

SOUTH SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL
(CENTRAL SWINDON SOUTH PARISH COUNCIL)

COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2020 at 7.15pm
at a VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING

Present	Cllr C Watts	Chair
	Cllr J Howarth	Vice-Chair
	Cllr J Ali	
	Cllr S Allsopp	
	Cllr V Ayris	
	Cllr J Firmin	
	Cllr M Gladman	
	Cllr D Griffiths	
	Cllr Heavens	
	Cllr P Herring	
	Cllr W Horley	
	Cllr N Hopkins	
	Cllr S James	
	Cllr L Kasmaty	
	Cllr J Miah	
	Cllr J Milner-Barry	
	Cllr S Pajak	
	Cllr T Philpot	
	Cllr N Watts	
Officers	Rob Core	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
	Jake Mee	Chief Finance Officer (CFO)
	Matt Bradley	Communications and Events Manager (CEM)
Public	One	
Public Session	No public questions	
1252	<u>Apologies</u>	
	Cllr S Ahmed	
	Cllr A Hamid	
	Cllr MJ Miah	
	Cllr M Strinkovsky	
1253	<u>Declarations of Interest & Applications for Dispensation</u>	
	None	
1254	<u>Chair's Report</u>	
	<u>New Grounds Maintenance Team</u>	
	The start of this month marked a significant moment in the Parish Council's history as we began self-delivering our grounds maintenance and street cleaning services. Parish Councillors will be aware that since 2017 when the Parish Council was formed we had contracted Swindon Borough Council to deliver our grounds maintenance and street cleaning services. We have now welcomed the staff who delivered this contract to the Parish Council, with them being TUPE transferred to the organisation. We will now be delivering grounds maintenance and street cleaning services with our own in-house team. If residents or Councillors have any grounds maintenance or street cleaning issues from now on I would encourage them to email admin@southswindon-pc.gov.uk or call our new dedicated number 01793 317410.	

Second Lockdown Restrictions

November also saw us enter a second Lockdown with the government, after many weeks of dithering and delay, agreeing to impose lockdown restrictions to prevent the spread of Covid 19. Unlike in the first Lockdown when Swindon Council decided to unilaterally stop all grounds maintenance services for four weeks, under South Swindon Parish Council management grounds maintenance and street cleaning services have been unaffected during the second lockdown. While Parish Officers have taken extra precautions to prevent the spread of the virus at work.

The only service changes the Parish Council have had to make is to return to a Click and Collect service at Old Town Library and to close outdoor gym equipment at Quarry Road and Cambria Bridge Play Areas.

East Wichel Play Area Refurbishment

Unlike in the first lockdown Play Areas have been able to remain open this month. This has been good news for East Wichel residents with the Parish Council's Play Area refurbishment recently completed in that community. This is the third play refurbishment the Parish Council has delivered since March and the twelfth we have delivered since we were established in May 2017. The number of Play Area refurbishments by this Parish Council is unrivalled in Swindon and we regularly get feedback from residents of other Parish areas saying they wish they had as good a quality play areas as we have in this Parish. It is something all Parish Councillors can be proud of.

Town Gardens Gates

After delays due to Covid 19 the Quarry Road gates have now been installed! The gates will remain covered until the ground works are completed this week but residents do not have long to wait until this project has reached its conclusion.

Parish Councillors will be aware that this project is the first heritage-based project the Parish Council has embarked on and given the lack of heritage projects in Swindon; I think this will be hugely welcomed by our parishioners. I am sure we all look forward to seeing the finished product very soon.

Arts in the Park

Later in this meeting we will be discussing a proposal to present photography exhibitions in our Parish parks. The idea of presenting artwork in the parks has been something the Parish Council has led on with posters of our wartime heroes in our parks starting in 2018 at the centenary of the end of World War One. We have continued presenting posters of our wartime heroes, the most recent time being during the Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day period earlier this month and we continue to receive positive feedback from residents.

The other Arts in the park project this month that has engaged our younger parishioners has been the Story Trail project by Old Town Library in the Town Gardens. The time our librarian has spent in this project and the library's new virtual Story Time is thanks to the Parish Council funding 10 additional hours at the library. We look forward to seeing more Story Trails in our parks over the coming months, with the next one set to be Christmas themed in December.

Spring Planting in Parish Parks

Over the last few months our gardeners at Town Gardens and Queens Park have been busy with Spring planting. The most recent work being done was at the Town Gardens Rose Garden where our gardeners have replaced the roses and soil after 20 years. Last week the whole Rose Garden was closed off to support this work however residents should find only half of the Rose Garden closed off this week.

I would like to thank our gardeners in Town Gardens and Queens Park who do a brilliant job keeping our parks so lovely.

