

**SOUTH SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL**  
(CENTRAL SWINDON SOUTH PARISH COUNCIL)

**COUNCIL MEETING**

Minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2021 at 7.15pm  
at a VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING

- Present** Cllr C Watts Chair  
Cllr S Ahmed  
Cllr J Ali  
Cllr S Allsopp  
Cllr V Ayris  
Cllr J Firmin  
Cllr D Griffiths  
Cllr E Heavens  
Cllr P Herring  
Cllr N Hopkins  
Cllr W Horley  
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)  
Patrick Victory Allotments Officer  
Oliver Saunders Projects Officer  
Theresa Gordon Planning & Agenda Clerk
- Public** Nine
- Public Session** There were numerous questions which were responded to en-bloc by the Chief Finance Officer and Communications and Events Manager, a copy of which is appended to the minutes.
- 1331** **Apologies**  
Cllr J Howarth  
Cllr S James  
Cllr M Gladman  
Cllr J Firmin
- 1332** **Declarations of Interest & Applications for Dispensation**  
Councillors J Ali and N Hopkins declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 16 as both are members of the Rotary Club Swindon.
- 1334** **Chair's Report**  
I start this meeting's Chair's Report on a sombre note. Today marks one year since the start of the Covid national lockdown. At 8pm a national vigil is being held and I would like to propose that at that time we hold our own minute of reflection for those that have passed away or families who have lost loved ones due to Covid 19.  
I am also saddened to report that the Parish Council's former videographer, Flicky Harrison, has passed away suddenly. Flicky was working with the Parish up until January this year but was diagnosed with stomach cancer and her illness spread quickly and she sadly passed away last week. Flicky did some great work for the Parish with regards to the Town Gardens gates and other Parish projects and she will be missed by all who

knew her. A post was recently put up on the Parish Council's Facebook page expressing our condolences to her friends and family for their loss.

The Parish Council continues to be operating at a fast pace with our larger projects like the Green Corridor Walking Trail and rewilding projects progressing well. With the spring upon us our grounds team are now moving their focus away from maintenance projects and on to grass cutting.

I will not repeat what is already on tonight's agenda, but here is an update on projects which have either been completed or nearing completion.

### **East Wichel Park Improvements**

Councillors will remember the recent refurbishment of East Wichel Play Area last year. This has been followed by a new Tiny Forest being planted in the park. A Tiny Forest is made up of 600 densely packed native trees in a space the size of a tennis court. They are capable of attracting over 500 animal and plant species within the first 3 years.

To go alongside the Tiny Forest the Parish Council has also created a new stone circle feature, using sarsen stones we have collected from other sites across the Parish. And over the next few days the Parish Council is planting a further 420 tree saplings in the park.

### **Queens Park**

We have a number of projects being discussed in today's meeting relating to Queens Park, however the most visible change has been the removal of the duckweed in the park's pond. When we took on the park we inherited the duckweed in the pond and after many attempts to clear it by our gardeners, we have managed to remove it. Thanks, should be passed on to our Parish Service Officers and gardeners who have done a great job in removing the eyesore. We now need to keep on top of its removal and are working with an aquatics company to keep it at bay.

### **Allotments Improvements**

I know Parish Councillors are very proud of the investment we have made in our allotments. We have recently improved the tracks around Broome Manor and Glenwood Allotments and have installed a new perimeter fence for Westcott Allotments, to secure the site from local wildlife keen to eat allotments holders' vegetables. On top of the investment in our allotments, we are proud to have one of lowest allotment charges for our Parishioners in Swindon- delivering great value for money for our allotment holders.

We are currently working to secure more allotment sites so more of our Parishioners can benefit from our excellent allotment service.

### **Swindon Road Pocket Garden**

Work to refurbish this piece of Swindon's heritage is almost complete. The Parish Council has completed the planting in the beds; the garden's benches have been refurbished and we have improved the brickwork after it had fallen into disrepair. New railings and a jet wash are still to come and that is likely to be completed this week.

### **Bin Installations**

Since my last Chair's report, the Parish Council has continued with more bin installations. 6 new bins have been added including at:

- The Huntley Close Play Area
- The Old Town Rail Line
- The Buckhurst Field Skate Park
- Farriers Close Play Area
- And two bins at the Croft Mountain Bike Trail Car Park

In this round of bin installations, we have been able to reuse some of the smaller bins which were too small where they were before and have been better located.

