

SOUTH SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL
(CENTRAL SWINDON SOUTH PARISH COUNCIL)

COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2021 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 J Firmin
Cllr M Gladman
Cllr D Griffiths
Cllr E Heavens
Cllr P Herring
Cllr N Hopkins
Cllr W Horley
Cllr S James
Cllr L Kasmaty
Cllr J Miah
Cllr M J Miah
Cllr J Milner-Barry
Cllr S Pajak
Cllr M Strinkovsky
Cllr N Watts
- Officers** Rob Core Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Jake Mee Chief Finance Officer (CFO)
Matt Bradley Communications and Events Manager (CEM)
Theresa Gordon Planning & Agenda Clerk
- Public** Two
- Public Session** Three written questions were received to which a written response would be provided and appended, a copy of which appears as Appendix A in the Minute Book.
- 1300** **Apologies**
Cllr T Philpot
- Not Present**
Cllr A Hamid
- 1301** **Declarations of Interest & Applications for Dispensation**
None

Standing orders were suspended to receive a presentation from Wiltshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Angus Macpherson.
- 1302** **Wiltshire Police and Crime Commissioner – Precept Presentation**
The Wiltshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Angus Macpherson gave a presentation regarding the Precept.

Cllr E Heavens and Cllr S Ahmed joined the meeting during this item.

The Commissioner gave a presentation and said that his role is primarily to hold the Chief Constable and Force to account for what is done with the Precept income.

The Commissioner said that a new rural crime team had been established and the target to recruit an additional 65 police officers in Wiltshire by March 2021, is on track, and

further investment had been made to the Digital Investigations and Intelligence Unit to counter cyber-crime.

Last month, the Government announced that it would deliver 6,000 new officers in 2021/22 nationally, as part of its plan to increase officer numbers by 20,000. The Government also announced that the policing element of the council tax for 2021/22 can be raised in April 2021 by 6.9% to help fund the increase in officers. The commissioner is asking all residents to support the £15 yearly increase which equates to an extra £1.25 a month and said that even with the increase, it is a lower precept contribution than any other Force in the South West.

The increase involves supporting the recruitment of 46 additional officers for Wiltshire in 2021/22 with further investment of officers to the frontline, bolstering the community policing teams, use of community intelligence to target issues of vulnerability, tackling highest harm offences and the maintenance of other essential services and continuing the delivery of service the public demand from their local police force.

There is a consultation survey which the public can have their say on www.wiltshire-pcc.gov.uk the survey ends on Tuesday 2nd February and the Commissioner will go before the Police and Crime Panel afterwards and report on the results of the survey with the hope that the results will be supportive of the increase.

Standing orders were reinstated.

1303 **Chair's Report**

I would like to take the opportunity to wish all Parish Councillors and staff a very happy New Year in what proves to be the Parish Council's busiest yet, with 40 different projects currently in progress.

Budget

It is the time of year again where the Parish Council needs to set its budget and precept. We will be discussing the budget later in the meeting, but I thought it worth thinking back to where the Parish Council was four years ago when we were first established. Play Areas were on the cusp of closing due to lack of maintenance, our parks kept going thanks to the dedication of the gardeners but not seeing any real investment for over a decade, Old Town Library set to close, Park Library running a minimal service and our grounds maintenance staff working at the Borough who were disheartened due to a lack of investment in the service.

Move forward to 2021 and things look a lot different in our Parish. We have refurbished half the play areas inside our Parish; our parks have been invested in with our gardeners energised; prior to last March; Old Town Library had increase book loans by over 400% and Park Library was open at times when adults and children need them open; and our grounds maintenance and street cleaning team have a renewed energy following investment by the Parish Council.

All these improvements and the further improvements to come this year will be done at a precept level significantly below some Parish Councils in Swindon and others in Wiltshire.

Parish Councillors can be proud that thanks to the decisions we have made the Parish Council delivers an excellent service for our parishioners and judging by the positive comments we have received over the last year, residents are taking notice.

County Ground Open Space

Parish Council Officers have been working on 40 different projects, but I wanted to touch on one project that has made a real difference to some of our parishioners that took place earlier this month.

At the beginning of January work started to improve the County Ground Open Space. This area had been left for many years becoming a hub for drug taking and littering. The pond, which is the responsibility of Thames Water to maintain, was in dire need of

improvement- with dumped shopping trolleys and rubbish making it an eyesore for the community.

The Parish Council had already installed new bins and arranged a litter pick to deal with litter last year. This was followed up with work this month to open the area with shrubbery cut back along the footpath and pond area of the County Ground Open Space. Our Parish grounds team then went over and above, with a total of 6 shopping trolleys, a tyre and a bin being pulled out of the lake.

Thanks to work from the Parish Council further improvements have followed. The probation service has offered their services for regular litter picking in the area and they have donated 4 bird boxes for local wildlife.

On top of this, Thames Water, who had left the lake an eyesore for many years have now said they are investigating making improvements to the pond later this year following the Parish Council's excellent improvements.

This is yet another example of the power the Parish Council can have on people's quality of life and I would like to congratulate our grounds team for the great work they have done in this open space.

Thanks

As I do with all my Chair's Reports, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Chief Executive Officer, Chief Finance Officer, and wider Parish Team for their dedication in delivering the very best service for our parishioners during challenging times.

1304 Minutes of the Full Council Meeting – 15 December 2020

RESOLVED To confirm as a true record the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 15 December 2020 approved as a correct record.

1305 Minutes of the Leisure and Amenities Meeting – 12 January 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Leisure and Amenities meeting held on 12 January 2021 be approved as a correct record.

