

Swindon Local Councils Forum Minutes 18th September 2025
Meeting held at 7pm in SBC Civic Offices, Committee Room 2

Those present: V Manro (Chairman), P Park (Central North), I Kearsey (Chiseldon), G Hawkes (Covingham), S May (Covingham), G Wilson (Liddington), J Hodgkinson (Hannington), R Hailstone (Haydon Wick), L Gow (Highworth), J Firmin (South Swindon), T Charnock (Stanton Fitzwarren) and J Hewer (Wroughton)

Also present: L Cutter, SLCF Secretary
H Robinson, Swindon Borough Council
E Freemantle, Wroughton Parish Council

416 Apologies

Were received and accepted from:

Ian Nockolds, WALC	Val Curtis, Covingham
Neil Hopkins, South Swindon	Steve Heyes, St Andrew
Adam John, Haydon Wick	Clive Bunney, Liddington
Nick Hartley, Hannington	Colin McEwen, South Marston
Diane Archer, Wroughton	Ian Jankinson, Blunsdon
Neil Hopkins, South Swindon	

417 Minutes

Members approved the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 26th June 2025 are a true record.

Proposed: Councillor I Kearsey

Seconded: Councillor J Hewer

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 26th June 2025 are a true record.

418 Matters arising from the Minutes

No matters were arising from the Minutes that are not included in the agenda for this evening's meeting.

419 Updates from the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC)

Ian Nockolds, County Advisor, WALC provided a written update and gave detail about the annual conference. Key highlights include preparing for the Elections 2026 and assisting SBC with training, NALC attended conference to discuss devolution, and a pack will be prepared and distributed to Members, training demands such as planning.

420 Swindon Local Plan 2043 – Regulation 18 Consultation

Members noted the consultation runs 1st September – 13th October 2025. Individual parishes and councillors will provide feedback or attend consultation events. Most events are daytime, with evening sessions requested for maximum accessibility.

Hard copies are available at local libraries, with parish councils able to request copies. All are encouraged to participate and critique the document before adoption, after which comments cannot be made.

Interest was expressed in the call for sites, including highways infrastructure and dwelling totals against local amenities. Play area documents should be reviewed as these protected sites provide useful reference material

421 Borough & Local Councils Partnership Working

A. Planning Partnership Framework

The Negotiating Working Party recently met with SBC Officers to review the protocol and annexes, linking in the new Director of Operations and the Chief Planning Officer to review the Planning Annex.

B. Report on Partnership Working Initiative

Helena Robinson, Director of Integrated Communities and Partnerships, SBC outlined opportunities for increased partnership working, including current projects:

- **Brighter Broadgreen** (Police Initiative) with South Swindon Parish Council
- **NDTI workshops** with Central Swindon North and South Swindon Parish Councils on data collection
- **Voluntary Access Swindon Community Connector** within Central Swindon North Parish Council - community-focused groups supporting residents accessing statutory support
- **NDTI expansion** to Stratton and West Swindon using PLACE data and established experiences
- **Community hubs** utilising libraries and accessible spaces for the public to be able to receive information from multiple partners for early intervention statutory services
- **Trail blazer project in Penhill** - £20 million over 10 years (£2 million annually) from local authority for sustainable community development
- **Sport England place-based work** - targeting areas with lower physical activity levels, with Wiltshire & Swindon bidding for funding to benefit wider communities
- **Clerks Forum** in October
- **Shared Comms Forum** in October at New College for sharing work, networking, and developing partnership activities

Focus areas include larger parishes and areas of deprivation/highest need. Community hubs like libraries will be better utilized through partnerships to provide signposting for support, financial wellbeing, and health services, creating a network of existing community spaces.

C. SBC Operational Update

Newly appointed Director of Operations, Simon Anthony, is active and engaged, he is involved in a lot of different areas and is keen to work closely with parishes to improve the current service level and communications. Would welcome the opportunity to come along to a future Forum meeting.

- **Members Hotline** (JADU account) business analyst is looking into this, and Central North Parish Council is actively part of the trial
- **Customer services improvements** to ensure that correct responses are received by the experienced people rather than closing the case and establish boundaries and services, appreciate the list is different for each parish
- **Swindon Mapping System** it is good but is based on older data, there will be some development to the software <https://maps.swindon.gov.uk/>
- – to consider adding responsibility of water ways and verges and include the parishes ownership and responsibilities
- **Speed of Reply** could do with enhancement, especially with regards to road closures for public events like the Swindon Half Marathon, as enquiries are on behalf of the community who may be worried about disruption to their caring commitments or travel arrangements

422 SBC Active Swindon Trail: Walking Routes

Walking routes planned for West Swindon, Haydon Wick and Wanborough. Parishes contacted to highlight local assets (e.g. West Swindon's mural underpasses). Highworth residents called upon to create new routes. Claire Flemming, Swindon Travel Services, was unavailable this evening so the item deferred to November meeting.

In the meantime, parishes encouraged to check website and ensure signage on existing walking routes are still installed and readable. QR codes and modernisation being implemented with permanent routes offering certificates and badges for participants to encourage young families to participate.

423 Increased Fly Tipping

Tom Charnock (Stanton) advised there has been an increase in builders waste being fly tipped, usually when logged it is cleared by SBC within 48 hours, but Wiltshire Council seem to be more proactive on the enforcement front. The Chairman explained that the Director of Operations mentioned in a recent meeting that there are two new fly tipping crews, two new staff trained to issue penalties or activate court action.