### **Thanks**

The Chair said that as with all his Chair's Reports, he 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.

Cllr E Heavens said that Councillor Brian Mattock who had passed away had not been mentioned by the Chair. The Chair apologised to Cllr Heavens and said that a message of condolence to Councillor Mattock's friends and family had been posted on the Parish Council's Facebook page and that he had personally found Councillor Mattock to be very approachable. He added Councillor Mattock would be sorely missed.

Standing Orders were re-instated.

**1335 Minutes of the Finance & Staffing Meeting – 26 January 2021**

**RESOLVED** That the minutes of the Finance and Staffing meeting held on 26 January 2021 be approved as a correct record.

**1336 Minutes of the Full Council Meeting – 26 January 2021**

**RESOLVED** That the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 26 January 2021 be approved as a true record.

**1337 Minutes of the Leisure & Amenities Meeting – 2 March 2021**

**RESOLVED** That the minutes of the Leisure and Amenities meeting held 2 March 2021 be approved as a correct record.

**1338 Planning Application to be examined.**

The Chair submitted a report regarding application S/OUT/21/0181, a copy of which appears as Appendix A in the Minute Book.

- |               |   |   |
|---------------|---|---|
| <b>1338.1</b> | S/OUT/21/0181<br>Land at Newburn Sidings<br>Swindon | Outline application for up to 368no. dwellings and 370 sqm of uses falling within Class E with associated parking, landscaping, and associated works – Access not reserved. |
|---------------|---|---|

The Chair of the Planning committee said there had been a lot of objections to the application hence being brought to the meeting and the Vice Chair asked Councillors to email any further comments.

**NOTED**

**1339 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.

**1340 Planning Decisions**

The Chief Finance Officer 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**

**1341 Historic Assets Project**

The Chief Finance Officer provided a verbal update on the future redevelopment opportunities for the Town Gardens Bowl and Queens Park Hothouse.

The CFO said that the Council had resolved to appoint a professional contractor to define the scope of work required to take forward the regeneration of Town Gardens Bowl and to look into the refurbishment of Queens Park Hothouse. Quotes from professional contractors and surveyors had been received but the scope of the project had not been defined enough for them to provide a clear quote, therefore regarding the Bowl, the Parish Council will develop a project brief which will provide a defined scope of what the Parish want to achieve with the Town Gardens Bowl regeneration project and bring back to Full Council to be re-tendered. Regarding Queens Park Hot House, The Council are unsure of how they want to proceed due to the condition of the property therefore have commissioned a structural survey by an engineer and are awaiting quotes. When the survey has been completed the Council will decide how to proceed with the structure and

the outcome will be brought to a future meeting. Neither of the projects are as initially expected and wanted to be realised but it is important that we take our time on both projects.

**NOTED**

**1342 Notice Board Policy**

The Communications and Events Manager submitted a report regarding a new policy on Parish notice boards, a copy of which appears as Appendix D in the Minute Book

The CEM said that the report was as tabled.

**RESOLVED** that the notice board policy be adopted.

**1343 Remedial works at Queens Park**

The Projects Officer submitted a report regarding remedial work to be done at Queens Park, a copy of which appears as Appendix E in the Minute Book.

The Projects Officer said that there are three parts to the project which required decisions.

The Projects Officer said that the first part of the project as shown in the report is for brickwork only, and recommended Contractor 3.

Councillor Pajak asked if the gates would be refurbished at the same time. The Clerk said that they would need to be sandblasted at an approximate cost of £2,000 followed by repairs and re-installation carried out by the Parish in-house officers.

**Part 1**

Rebuild of walls at Durham Street Entrance.

Contractor	Total Price £(+Vat)
1.	£19,750
2.	£35,460
3.	£18,820
4.	£20,750

**RESOLVED** that the recommendation of contractor 3 be approved.

The Projects Officer said that the second part of the project as shown in the report is that there are steps excluding access for anyone in a Wheelchair to the memorial garden entrance and proposed that a new concrete ramp with new railings be built in the centre of the steps with brick edging and the existing steps be rebuilt along with remedials to the patio areas and recommended Contractor 1 for the Ramp and the ornate railings option for the railings.

Cllr Pajak said that the wall at Groundwell Road had a feature window with a missing capstone and asked if it can be replaced at the same time, to ensure that the feature remains. The Clerk said that it could be refurbished at the same time as the railings.

