

SOUTH SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL
(CENTRAL SWINDON SOUTH PARISH COUNCIL)

COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2020 at 7.15pm
at a VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING

Present

Cllr C Watts	Chair
Cllr J Howarth	Vice-Chair
Cllr S Ahmed	
Cllr J Ali	
Cllr S Allsopp	
Cllr V Ayris	
Cllr M Gladman	
Cllr D Griffiths	
Cllr A Hamid	
Cllr P Herring	
Cllr W Horley	
Cllr N Hopkins	
Cllr S James	
Cllr L Kasmaty	
Cllr J Miah	
Cllr MJ Miah	
Cllr J Milner-Barry	
Cllr S Pajak	
Cllr T Philpot	
Cllr M Strinkovsky	

Officers

Rob Core	Clerk
Jake Mee	Deputy Clerk and RFO
Matt Bradley	Communications and Events Manager
Theresa Gordon	Agenda Clerk
Gifty Tawiah	Broadgreen Community Centre Manager

Public

Two

Public Session

A member of the public said that the Leisure and Amenities meeting on the 8th September included an update on the play area refurbishments, however the minutes of this meeting have not been published. Can the Chair provide an update on this matter?

The Clerk responded that the minutes are not published as final until agreed in full council, previous minutes are to be adopted this evening. The play refurbishment programme is determined in the main by the yearly independent play inspection and through consultation. The independent inspection is currently underway

A member of the public said that he understood the rationale for not providing Zoom access details with the published agenda is to prevent Zoom Bombing. Can the Chair confirm how many instances of Zoom Bombing the parish has witnessed at parish meetings? And, if there have not been any, would he agree that this places an unnecessary hurdle in the way of the public engaging with their parish councillors, as well as added workload for the Parish Clerk in ensuring that invites are sent to all those who have requested the details.

The Clerk responded that the current system had avoided possible Zoom Bombing and does not place added workload on parish officer, nor does it restrict attendance. And it should be noted that parish Councillors contact details are listed on the Parish web site for the purpose of parishioner engagement.

A member of the public asked how many instances of fly tipping had the Parish paid to clear since the start of 2020 and what is the financial cost to the Parish in doing so? and what action are the Parish pursuing in ensuring that they take the necessary statutory powers from SBC to ensure that they can investigate and prosecute fly-tippers?

The Clerk responded that removal of fly tipping above car boot size accumulations (A few black bags) had not been transferred to the parish nor is it in the deed of services, therefore removal, investigation and enforcement remain with the principal waste authority, Swindon Borough Council.

A member of the public asked to have the following question asked at the current meeting and obtain comments from Councillors, not just a reply from a council officer.

The Clerk responded that the normal protocol is for public questions to be answered by a council officer or the chair of the meeting, all councillors can ask further questions or provide answers if they so wish.

A member of the public said that for a number of months now a rough sleeper has been allowed to camp in Queens Park. He had been attended to by various people from SBC and Threshold who had supplied his needs (quote by one of Threshold team). Does the Parish Council intend this to be the norm in the parks they have the leases for and fail to uphold the byelaws that are contravened as well as good housekeeping of the parks?

The Clerk responded that there is no such allowance to camp on either public or parish property. The parish council responds to all reports of rough sleepers across the parish by informing the relevant agencies. The parish council requested legal powers of enforcement from Swindon Brough Council and these have not been granted, therefore the borough council remains the enforcing body for byelaws

A member of the public asked if the rough sleeper is in possession of a key to the toilets. which would explain the lights on at night in there.

The Clerk responded that no key had been supplied.

A member of the public said the question relates to the failure to secure both the Town Gardens and Queens park at the correct times by as much as Two and a Half hours Late. Currently closure time is 7.30 (30 mins after sunset) It is a bye law but also a safety issue, with risk of injury, in the dark, or violent attack and harm with serious consequences. The situation not helped at Town Gardens since the times of closure having been removed, some months ago instead of being left until the promised replacements arrived. Again, not good housekeeping, but not the fault of the staff on site.

The Clerk responded that SBC security team lock both our parks and have a number of sites to secure as would any contractor, if there is an issue on any of the locations the locking process can be delayed. The security team have not informed the parish of any issues when locking. Tenders had been received in September 2019 for locking of the parks. All suppliers could not guarantee closure on time due to other commitments, a number of suppliers refused to tender due to varied timing of closing (Dusk). Market prices were approximately £10,000 per site other than SBC, for continued service their price £3,000 for both sites. No budget line was identified for security.

A member of the public said that if Parish Rangers can put up banners and posters of Parish council actions and notices on new play areas then it can't be a Covid 19 restriction stopping times (even temporary one) being put on Town Gardens entrances.