Ian Kearsey (Chiseldon) acknowledge some areas SBC do not pick up the waste and there are additional charges to the parish.

Lesley Gow (Highworth) advised that Highworth does not have the time and resources to take waste to the tip.

The Chairman will request enforcement statistics and the operational areas for the fly tipping crew, as primarily the Officers are there for the public space protection order sites within the Town Centre.

424 Street Work Licences

Discussed with Director of Operations, fees part of the act. Planning applications get 50% off, he is going to come up with a list of set charges. Jake has written a report on this in July with a proposal of different tiers.

425 Election 2026

Members acknowledged the email from Matt Box (SBC, Head of Elections and Democracy) about the Elections 2026. Key highlights:

- Election Notices will be published on Monday 23rd March – nomination period will close at 4pm on Thursday 9th April.
- Pre-Election Period (Purdah) will be Monday 23rd March – Thursday 7th May.
- There will be a briefing with the Clerks in February, date TBC.

No confirmation of costs yet, these are usually reduced in line with SBC elections taking part at the same time and sharing polling stations. Part of the realignment of the election cycle with SBC was to save on costs. Recognised parishes need to know soon for budget setting.

Concern locally that candidates are not standing for parish elections and there needs to be modernisation to include expenses for babysitting costs and the expectation to represent and make decisions for the community.

426 Joint Procurement Projects

John Hodgkinson (Hannington) – Play Area Refurbishment – hugely grateful to Wroughton what they have done in advising the process for Play Area refurbishments. There are two very good trusts that supply money for a lot of children, discussing with the trusts to get a substantial grant as to determine what Hannington to do.

427 Members Reports

Liddington: Biogas Development Planning Update - Common Head Roundabout:

SBC's Planning Committee has approved a controversial biogas development at Common Head roundabout despite significant procedural failures and policy concerns. Liddington Parish Council was not consulted on the application, and community objections were dismissed without documented justification or explanation from the SBC's Planning Committee. The development affects an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) site with strict development limits and sits across the dual carriageway from hospital infrastructure. Particularly concerning is that the original application from January 2024 received major objections from initial planning officers, but new officers subsequently disregarded these concerns. Similar procedural issues have occurred in Stanton and Highworth, suggesting systemic problems with SBC's planning governance.

428 Items for the Next Agenda

To be passed to the Secretary or Chairman in advance of the next meeting on the 20th November 2025.

The meeting closed at 20:48

Swindon Local Councils Forum Minutes 18th September 2025
Annual General Meeting held at 8:49pm in SBC Civic Offices, Committee Room

429 Election of Chairman

Members nominated Councillor Vinay Manro to continue chairmanship for 2025/2026.

Proposed: Councillor I Kearsey

Seconded: Councillor G Hawkes

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

Resolved: To duly elect Councillor V Manro as Chairman of the Swindon Local Councils Forum.

430 Election of Vice Chairman

Members nominated Councillor Ian Jankinson to continue vice-chairmanship for 2025/2026.

Proposed: Councillor V Manro

Seconded: Councillor R Hailstone

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

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

431 Confirmation of the Secretary

Members agreed for Laura Cutter to continue as Secretary.

Proposed: Councillor J Hewer

Seconded: Councillor I Kearsey

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

Resolved: To confirm Laura Cutter as the ongoing Secretary of the Swindon Local Councils Forum.

432 Confirmation of External Representatives

SBC Standards Committee – *In June 2025, following resignation of Councillor M Compton (Blunsdon), Councillor I Kearsey (Chiseldon) agreed to take on the SBC Standards Representative role with Councillor R Hailstone (Haydon Wick). In view of the upcoming elections the Forum suggested that the two representatives remain.*

Proposed: Councillor P Park

Seconded: Councillor J Hewer

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

Resolved: To nominate Councillors R Hailstone (Haydon Wick) and I Kearsey (Chiseldon) to continue as the SBC Standards Representative roles on behalf of the Swindon Local Councils Forum.

433 Approval of Previous Minutes 2024/2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th September 2024 were approved at the Forum meeting on 21st November 2024, proposed by Councillor Ian Jankinson and seconded by Councillor John Hewer. Minute reference: 385.

434 Financial Report 2025/2026

The current bank balance is £463.27 after the Secretary's salary of £1,500.00 + £48.00 to include the NJC Terms & Conditions percentage rise of 3.2% (as agreed at the previous Annual General Meeting. Minute reference: 373).

From February 2025 monthly bank charges are being received of £4.25 per month, this was unforeseen as hasn't been budgeted for so will come out of the contingency fund.

West Swindon did not rejoin and therefore the income was down by £185.00 per annum, this will also be deducted from the contingency fund.

The Secretary and Chairman will work on updating the signatories on the account in view of Councillor M Compton (Blunsdon) resignation. Currently the bank signatories are the Secretary and Councillor R Hailstone. The bank signatories should include the Chairman & Vice Chairman.

The Secretary proposes that the budget increases from £1,500.00 to £1,700.00 to account for the salary increase, the £48.00pa bank charges and to bring the contingency back up to £500.00. Swindon Borough Council continues to provide free room hire for the Forum.

435 May 2026

To note that the AGM for 2026 may have to take place post-elections in May 2026 in case there is a change in Membership.

Meeting closed: 20:57

