

SWINDON LOCAL COUNCILS' FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 29th September 2022.

In attendance: M Lucas (Central Swindon North), V Curtis (Covingham), L Brown (Haydon Wick) A John (Haydon Wick), R Hailstone (Haydon Wick), B Biggs (Highworth), G Wilson (Liddington), D Griffiths (South Swindon), J Hewett (Wroughton), G Overbury (Wroughton)

Also in attendance: A Reeves (Central Swindon North)

Secretary: L Cutter

285 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor R Hailstone was elected Chairman.

Proposed: Councillor A John

Seconded: Councillor G Wilson

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: To elect Councillor R Hailstone as Chairman of the Swindon Local Councils Forum.

286 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Councillor I Jankinson was elected Vice-Chairman.

Proposed: Councillor J Hewett

Seconded: Councillor V Curtis

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: To elect Councillor I Jankinson as Vice Chairman of the Swindon Local Councils Forum.

287 CONFIRMATION OF SECRETARY

L Cutter was confirmed as the Secretary.

288 CONFIRMATION OF EXTERNAL REPRESENTATIVES

A. SBC Standards Committee – Councillors M Compton (Blunsdon) and R Hailstone (Haydon Wick)

B. Wiltshire and Swindon Countryside Access Forum – Councillor T Charnock (Stanton Fitzwarren)

C. Swindon Youth Advisory Group – Councillor D Griffiths (South Swindon)

289 FINANCIAL REPORT

Members received an update from the Secretary regarding the income to date and any outstanding subscriptions that have been chased. The Secretary's salary has been paid up until March 2023. There is now an adequate contingency amount of £500.00 so the budget can be reduced for next year meaning there will be a cost saving in subscriptions.

290 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Members approved the minutes of the last AGM meeting held in September 2021.

Proposed: Councillor V Curtis

Seconded: Councillor A John

Vote: Agreed unanimously

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the last AGM as a true record.

291 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from I Jankinson (Blunsdon), M Compton (Blunsdon), P Sunners (Chiseldon), C Wilkinson (Chiseldon), R Codrington (Stanton Fitzwarren), G Hawkes (Covingham) and D Lomax (Wanborough).

292 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting 26th May 2022 were signed as a true record.

Proposed: Councillor A John

Seconded: Councillor D Griffiths

Vote: Agreed unanimously

RESOLVED: To approve and sign the minutes of the previous meeting 26th May 2022.

293 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Min Ref 278 – Mapping System – explanation from the Chief Operating Officer (S Mowbray) at Swindon Borough Council during the Clerks & Chairs Forum recently regarding tree maintenance issues, S106 delays and staff redundancies. S Mowbray is collecting examples of what would be useful for the mapping system to see which information can be shared.

Min Ref 241 – Town Advisory Engagement Panel – Meetings have now ceased, and Swindon Borough Council is progressing the projects. There may be the occasional need for an advisory panel, these are ad hoc, in the event that a problem occurs.

294 SWINDON BOROUGH & LOCAL COUNCILS DRAFT CHARTER

Members received an update from the working party that a revised draft was received and sent back to Councillor D Heenan & S Mowbray at Swindon Borough Council. It was acknowledged that the draft is almost at its final stages and will be ready to be circulated to local councils in readiness for Swindon Borough Council presenting the document to cabinet in December 2022.

295 SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE

Members discussed initiatives to assist with supporting Ukraine.

- Councillor J Hewett advised that Wroughton has been approached by HAF GB (Humanitarian Aid fund) to discuss adopting a village in Ukraine to help rebuild the economy once the attacks have ceased, this could be purchasing laptops for schools and hospitals. HAF GB has recently raised £26,000.00 at a gala dinner and sends a 40ft shipping container full of supplies to Ukraine frequently from donations. Councillor J Hewett will circulate the details.
- Councillor R Hailstone advised that Haydon Wick has been working closely with Pattern Church and is soon to host a Ukrainian Café which could include sign posting, assisting with job searching, a safe space to network and possibly receive some English lessons.
- Central Swindon North confirmed that several events are taking place throughout the four libraries within its local area. Also has done a series of fundraising events such as Park Run, but in recent times there has not been a lot of interest.
- South Swindon confirmed that the Health Hydro is giving free memberships to Ukrainian Refugees to make use of its gym facilities.

296 COST OF LIVING CRISIS

Members discussed the current cost of living crisis and ways in which local councils could help local communities.

