

South Swindon Parish Council

Full Council Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 17th December 2024 at 7.15pm

In the Parish Council Office, Gladstone Street, SN1 2AU

Present:

Cllr N Hopkins – Chair	Cllr S James
Cllr R Banwell-Moore – Vice-Chair	Cllr L Kasmaty
Cllr J Ali	Cllr M Le Coyte-Grinney
Cllr S Allsopp	Cllr R Leather
Cllr M Davies	Cllr G Philpot
Cllr J Firmin	Cllr T Philpot
Cllr D Griffiths	Cllr T Silberberg
Cllr P Herring	Cllr N Watts

Apologies:

Cllr S Ahmed	Cllr J Miah
Cllr D Dias	Cllr J Pereira
Cllr J Howarth	

Absent:

Cllr A Hamid	Cllr D Vales
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Officers:

Jake Mee	CEO
Max Tanner	Committee Officer
Magdalena Kunda	Finance Manager

Public:

1

Public Questions:

Question I have noticed the installation of roadside signs stating 'Welcome to South Swindon Parish'. I would appreciate your view on what is the purpose of the signs, who is intended to benefit from them, and what benefit is intended to be derived from them.

Answer The cost of the signs was £13,362 for six signs at vehicular entry points to the Parish. The signage was commissioned to showcase the achievements of South Swindon Parish Council in the In Bloom competition as well as to increase the levels of community identity for those within the parish. The signs are comparable to other cities such as Bath and Torquay who also have signs to commemorate their successes in the In Bloom competition as well as other parishes in Swindon such as Haydon Wick. The commissioning of the signs had no financial impact on the operations of the parish council as the council were still able to complete all planned projects.

Gateway signs at parish entry points can offer several important benefits:

1. Enhanced Community Identity - They help define the geographic boundaries of the parish and create a distinct sense of place, making residents feel more connected to their community.
2. Traffic Calming - Gateway signs often serve as visual cues to drivers that they're entering a residential or community area, naturally encouraging slower speeds and more careful driving.
3. Improved Navigation - They help visitors and emergency services clearly identify when they've entered the parish boundaries, making navigation more straightforward.
4. Community Pride - Well-designed gateway signs can enhance the aesthetic appeal of entry points and foster a sense of pride among residents.
5. Local Character - They can showcase unique parish characteristics,

- historical significance, or local heritage through design elements.
6. Tourism and Economic Benefits - Attractive gateway signs can help create a positive first impression for visitors, potentially encouraging tourism and local business activity.

2425 - 191

Apologies

The committee accepted apologies from Cllr Saleh Ahmed, Cllr Domingos Dias, Cllr Janine Howarth, Cllr Jamal Miah, Cllr Joseph Pereira.

2425 – 192

Declaration of interest & Applications for dispensation

None

2425 – 193

Chair's Report

Firstly I am saddened to inform you that Dr Michael Smith, a resident of South Swindon for his life of 85 years passed away at Great Western Hospital on 5th November. Dr Smith was a well-respected author, enthusiast, GWR Apprentice at Swindon Works, teacher and lecturer at Bristol University and consultant to Network Rail. Recently he helped the parish with the very difficult task of locating a locomotive wheel that could be used in Queens Park as part of the Mesothelioma memorial area. Michael travelled to Doncaster to bring back the wheel you can now see mounted on the terrace at Queens Park along with information gathered as a result of Dr Smith's extensive research into the history of the wheel.

Our 4th year of the Enchanted Gardens Light Trail has started and this is the most exciting Light Trail we have had so far in Town Gardens which started on 29th November and runs up to and including Christmas eve. This year has a new route and even more installations, with some that will be seen for the first time in this country. We are very excited to be partnering this year with the local NHS charity, Brighter Futures in a number of ways including car parking at Commonweal and sales of Light Trail merchandise and there are some new and exciting food and refreshment offerings.

We have installed Christmas trees at three sites in the Parish, here at Broadgreen, Cavendish Square and our Community Hub at Badbury Park. I was delighted to see so many residents attending the switch on ceremonies and having a great time and so many happy young faces. Santa attended them all for which we thank him.

We have a number of major projects in progress at this time including one on this agenda – the acquisition of a larger depot, and in the New Year we expect to make a submission for improvements to Town Gardens including the refurbishment of the iconic Art Deco Bowl. In addition, we have projects on-going to install solar panels and batteries on a number of Parish sites. If the proposed new depot goes ahead, and I hope it will, solar panels will be installed together with EV charging facilities to cater for expected changes in our vehicle fleet over time.

Finally, I would like formally thank all Parish Officers, staff and councillors for their hard work this year and wish them a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We will continue to work hard to deliver a safe and clean Parish as efficiently as possible and improving the environment for Parishioners that makes a significant contribution to nature in South Swindon.

