

Minutes of the Swindon Local Councils Forum **Annual General Meeting** held 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023 at the Civic Offices, 7pm.

**Those present:** Councillors R Hailstone (Haydon Wick), I Jankinson (Blunsdon), L Gow (Highworth), J Whitehead (Chiseldon), V Curtis (Liddington), G Hawkes (Liddington) G Wilson (Liddington), J Ali (West Swindon), N White (Stanton Fitzwarren), C McEwen (South Marson), K Smith (Highworth), A Jimmy (Haydon Wick), M Compton (Blunsdon), N Hopkins (South Swindon), D Griffiths (South Swindon) and John Hower (Wroughton).

**Also in attendance:** L Cutter (Secretary), D Bourne (Wiltshire Association of Local Councils), Councillor J Grant (Swindon Borough Council's Cabinet Member for Communities and Joint Working), D Rose (Highworth)

**338 Election of Chairman**

Councillor R Hailstone was duly elected as Chair of the Swindon Local Councils Forum.

**Proposed: V Curtis**

**Seconded: I Jankinson**

**Vote: Agreed unanimously.**

**339 Election of Vice Chairman**

Councillor I Jankinson was duly elected as Vice Chair of the Swindon Local Councils Forum.

**Proposed: R Hailstone**

**Seconded: V Curtis**

**Vote: Agreed unanimously.**

**340 Confirmation of Secretary**

Laura Cutter was confirmed as the Secretary of the Swindon Local Councils Forum.

**341 External Representatives**

Members discussed each External Group and after consideration, agreed to the continuity of existing representatives of the Forum:

- SBC Standards Committee - Councillors R Hailstone and M Compton
- Wiltshire and Swindon Countryside Forum - Councillor T Charnock
- Swindon Youth Advisory Group - Councillor D Griffiths
- Town Deal Board – Councillor G Wilson

The Secretary will obtain further information regarding the Countryside Forum as understood that this Forum hasn't met yet.

**342 Financial Report 2022/2023**

The Secretary confirmed that the current bank balance is £316.86 and there are eight parishes that have not yet paid their subscriptions, which total £655.00, the Clerks of these parishes will be contacted again for payment. The Secretary's salary of £1,136.00 has been paid for this financial year. Next year's subscriptions should incorporate the membership of the two parishes that joined this year and there are now also sufficient contingency funds in the bank account, so a further reduction can be made.

The Annual General Meeting concluded at 7.12pm

**Minutes of the Swindon Local Councils Forum meeting held 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023 at the Civic Offices, 7.15pm.**

**Those present:** Councillors R Hailstone (Haydon Wick), I Jankinson (Blunsdon), L Gow (Highworth), J Whitehead (Chiseldon), V Curtis (Liddington), G Hawkes (Liddington) G Wilson (Liddington), J Ali (West Swindon), N White (Stanton Fitzwarren), C McEwen (South Marson), K Smith (Highworth), A Jimmy (Haydon Wick), M Compton (Blunsdon), N Hopkins (South Swindon), D Griffiths (South Swindon) and John Hewer (Wroughton).

**Also in attendance:** L Cutter (Secretary), D Bourne (Wiltshire Association of Local Councils), Councillor J Grant (Swindon Borough Council's Cabinet Member for Communities and Joint Working), D Rose (Highworth).

**343 Apologies**

R Codrington (Stanton Fitzwarren), A John (Haydon Wick), V Manro (Haydon Wick).

**344 Minutes**

Members agreed to approve the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

**Proposed: Councillor I Jankinson**

**Seconded: Councillor J Hewer**

**Vote: Agreed unanimously.**

**RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2023.**

**345 Introduction from WALC's Local Councils Advisor**

Deborah Bourne introduced herself to the meeting and explained the function of the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils in its advisory capacity to local parishes. It is noticeable at the meetings that there is not much representation from Swindon and WALC would like to improve communications and partnership working. Many of the issues experienced in Wiltshire are also apparent in Swindon, so there is a good reason to network and share best practice. The Chairman confirmed that the Swindon Local Councils Forum (formally known as Swindon Area Committee) was set up as a subsidiary to WALC as a focus group for Swindon issues. The WALC meetings are often quite far into Wiltshire and are held in the evenings. Members agreed that WALC should be supported as it has been very helpful with local issues, training and offering advice, in line with each individual parish council's memberships. The Secretary confirmed that she would attend the WALC Committee meetings where necessary and report back on items to the Forum.

Training sessions will be provided more locally, and Wroughton Parish Council offered its meeting room space. Deborah will liaise with Wroughton Parish Council directly and get some training dates confirmed in due course. Deborah was interested in the introduction from Councillor Jim Grant and improving partnership working, so agreed to observe some of the meeting.

**346 Introduction from Councillor Jim Grant (SBC Cabinet Member for Communities and Joint Working)**

Members received an introduction from Councillor J Grant regarding his aspirations for term of office and the importance of improving communications with local councils. Councillor J Grant explained that a Parish Liaison Officer has now been appointed which will give dedicated personnel to attend to parish issues and improve communications. An email detailing the current position was sent to Clerks & Chairs a few days ahead of the meeting and the general feedback was that this correspondence was welcomed. A meeting has been proposed for Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023 to discuss the content of the email and suggested next steps.

**347 Borough & Local Councils Draft Charter Protocol**

Discussed in length during the previous agenda item. The Protocol Working Party will liaise with Councillor J Grant outside of the Forum and report back in November. In the meantime, there is a meeting due to take place on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023 which Clerks & Chairs have been invited to, the Secretary and Chairman of the Forum will also be invited to attend.

**348 SBC Elections Cycle**

Members discussed whether the Forum wishes to submit a collective response to the SBC Elections Cycle Consultation. The newer parishes are also on a different elections cycle, it would be beneficial to continue to tie the parish and borough elections together as it would save on costs for polling stations and elections administration.

**349 Members Reports**

There were none.

**350 Items for the Next Agenda**

To be passed to the Secretary ahead of the meeting on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023.