**Part 2**

New Disability Ramp in Memorial Garden Entrance (Ramp Only).

Contractor	Total Price £(+Vat)
1.	£3,920
2.	£11,045
3.	£10,400
4.	£4,200

Additional Railings – Required for Health & Safety

Railings Type	Total Price £(+Vat)
Basic Key Clamp	£1,040 (Best price received from 4 quotes)
Seamless Tubular	£1,950
Steels painted black	

Ornated Wrought      £3,576  
Iron – option in  
black

**RESOLVED** that the recommendation of contractor 1 for the ramp and additional option of ornate wrought Iron railings in black be approved.

The Projects Officer said that the third part of the project as shown in the report is to improve access to the Secret Garden it has 2 ramps and key clamp railings the risers are railway sleepers which are rotting and the compacted path surface and are looking to rebuild the ramp in concrete, install new side railings and improve the link path that crosses at this point of the park and make the rear part of the park more accessible and recommended contractor 1 for the ramps, paths and seamless tubular railings painted black.

**Part 3 New Path Surfaces and Disability Ramps in the Secret Garden.**

Ramps and Path only

Contractor	Total Price £(+Vat)
1.	£5,210
2.	£12,435
3.	£5,910
4.	£9,400

Railings Type	Total Price £(+Vat)
Re-use existing key clamp railings as shown in report	£190.00
Seamless Tubular steel painted black – 1 side only	£3,150
Ornated Wrought Iron option in black	£5,975

**RESOLVED** that the recommendation of contractor 1 and seamless tubular railings painted black on one side only be approved.

**1344      Meeting Schedules 2021/22**

The Chair of the Council submitted a meeting schedule for 2021/22, a copy of which appears as Appendix F in the Minute Book

Cllr Allsopp noted that the Leisure and Amenities meeting would be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May 2021 when local elections would be taking place. The Chair of the L&A committee agreed that May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021 would be a preferred date.

**RESOLVED** that the meetings schedule for 2021/22 with amendment be approved.

**1345      Internal Audit – Quarter 3 2020/21**

The Chief Finance Officer submitted a report from the Internal Auditor, a copy of which appears as Appendix G in the Minute Book

The CFO said that it had been a difficult audit due to Covid-19 and three-quarter audits had been done remotely. It had been difficult but with accurate filing of minutes and the new Finance assistant gathering all the required information together. The CFO said he was pleased with the report and everything is up to date. The CFO had reviewed the recommendations and 1&5 are regarding re-adopting the standing orders and financial regulations, the investment strategy and in-line with the latest NALC model documents all the documents will be updated for the May 2021 Full Council meeting. We had previously had recommendation 2 regarding a fidelity guarantee with the Council ensuring itself that monies are safe and secure. It was previously agreed that the insurance premium had required it to be updated to the premium level, but it was with earlier insurers. The current process is safety checked throughout and the CFO would be happy to bring a recommendation for consideration to a future meeting when quotes

are received from the current insurers. A review of recommendations 3&4 are regarding very small unpaid ledger items regarding Broadgreen which is in progress and the Allotments which had since all been paid and are now up to date.

The Chair gave thanks to all officers involved.

## NOTED

1346

### Events Booking Charges

The Communications and Events Manager submitted a report regarding events booking charges, a copy of which appears as Appendix H in the Minute Book

The CEM said that the report is as tabled with recommendation.

#### 4 Recommendation

**4.1** The Parish Council agree the following Events Charge Policy for the 2021/22 financial year

**4.2** The Parish agree that a maximum of 12 events will be permitted in the Town Gardens Bowl per year

Site	Charge
Town Gardens Bowl 0-499 people	£750
Town Gardens Bowl 500+	£1,500
Section of Town Gardens (interest largely comes from around the Bandstand area)	£500
Commercial Photography/Videography	£100
GWR Park per day	£750
Queens Park	£500
Section of Open Space in the Parks for Private Business or Charitable Groups Outside of the Parish (day rate, not hourly)	£60
Section of Open Space in the Parks for Private Business or Charitable Groups Outside of the Parish (for one hour)	£30
Section of Open Space in the Park for registered charities inside of the Parish	£0
Community Charge for Town Gardens & Bowl, GWR Park & Queens Park up to 1000 people. Requirement: It must be free entry with unrestricted access and the organisation running this event must be not for profit and located within the borough.	£300
Set-Up/Down Costs per day	25% of usual day rate
Boot Camp/Personal Trainer Season Tickets	£60 per month