2425 – 194

Minutes – Planning

The council were presented with the draft minutes for the Planning Meeting held on the 29th October 2024 for approval, a copy of which appears in the Minute Book as Appendix A.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Planning Meeting held on the 29th October 2024 are approved as a true record.

2425 – 195

Minutes – Leisure, Environment and Amenities

The Council were presented with the draft minutes for the Leisure, Environment and Amenities Meeting held on the 5th November 2024 for approval, a copy of which appears in the minute book as appendix B.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Leisure, Environment and Amenities Meeting held on the 5th November 2024 are adopted and approved as a true record.

2425 – 196

Minutes – Planning

The council were presented with the draft minutes for the Planning Meeting held on the 26th November 2024 for approval, a copy of which appears in the Minute Book as Appendix C.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Planning Meeting held on the 26th November 2024 are adopted and approved as a true record.

2425 – 197

Minutes – Leisure, Environment and Amenities

The Council were presented with the draft minutes for the Leisure, Environment and Amenities Meeting held on the 3rd December 2024 for approval, a copy of which appears in the minute book as appendix D.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Leisure, Environment and Amenities Meeting held on the 3rd December 2024 are adopted and approved as a true record.

2425 – 198

Accounts – October 2024

The CEO submitted the Accounts for October 2024, a copy of which appears in the minute book as appendix E.

RESOLVED:

To approve the Accounts for October 2024.

2425 – 199

Payment Schedule - October 2024

The CEO submitted the Payment Schedule for October 2024, a copy of which appears in the minute book as appendix F.

RESOLVED:

To approve the Payment Schedule for October 2024.

2425 – 200

Payment Schedule – November 2024

The CEO submitted the Payment Schedule for November 2024, a copy of which appears in the minute book as appendix G.

RESOLVED:

- I. To approve the Payment Schedule for November 2024.
- II. To thank the finance team for all their work which has allowed for the Parish Council to increase its operations

2425 – 201

Solar Installations

The council received a verbal report from the CEO regarding solar installations at Parish Facilities. This item would be brought back with more information at the next council meeting.

RESOLVED:

To note the contents of the report.

2425 – 202

Draft Budget 2025-26

Councillors received a written report from the CEO regarding the draft budget for 2025-26. A copy of which appears in the Minute Book as Appendix H.

Recommendations

3.1 That the draft budget for 2024/25 as detailed in the attached report is noted.

3.2 That the draft Precept demand for 2024/25 of £3,518,324 is noted

3.3 That council has considered the recommendations for councillor allowances as detailed

in the Independent Remuneration Panel Report and have chosen to set their own allowances.

3.4 That councillor allowances be increased from 2024/25 by 3.65% as per point 2.7 at £6,314 for the Chair and £1,262 for all other councillors.

RESOLVED: To approve recommendations 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4

2425 – 203 **Movement to Cloud Server**

The council received a written report from the CEO regarding potential movement to a cloud server. A copy of which appears in the Minute Book as Appendix I.

Recommendations

3.1 Migrate the council's existing physical server to a cloud-based solution with our IT Support Partner GHS Solutions.

3.2 Approve the initialisation costs of £3,360 and an annual support budget of £10,372.80

RESOLVED: To approve recommendations 3.1 and 3.2.

2425 – 204 **Parish Depot**

Councillors received a written report from the CEO regarding the Parish Depot. A copy of which appears in the Minute Book as Appendix J.

RESOLVED:

- I. To commission the CEO to begin a public consultation of a loan for the purchase of a new depot facility.
- II. To allow the CEO to appoint a project manager for the delivery of a new depot.

2425 – 205 **Response to Wichelstowe Sports Hub Consultation**

Councillors were asked to consider a response to Swindon Borough Council's consultation on a future Wichelstowe Sports Hub. A copy of which appears in the Minute Book as Appendix K.

Recommendations

3.1 To agree the proposed response to the Wichelstowe Sporting Hub consultation as detailed in Point 2.5.

RESOLVED: To approve recommendation 3.1.

2425 – 206 **Admission of Public and Press**

RESOLVED: To resolve in accordance with standing order 3(d) that 'in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded, and they be instructed to withdraw'. **Reason: Commercial Sensitivity**

2425 – 207 **Service Review**

The council received a written report from the CEO regarding the selection of a professional company to review the council's grounds maintenance and street cleaning service. A copy of which appears in the Confidential Minute Book as Appendix A.

Recommendation

3.1 Council should review the proposals against the specification and select a partner.

RESOLVED: To accept quote B at a cost of £18,000 to conduct a service review of the grounds maintenance and street cleaning service.

Meeting Closes at 20:24

Signed.....

Date.....

Chair of the Parish Council