The Clerk responded that signs had been commissioned for both sites but due to supplier shutdown this was delayed.

1191

Apologies.

Cllr J Firmin

Cllr Heavens

Cllr N Watts

1192 Declarations of Interest & Applications for Dispensation

Cllr N Hopkins and Cllr J Ali declared a non-pecuniary interest as they are both members of the Rotary Club of Swindon.

1193 Chairs Report

The Chair said that we have received enquiries about the Parish strategy for playground renewal and I feel it would be worthwhile reminding Parish Councillors and informing Parishioners as to why we have developed the current strategy.

When the Parish was created in March 2017, it consisted of an office with a part time clerk and an admin assistant. At this time, 21 playgrounds were transferred to the Parish in one lot as the Borough had no funding for refurbishment or renewal. Indeed, if we had not accepted them, the Borough officers were discussing removal of playgrounds, as the Borough was not financially in a position to keep up the basic statutory maintenance, inspections, and repair.

Usually, a local authority would have a program of refurbishment with a nominal 17-year cycle per playground renewal spread evenly across the portfolio. The Parish had no option but to take possession of 21 playgrounds at the same time with various levels of disrepair/lack of investment in order to secure the assets. From this point, we commissioned a condition report and initial priorities were set for Playgrounds at Rushy Platt, GWR Park, Lordsmith Green, Hesketh Crescent, Cambria Bridge, Savernake Street, Broadgreen, East Wichel (just starting) and Westcott Park. The main issues with Savernake, Westcott and East Wichel were related to them being constructed from wood that had, and indeed is, rotting, therefore they became a priority through this process. The design and construction of these parks, although initially providing excellent play value, did not lend itself to longevity or cost-effective on-going maintenance.

We are now in a position to set our next set of priorities. The annual inspection and subsequent condition report will provide information for the Parish project manager and Chair of the Leisure and Amenities Committee to produce a report with a projected work schedule for the next two years. This will be brought to the relevant committees and we will welcome feedback from Parishioners with regards to these future deliberations.

GOODGYM

Parish Councillors would like to thank GoodGym Swindon and local residents for joining them at the weekend to litter pick at the County Ground Open Space. 14 people attended the litter pick, and 15 bags of rubbish were collected. Those present would also like to thank the Swindon Town FC Community Foundation for free teas for the volunteers after the litter pick.

The Parish Council looks forward to working with GoodGym Swindon in the future.

The parish has also installed two new bins in the County Ground Area. We are glad to say that a resident contacted us to say that she has noticed these bins are already being well used; and there are eight further bins to install over the coming weeks.

GWR PARK

South Swindon Parish Council is pleased to be working with Swindon Borough Council to commission a Conservation Management Plan for GWR Park (formerly known as Faringdon Road Park).

The Parish Council is now responsible for managing GWR Park and holds a 99-year lease on it. We have already installed a WW1 Memorial and refurbished the play area in the park.

Last year, Swindon's Railway Village, which is in the South Swindon Parish, was selected as one of Historic England's Heritage Action Zones and will benefit from £1.6 million of funding to revitalise this much-loved area. One of the key projects that is included in the Heritage Action Zone is to create a Conservation Management Plan for the park- which will look at ways the park's heritage can be conserved and improved. As the custodian of GWR Park we will be working in partnership with Swindon Council and Heritage England on this project.

Park Posters.

Parish Councillors have been delighted that the Parish has been contacted by several relatives of the local heroes featured in our WW2 posters displayed in Town Gardens, Queens Park and GWR Park. These posters were featured to mark the 75th Anniversary of the end of WW2. The Parish Council had the pleasure of meeting the son and daughter-in-law of Harold Wilfred Hazell who was featured in one of the Parish Council's wartime posters and died fighting in Asia during the Second World War. Peter and Sheila Hazell were presented the wartime poster of their father by the Chair of the Parish Council's World Wars Working Party. They expressed how pleased they were that the Parish Council had displayed the poster and brought in the telegram which notified their mother that Harold had died. It was very powerful to hear a first-hand account of the effect of the War. The Parish Council would like to again thank local historian, Mark Sutton, for his significant contribution to the Wartime Posters project.

Covid 19 centre

The Parish Council is really pleased to have facilitated a Covid Walk-Through Test Centre at Broadgreen Community Centre- part of the South Swindon Parish campus. Only a few weeks ago the Broadgreen and Town Centre area had a significant number of cases so it is great that a test centre can be so local. It should be noted that appointments must be pre-booked in the same way as the other testing sites. The Broadgreen site is available to 'walk-through' visitors only (Not drive through).

