

**WILTSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS  
SWINDON AREA COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2019 at Swindon Borough Council, Committee Room 2 Civic Offices, Swindon. Start time 7pm.

Present: M Compton (Chair), I Jankinson (Blunsdon), R Worman (Haydon Wick), A John (Haydon Wick), V Curtis (Covingham), G Hawkes (Covingham), D Moffatt (Central Swindon North), A Moore (Liddington), P Sunners (Chiseldon), C Hayes (Wanborough), S Brown (South Marston)

Secretary L Cutter

The Chairman welcomed the meeting and members introduced themselves.

## **126 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

D Griffiths (Central Swindon South), R Hailstone (Haydon Wick),  
Colin McEwen (South Marston)

## **127 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019 were a correct record.

**Proposed: Councillor V Curtis**

**Seconded: Councillor A Moore**

**Vote: Agreed unanimously.**

## **128 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

None.

## **129 RELATIONSHIPS WITH SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Councillor I Jankinson updated the meeting on a recent Clerks & Chairs meeting, it is apparent that the Borough Officers are stretched and actions are not being dealt with as efficiently as they could be via the online reporting system. It was suggested at that meeting that a special access for Parish Clerks was created so they could navigate the process appropriately as they were not able to do this at the moment.

Councillor V Curtis advised the meeting that a few representatives for Swindon Area Committee (SAC) recently met with Susie Kemp (CEO Swindon Borough Council) on the back of ceasing the Borough/Parish meetings. They received a genuine apology as she had initially been misinformed about the role of SAC. The representatives at the meeting were able to provide examples of work undertaken with Parish Councils collectively via SAC and they also corrected any belief that SAC membership was restricted, or that it comprised mainly rural Councils.

The Secretary informed that 17 out of 19 parishes are now members.

Councillor D Moffatt advised that size might mean disparity of interests between parishes. Some of the work Central Swindon North have been doing recently with regards to employing a Youth Worker and running a Dementia Café may be different to the work of other Councils. The general feeling of the meeting is that, regardless of size, other Councils have also done this type of work or are working towards. It was also suggested that rather than using the description of CIL to reclaim development money the description is changed to Developer Contributions.

Councillor S Brown suggested that parishes work together to show the importance of SAC and create future agenda items of common interests that will accommodate all of the parishes. In order for this to be effective, members will need to actively attend the meetings and have input in to the topics for discussion.

Committee Rooms are now available at the Civic Offices for SAC to hold meetings making the location central to all parishes.

### **130 NEW COUNCILLOR INDUCTION TRAINING**

Councillor S Brown asked whether other councils had created induction packs beyond the national NALC introductory guides. She was concerned that new parish councillors are often thrown in at the deep end with both internal processes and local issues and some were choosing to stand down rather than flounder.

Few other councils appear to have any formal induction pack; some relied on a 'buddy' system.

Some Parish Council's held Councillor Information Sessions for all Councillors which acted as an induction for new Councillors and refresher for re-elected Councillors.

There are also mandatory SBC training courses for new Councillors to attend within 12 months of office, such as for code of conduct - a list of dates has recently been provided by the Borough Council.

Cllr Brown circulated an induction pack that was created from scratch by South Marston Parish Council to introduce new Parish Councillors to their roles and advise of the policies and procedures that were relevant to South Marston. It was requested that Parish Councils review the document and share thoughts on how to improve it with a view to its transferability across parishes. It will be circulated to members once the hyperlinks to confidential documents have been removed.

### **131 SOCIAL MEDIA TROLLING**

Recent reports of social media trolling prompted this to be an item for discussion. There were some examples of trolling provided, but it did not appear to be widespread. Nevertheless, when it was met, it can be dispiriting for councillors who are unsure how to handle it. It was noted that, as a result of this being raised at the meeting with Susie Kemp, the Borough Council are considering mounting a training session for Councillors to attend.

### **132 CONSULTATION IN THE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACES**

A report was tabled by Councillor C McEwen regarding the maintenance of the Public Open Spaces/ Green Infrastructure ("POS") within parish boundaries. It has become apparent that the maintenance of new developments is, via the S106 documents, being transferred to commercial management companies in which the homeowners have to pay a management fee for maintenance in addition to paying the local council precept.

Many local councils present reported difficulties with management companies that were already in place. These included lack of response to residents' enquiries, excessive costs and lack of local control.

Councillor G Hawkes also advised as a member of the National Flooding Agency there are many issues with who undertakes future management of SUDs areas and accepts the liability of flooding, where the responsibility and ownership is split between parties and the developers have moved on.

South Marston are now in discussion with Swindon Borough Council working towards a policy to be adopted in the Local Plan revision that a 'best practice' protocol is established that endorses the following criteria for future maintenance of POS:

1. Ensure appropriate service delivery in the long term
2. Provide value for money thorough local accountability
3. Ensure that the asset owner has lasting control of an appropriate income stream

The meeting agreed that Swindon Area Committee support this proposal and Councillor C McEwen will be in touch with parish councils to discuss this further.

**Proposed: Councillor S Brown**  
**Vote: Agreed**

**Seconded: Councillor I Jankinson**

### **133 DRAINAGE**

A report was tabled from Councillor R Worman in regards to the drainage issues in Haydon View, as this area is classed as High Risk. Haydon View have received many floods in previous years and the Haydon View Residents Association have managed to obtain yearly cleaning by Thames Water.

The gullies are only attended to every 3 – 4 years by Swindon Borough Council. Officers are looking to add gulley management to the website so that residents can see which gullies have been cleaned and when it is due for maintenance.

The meeting discussed ditches and who is responsible for clearing these. It is believed that the Farmer's own the ditches but the Borough Council are responsible for the side closest to the Highway. Councillor I Jankinson researched a document and asked the Secretary to circulate this to all members.

### **134 PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR 'AIR BED & BREAKFAST'**

Councillor S Brown advised there have been many planning applications for conversions of garages and annexes that are being used as separate dwellings for Air B&B's. This is common across both urban and rural areas, as was evidenced at the meeting. She was concerned that there appeared to be no direct guidance for or from planning officers, despite it being a growing phenomenon and one of great concern for adequacy of parking and traffic etc.

The meeting discussed the guidelines and confirmed there are no specific rules regarding Air B&B's and if the dwellings have been built prior to any changes in standards the Borough Council cannot enforce any regulations retrospectively. It was decided that this issue should be progressed outside the meeting – in particular when the revised draft Local Plan is issued at the end of July which it is thought will introduce changed parking standards. It may be that SAC hold a special meeting towards the end of the consultation period to review this and any other issues.

### **135 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To note the date of the next meeting 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019 at the Civic Offices (SBC), Committee Room 2. This meeting will be the AGM.

**136 ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA**

To be passed to the Secretary prior to the next meeting.

**137 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Councillor I Jankinson read out an email response from the Highways Authority in regards to the A419 and how this is still in line with the 2036 model. There are no planned changes to the Turnpike Junction even with increased traffic and new dwellings within that area.

Councillor R Worman advised that there are plans to install traffic lights at the Moonrakers Roundabout.

The meeting ended at 8.20pm