**Returnable Deposit for Events:** £1000

**Multi-Day Bookings:** Discounts may be negotiated for multi-day event bookings.

**Payment Terms:** A booking will not be confirmed until payment is provided.

**Cancellation Policy:** The charge will not be returned for cancellations within 6 weeks of the date of the booking.

**RESOLVED** that recommendations 4.1 and 4.2 be approved.

1347

### Town Gardens Café Lease

The Chief Financial Officer submitted a report regarding the Town Gardens Café lease, a copy of which appears as Appendix I in the Minute Book.

The CFO said that the report was as tabled however there had been significant interest in the Town Gardens café prior to Covid-19. If at any point any of those had been a legitimate interest expressed to the Council we would have had to look at the current situation which we agreed to do at a later date. The Parish Council had given some financial support to the current tenant and were to review the lease - which was a tenancy at will - after inheriting it from the Borough Council which meant that the tenant

could give no notice as could the Parish therefore a document which went to tender in which the current tenant did not participate. 7 went to tender, 2 failed the compliance submission and 5 proceeded to stage 2 and were scored and weighted based on the bid document and reviewed by the assets working party who agreed the scoring on quality and price and as submitted in the tender scoring analysis tender 3 came out on top and had been a viable tender.

**3. Recommendation**

- 3.1** To award an initial three-year lease to Tender 3 as per 2.6 and to draft a lease with the Council's solicitors.
- 3.2** To revise the initial lease commencement date from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021 to 6<sup>th</sup> April 2021 subject to the completion of Parish Council funded refurbishment works.
- 3.3** To place on record a thank you from the Parish Council to Carol watts for many years of service in running the café and her contribution to the community.

**RESOLVED** that recommendations 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 be approved.

**1348 Use Town Gardens Café**

The Communications and Events Manager submitted a report regarding the use of the Town Gardens Café over the forthcoming bank holiday weekend, a copy of which appears as Appendix J in the Minute Book.

The CEM said that the event as shown in the report would be an opportunity for the Parish Council to raise money for charity before the new tenants started and gave thanks to Swindon Old Town Rotary for their interest and with Parish Council support they will have use of the Kiosk for Easter Weekend.

**3. Recommendation**

- 3.1** Subject to compliance with health and safety requirements and on the basis that this is a charitable fundraiser run by volunteers, Parish Councillors are recommended to agree to Old Town Rotary's free use of the Town Gardens Café Kiosk over the Easter Bank Holiday Weekend (2<sup>nd</sup> April to 5<sup>th</sup> April)

**RESOLVED** that recommendation 3.1 be approved.

**1349 Emergency Delegated Decisions**

The Chief Finance Officer submitted a copy of decisions made by the Chair and Vice Chair of the Parish Council to be noted, a copy of which appears as Appendix K in the Minute Book.

**NOTED**

**1350 Fly Tipping**

The Chief Executive Officer gave a verbal report regarding fly tipping in the Central South Swindon Parish areas.

The CEO said that there had been some confusion regarding what the Parish Council are responsible for in terms of fly tipping. The Parish Council had recently taken the services over from the Borough Council and know that many areas within the Parish are suffering continual fly tipping problems. Under the Deed of Services, the Parish Council are responsible for clearance of fly tipping, grass cutting and litter picking on behalf of the Borough Council, as the Parish do not own the public highway. The deed states that where it is reasonably practical for the Parish Council to remove fly tipping it will do so but when fly tipping removal is beyond their capability we advise to contact the Borough Council, who log the incident and remove it without charge. The Borough also retains responsibility for enforcement action. What is reasonably practical for the Parish is two staff in a vehicle who can load safely using manual handling, but they do not pick up hazardous materials. If the Parish can locate evidence of who has tipped it is photographed, logged, and sent to Swindon Borough Council for them to progress.

The Council Chair said that reporting to DEFRA lies with Swindon Borough Council and there is a problem with their call logging. The Chair had asked the CEO to report back to Swindon Borough Council to ensure they understand their responsibilities regarding

reporting. The Parish Council do not have the authority to report to DEFRA and cannot enforce/prosecute as that obligation lies with Swindon Borough Council. The Parish provide a report for DEFRA which is sent directly to Swindon Borough Council, to collate and progress.

