

WEST SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the
FINANCE & STAFFING COMMITTEE
 held on **Monday 24th February 2025** at **6.00 pm**
Unit 25, Westmead Industrial Estate, Swindon, SN5 7YT

Present:

- Cllr Peter Bates
- Cllr Rose Llewellyn (Chair)
- Cllr Graham Philpot
- Cllr Trish Philpot
- Cllr Caryl Sydney Smith
- Cllr Sean Wilson

Officers: Paula Harrison (Parish Manager/Clerk)

Public: Three

Public Questions:

A resident expressed their disappointment at the Council's decision to increase the Parish Council precept to 13.4%. The resident asked why the Parish Council would consider taking on an additional service that was the responsibility of Swindon Borough Council.
The Chair advised that a more detailed written response would be provided.

Meeting start 6.05 pm

195. Apologies & Applications for Dispensation

Apologies: Cllrs Ali, Dayan, Ertas, Grother, Swinyard
 Applications for dispensation as required by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Parish Council on 20 May 2024: None

196. Bank Statements

The bank statements for January 2024 were circulated with the accompanying bank reconciliation, copies can be found in the Minute Book as **Appendix A**. The information was noted.

197. Schedule of Payments

A schedule of payments for January 2025 was circulated, a copy of which appears as **Appendix B** in the Minute Book. Payments were as follows:

Account Name	Amount	Category	Notes
Swindon Borough Council	£1,000.00	Other	Swindon Borough Council
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Swindon Borough Council	£1,000.00	Other	Swindon Borough Council
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RECOMMENDED that Council is approves 44 payments totalling £59,027.73 for January 2025

198. Play Leases

The Parish Manager circulated a report, a copy of the report appears as **Appendix C** in Minute Book. The Parish Manager advised that Bevirs solicitors were reaching a conclusion to the long running negotiations on play area leases. It was noted that an indemnity policy had been requested to cover any matters arising from missing deeds associated with play areas. Councillors noted that it would be helpful to follow up on the land ownership of Bloomsbury Park.

199. Resident Complaint

The Parish Manager circulated a report, a copy of the report appears as **Appendix D** in Minute Book. The report detailed the following formal complaint:

- **The failure of West Swindon Parish Council, to maintain the land behind No.1 Lineacre Close, Grange Park, Swindon, which is owned by Swindon Borough Council 8th September 2024**
- **Failure to remove green waste flytipping from the Mannington/Blagrove cycle path 8th September 2024**

The Parish Manager highlighted additional material that had been circulated at the request of the resident. Councillors considered the information. It was noted that Minute 26 from the Planning, Leisure and Environment Committee (11.11.24) extends the Parish Council's treatment to include planting and clearance on a priority basis; density of planting at Lineacre Close should be able to be improved in due course. It was noted that the matter relating to the removal of flytipped green waste was for Swindon Borough Council to resolve.

RESOLVED that

- a) the Parish Council team has followed the Council's policies and procedures in relation to its shrub bed maintenance as set out in the details of the Complaint in the report and accompanying photos from the resident
- b) the Parish Council has reached a finite position on this matter
- c) the Parish Manager and Chair agree a written response to the Complainant summarising the outcome
- d) the Parish Council reviews the Formal Complaints Procedure.

200. HGV Roadsweeping

The Parish Manager circulated a report, a copy of which appears as **Appendix E** in the Minute Book. The report summarised the procurement process for securing prices to provide an HGV road sweeping service. Only one contractor had responded. A price for residential roads was itemised with an additional price for main road sweeping. Indications to date were that Swindon Borough Council would reimburse the Parish Council for main road sweeping. Costs were £5,567.29 for residential roads and £1,183.29 for main roads. Given the scale of vegetation, it may be that two sweeps in Spring/early Summer are required to remove vegetation effectively, with a later sweep in the Autumn. It was agreed that it would be important to advertise the start of the service across all media to ensure high levels of awareness with a view to residents keeping roads free of vehicles to ensure that there is maximum benefit.

RECOMMENDED that Council is approves two sweeps of main and residential roads with the option for a third sweep later in the year.

6.28 pm

201. Admission of Public and Press

Resolved 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'.

202. Property Valuation Update

The Parish Manager circulated a report setting out quotes for acting as the Parish Council's agent for forthcoming lease negotiations. A copy of the report appears as **Appendix F** in the Minute Book. Councillors considered the information.

RESOLVED that

- a) Projekt Property be appointed as the Council's agent
- b) The lease negotiations include an option for three years plus two years

203. Staffing Report

The Parish Manager provided report setting out a number of staffing matters. A copy of the report appears as **Appendix G** in the Minute Book. Councillors considered the request to pay a percentage increase at the start of the new financial year rather than waiting for the later official confirmation. It was noted that the Government indications were an offer of 2.8%.

Councillors continued previous discussions on steps to equalise pay across the job roles. It was noted that the introduction of a discretionary increment for existing staff would assist in resolving any differences. New starters would be treated as new staff and would begin on a paypoint on the range of payscales with an annual review. Councillors considered the request for the newly agreed employment bonus to be applied to all non managerial staff.

Councillors received a draft Pensions Statement, a copy of which appears as **Appendix H** in the Minute Book.

RECOMMENDED that

- a) all staff receive a 3% salary increase from April 2025 onwards, with any additional increase arising from the annual pay award to be paid thereafter

RESOLVED that

- b) the Employee bonus scheme to all non-managerial staff
- c) the existing team of parish operatives are eligible for two discretionary increments, in April 2025 and April 2026 as proposed,
- d) the draft Pension Statement is noted and approved

Meeting closed 7.06 pm

Signed:

Chair, Finance & Staffing Committee

Date: