

## WEST SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the  
**PLANNING, LEISURE & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**  
held on **Monday 11th March 2024 at 6.00 pm**  
**Unit 25, Westmead Industrial Estate, Swindon, SN5 7YT**

**Present:**

Cllr Peter Bates  
Cllr Leon Grother (Chair)  
Cllr Rose Llewellyn  
Cllr Tim Makofu (virtual)  
Cllr Graham Philpot  
Cllr Trish Philpot  
Cllr Nandini Singh  
Cllr Caryl Sydney Smith  
Cllr Andrew Swinyard  
Cllr Sean Wilson

**Officers:** Paula Harrison (Parish Manager), Steven Anns (Operations Supervisor)

**Public:** Nine

**Public Questions:**

Resident referred to Item 2, Parish Meeting, and suggested that it be held at the West Swindon Library or at Freshbrook Community Centre. Cllrs advised it may not be open in time.

Resident suggested that funding for the Community growing project be taken from the Backlands reserve pot and also suggested that any growing space be fenced.

Resident suggested that bleed kits could be given to Tescos as they have existing defibrillators and pubs such as the Windmill at Freshbrook village centre.

Resident indicated that he represented 17 neighbours from Russley Close who are not happy with the consultation process initiated by the Parish Council. Resident asked that questions posed by email be considered properly and not dismissed.

Resident asked that consultation process be amended to enable residents to have a better understanding of what is proposed and how it would work.

Resident alleged that the changes would constitute change of use as it is used as a wildlife corridor, children's play and the also prone to flooding.

Resident indicated that Cllr Mary Martin had indicated that this space could not be used for any other means.

Resident reported that this green space was a safe place for children to play without crossing roads and dog walkers.

Resident asked who had expressed interest in this scheme, when did a survey take place.

Resident asked for clarity on terms of use and governance.

Resident asked for how litter and rubbish will be managed.

Residents agreed that there will be parking issues.

Resident reported that there was a huge rat problem in this area that has caused issues repeatedly in the past.

*Cllr Grother advised that this proposal would take into account the views submitted to date.*

Resident asked for clarity on the process for changing the use of the space, level of water in the stream, parking issues and anti social behaviour.

Resident indicated that water levels in the stream had breached the banks due to removal of vegetation. Will this proposal start removing more vegetation and create a bigger flood risk. There is also repeated anti social behaviour and this is short notice.

Resident indicated that communication was short notice and not all residents received communication at the same time.

Resident expressed concern that these plans set precedent for a gateway to other changes on that land.

Resident reported that letters were distributed on Friday afternoon and Saturday, not all residents were given a communication.

Resident queried whether weedkiller might impact on Peatmoor lake.

Resident reported that wildlife are invasive to allotments even where there are nets and fencing.

*The Chair thanked residents for their points.*

*The Chair clarified that there has been a lot of interest in growing and that the Parish Council has had a long list of people waiting for allotments over a number of years that had led to discussions regarding community growing.*

*The Parish Manager advised that community growing had been an initiative that the Parish Council has considered developing over the last four to five years. Numerous discussions and reports all of which had been advertised on public Agendas, debated at public meetings, and detailed in published public reports by the Parish Council. Many locations had been considered at various points and different styles of community growing have been proposed from ground level plots to raised planters. Areas around Peatmoor Woodland, backland sites and former play areas had been considered. Over time it had been narrowed down to Russley Close and Crawford Close as potential trial spaces.*

*A flyer was distributed in both areas and a survey set up on the Parish Council's website. Over 35 people expressed interest via the online survey of which around 11 would be a short walk from Russley Close. As a report was going to this Committee identifying a specific location, it was determined that neighbouring properties would be notified that a discussion at Committee was*

*planned. A letter detailing this was distributed by the Parish Team on the morning of Friday 2nd February advising residents of the Agenda item and how to make representation. The Parish Council was at very early stages in the consideration of this project and was not technically obligated to create a formal consultation in order to progress this proposal.*

*The Chair confirmed that this proposal be considered a future meeting given the feedback. Resident offered to canvass other residents given the short notice of the communication from the Parish Council.*

*The Chair indicated that the matter would not be discussed any further at this meeting and would be deferred. The Chair asked that clarification be sought from Swindon Borough Council regarding any covenants or provisions on this space.*

*n.b. Swindon Borough Council has confirmed that there are no specific wildlife, ecological or protected conditions on the backland at Russley Close. It is classed as public open space.*

Meeting start 6.43 pm

**234. Apologies & Applications for Dispensation**

Apologies: Cllrs Gattapur, Cllr Dayan  
Applications for dispensation: None.