The CEO said that he had spoken to the head of waste collections and enforcement who understand it is their job to report yearly to DEFRA and that the Parish only provide the information and the CEO will ask for that statement in writing.

The CEO said that the public should report in the first instance via Swindon Borough Council website as appropriate and those reports are forwarded to the Parish Council who are responsible for clearing public highways within the Parish, including alleyways up to the curtilage of private properties.

**NOTED**

**1351 Shrivenham Road Allotments Fencing**

The Allotment Officer submitted a report regarding an amendment to previously approved fencing improvements at Shrivenham Road allotments, a copy of which appears as Appendix L in the Minute Book.

The Allotment Officer said that the fencing is being replaced due to its poor condition and security risk. Cllr Allsopp asked when the fence would be installed and would any hedgerows be disturbed due to birds nesting March to Sept. The Allotments Officer confirmed that the work would not disturb any of the hedgerows.

Quote 1	£11,680.00
Quote 2	£9,876.00
Quote 3	£9,850.00

**3. Recommendation**

**3.1** That Quote 3 for £9,850.00 as detailed in 2.3 be accepted and funded by CIL (current reserve £76,355)

**RESOLVED** that recommendation 3.1 and payment of £9,850.00, funded by CIL be approved.

The meeting closed at 20:39pm

Signed.....

Date.....

Chair of the Council

## Appendix – Responses to public questions

The Chief Finance Officer responded to questions regarding the Town Gardens Café

- Q How is the rent to be realised comparing to the current rental.
- A The top scoring tender submitted business plans with comprehensive answers and market research to show that their plans were deliverable.
- Q What is the Parish Council spending to put the café in a good state of repair?
- A The Parish Council commissioned repairs to the external of fabric of the building including replacing all the rotten wood panels and framing along with decoration, and that will be done after the Bank Holiday weekend.
- Q How are services going to be improved given 2 tenders have achieved near perfect quality scores.
- A The tender scoring prioritised intended usage opening hours of the café, use of local suppliers, menu selection including allergies and dietary requirements relevant experience in the social and environmental benefit.
- Q Regarding how close the top 2 tenders were, and no rental volumetric data was made available to bidders how can we guarantee a risk of not being able to deliver, I assume is the question here on this tender.
- A the scoring for the price based on tenders was strict math with no room for interpretation bidders were asked to submit what they thought was viable and were scored appropriately the working party assessed all bids received were financially viable based on knowledge of current rental and operation of the café, for instance no bid would have been accepted with a rental offer of £100,000 because we know that is not viable some bidders conducted their own surveys of footfall and business within the park and submitted their business case based on that.

The CEM answered questions regarding the Swindon Summer Bowl and why the Parish had not taken a booking from them and would answer Mr & Mrs Sweetings questions as it would also answer other questions posed.

The CEM said that the Parish Council had numerous discussions with Fandangos to block book the Town Gardens Bowl at a much-reduced rate than what is the Parish Council's current charge for the bowl it is also significantly below the proposed charge for the bowl in 2021-22 to be discussed later in this meeting. The Parish Council event's working party considered Fandango's proposal and declined their offer as it would reduce the value of the offering to other potential renters and the proposed block booking would have meant that their equipment would have been left in the bowl, prohibiting any other bookings taking place during the four-week period that Fandangos had proposed to use the bowl. As the Events working party did not support this booking their proposal was not included on this meeting's agenda. Whilst we thank Fandangos for their events last summer during the height of lockdown, no assurances were given that this could be repeated this summer and as early as the end of last year I as Events Manager for the Parish Council had explained to Fandangos that a similar type of event model as last years would not likely be supported by the Parish Council again. There has not to my knowledge been an application to increase the use of the bowl prior to the Parish Council taking on the Town Gardens Swindon Borough Council had set a limit of 9 events in the bowl. Later in this meeting a proposal has been made to set a limit of 12 events per year in the bowl at present we have 1 small ongoing booking for the bowl, 2 event bookings and 1 strong expression of interest we have also had other organisations contact the Parish Council to consider booking the venue. I would encourage all organisations interested in using the bowl to contact myself as the Parish Councils Events Manager and I will be able to take you through the Parish Councils charge for your booking and other booking requirements. The bowl is available based on the charging policy the Parish have set.