

South Swindon Parish Council
Annual Council Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 20th May 2025 at 6.30pm
In the Parish Council Office, Gladstone Street, SN1 2AU

Present:	Cllr Neil Hopkins – Chair Cllr Meural Cardoso Cllr Mike Davies Cllr John Firmin Cllr Dave Griffiths Cllr Abdul Hamid Cllr Patrick Herring Cllr Janine Howarth Cllr Sam James	Cllr Rebecca Banwell-Moore – Vice-Chair Cllr Linda Kasmaty Cllr Joseph Pereira Cllr Graham Philpot Cllr Trish Philpot Cllr Tom Silberberg Cllr Danial Vales Cllr Nadine Watts
Apologies:	Cllr Junab Ali Cllr Steve Allsop Cllr Domingos Dias	Cllr Marianne Le Coyte-Grinney Cllr Jamal Miah
Absent:	Cllr Saleh Ahmed	
Officers:	Matt Leather Carol Clark Max Tanner	Deputy CEO Assistant Clerk Committee Officer
Public:	None	
Public Questions:	None	

- 2526 – 1** **Election of Chair for 2025/26**
Cllr N Hopkins was proposed and seconded.
- RESOLVED:** That Cllr N Hopkins be elected as Chair for the 2025/26 municipal year.
- 2526 – 2** **Election of Vice-Chair for 2025/26**
Cllr R Banwell-Moore was proposed and seconded.
- RESOLVED:** That Cllr R Banwell-Moore be elected as Vice Chair for the 2025/26 municipal year.
- 2526 – 3** **Apologies**
The committee accepted apologies from Cllr J Ali, Cllr S Allsop, Cllr D Dias, Cllr M Le Coyte-Grinney and Cllr J Miah.
- 2526 – 4** **Declaration of interest & Applications for dispensation**
Cllr N Watts, Cllr M Davies, Cllr N Hopkins, Cllr J Howarth declared a prejudicial interest for item 26 - Grants as Swindon Borough Councillors with a Swindon Borough Council grant application was discussed. These Councillors withdrew from the debate for this application.
- 2526 – 5** **Chair's Report**
One of the key things that has made a great difference in the Town Gardens is the improvements to the town gardens pond where a significant amount of planting has been done to improve the ecology of the pond to complement the refurbishment of the metal works. The plants will provide more cover for the fish from herons and a net has also been

installed to further protect the fish. That corner of the park, compared to what it was a few years ago, has just improved immeasurably with the aviary and the pond now looking really good.

Regarding the duckweed problem at Queen's Park Lake, it's an ongoing situation but the Parish Council is taking the issue very seriously. We are continuing to remove the duck weed and it's a matter of trying to reduce the nutrients in the lake. We are discouraging people from feeding bread to the ducks as this contributes to the duckweed by increasing the nutrients in the lake. There's not much we can do about the overall ecology of the lake as there is no way for the water to drain out of the lake. The gardeners are working hard to remove as much duckweed as possible.

In terms of In Bloom, I wanted to mention the judging date is the 15th of July. We have done really well in the last few years, and we need to thank councillor Kastmaty and her teams of volunteers who do so much work around the parish. We also must thank the individual community groups which have contributed to the bloom submissions, including the In Your Neighborhood submissions. I really look forward to each year because every year has been better than the last.

I'd like to mention the Buckhurst field event on Saturday. if councillors are available for any time during the day please go and join in. We have the opening of the sports pavilion and also the skate park, two really significant improvements to Buckhurst and there's still more to come. With my other hat of Deputy Mayor, I'll be opening the pavilion which will be my second public event in this position.

We've got a huge number of events going on. I'd like to thank the members of the events working party, and the staff for arranging and running these events. They're better and better every year and it's great to see the number of events we have going on. If councillors have availability the events team would welcome volunteers.

We've had our first issue of the Parish Newsletter, detailing Parish activities through Spring. I've already had comments from people that were very pleased to see it. I am already looking forward to the Summer edition which I'm sure will be just as well received.

2425 – 6

Minutes – Planning

The Council were presented with the draft minutes for the Planning Meeting held on the 29th April 2025 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 April 2025 are adopted and approved as a true record.

2526 – 7

Minutes – Full Council

The council were presented with the draft minutes for the Full Council Meeting held on the 22nd April 2025 for approval, a copy of which appears in the Minute Book as Appendix B.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on the 22nd April 2025 are approved as a true record.