This year we have also been fortunate to get the support of the Swindon Thamesdown Rotary Club with Spring planting in GWR Park. The Rotary Club planted crocuses at the Faringdon Road and Church Place entrances to the park to mark World Polio Day, after the Rotary community reached an important milestone in their aim to end global poverty-with Africa being deemed Polio-free by the World Health Organisation.

We thank the Swindon Thamesdown Rotary Club for their voluntary efforts and congratulate them in their work to end Polio.

Allotment Track Improvements

When taking on the running of allotments inside our Parish, Parish Councillors took the decision to reduce the charge for allotment plots for our parishioners. As a consequence, allotment plot holders living inside the Parish have the cheapest allotment rate in Swindon.

On top of this the Parish Council has undertaken a rolling program of investment in our allotments. Part of that investment has included improving vehicular access in to and around our allotment sites. The first access track refurbishment has just been completed at Westcott Allotments. I understand the improvements made to Westcott Allotment track had been requested for 20 years and I am pleased the Parish Council has been able to deliver this. Three further allotment track improvements are expected to be completed within the next few months.

Other Updates

The Cavendish Green Landscaping and Gardening project is now completed with new trees and plants planted last week.

Work on Shaftesbury Lake has started. We have cut back the brambles so the lake is more visible to Park South residents, an additional bin will be installed in due course and the Chair of our Bloom, Gardens & Wildlife Working Party will be working with the Friends of Shaftesbury Lake about appropriate wildflowers for the area.

We have provided grants to the Town Gardens Bowls Club and Swindon Town Women's Football Team to support them during Covid-19 because of financial losses. Both club's have thanked the Parish Council for their support.

Though no formal service was run by the Parish Council this year, we laid wreaths at all our park's memorials on Remembrance Sunday.

Our Old Town Parish Councillors have led a project to create a new wildlife meadow on the Evelyn Street embankment. They engaged more than 20 people from the local community to support these activities.

The Parish Council has received recognition from the Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire and the Royal Horticultural Society for our efforts to support the local community and brighten up the Parish.

And I can report that the refurbishment of the PC Richard Webb Sundial has just been completed today by our in-house maintenance officers. Not only has the sundial been completed but the paving around the stone has now been improved.

Concluding Remarks

In my Chair's reports it is becoming common place that I run through a multitude of Parish projects we have completed and the success stories for South Swindon we have delivered. With the Parish Council recently doubling in size with a dedicated grounds team, the impact this will have on the quality of service residents receive and number of projects the Parish Council can deliver will substantially improve. It is exciting times for the South Swindon Parish, and I would like to thank our Chief Executive Officer, Chief Finance Officer, and all other Parish Officers for their work in making us a successful Parish Council.

1255 Minutes of the Full Council Meeting - 25 August 2020

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 25 August 2020 with amendment that page 547 be left intentionally blank be approved as a correct record.

Cllr T Philpot left the meeting during this item.

1256 Minutes of the Leisure & Amenities Committee – 8 September 2020

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning and Environment Meeting held on 8 September 2020 be approved as a correct record.

Cllr J Ali and Cllr J Miah joined the meeting during this item.

- 1257** **Minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee Extraordinary Meeting – 15 September 2020** **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Extraordinary Planning and Environment Meeting held on held on 15 September 2020 be approved as a correct record.
- 1258** **Minutes of the Full Council Meeting – 22 September 2020** **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 22 September 2020 be approved as a correct record.
- 1259** **Minutes of the Extraordinary Planning & Environment Committee Meeting – 13 October 2020** **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning and Environment Meeting held on held on 13 October 2020 be approved as a correct record.
- 1260** **Minutes of the Finance & Staffing Committee Meeting – 20 October 2020** **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Finance and Staffing Meeting held on held on 20 October 2020 be approved as a correct record.
- 1261** **Minutes of the Leisure & Amenities Committee – 3 November 2020** **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Leisure and Amenities Meeting held on 3 November 2020 be approved as a correct record.

1262 **East Wichel Open Space**

The CEO gave a verbal report regarding tree planting at East Wichel.

The CEO said that the play area at East Wichel had recently been refurbished and had gone well. The Projects Officer had been looking to alleviate the drainage on site and had re-cleared a ditch on the left-hand side of the site, when doing so he had to remove small sapling trees known as whips to improve further drainage. The Projects Officer had secured free of charge 400 mixed whips which will be planted on the left-hand side of the ditch next to the school fence and as they mature will further help with drainage. The ditch line will be followed and go across to the bottom of the site where a small pond had been created with reeds to also help drainage, the remaining whips will go behind the pond and curve round and provide habitat for wildlife at the back with no hazards to children and again helping with drainage. The saplings/whips are very small but are ideal for the area and could be added to at a later date.

