

SOUTH SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL
(CENTRAL SWINDON SOUTH PARISH COUNCIL)

COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2019 at 6.30pm
in Lounge, Broadgreen Community Centre

Present Cllr C Watts (Chair)
Cllr J Howarth (Vice-Chair)
Cllr J Ali
Cllr S Allsopp
Cllr N Burns-Howell
Cllr P Dixon
Cllr J Firmin
Cllr M Gladman
Cllr P Herring
Cllr N Hopkins
Cllr M J Miah
Cllr J Milner-Barry
Cllr S Pajak
Cllr T Philpot
Cllr B Thompson
Cllr N Watts

Officers Rob Core (Parish Clerk)
Jake Mee (Deputy Parish Clerk)

Public Four

Public Session A member of the public stated that they were pleased to see the Police and Crime Commissioner Angus MacPherson was attending the meeting, as they had contacted his office two years ago regarding being threatened and abused by a cyclist and was told that someone would contact them within two weeks, however that is now over 2 years ago. When told that extra money was being taken for Policing the resident was not particularly pleased, however if it means improvement to the service, the resident is willing to accept it. The resident also stated that Swindon is probably the biggest domestic area in the County of Wiltshire and feels that the increase should be reflected in the services provided. The resident also commented that they are pleased that the last minutes accurately reflected their comments regarding the Lawns.

The Chair stated that he would not ask the Crime Commissioner Angus MacPherson to respond as questions would be addressed in the meeting.

592 **Apologies**
Cllr J Miah
Cllr D Pajak
Cllr I Shaikh

Not Present
Cllr A Hawkins
Cllr T Robson

593 Declaration of Interest & Applications for Dispensation

None.

594 Police and Crime Commissioner Angus MacPherson

The Chair introduced Angus MacPherson the Police and Crime Commissioner who thanked the Parish Council for inviting him to the meeting, he was pleased to report the increase in the police Precept which has enabled Wiltshire police to employ forty extra police officers to the Community Team. The commissioner recognised resident comments regarding the area and confirmed that funding is equally divided around the County and that Community Policing Teams are balanced out to ensure the same amount of cover is provided across the County. The extra officers will increase the community policing teams across the County which is a twenty four hour activity, there are now approximately three hundred Special Constables who are able to support the community teams and from Friday 19 April 2019 Roads Policing returns to the County as a whole which will increase the visibility of Police including visibility on the roads. For what has been a difficult year for the Constabulary, particularly in terms of events in the south of the County they had done really well to maintain policing at the level they had, at the end of March 2019 it was approximately twenty Officers over budget at the end of the year which was again enabled by bringing forward the training for the year and ensuring all monies spent would be on Officers.

The Commissioner apologised that the gentleman who had spoken earlier had not received a response regarding their issue but will follow the issue up with his office and ensure that the resident receives a response which he would provide via the Clerk.

The Commissioner had spoken to the Inspector of Division and been given an idea of what had been agreed with the community across the south of Swindon. The priorities of the CPT some of which are South Swindon and others with villages outside of Swindon. The Commissioner stated that he would like to hear from the public, residents and the Council and although he may not be able to respond at this meeting, he will take the query away and respond via the Clerk.

The Commissioner took questions from Councillors.

Cllr. S Allsopp had concerns regarding the amount of time that the Police spent dealing with non-criminal matters such as missing young persons and people with mental health issues, which perhaps should be managed by organisations other than the Police Force.

The Commissioner responded that although Police Officers do spend a lot of time dealing with these types of issues if there is a person in mental health crisis it is right that an officer should be there. There is now a Mental Health Nurse 24/7 in the Control Centre and this alleviates some of the issues by providing a process which leads to police time being used efficiently. Regarding finding missing people, there are numerous reasons which should be addressed and supported by all organisations involved in the care of the individuals.

Cllr N Hopkins stated that we had lost approximately 187 officers since 2010. The forty police officers now engaged is good news but what has happened to crime in the interim. The Commissioner responded that crime has increased but the statistics may not be accurate, and this may be a good place to start from.

Cllr N Hopkins asked if increases in violent crime etc. are just down to recording. The Commissioner responded that this was in part true.

Cllr P Dixon asked if there are now less officers than in 2010. The Commissioner responded that this was correct but that the mix has changed and not all officers carry warrant cards.

Cllr. S Pajak stated that the Police 101 number is not always answered so how can recording statistics have been improved. The Commissioner responded that the 101 phone figures will be reported back to the Clerk and there is no reason not to continue to phone 101.