2526 – 8

Payment Schedule – April 2025

The CEO submitted the Payment Schedules for April 2025, a copy of which appears in the minute book as Appendix C.

RESOLVED: That the Payment Schedule for April 2025 be approved.

2526 – 9

Year End 2024/25 – Annual Governance Statement

The CEO submitted the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25 as part of the 2024/25 Annual Return. A copy of which appears in the minute book as Appendix D.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Governance Statement, items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8 be approved.

2526 – 10 Year End 2024/25 – Accounting Statements

The CEO submitted the Accounting Statements for 2024/25 as part of the 2024/25 Annual Return. A copy of which appears in the minute book as Appendix E.

RESOLVED: That the Accounting Statements for 2024/25 as part of the 2024/25 Annual Return be approved.

2526 – 11 Review of Standing Orders

The CEO submitted a draft copy of the Standing Orders to be reviewed, a copy of which appears in the minute book as Appendix F.

RESOLVED: That the standing orders be approved and adopted.

2526 – 12 Review of Financial Regulations

The CEO submitted a copy of the Financial Regulations to be reviewed, a copy of which appears in the minute book as Appendix G.

RESOLVED: That the Financial Regulations be approved and adopted.

2526 – 13 Committee Structures 2025/26

The CEO submitted a copy of the Committee Structures and to appoint Chairs, Vice-Chairs, and members to serve on the following Committees for 2025/26. A copy of which appears in the minute book as Appendix H.

RESOLVED: That Cllr N Hopkins be elected as Chair of Finance & Staffing

RESOLVED: That Cllr R Banwell-Moore be elected as Vice Chair of Finance & Staffing

RESOLVED: That Cllr L Kasmaty be elected as Chair of Leisure, Environment & Amenities

RESOLVED: That Cllr J Firmin be elected as Vice Chair of Leisure, Environment & Amenities

RESOLVED: That Cllr P Herring be elected as Chair of Planning

RESOLVED: That Cllr S James be elected as Vice Chair of Planning

RESOLVED: To approve the nominations of Committees as it appears in the minute book as Appendix I.

2526 – 14 Terms of Reference and Delegation Scheme

The CEO submitted a copy of the draft Terms of Reference to be reviewed.

RESOLVED: To make changes of numbering to accurately represent the membership of Committees and Working Parties

RESOLVED: To create a Newsletter Working Party with 5 members which will report to the Full Council. The Terms of Reference of this Working Party are as follows:

1. To support the Officers in the drafting of the Parish Council Newsletter
2. To make proposals to Full Council for any changes to the format or frequency of the newsletter
3. To monitor the effectiveness of the Council's print and delivery arrangements for the newsletter.

RESOLVED: To approve the Terms of Reference & Delegation Scheme.

2526 – 15 Calendar of Meetings 2025-26

The CEO submitted the Calendar of Meetings for the 2025/26 year to be approved. A copy of which appears in the minute book as Appendix J.

RESOLVED: To approve the Calendar of Meetings for the 2025/26 year.

2526 – 16 Appointment of Working Parties

The CEO submitted a copy of the Appointment of Working Parties and to appoint Chairs,

Vice-Chairs, and members to serve on the Working Parties for 2025/26. A copy of which appears in the minute book as Appendix K.

RESOLVED: To appoint Cllr M Davies as Chair of the Newsletter Working Party and Cllr Hopkins, Cllr Firmin, Cllr Vales and Cllr Kasmaty as members.

RESOLVED: To approve the appointment of Working Parties, as they appear in Appendix L.

2526 – 17

Membership of Other Bodies

Cllr A Hamid leaves the room during this item.

The Deputy CEO submitted the following verbal list of Memberships of Other Bodies for the year 2025/26:

- Wiltshire Association of Local Councils
- National Association of Local Councils
- Swindon Local Council Forum
- Cooperative Councils Innovation Network

RESOLVED: To approve the list of Membership of Other Bodies.

2526 – 18

Representatives on Outside Bodies

The CEO submitted a copy of the Representatives on Outside Bodies for 2025/26. A copy of which appears in the minute book as Appendix M.

RESOLVED: To nominate Cllr S James as a representative of WALC

RESOLVED: To approve the list of Representatives on Outside Bodies.

2526 – 19

Appointment of Internal Auditor

The Chief Executive Officer submitted a report for review and appointment of the internal auditor for 2025/26, a copy of which appears in the minute book as Appendix N.

