

WEST SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Monday 23 April 2018 at 7.30pm

Minutes

Present:
21 Residents

West Swindon Parish Council: Cllr M Courtliff, Cllr S Gattapur, Cllr N Gibbons, Cllr E Heavens, Cllr V Kumar, Cllr J Lenton, Cllr T Makofu, Cllr N Martin, Cllr M Martin, Cllr T Swinyard, Cllr C Sydney Smith, Cllr M Walker, Cllr K Williams.

1. Apologies

Cllr Steph Exell

2. Welcome

Chair of West Swindon Parish Council, Cllr Nigel Gibbons welcomed residents to the first Annual Parish Meeting for the parish of West Swindon.

3. Guest Speaker: Ms Amelia Patterson: Litter; My Three Step Plan

Local school girl and resident of Shaw, Ms Amelia Patterson introduced her work as a volunteer litter picker and campaigner. Ms Patterson promoted prevention, education and action as a community to tackle the litter issues. Residents asked a number of questions and suggested that there could be links with Lydiard Park Academy and its Community Ambassadors.

The Chair thanked Ms Patterson for her presentation.

4. Annual Report from the Chair.

Cllr Nigel Gibbons reported that the Parish Council had completed a busy first year with a range of projects that would be highlighted in the Committee reports including planting, reviewing Streetsmart services, establishing an office and recruiting staff. The Precept for next year 2018/19 was agreed with no change across the Council Tax bands proposed.

5. Finance Report

Paula Harrison – Parish Manager reported that the Parish Council had not completed a 12 month financial year due to the elections in May and a slow start. This resulted in an underspend for the year which would be combined to fund key projects in 2018/19 such as play area refurbishment and the creation of General Reserves accounts for the Parish Council. A report is attached as Appendix A to the Minutes.

Resident Questions:

Q. The report information is confusing A. Information will be simplified and put on the Parish Council's website.

Q. The Reserves from one year to the next do not match, £37,000 is missing? A. £219,000 is allocated to the 2018 budget and the remainder is General Reserves. A further response will be sent in writing.

Q. Are the Council's auditors prioritising actions/recommendations? A. Not at this time.

Q. What has happened with the tax base that has previously been reported by Swindon Borough Council? A. The Parish Council submits a Precept Demand and does not collect Council Tax – this is an enquiry for Swindon Borough Council.

Q. When is the Parish tendering for Streetsmart services?

A. The services are being reviewed by an independent consultant.

Q. *What is the cost of the consultant?*

A. Costs for the current phase are in the region of £5,000.

6. Report from the Finance and Staffing Committee

Cllr Nigel Gibbons reported that an Assistant Clerk had been appointed and would be starting from 1 May 2018. The Precept was agreed and progress for the next financial year's projects was underway.

7. Report from the Planning & Environment Committee

Cllr Keith Williams (Chair of Planning & Environment Committee) reported that the Committee had dealt with a range of planning applications throughout the year. The Battery Storage facility at Mannington was one of the main development proposals. The Committee had progressed work to tackle pavement parking and had invited Streetsmart Cleaning Team representatives to answer questions about the service. The Committee had reviewed the Neighbourhood Planning process and would not be progressing at this time. Enhanced work to tackle tall shrubbery had been commissioned for 2018/19 and the Committee had liaised with Swindon Borough Council on the funding from sponsoring roundabouts.

Resident Questions:

Q. *What action is being taken on Welton Road with ongoing pavement parking and parking traffic restrictions?*

A. These are Swindon Borough Council measures, parish councillors have taken action to speak to car owners about pavement parking.

Q. *What about the impact of Delta 800?*

A. This is under permitted development and there is little influence that the Parish Council can make on this type of conversion.

Q. *Can anything be done about parking on Caronbridge Road?*

A. Busy times such as the Church do create parking issues. The Parish is working with Swindon Borough Council on options for parking enforcement.

