update from Cllr S May on the Speed Indicator Devices. New lithium batteries and charging pads have been delivered. Batteries will be changed weekly to support ongoing monitoring and reporting. If successful, a further set of batteries and chargers will be purchased to ensure sufficient equipment is available for continued monitoring and rotation.

15. Trees for Climate Initiatives

The Chair advised that approximately 40 trees require replacement, with a significant response from residents and the contractor. A list of priority trees will be compiled and sent to the Trees for Climate lead. Thorough site surveys are required, particularly where utility works may have left unsuitable ground conditions for planting. Planting is expected to take place later in the year.

A separate project to create a shaded copse of trees may be considered in future; the current project is focused on replacing trees that have been lost. Ash dieback is also affecting local trees, including large trees around Kingfisher and St Paul's Drive, with the contractor identifying several priorities.

At the recent Clerks Forum, the Woodland Trust presented a slide show regarding plans in developing a "Nature Belt" concept to increase trees, green spaces and biodiversity. It is still at an early stage. The Wiltshire and Swindon Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) already supports increasing urban tree cover, improving access to nature and planting trees, shrubs and hedgerows.

For the Parish Council there may be future opportunities to work with the Woodland Trust on tree planting and improving local green spaces. Further parish meetings will be arranged.

16. Wanborough Allotments Draft

Chair & Vice Chair will discuss with Cllr G Hawkes. Vice Chair will circulate amended copy, asking for further edits ahead of it being represented back to Wanborough Parish Council.

17. The Handy Mag

- Skate Park Events – 3rd August and 24th August
- Trees For Climate Update

18. Matters Arising

Cllr R Bacon: Flower Box at the end of Kingfisher Road is broken, the front board is coming off. *Action for Maintenance Engineers to investigate and repair.*

Recent traveller activity at Covingham Park was dealt with swiftly by SBC and Police, with the area left reasonably tidy. With 16 entry/exit points, vehicle access remains a concern.

Bollards have previously been considered, but SBC permission is required as CPC is the leaseholder, while access for services must be maintained. Bollard renewal costs will be investigated, noting that individual street works licences could cost approximately £300 per bollard.

Action: Clerk to contact SBC Highways for advice on suitable and proportionate measures.

The meeting ended at 20:16

Signed.....

Date.....