Cllr T Philpot re-joined the meeting during this item.

NOTED

1263 **Allotments Working Party**

The Chair of the Allotment Working Party submitted a report for consideration regarding Westcott Allotment site, a copy of which appears as Appendix A

The Chair said that the allotments had been a lifesaver for people during the lockdown allowing plot holders to grow sustainable food, lessened isolation and loneliness whilst also providing exercise, the result being that the parish had seen waiting lists increase.

The Chair said that fencing is required at Westcott due to deer accessing the site causing damage to allotments.

The Specification for galvanised palisade fence, quotes had been obtained from three suppliers to erect the fence as detailed below. Quotes include removal and disposal of the old fence and all metal work will be recycled.

Quote 1	Quote 2	Quote 3
£12,587	£14,196	£10,545

Recommendations

3.1 That Quote 3 for £10,545 as detailed in 2.3 of the report be accepted if the same standard is to be maintained.

These works to be funded from the CIL receipts held (£103,162 at the date of the report).

3.2 A lower specification chain link fence could be installed at lower cost however, this would not be in keeping with the remaining boundary fences and would have a much shorter life span.

RESOLVED that recommendation 3.1 funded by CIL earmarked reserve be approved.

1264 Events Working Party

The Chair of the Events Working Party submitted a report regarding parish support of Arts in the Park project, a copy of which appears as Appendix B.

The Chair said that the Parish had been approached by a local photographer and music producer who had seen the recent World Wars image and artwork displayed in the Parish parks. The couple approached the Parish Council regarding the possibility of holding a series of five different themed documentary, photography exhibitions/displays followed by event days that include professionally facilitated community workshops and live performances by professional musicians to be held in the Parish Council's Parks.

The couple believe that they have the knowledge and contacts to organise such events and will be applying for Arts Council funding of up to £15,000 however part of the funding application will involve them being asked what the Parish would provide. The Parish will be providing the use of their parks and facilities; however, the couple had asked if the Parish would cover the cost of display stands similar in size to the parish parks own notice boards.

The aim is to set up the exhibitions and a live event would follow on the Saturday together with the music event, after which the stands can be taken by the Parish to be used in other parks.

The proposal is based around initially hiring the stands, or if the stands could be re-used in the future at other parks, purchasing may be the best option. To proceed with the grant application the couple need the Parish support for the reasons stated

Recommendations

That the Parish Councillors agree the following:

- 3.1. Support the Arts in the Park project in Parish Council parks from May until September in 2021.
- 3.2 Pending a successful Arts Council England funding application bid by the event organisers and greater certainty that this event will take place, support covering the cost of the 15 weatherproof frames for the event, the notional event booking charge and the cost of transporting and installing the frames through the Parish Council's in-house team.
- 3.3 Subject to Parish Council support of Point 3.2, agree to the purchasing of 15 weatherproof frames to be used for this and future events.

RESOLVED that recommendations 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 as amended be approved.

3.1	For 16	Against 0	Abstain 3
3.2	For 16	Against 0	Abstain 3
3.3	For 16	Against 0	Abstain 3

1265 GWR Working Party

The CFO said that the Chair of the GWR Working Party had given his apologies and there were no updates to be presented.

1266 In Bloom, Gardens and Wildlife Working Party

The Chair of the In Bloom, Gardens and Wildlife Working Party said that the Working Party had looked at rolling out the In-bloom idea throughout the South Swindon Parish and potentially calling it Pride in the Parish, and to encourage people to do things with their front gardens and possibly choose a street where people can be encouraged to enter a competition of best display in their front garden. The objective is to raise the profile of the Britain in Bloom idea so that it could be rolled out throughout the Parish and it is hoped that people will talk about what parts of their areas they would like to be

rewilded. If we want to encourage pollinating insects' bees etc. we need to provide food for them which is currently found in grassed areas, however in those areas the grass is regularly cut short meaning there is no food available, therefore we are looking at areas where the parishioners would be agreeable to have less regular grass cutting, a map could be created and any suggested areas could be left longer before cutting, possibly being cut twice a year.

We hope that the Wildlife path from Cambria Bridge to Shaftesbury Lake will be ready and open by the Spring when all Councillors will have an opportunity to see and walk it. It will have good signage and an app for phones which will take the user along the route.

Councillors discussed signage, newsletters, and wildflower border schemes along kerbsides that other towns and cities had started, and which could be duplicated across the Parish.

NOTED

The meeting closed at 20.11pm

Signed.....

Date.....

Chair of the Council