

SOUTH SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL
(CENTRAL SWINDON SOUTH PARISH COUNCIL)

FULL COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2021 at 6.30pm
at the Marriot Hotel, Pipers Way Swindon SN3 1SH

- Present** Cllr C Watts (Chair) Cllr W Horley
Cllr S Ahmed Cllr S James
Cllr J Ali Cllr L Kasmaty
Cllr S Allsopp Cllr M J Miah
Cllr V Ayriss Cllr S Pajak
Cllr J Firmin Cllr T Philpot
Cllr D Griffiths Cllr N Watts
Cllr N Hopkins
- Officers** Rob Core Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Jake Mee Chief Finance Officer (CFO)
Matt Leather Communications and Events Manager (CEM)
Theresa Gordon Planning & Agenda Clerk
- Public** One
- Public Session** There were questions from members of the public which were responded to en-bloc by the Chief Executive Officer, a copy of which is appended to the Minutes.
- 1420** **Apologies**
Cllr M Gladman
Cllr A Hamid
Cllr E Heavens
Cllr P Herring
Cllr J Howarth
Cllr J Miah
Cllr J Milner-Barry
Cllr M Strinkovsky
- 1421** **Declaration of Interest & Applications for Dispensation**
None
- 1422** **Wilts and Berks Canal Trust Presentation**
A presentation from Mr C Barry and Mr R Hacker of the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust was given regarding, ongoing work of the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust in the South Swindon Parish area, a copy of which is appended to the Minutes.

A history of the canal was presented alongside slides of the canal's proposed route. The presentation gave the Trust's vision and plans for future development and the benefits it could bring socially and economically to Swindon. The Trust are inviting outside bodies to be involved and inviting them to take up Trust Membership.

Councillors discussed the presentation and thanked the presenters for coming.
- 1423** **Chair's report**
The summer months start a period of rapid activity for the Parish Council on what proves to be an important period for the Parish.
Events
With Covid restrictions gradually easing, events in our parks have kicked off. Our Events Manager will be running through the events happening in our parks over the next few months, but I just wanted to put on record how pleased I am that the Parish Council has been proactive in organising and supporting events in our parks after Covid 19 decimating the events calendar last year.
Projects

South Swindon Green Trail

The Parish Council has restarted work on the South Swindon Green Trail and in particular the section that runs from Nightingale Cottage to Broome Manor Lane. Work started along this stretch earlier this year and due to adverse weather conditions our contractor has only managed to get back on site last week to complete this work. Once the resurfacing and additional stoning up of this section of the trail is completed we will be ready to get this trail formally opened.

Town Gardens Quarry Road Light

After more than 20 years of disrepair, the Parish Council has fixed the light over the Town Gardens Quarry Road gate. The light has been attached to this gate for the majority of its 120-year existence but sadly got into a state of disrepair under the previous owners of the site. This really is the cherry on top of our gate's refurbishment project, and I am delighted to see this light back on.

Cambria Bridge

Work has started on the next phase of improvements at Cambria Bridge, after we refurbished the Play Area last year. In April we supported a local initiative to create an edible community garden in the area with fruit bushes planted that will eventually be available for local residents to pick. Work has also now started to resolve the cracked surface in the Skate Park at Cambria Bridge as a result of tree roots. New raised beds and retarmacking is being completed to try to improve the surface.

Canal Walk Edible Garden

Following the success of the edible garden at Cambria Bridge a second community garden was established on the canal path near to Kingshill Road. This community garden is growing beans and courgettes and has been met with huge positivity from the local community, with residents even helping out with watering the vegetable patch. I want to go on record to thank local resident Jess Hallsall and the Chair of our In Bloom Working Party, Linda Kasmaty, for their hard work in getting these community projects off the ground. It is fantastic that we have been able to work with residents to do these community projects.

Shaftesbury Lake

The Parish Council has continued with its commitment to improve the Shaftesbury Lake area. In April we installed a new noticeboard for the area that was made by the Parish Council's maintenance officers. This was followed by a new wildlife ladder that was again built by the maintenance officers to help ducklings, goslings and cygnets who fell into the weir.

Rewilding

Since the Spring, the Parish Council has been pursuing the rewilding of 10 areas inside the Parish. Benefits to rewilding more areas of the UK include improving biodiversity and wildlife, fighting climate change (drawing down more carbon from the atmosphere) and improving our health and wellbeing with more colourful wildflowers added to our communities.