**235. Annual Parish Meeting**

The Parish Manager circulated a report detailing the requirements for an annual Parish Meeting for all Parishes, a copy of the report appears as **Appendix A** in the Minute Book. The Parish Manager invited suggestions for the style and format of the meeting. Councillors considered whether to have the Annual Parish Meeting on the same evening as the Annual Parish Council meeting as set out on the meeting calendar.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Annual Parish Meeting should be held separate to the Annual Parish Council meeting, date to be confirmed.

**236. Community Pantry and Community Growing**

Chair deferred item to a future meeting.

**237. Planting Update**

The Parish Manager circulated a report setting out details of the planting scheme for West Swindon, a copy of which appears as **Appendix B** in the Minute Book. It was requested that consideration be given to improving the floral planting in the village centres. Councillors noted the position.

**RESOLVED** that the Parish Manager invites Councillors to participate in a working party to develop a proposal and future business plan.

**238. Control the Bleed Kits**

The Parish Manager provided a report setting out information relating to Control the Bleed kits, a copy of which appears as **Appendix C** in the Minute Book. Councillors noted the

information and discussed options. It was agreed that pubs and village centres would be prime locations for both defibrillators and bleed kits in the first instance. It was noted that not all defibrillators are accessible out of daytime hours. It was also noted that Tescos in the village centres have defibrillators as does the West Swindon District Centre and Link Centre. It was agreed that it would be preferable to have kits accessible at all times and therefore kits available in outside locations would be useful.

**RESOLVED** that

- a) the Parish Manager contacts the Owens World foundation to seek connection and support
- b) that contact be made with local pubs and churches to determine interest and support for defibrillators and bleed kits
- c) investigation into grant funding be progressed to support this initiative

**239. Play Update**

The Parish Manager and Operations Supervisor shared information on potential play improvements across the Parish. This included

- a) removal of the tunnel at the Chesters and inclusion of new stepping stone/balance equipment
- b) replacement of play fencing around the kickabout in Westlea park
- c) replacement of the balance equipment, climbing net and climbing frame at Whitehill park
- d) addition of a small goal end for the tarmac area at Whitehill park
- e) addition of moulded shapes/creatures for seating/climbing

Estimated costs are in the region of £30,000.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Council approves play expenditure on replacement equipment as proposed up to a value of £30,000.

**240. Website Update**

The Parish Manager gave a short demonstration on changes and developments to the website. It was noted that the website should be ready and tested in order to be launched in the new municipal year. Cllr G Philpot noted some sections might not be as visible as they could be and volunteered to assist with reviewing.

**241. Social Media Review as requested by Cllr Wilson**

Cllr Wilson shared comments and observations on the Parish Council's facebook page. Councillors discussed social media. It was agreed that posting on smaller facebook groups was helpful to spread messages at a local level.

It was noted that social media could be reviewed once recruitment has been finalised.

**242. Clean and Green Update**

The Parish Manager circulated a report setting out the accrual of funds in the Clean and Green fund to date, a copy of which appears as **Appendix D** in the Minute Book. Councillors noted the position.

**243. Planning Report**

Councillors received a planning report setting out applications submitted to date. A copy of the report appears as **Appendix E** in the Minute Book.

The following were noted without objection.

S/HOU/24/0201	Erection of a single storey rear extension	19 Friesland Close Ramleaze SN5 5YG
S/HOU/24/0202	Erection of a single storey rear extension	12 Furze Close Peatmoor SN5 5DB

Meeting closed 7.24 pm.

Signed: .....

Chair, Planning, Leisure & Environment Committee

Date: .....