- Wroughton confirmed it is hosting drop in sessions with SBC's Financial First Aiders
- Haydon Wick will be hosting a Warm Space on a Monday & Friday from 11am – 1pm and signposting people to neighbouring warm space initiatives. Also has recently paid the NJC pay award to its staff and provided them with a staff larder.
- Central Swindon North also has discussed opening its libraries and extending to local churches and its plot holders are sharing allotment produce which is then used for hot meals.
- Wroughton is doing the same initiative with plot holders.
- Liddington is opening the community centre and village hall to provide a warm room and refreshments.

297 PROMOTING HEALTH & WELLBEING

Covingham advised the local church is promoting a different activity every week for residents to go along to, the sessions are designed for mental wellbeing and loneliness.

Many parishes present confirmed the promotion of dementia friendly communities, inclusive of website and policy updates. Haydon Wick confirmed it has recently received £10,000.00 in grant funding from the National Lottery and won an award from Wiltshire Community First. Haydon Wick also has an interactive Mobi Table which is available for hire.

298 TREE MAINTENANCE ISSUES & OVERHANGING VEGETATION

Central Swindon North: Raised some ongoing examples of land ownership issues and how these are defined within leases and agreements. There are several costs associated to maintenance on these pieces of land, especially with regards to tree maintenance which could cost as much as £680,000.00 and Central Swindon disagree with the details within the documents. Central Swindon has received advice from NALC regarding leasehold and freeholds.

Covingham: Raised several examples of private overgrown vegetation encroaching public footpaths. Apparently, SBC Highways can send notices that eventually lead to enforcement if no action. Some members present confirmed they issue a letter to the resident politely requesting that the hedges are cut back, if they aren't then the parish council could do this and charge for the service – it has never escalated to this stage.

299 PLANNING ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

Councillor A John (Haydon Wick) gave examples of two properties within Haydon Wick that have been subject to planning enforcement action, but both extensions are still standing. Haydon Wick has been chasing Swindon Borough Council on these items and asked questions to the Planning Inspectorate as to how long SBC must respond. Members suggested writing to Justin Tomlinson MP and asking NALC for sector specific help such as the legalities and consultation documents.

300 WILTSHIRE POLICE - COMMUNITY SAFETY GROUPS

Some members were concerned that the Wiltshire Police meetings have not reached their communities yet. The Police confirmed visits to high crime areas would take priority and a pilot scheme in North Swindon and West Swindon has proven successful. Covingham confirmed that two meetings were set up and subsequently cancelled. Most parishes present had good working relationships with their local PCSO's, and some attend the Council meetings to give operational updates.

301 BUS SERVICES UPDATE

Councillor A John (Haydon Wick) explained to the forum that there is a rerouted bus service through two main streets in Taw Hill. This is causing a lot of upset to residents and a complaint to Swindon Bus Service has been submitted on their behalf. Buses are being rerouted down very narrow streets. Members confirmed this is an issue generally Borough Wide. Wroughton has representatives for a Transport Committee meeting but there have not been any meetings recently. There may be scope for parishes to work together and meet collectively to discuss transport issues with Swindon Borough Council.

302 ELECTRIC VEHICLES AND CHARGING POINTS

Members shared experiences with fleets of electric vehicles. A general observation was the lack of electric vehicle spaces throughout Swindon and how rural parishes could struggle with this initiative. Members felt that new properties should come with allocated electric vehicle spaces to make the scheme successful.

303 UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND

Members present confirmed that applications for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund were submitted by their parish councils, but no one present had an update which projects had been successful. Further information has been requested by SBC on multiple occasions, but no updates have been received.

304 MEMBERS REPORTS

Councillor A John (Haydon Wick): Asked if there were any updates on the plans for the Swindon Robin's Stadium? *Members confirmed there was a press release recently and that construction works had been ceased pending further investigation.*

Councillor D Griffiths (South Swindon): South Swindon be holding the light trail at the Town Gardens again this year from 2nd December until New Years Eve.

Councillor G Wilson (Liddington): Asked if there were any updates from SBC regarding revised Transfer of Services Deeds? *Members confirmed that S Mowbray raised this in a recent Clerks & Chairs meeting and explained there has not been any resources available to progress with this, SBC Officers are busy with other priorities.*

305 ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

To be passed to the secretary in time for the next meeting on 17th November 2022.

The Chairman thanked Central Swindon North for allowing use of the room for tonight's meeting.

The meeting ended at 20:57