1306 Planning Applications delegated to the Chair & Vice-Chair

The Chair submitted a report containing the delegated responses of the chair and Vice Chair, a copy of which appears as Appendix B in the Minute Book.

RESOLVED that the responses of the Chair and Vice Chair be approved.

1307 Planning Decisions

The Deputy Clerk submitted for information a report containing the decisions made by Swindon Borough Council, a copy of which appears as Appendix C in the Minute Book.

NOTED

1308 Future Development of Town Gardens Bowl and Queens Park Hothouse

The Chief Executive Officer submitted a report regarding future redevelopment opportunities of the Town Gardens Bowl and Queens Park Hothouse, a copy of which appears as Appendix D in the Minute Book.

The CEO said the detailed report provided the main points of information and a briefing regarding the Hothouse and Town Gardens Bowl had been held for Councillors. The Council recognised the need for expertise in managing the sites, and said that they cannot be left, as they are deteriorating rapidly. The feasibility studies give an indication of where the parish would like to be in 5 years' time demonstrating the opportunities to draw an income, and any profit would be re-invested into both parks.

Cllr Pajak said it would have a lot of support and it should be ensured that the consultation is widely seen. He also asked if grants would be part of the recommendation. The CEO said consultation will be widely advertised and pursuing grants would be part of a professional management contract.

Cllr. Horley questioned the car park shown on the plans for Town Gardens and asked if there are sustainable alternatives. The CEO said that the car parking is not part of the wider project and other parking options would be explored.

Cllr. Horley asked what the financial implication of the building works would be. The CEO said it is not in the current budget, and the CFO confirmed that there are other options of financing the projects, but studies are required to find out what that costs would be.

Cllr. Horley asked if the town garden café notice was linked to the redevelopment plans or were 3-year contracts being introduced for all parish cafes. The CEO said that the café is unrelated to the projects and there had been no lease agreement with the café tenant therefore it was appropriate to put the café out to tender.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1** Through a vetting process appoint a specialist contract management agent to support the procurement of the services the Parish Council needs to deliver these heritage-based developments as outlined in Point 2.4 of the report.
- 3.2** Instigate a Public Consultation on the Parish Council's plans to redevelop the Town Gardens Bowl and Queens Park Hothouse and associated costs. The outcome of this consultation will be brought back to the Full Parish Meeting on the 23rd of February for final decision.
- 3.3** Direct the specialist contract management agent to deliver on the council's behalf the refurbishment of the Queens Park Hothouse and Town Gardens Bowl.

RESOLVED that recommendations 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 be approved.

1309 Parish Website

The Communications and Events Manager submitted a report regarding the development of a new Parish Website Platform, a copy of which appears as Appendix E in the Minute Book.

The CEM said that the details are as tabled in the report but wanted to make councillors aware that the guidelines regarding accessibility of public sector websites requires the parish council to make that change of web platform, at the moment the current web platform does not have the ability to comply with the government guidelines regarding accessibility so this change will ensure we comply with the government guidelines.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1** To agree contract Company 3 for the development and ongoing support for a new Parish Council website based on their quote above.
- 4.2** Support Parish Officers view to retain the distinctive Broadgreen Community Centre website despite its web accessibility limitations, rather than incorporate the community centre's webpage into the main Parish Website.

RESOLVED that recommendations 4.1 and 4.2 be approved.

1310 Queens Parks Public Spaces Protection Order

The Chief Executive Officer submitted a report regarding work to build a case for a Public Spaces Protection Order at Queens Park, a copy of which appears as Appendix F in the Minute Book.

The CEO said that a PSPO for Broadgreen and Spring Gardens, had been sought by Wiltshire Police, this indicated that the street drinkers would move to a new area, such as Queen's Park which already had an historic problem with street drinking, the CEO said that it is now time to evidence the problem and attain a PSPO for Queen's Park.

No evidence had been gathered to date and evidence is necessary in order to apply for a PSPO from the Magistrates, therefore we would like to send a survey to every household

on the access routes to Queens Park asking if they have evidence of street drinking and/or antisocial behaviour in the park. The surveys would be hand delivered by Broadgreen Community Centre staff and the most effective way of getting responses would be to supply pre-paid return envelopes.

An online survey will be offered via Survey Monkey and advertised via social media, the parish website and notice boards in order to obtain responses from the residents of Swindon.

The Park Gardeners are using an incidence log to record any issues experienced in the park. This will be an ongoing requirement and where possible, gathering evidence of street drinking and including litter around the park and in the bins.

The results of the survey and evidence gathered by the Gardeners will be collated and presented to Wiltshire Police for the application for a PSPO.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1** That a survey is sent to households that are on the access roads to Queens Park to gather responses to the issues in the park
- 3.2** That £225 be spent on pre-paid envelopes for the paper responses
- 3.3** That an application be submitted to the Magistrates for a PSPO for Queens Park once evidence has been gathered to support such an application

RESOLVED that items 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 be approved.

1311

South Swindon Parish Council Budget 2021-22

To consider a report from the Chief Finance Officer regarding the budget for 2021-22, a copy of which appears as Appendix G in the Minute Book.

The CFO said that the budget had been reviewed and recommended by the Finance and Staffing Committee.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1** That the draft budget for 2021/22 is approved as detailed in this report.
- 3.2** That the Precept for 2021/22 be set at £2,567,193
- 3.3** That the shortfall in General Reserve be approved as sufficient and reviewed once the final accounts are known at year end.

RESOLVED that recommendations 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 be approved.

The meeting closed at 8:05pm

Signed.....

Date.....

Chair of the Council