

WEST SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Newsletter Report

1. Overview

- 1.1 It has been the intention of West Swindon Parish Council to create a newsletter for distribution across the Parish.
- 1.2 The Link Magazine has a North & West Edition which is distributed to 25 households, including, every street in the West Swindon Parish.
- 1.3 The Link Magazine is generally cited as a resource that is well regarded by local residents.
- 1.4 The Parish Council set a budget for a newsletter of £3,000 in 2017/18 and £1500 for 2018/19. Earmarked reserves could be identified to cover the cost next year.

2. Newsletter frequency:

- 2.1 The Link Magazine is produced monthly and a quote has been provided as follows:
 - A single page newsletter within the magazine would cost **£859 + VAT per insert**
 - To book four issues across the year **£773 + VAT per insert** (total £3092 x 4 inserts)
- 2.2 A draft text for the first newsletter is attached as **Appendix A** to this report. A copy of a newsletter from the South edition of the Link Magazine produced for South Swindon Parish Council is attached as **Appendix B**.
- 2.3 The newsletter would enable West Swindon Parish Council to promote seasonal messages or key themes across the year as well as raising awareness of how the Parish Council has spent the Precept.

3. Recommendation:

- 3.1 That the Parish Council commits to purchasing four newsletters within the Link Magazine to be published over the next twelve months.

Paula Harrison
Parish Manager

APPENDIX A

Spring 2018 Newsletter - DRAFT

[LOGO]

An update from West Swindon Parish Council

We have worked hard to establish the Parish Council since the elections of last May, putting structures in place and developing a solid team ethic amongst our fifteen Parish Councillors. We are strongly motivated to ensure West Swindon is a well-cared-for, active and developing Parish: it is in fact **one of the largest Parishes in England**.

[GROUP PHOTO]

We have set up a new office at the West Swindon Library which provides an administrative base for our Parish Manager Paula Harrison, and which also acts as a hub for events, surgeries and council meetings. There is a good level of public attendance at council meetings, and a strong level of public interaction focuses our delivery of services to meet the needs of the community. Notice boards have been installed at West Swindon Library, and at Shaw and Toothill village centres.

Through our committee structure we have established a raft of initiatives, some short and some longer term. Here is a snapshot of what we have been doing.

We have undertaken an audit of litter-bin provision throughout the Parish to assess its fitness for purpose and to strengthen the current provision. This process has included public consultation and the establishment of a strategy to relocate and/or supplement existing bins. We have recently completed a first phase of this initiative and a second phase is planned although it is anticipated this will be an ongoing project.

The feedback we receive reflects the strong level of concern, if not frustration and anger among residents, over the continuing level of littering and rubbish in West Swindon. Littering blights our environment, puts our civic pride to shame and rubbish is costly to remove and dispose of. Regrettably, despite the best efforts of our street-cleaning team and our many voluntary groups, littering and to a lesser extent fly-tipping remain endemic in parts of our community. Such is our resolve to tackle this issue that the parish council has recently established a new committee solely dedicated to driving a range of initiatives around litter-bin provision, recycling, awareness, education and enforcement.

We have also now undertaken a review of play areas. As a consequence we are now, as part of an on-going programme, planning investment into the redevelopment and make-over of a number of play areas and associated playgrounds.

We are actively supporting local community groups and have made a number of grant awards. The Borough Council has invited expressions of interest in operating the Toothill Community Centre and we are hopeful that a new operator will soon be identified to re-establish this vibrant community hub.

As you might imagine we are acutely aware of the pressures of new development within and around the boundaries of our Parish, particularly the stress this places on local services and infrastructure. We are considering a Neighbourhood Local Plan to establish a planning framework for the Parish and provide a platform against which inappropriate development can be robustly challenged. We work hard to protect our open areas and are active stakeholders in promoting and protecting the essential setting of Lydiard Park.

One of our biggest costs is the provision of grass-cutting and landscape services. We have recently instructed consultants to review and evaluate the current service provision to establish if the present contract is market-facing and provides best value.

The first phase of new Spring planting is now flowering and we have adopted the allotments at Blagrove. We are keen to identify new sites for allotments to satisfy a growing demand.

The Parish Council has agreed to set the same charge for each Council Tax Band as last year in order to sustain a budget that will continue to focus on local facilities and community.

Please do visit our website (www.westswindon-pc.gov.uk) for more information on the Council and for Councillor contact details. We welcome your feedback and support, and hope to see you at one of our forthcoming council meetings, the dates of which are available on the website and parish notice boards.

Nigel Gibbons

Chair - West Swindon Parish Council