Q. *How was the sale of the toddler play area agreed?*

A. There has been no sale of the toddler play area.

Q. *Could the grasscutting include setting aside areas for wildflower meadows?*

A. The Parish Council's Leisure and Amenities Committee is actively supporting this.

Q. *What is the impact of the road layout at Ridgeway Farm?*

A. These are Wiltshire Council proposals but the T junction at the top of Swinley Drive should funnel through Ridgeway Farm traffic.

8. Report from the Leisure & Amenities Committee

Cllr Matthew Courtliff (Chair of Leisure and Amenities Committee) reported that the work of the Committee had been very positive with regular public participation. KMC Consultancy reviewing Streetsmart Services will deliver a value for money assessment. The Committee has installed 20 new bins and is on track for a further 20 bins as part of the second phase of litter bins. Five play areas are earmarked for refurbishment this year and the Committee has reviewed the condition of all 20 play areas. The bulb planting programme on Shaw Ridge and Mannington was completed and survived the cold weather conditions. Work was underway to establish wildflower meadows in partnership with FAB. The Committee had funded WestWords – a project with Lydiard Park Academy. Grant had paid for a community poet and camera/editing work. Film showing scheduled for Wednesday 16 May at 6.30 pm at the West Swindon Library.

Resident Questions:

Q. *What is the work pattern of street sweepers? Why don't they work where there are no raised kerbs?*

A. The enquiry will be raised with Streetsmart.

Q. *If you are doing 5 play areas this year, what about next year?*

A. The Parish has set aside funding for an annual programme of refurbishment so will look at other play areas next year based on the inspection reports.

Q. *When will you fine people for littering? Hook St, Bess Road, taxi drivers in lay-bys.*

A. Discussions are underway with Swindon Borough Council as they currently have the powers/authority.

Q. *Why is Freshbrook always the poor relation? When it comes to bins and noticeboards other areas do much better than Freshbrook?*

A. A significant proportion of the next phase of litter bins are for Freshbrook. The noticeboard was put in Tesco's at the Village Centre as this was felt to be the best place.

Q. *Is anything going to happen at the dew pond in Toothill Park?*

A. We will ask Streetsmart to inspect and report back.

9. Update from the Flytipping & Litter Working Party

Cllr Ellen Heavens thanked Ms Patterson for her interesting and thoughtful presentation and suggested that there could be much work with peer educators like Ms Patterson. Cllr Heavens thanked residents who take litter and flytipping seriously and give up time to deal with it. Cllr Heavens reported that the Working Party would be reviewing the current approach to street cleaning and that there needed to be an end to the ongoing culture and behaviours. Cllr Heavens promoted a workshop event on Saturday 12 May at 3.00 pm for residents to discuss issues relating to litter and flytipping with the Parish Council.

Resident Questions:

Q. *The general attitude and behaviour has changed towards picking up dog mess? Could something similar apply to litter?*

A. Its complicated and we need to tackle all of the reasons behind it.

Q. *Commercial waste dumping is an issue.*

A. Swindon Borough Council could delegate powers so the Parish Council is working on it.

Q. *What about sweeping up grass cutting?*

A. The team are meant to take care but it is not cost effective to sweep up cuttings.

Q. *What about Great Western Way?*

A. This is done by Swindon Borough Council as a main highway but is only done once a year due to the cost.

10. Guest Speaker: Mr. Richard Beale, RHS In Bloom

Mr Beale introduced RHS in Bloom. The approach is to get communities involved in horticulture and the local environment. If the Parish Council is interested it should work with interested groups and residents through an In Bloom committee.

In West, taking an informal approach is possible by linking together existing groups and projects through the Its Your Neighbourhood Scheme. This supports smaller community approaches to specific projects and schemes.

Mr Beale encouraged the Parish Council and residents in West to consider it and offered to assist at a future date.

The Chair thanked Mr Beale for his presentation.

11. Public Questions

Q. Resident asked if the Parish Council was interested in empowering people to get more involved as many residents might be time rich but might not want to just litter pick?

A. The Chair indicated that resident involvement was very important to the Parish Council and this would be progressed further this year.

12. Meeting Close

Chair, Cllr Nigel Gibbons thanked the speakers and residents for attending. Unanswered questions would be addressed individually or via the website and the Parish Council could be approached at any time.

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