

WEST SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the online meeting of the
WEST SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL held on
Monday 25 January 2021 at 7.00pm

Present:

Cllr Umar Ali
Cllr Steph Exell
Cllr Simon Firth
Cllr Suresh Gattapur
Cllr Nigel Gibbons (Chair)
Cllr Geoff Gould
Cllr Prakash Khaitan
Cllr Nick Martin (Vice Chair)
Cllr Mary Martin
Cllr Trish Philpot
Cllr Tim Swinyard
Cllr Caryl Sydney Smith
Cllr Keith Williams

Officers: Paula Harrison (Parish Manager)
Leanne Curtis (Assistant Clerk)

Public: Three

Presentation: The Police & Crime Commissioner Mr Angus Macpherson gave an update on staffing, force priorities and future demands. A copy of the slides are attached as **Appendix A.**

- The Chair asked if the public were bearing the burden of increases in policing costs. Mr Macpherson confirmed that Government funding for the force meant it was the lowest in the South West and did not cover all costs.
- Resident asked that the Commissioner raise awareness of the school crossing and safety issues at Westlea Primary School due to traffic diversions and obstructive parking. The Commissioner noted the request.
- Cllr Gattapur asked for it to be noted that general patrols around parks to deter drug dealing would be welcomed. The Commissioner noted the request.
- Resident asked if the predictive policing software tools were available. The Commissioner indicated that it would be useful however all purchasing it done nationally.

Public Questions:

Resident offered a positive statement following joint work with the Keep Swindon Tidy and Reduce Plastic Waste initiatives. A problem with plastic gloves littering around Corton Crescent persists. Cllr Williams highlighted Waste Free February. The initiative run by **Wiltshire Wildlife Trust**, challenges people to live waste free for the month of February. Cllr Williams encouraged people to spread the awareness and sign up.

Resident asked if it would be possible to connect with any opportunities for recycling old laptops and PCs e.g. those taken to Waterside. Cllr Williams advised that there were routes for recycling already established but would look into the options.

Meeting start 7.24 pm

637. Apologies

Apologies were submitted by Cllr Mike Burtenshaw due to IT issues and Cllr Tim Makofu due to work commitments. **RESOLVED** that all apologies received were approved.

638. Declarations of Interest & Applications for Dispensation

Declarations of Interest required by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Parish Council on 14th May 2019.

None received.

639. Minutes of the previous meetings

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 21 December 2020 be confirmed and approved.

7.26 pm Cllr Tim Swinyard joined the meeting.

640. Minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee held on Monday 11 January 2021 be confirmed and approved.

641. Minutes of the Finance and Staffing Committee

RESOLVED that Recommendation (Minute 628) that expenditure for December of 58 Payments totaling £52,539.67 be approved.

RESOLVED that Recommendation (Minute 632) that the Precept Budget be confirmed and approved by Council be dealt with under Agenda item 11

Councillors considered Recommendation (Minute 633) that the Parish Council registers new employees with the NEST government backed pension scheme. Cllr Swinyard gave a brief summary indicating it was a low risk, nationally managed scheme. Cllr Exell highlighted that it had been previously recorded that she could not support this measure.

RESOLVED that the Recommendation (Minute 633) be approved. Cllrs Exell, Firth, Philpot and Ali voted against.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Finance and Staffing Committee meeting held on Monday 11 January 2021 be confirmed and approved.

7.36 pm Cllr Philpot left the meeting due to IT problems

642. Minutes of the Leisure & Amenities Committee

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Leisure & Amenities Committee held on Wednesday 13 January 2021 be confirmed and approved.

643. Update from West Swindon Parish Council Chair

The Chair shared continuing concern regarding the delays on the widening of Mead Way and the impact of this on the deterioration of Whitehill Way. A letter will be sent to Chief Executive asking for an update. Wider impact on Delta and Langstone Way!

The Chair expressed thanks to the volunteers who continue to be active in our open spaces, making a huge difference.