The Parish Council established the bee sign as our rewilding project logo, with logo installed on to posts in the ground in all the rewilded areas.

After a consultation with residents last year on possible areas for rewilding, the Parish Council designated 10 spaces in the South Swindon Parish for rewilding and have only done a limited number of cuts to these spaces.

We have already started to see signs of wildflowers blooming as a result of this exercise and at the end of this year we will review the results of our rewilding exercise, see how successful they have been and if they are welcomed by residents living near to them.

Allotments

The Parish Council has made huge investments in our allotment sites recently, which together with one of the cheapest charges for allotment holders who lived inside our parish, shows we deliver amazing value for money for allotment plot holders.

Investment in our allotment sites continues at a pace. The Parish Council has just completed work to erect a metal fence around the car park of Shrivenham Road Allotments to prevent fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour. And attention has now turned to the small Broome Manor Allotment site with work to improve its allotment track starting later this week. This follows track improvements to most of our allotment sites.

I would like to end this Chair's report noting the sad leaving of our Allotments Officer, Patrick Victory, who has decided to retire after two years working for the Parish Council. Patrick has done a fantastic job overseeing a transformation of our allotment sites, offering a responsive service to our plot holders. The fact our allotments have a huge waiting list is testament to the great service Patrick has been delivering on behalf of the Parish Council and I am sure all Parish Councillors would like to extend our thanks to him for his great work.

1424 Minutes of Annual Council Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on the 25th May 2021 be approved as a true record.

1425 Minutes of the Extraordinary Planning Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Meeting held on the 26th May 2021 be approved as a correct record.

1426 Emergency Delegated Decisions

The Chief Executive Officer submitted a report regarding emergency delegated decisions, a copy of which appears as appendix A in the Minute Book.

The CEO submitted a grant application which had been previously agreed by the Grants Working Party and which would normally be put in front of a Committee for approval, however as the application was time sensitive the CEO used delegated powers agreed at the Annual Council meeting on 25th May 2021 to pass the application for release of payment.

NOTED

1427 Payment Schedule May 2021

The Chief Finance Officer submitted the Payment Schedule for May 2021, a copy of which appears as Appendix B in the Minute book.

RESOLVED that the Payment Schedule for May 2021, totalling £149,950.95 be approved.

1428 Internal Audit 2020/21 – Final

The Chief Finance Officer submitted the 202/21 Final Annual Audit report, a copy of which appears as Appendix C in the Minute book.

The CFO said that all recommendations given in the last report had been acted upon and resolved with no issues found.

Thanks were given to officers for all their work.

NOTED

1429 Year End 2020/21 – Annual Governance Statement

The Chief Finance Officer submitted the 202/21 Annual Governance Statement, a copy of which appears as Appendix D in the Minute book.

The Parish Council approved Yes responses to assertions 1-8 individually and a Not Applicable response to assertion 9.

RESOLVED that the 2020/1 Year End Annual Governance Statement be approved.

1430 Year End 2020/21 – Accounting Statements

The Chief Finance Officer submitted the Year End Accounts and the Accounting Statement for 2020/21, a copy of which appears as Appendix E in the Minute book.

RESOLVED that the 2020/21 Accounting Statements be approved.

- 1431** **New arrangements for considering Code of Conduct Complaints**
New arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints now in place were considered by Councillors, a copy of which appears as Appendix F in the Minute book.

NOTED

- 1432** **Events Update**
The Communications and Events Manager gave a verbal update of 2021 Events.

The CEM gave an update on the events being held in the parks which the parish had been supporting or had organised in-house. The events programme started last weekend with “Summerscreens” and there is an upcoming “Vintage Picnic in the Park” event which had been supported with a Parish Grant. Due to lockdown restrictions the Brass bands had been unable perform but would be restarting on 25th July 2021.

Councillors discussed the events already held and future events yet to be held and said that a phenomenal amount of work had been done even through the Covid-19 challenges and gave thanks to Cllr N Hopkins the Chair of Leisure, Environment & Amenities Committee and to Matt Leather the Communications and Events Manager along with the wider teams who had supported the events taking place.

NOTED

The meeting closed at 19.20 pm.

Signed.....

Date.....

Chair of the Council