Recommendations

3.1 That the Council re-appoints Auditing Solutions Ltd as per 2.4 and the attached engagement letter to provide its Internal Audit service for 2025/26.

RESOLVED: To approve recommendation 3.1.

2526 – 20

Review of Property and Assets

The CEO submitted a report regarding the review of Property and Assets. A copy of which appears in the minute book as Appendix O.

RESOLVED: To approve the review of the Parish Council's property & assets.

2526 – 21

Review of Insurance

The CEO submitted a report regarding insurance affected on the 1st April 2025. Copies of which appear in the minute book as Appendix P.

RESOLVED: To adopt the insurance as tabled.

2526 – 22

Review of Risk Assessment

The Assistant Clerk submitted a copy of the 2025 Risk Assessment. A copy of which appears in the minute book as Appendix Q.

RESOLVED: To approve the Review of the Risk Assessment.

2526 – 23

Allowances

The Council received a verbal report from the Deputy CEO regarding Councillor Allowances that had been previously agreed at the December Full Council Meeting.

RESOLVED: To agree Allowances as previously agreed.

2526 – 24

Review of other Policies

The CEO submitted Parish Council Policies for Review:

- Allowances
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints Procedure
- Data Protection
- Employer Discretions
- Equality & Diversity
- Freedom of Information
- Grants
- Habitual & Vexatious Complainant
- Health & Safety
- Health, Wellbeing & Attendance
- Internal Controls
- Internal Audit Terms of Reference
- Bereavement
- Recruitment & Selection
- Casual Councillor Vacancy
- Investment Strategy
- Lone Working
- Memorials
- Member – Officer Relationship
- Noticeboards
- Parish Services
- Press & Media
- Privacy Notice – GDPR
- Privacy Notice – Employee
- Publication Scheme
- Recording & Reporting
- Safeguarding
- Training
- Vehicle Tracking
- Whistleblowing
- Records Management
- Website Accessibility
- Employing People with Convictions

RESOLVED: To approve and adopt the above policies aside from 33. Casual Councillor Vacancy and 15. Lone Working as from 20 May 2025.

2526 – 25

Electric Vehicles

The Council received a report from the CEO regarding the procurement of electric vehicles. A copy of which appears in the minute book as Appendix R.

Recommendations

3.1 The council approve the purchase of eight vehicles as per the specification in the appendices and price detailed in 2.7 under the Halton Housing Framework.

RESOLVED: To approve recommendation 3.1.

2526 – 26

Grants

Councillors were presented with a report detailing grant applications that had been scrutinized by the Grants Working party. A copy of which appears in the Minute Book as Appendix S.

Recommendations

3.1 To approve the Grants Working Party recommendations for grant applications as detailed in Points 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6.

RESOLVED: To agree with the recommendation of the Grants Working Party for the application listed in Point 2.1 and approve the grant for £2,000 to the Platform Project.

RESOLVED: To reject the recommendation of the Grants Working Party for the Application listed in Point 2.2 and reject the grant for £661.44 to Willows Counselling.

RESOLVED: To agree with the recommendation of the Grants Working Party for the Application listed in Point 2.3 and reject the grant for £2,000 to the Bangladesh Association.

RESOLVED: To agree with the recommendation of the Grants Working Party for the Application listed in Point 2.4 and reject the grant for £1,000 to Swindon & Wiltshire Pride.

RESOLVED: To agree with the recommendation of the Grants Working Party for the Application listed in Point 2.5 and reject the grant for £2,000 to Young Waves

RESOLVED: To agree with the recommendation of the Grants Working Party for the Application listed in Point 2.6 and reject the grant for £1,000 to Swindon Borough Council's

Armed Forces Day.

2526 – 27

Emergency Decision

Councillors received a report regarding an emergency decision to approve a grant application by Prospect Place Conservation Area Trust. A copy of which appears in the minute book as Appendix T.

Recommendations

3.1 To note the report and decision made.

RESOLVED: To approve recommendation 3.1.

2526 – 28

Old Town Business Association

The Council were asked to agree to a Service Level Agreement with the Old Town Business Association regarding the association's events for 2025. A copy of which appears in the Minute Book as Appendix U.

RESOLVED: To agree the Service Level Agreement with the Old Town Business Association.

Meeting Closes at 20:09

Signed.....

Date.....

Chair of the Parish Council