For anybody needing to visit South Swindon Parish Council's offices by car they should please enter our car park in the usual way, explain to any security staff they are there to visit the Parish Council and park as close to the Parish Offices as possible.

- 1194** **Minutes of the Full Council Meeting**
RESOLVED that the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 18 February 2020 be approved as a correct record.
- 1195** **Minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee**
RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning and Environment Meeting held on 25 February 2020 be approved as a correct record.
- 1196** **Minutes of the Finance & Staffing Committee**
RESOLVED that the minutes of the Finance and Staffing Meeting held on 25 February 2020 with amendment be approved as a correct record.
- 1197** **Minutes of the Leisure & Amenities Committee**
RESOLVED that the minutes of the Finance and Staffing Meeting held on 10 March 2020 be approved as a correct record.
- 1198** **Minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee**
RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning and Environment Meeting held on 10 March 2020 be approved as a correct record.
- 1199** **Minutes of the Full Council Meeting**
RESOLVED that the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 26 May 2020 be approved as a correct record.
- 1200** **Minutes of the Full Council Meeting**
RESOLVED that the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 16 June 2020 be approved as a correct record.
- 1201** **Minutes of the Full Council Meeting**
RESOLVED that the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 14 July 2020 approved as a correct record.
- 1202** **Minutes of the Finance & Staffing Committee**
RESOLVED that the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 25 August 2020 be approved as a correct record.

1203 Minutes of the Full Council Meeting

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 25 August 2020.

DEFERRED

1204 Grant Application – Prospect Place Conservation Area Trust

The RFO to submit a grant application regarding Prospect Place.

The RFO said that he required more information and that the grant application had been withdrawn for the time being.

DEFERRED

1205 Payment Schedule – August 2020

The RFO submitted the Payment Schedule for August 2020, a copy of which appears in as Appendix A in the Minute Book.

RESOLVED that the Payment Schedule for August 2020 totalling £355,554.97 be approved.

1206 Accounts – August 2020

The RFO submitted the Accounts for the period to August 2020, a copy of which appears in as Appendix B in the Minute Book.

The RFO gave an update on a profile budget he had completed and said that the parish are running well without taking the services on yet. The transfer is due in November and if Councillors have they suggestions they would like to be factored in they need to be received by September/October to be factored into the budget if feasible.

RESOLVED that the Accounts for August 2020 be approved.

1207 Westcott Play Area

The Clerk gave a verbal update on the annual Westcott Play Area inspection

The Clerk said that the annual play area inspections had been delayed due to Covid 19 but were now being done and Inspectors are flagging anything deemed urgent directly to the Clerk. Parish Rangers do regular visual inspections to play areas, however the annual inspections are more in-depth including wood depth tests for all types of rot; in this instance Westcott Place equipment failed because below surfaces had started to rot which compromised the structural integrity. The parish immediately removed the wooden equipment and consideration will be given to it being replaced with steel.

NOTED

1208 Update on Broadgreen Local Test Site (LTS)

The Broadgreen Centre Manager Gifty Tawiah gave a verbal update on the use of the Broadgreen community Centre.

The Centre Manager said that the local test site had been set up at short notice and is being operated by G4S on behalf of the NHS. It had been operational for a week and had been set up in a safe and suitable, way with all G4S staff following health and safety guidance. Having discussed the set up with the parish health & safety officer the conclusion had been that we are assured by the set up. The site is open 8am – 8pm and the staff are keeping a record of how many tests are done weekly. Gifty had asked for the information to be provided and will pass onto the Clerk and Councillors when received. Risk to people is considered low, and as a walk-in site only on-site parking is not available to the public. Gifty is waiting for information from G4S to update the parish social media pages to be accessible to the public.

NOTED

1209

End Polio Now Day

Councillor N Hopkins submitted a verbal proposal for consideration.

Cllr Hopkins said that the Rotary Club would like to commemorate a milestone in the ending of polio globally and the Rotary Club had been in support of activities to help eradicate polio which is one of the worst diseases but avoidable with vaccination and can be eradicated. The Rotary Club have asked the Parish if they would allow them to light up the bandstand in the Town Gardens to celebrate “end polio now day” together with a small display to explain work being done to eradicate polio, this would take place on the 24th October 2020 and be funded by Rotary International funding.

Cllr Strinkovsky said that the committee should ask the Rotary Club to help the parish do more public outreach work. Cllr Hopkins confirmed that he would raise the request with the Rotary Club.

RESOLVED that Cllr Hopkins pursue the proposal.

The meeting closed at 8.06pm

Signed.....

Date.....

Chair of the Council