The Chair stated that the police need to make the improvements and relaunch 101 as people will not be aware that the previous problems have been rectified.

Cllr S Pajak asked if the drug problems have reduced or increased in Swindon. The Commissioner responded that County Lines Operations were in effect, but no extra funding is received by Wiltshire County Council. Drugs were not just a police problem; huge organisation partnership is required.

Cllr. S Pajak asked if the speeding rates had decreased. The Commissioner responded that there had been no increase in deaths or serious injury in the County since Swindon withdrew from the partnership.

Cllr. P Herring asked if A Place of Safety (S136 Units) in Swindon has worked. The Commissioner responded that it had worked, although the Health Service were struggling to staff two sites in Swindon, they would struggle with three and there are not enough Section 12 Doctors for a 24/7 provision.

Cllr. P Herring asked if this was due to budget restraint. The Commissioner responded that it is a Health Service issue and people should not be taken to custody suites.

Cllr. C Watts asked if Wiltshire police are now worse funded with less resources due to changes in the way funding is shared. The Commissioner responded that funds are directed in proportion to need not equally.

Cllr. J Milner-Barry asked if Community Speed watch was useful at all. Mr MacPherson responded that it is useful as an educational tool.

595 Dorset Fire and Rescue Service – Safe Drive Stay Alive

Glynn Moody of Dorset Fire & Rescue Service gave a presentation regarding Safe Drive, Stay Alive, a copy of which appears as Appendix A in the Minute book.

The Stay Alive campaign has 70 shows annually and all Swindon schools take part. The service is provided free of charge although it costs approximately £7,000 a year. Swindon Borough Council has discontinued its funding of £2,000 and the organisation are looking for £2,000 funding from the Parish.

Cllr. S Pajak asked if any work was being undertaken for elderly drivers. Mr Moody responded that he has not personally seen any increase but the Safe Drive, Stay Alive scheme focuses on young drivers.

Cllr. J Howarth asked if other Parishes had been approached and if there is publicity available for donors. Mr Moody responded that any funding from Parishes would be posted on social media and hopefully the Swindon Advertiser.

RESOLVED that the Deputy Clerk would gather more information which would be considered at the next Finance and Staffing meeting.

596 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved that the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on 12 March 2019 be approved as a correct record.

- 597 **Planning & Environment Committee**
RESOLVED that the minutes of the Finance & Staffing Committee held on 19 March 2019 be confirmed and adopted.
- 598 **Finance & Staffing Committee**
RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee held on 26 March 2019 be confirmed and adopted.
- 599 **Leisure & Amenities Committee**
RESOLVED that the minutes of the Leisure & Amenities Committee held on 09 April 2019 be confirmed and adopted.
- 600 **Planning & Environment Committee**
RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee held on 09 April 2019 be confirmed and adopted.
- 601 **Information from Borough Councillors**
None
- 602 **Parish Council Representatives' Reports**
None
- 603 **Chair's Report**

The Chair stated that the Council have reached the end of year two of the Parish. This year marked the end of the first administration as the Parish was subject to all-out election after two years. The Council had set itself targets to be completed in the first two years to ensure the administration that follows, who will have a full 4 years, would not be hamstrung by decisions and policies implemented by those charged with building the organisation.

Our first administration created out from a top down local government exercise to address budgetary challenges, - regrettably, not bottom up necessity or stated aims or requirement of residents - was primarily charged with building an organisation that would retrospectively fit the brief and requirements of our parishioners.

The Chair was content that the Parish Council being handed over to the incoming elected councillors was in good order regarding finance, services and added value for the precept that they had been entrusted.

The decision to keep the experienced StreetSmart team together, and indeed invest further in this team, had paid dividends. Seamless continuity of service was not only achieved, but the services, grass-cutting, shrub clearing, litter picking etc were improved and returned to a level not seen for some years.

The fourteen allotment sites managed by the Parish Council had suffered negligible investment over many years, had now seen fences fixed, derelict sheds removed, and overgrown plots returned for rental. Where plots were unused across the borough, there was now a waiting list for available plots. This had been achieved for allotment holders whilst decreasing the annual cost of allotment to parishioners.

The Parish boundary had been created with the economy of scale to include the formal parks of Town Gardens, Queens Parks and The Great Western Park. The Parish Council had budgeted from day one to take leases for those parks and entered protracted negotiations whilst funding the Gardeners to ensure the collective expertise was not lost and the grounds were kept in good order.