644. Update from Swindon Borough Councillors

Cllr M Martin advised that as a Parish and Borough Councillor, over the last few years unauthorised tree cutting was becoming more prevalent. Recent reports of tree cutting included a missing copse by Orin Close. It isn't clear why this is happening particularly with restrictions on the sale of wood. Research was underway into whether it is an offence, but there may not be an easy solution. Cllr Gould suggested it was a criminal offence. Cllr Martin will update at a future meeting.

Cllr Williams advised that the Borough Council's Carbon Reduction Strategy had 77 responses the majority of which were in support of it. Locally, discussions with the Swindon Housing Company have resulted in the Sparcells Toddler area being relocated. No firm details on where it will be located or the process for installing a new park.

7.44 pm Cllr Philpot rejoined the meeting.

645. Updates from Parish Council Representatives

Cllr Gattapur confirmed that funds totalling £3634 had been passed to the Parish Council for the BMX pump track. Cllr Gattapur thanked two residents who had recently planted 2000 bulbs in Westlea park.

646. Service Delivery/Depot Update

The Parish Manager referred to a report updating on progress to secure the lease for Unit 25 Westmead Industrial Estate, a copy of which appears as **Appendix A** in the Minute Book. A copy of the draft lease was appended, a copy of which appears as **Appendix B** in the Minute Book.

The Parish Manager confirmed that the lease may be ready for signature prior to the next Full Council meeting.

The Parish Council's Standing Orders require that a legal deed cannot be executed on behalf of the Council unless approved by a resolution. Subject to a resolution, any two Councillors may sign on behalf of the Council with the Proper Officer (the Parish Manager) as a witness to the signatures.

Cllr Exell highlighted the gender specific references throughout the lease. The Chair advised that the word 'landlord' was the recognised term in reference to the individual or individuals/companies, organisations or parties that were the owners of the estate to be rented or leased.

The Chair advised that common parts repairs would be shared between both parties and should not be an issue. The Schedule of Condition records the current condition and there are warranties on recent work undertaken including the roof.

RESOLVED that

- a) West Swindon Parish Council approves and signs the lease as set out in **Appendix B** (including any subsequent minor corrections)
- b) Cllr Gibbons and Cllr Nick Martin to sign on behalf of the Parish Council, in the event that one or both of these is unable to sign, Cllr Williams or Cllr Gould to sign in their place

647. Precept 2021-22 Budget Report

The Parish Manager circulated a letter from Swindon Borough Council, confirming the tax base for 2021-22 and a report setting out the Precept Budget for 2021-22. A copy of the letter appears in the Minute Book as **Appendix C** and a copy of the report appears in the Minute Book as **Appendix D**. A copy of the Reserves Policy was also circulated and appears as **Appendix E** in the Minute Book.

The Finance & Staffing Committee had reviewed expenditure carefully and created a budget for 2021-22. This included costs for the now in-house service delivery team and relocated office and depot. The staffing, accommodation and vehicles are the majority expenditure in the annual budget. The Finance & Staffing Committee recommended a Precept increase of 3%.

Based on planned expenditure for 2021-22, it is proposed that a **3% increase** is applied to the overall Precept budget. This will set the Band D equivalent to **£101.41** representing an increase of **£3.59** (3.65%) and creating an overall precept income of **£899,871.86**.

Cllr Gould highlighted that the 3% increase overall represented a 3.65% increase to Band D property and expressed concern that it was misleading to refer to a 3% increase.

Cllr Tim Swinyard proposed that Council agrees to adopt the proposed budget (**Appendix D**) and thereby sets the Precept for 2021-2022 at £899,871.86.

Cllr Gould proposed that the annual precept be reset based on the amount that would represent a 3% increase to Band D properties (total £894,208.58)

All Councillors with the exception of Cllr Gould voted in favour of an overall precept increase of 3%.

RESOLVED that the Clerk submits a Precept Demand for 2021-22 at £899,871.86.

Date of next meeting: Monday 22 February 2021 7.00 pm

Meeting closed 8.20 pm

Signed:

Date:

Chair, West Swindon Parish Council

DRAFT