The lease transfer of Town Gardens and Queens Parks was completed on 1st April 2019 along with the transfer of staff. Whilst this process, two years in the making, had taken a lot longer than anticipated, this had given the Council a financial allocation that would allow additional investment in the next administration term. Again, due to previous lack of investment, there would be considerable projects to undertake, including refurbishment of the bowl and the listed gates at Town Gardens, and the pumping mechanism for the lakes at Queens Park.

The Chair stated that in the last meeting they had requested a report for the Playgrounds and had now received the reports from the independent inspector and the Parish Council Projects Manager and there were some advisories to be looked at but nothing that would fall outside of the set aside budget. A full report will be brought to the next available Leisure and Amenities meeting.

The Chair thanked Cllr A Hawkins, Cllr P Dixon, Cllr B Thompson, Cllr N Burns-Howell, Cllr D Pajak and Cllr I Shaikh for all their hard work over the past two years and hoped that they had enjoyed their time as Parish Councillors.

604 Terms of Reference - Youth Worker Working Party

A draft Terms of Reference was presented to the Council to be considered, a copy of which appears as Appendix B in the Minute book

RESOLVED to approve the draft terms of reference for the Youth Working Party to consider the role and make recommendations to the Finance & Staffing Committee.

605 General Power of Competence (GPoC)

To consider a report presented by the Deputy Clerk, a copy of which appears as Appendix C in the Minute book

The Deputy Clerk reported that The Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012 state that the Parish Council did not need to re-adopt the General Power of Competence unless it was required to establish a new activity that the Council did not have a statutory power to do.

If the Parish Council wanted to re-adopt the GPoC it would need a qualified Clerk and the number of elected Councillors had to be equal to or greater than two thirds of the total members.

It was discussed about the possibility of hiring a locum Clerk but advice sought from the SLCC recommend that the Council did not use a locum Clerk.

RESOLVED the Clerk and Deputy Clerk will investigate appointing a locum clerk for the Annual Council Meeting to re-adopt the General Power of Competence.

606 Savernake Street Community Centre

To consider a report from Eastcott Community Association, a copy of which appears as Appendix D in the Minute book

The Deputy Clerk stated that he had meetings with the Eastcott Community Association, and they had a programme of smaller works that would help with hiring of the Centre. The Parish have revenue available as shown in the report but would like to request further funding to be able to approve the works.

Cllr. C Watts agreed that the works should be carried out as there is the possibility that without the work being done the centre would have to close and it was one of the most used community centres in the Parish and South Swindon Parish Council would like to support it as much as possible.

Cllr. N Hopkins suggested that it is critical that the integrity of the building is maintained, and safety is of prime importance, but there is a need to be careful of how much is spent as in the future there may be a decision made to replace the buildings.

Cllr. J Milner-Barry stated if the building is going to survive for 25 years the energy bills are probably astronomical so if the building is large amounts of work now the energy bills could be halved with energy saving building works. The Parish Council should have sight of the building report before putting a lot of money into it.

The Deputy Clerk confirmed that the project does include energy saving works and this would reduce the energy bills.

Cllr. P Dixon asked if it is a long-term goal; these are quick fixes to improve the facility but once the parish take on the building more serious improvements are needed for energy efficiency working with all organisations working out of the centre.

RESOLVED to fund the proposed works on Savernake Community Centre as detailed in Appendix D.

607 **Angel Ridge Play Area**

A verbal report was given by the Deputy Clerk and a written report from the Projects Manager to be considered, a copy of which appears as Appendix E in the Minute book

The Clerk state that the annual inspections had since been carried out and were more favourable than first thought. Within Angel Ridge there were no major works required and the water feature's flow was run via the water system with the estimated annual bill for running the feature of £400. The Parish would be able to turn it on or off. It was enjoyed by many children using it.

A concern was the large stone mounted on a spindle which appeared to be dangerous, but the independent inspectors report had classed it as low risk.

RESOLVED to lease Angel Ridge Play Area for 99 years.

608 **Councillor Allowances**

The Deputy Clerk advised that councillors had not claimed £3,031.25 of their allowances in year and it had previously been agreed to donate unclaimed allowances to the Chair's nominated Charity.

RESOLVED to transfer £3,031.25 to the Chair's nominated Charity Brighter Futures

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm

Signed.....
Date.....
Chair of the Council