

Present: Cllrs Mr S Massey (Chairman), Mrs V Boote (Vice Chair), Mrs P Halford, Dr R Painter, Mr G Fanthom, Mrs L Page, Ms D Chandler, Mr K Pincher.

Also, present Mrs J Cree –Clerk.

129/23. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies of absence were received from Cllr Mr S Hewitt and County Cllr Mrs V Wilson.

130/23. To receive a report on Crime and Anti-social Behaviour.

The reports were circulated to members from the PCSO's and were noted. An apology from the Police was received that a PCSO could not attend the meeting.

The following was reported on behalf of Cllr S Hewitt that could not make the meeting:-

"I believe the report should include the car stolen from the frontage of a house on High Street Swindon where a device was used to capture the access codes to open it. I have been able to provide CCTV to assist the police. The officer who came to view said that another publicity campaign regarding RFID blocking pouches was due. Is there a planned date for this and if not imminent can some interim info be sent to Jenny for us to put on our website and Facebook page?"

Cllr Dr R Painter reported he had attended the drop in at Himley Hall with the PCSO's and also a later one at the Platform Café. The PCSO's need to ensure that these events are well published.

131/23. Presentation from Claire Rawlings – Health and Well Being

The presenter did not attend.

132/23. Declarations of Councillors' Interest.

Cllrs Mr G Fanthom, Mrs P Halford, Mrs L Page and Mr S Massey re affirmed that having previously declared an interest as they are serving members of Swindon Community Centre.

133/23. To receive for confirmation and adoption, the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 13th July 2023 (copy attached).

The minutes of the meeting held on the 13th July 2023 were agreed by majority with 1 abstention.

134/23. County / District Councillors to address the Council on any matters relevant to the Parish

County Councillor Mrs V Wilson sent her apologies for the meeting.

135/23. To discuss Development Applications received.

Validated application

23/00762/VAR Green Acres, Church Road, Swindon
Application Reference Number: 12/00709/FUL Date of Decision: 17/10/2012 Removal of Condition 10 (PD rights): Government policy does not support the removal of PD rights on green belt grounds

Recommend Refusal on the grounds that the Greenbelt should be protected by keeping the continued removal of the permitted development rights

23/00723/FUL Finnley Barns Church Road Swindon DUDLEY DY3 4PG
The erection of an agricultural building for storage of conserved forage crops and machinery

No Objection

23/00485/FUL The Old Chapel Chapel Lane Smestow
Change of use of land to extend residential garden

Recommend refusal on the grounds that the greenbelt land should not be converted into garden land as it would result in a loss of Greenbelt land.

Decisions

23/00494/FUL 6 Hinksford Park Swindon Road Hinksford
Change of use from C3 dwellinghouse to a day centre for Age UK (Class E use)
Decision Approved

23/00505/FULHH 2 Chasepool Cottages The Holloway Swindon
Alterations to external finishes, removal of chimney, installation of rooflights and solar panels, and a single storey side extension to create an entrance porch (Modification to permission 21/00711/FUL)
Decision Approved

23/00485/FUL The Old Chapel Chapel Lane Smestow
Change of use of land to extend residential garden
Decision Refused

23/00506/FULHH 35 Wombourne Road Swindon
Two storey and single storey front extension
Decision Refuse

11/9/23

The above were noted.

136/23. To receive an update on the cricket, bowls, and allotment leases

The leases are still in the process of being updated by the solicitor. The following email was received on the 5th September:-

“Dear Olivia

I thank you for your email below. I have forwarded the draft underlease with your latest comment to the superior landlord’s lawyer.

On the EPC, do you know what the costs are?

Kind regards

Waheed Rahman”

A follow up email was then sent from Olivia on the 12th September :-

“Dear Waheed

Any word from the head landlord?

Please see updated amended draft with a couple of tidying up points which should be non-contentious:

1. Definition of Tenant amended to include words ‘from time to time’
2. Clause 2
3. Clause 10.2 addition of words ‘and reasonable’
4. Clause 22.6 addition of words ‘reasonable and proper’.

14th September 2023

Kind regards

Olivia Davies - Solicitor"

Waheed has chased the head lawyer today (Emma) to process further. The head lease is the only lease to be completed and then the rest can be signed.

This was noted.

137/23. To receive an update and discuss grounds maintenance / repairs at the playing fields and the village

The following was asked to be raised by Cllr S Hewitt in his absence:-

St John's Church Gate.

He has spent time relaying 6 pavers that were a trip hazard to villagers. There is one still standing proud that has been cemented in that he was not equipped to fix. He will return to do it asap.

The following update was received re Brooklands from Cllr Roger Lees

"Apologies for the delay in getting back to you. We have sought to obtain three quotes but have only had one response – the other two contractors are being chased but if responses are not received, we will (under our procurement policy) need to carry out a validation of the one quote received. Confidentially, the one quote is large - this is not for public release as it still requires checking. If the works do end up costing this sort of sum plus VAT, homeowners will unfortunately have a large bill to pay (although not all as the requirement to pay for a contribution to maintaining the road was not included for at least one homeowner).

I'm still liaising with Severn Trent and the answer is still no to their potential contribution of the costs to the road – because there is no legal requirement to do this. I'm going to appeal to the Chief Exec on the grounds of community impact – will include you in that email."

This was noted.

Cllr Dr R Painter has cleared several of the footpaths and is awaiting the use of the multitool purchased by the Parish Council. He has emailed the Chairman to ask for the use on 4 occasions, he will email the Clerk and the Vice Chairman for use in the future and this request to be forwarded to the Chairman.

138/23. To receive an update on the Parish Website

The Chairman reported that the Word-press licence renewal is due at a cost of £307.20. Cllr Mr K Pincher has been looking at a new website (before the renewal is due) and has found that the Grow web site is £2 per month for the first six months and £7 per month after that - invoiced monthly + VAT and SwindonParishCouncil.co.uk is currently discounted from £23.98 for two years to £11.99. +VAT.

It was proposed by Cllr Dr R Painter and seconded by Cllr Mrs P Halford to purchase the new website domain and website at the reduced costs detailed above. On a vote this was agreed.

It was noted that the Noticeboards need to be updated on a regular basis.

139/23. To discuss a SID sign and associated costs

The Chairman reported that this is Slow progress – the request for sites is currently with Community Highway Support Officer (Tom) he has been supplied with maps of Swindon & Smestow with a number of suggested locations for additional poles. These have been reviewed and passed to the department who look after the under-ground infrastructure and a reply is awaited from that department. Once received Tom will review and may attend for a site visit and then provide a decision.

He had a brief conversation with the Officer (Tom), and he did state that ground sockets / removable poles were preferred over fixed poles as a reduction in unused street furniture is seen as beneficial. This was noted.

Cllr Mrs V Boote will ask for the information from Mr A Aston on how long the SID will be in the Parish.

Community Speed Watch – it does operate with 2 members of the Council being qualified and several members of the public also being qualified to operate the device. No report is received on the use or data statistics from this group. This information would have to come from the Community Speed Watch Co-ordinator at Staffordshire Police.

Speed Watch sites are agreed by Community Speed Watch Co-ordinator on the grounds of safety, these are by the Green Man, one by the school, one by Smestow and one in the High Street.

20's plenty Staffordshire Group has sent an invite to all Parishes to attend via zoom to seek further information on what they are trying to achieve.

140/23. To receive the report of the Clerk

Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association - 84th AGM: Monday 30 October 2023, 7pm-9pm, Trentham Suite, Staffordshire Place.

141/23. To agree accounts for payment and note completion of the External auditor and receive any comments

The accounts for payment are listed below:-

Clerks Wage	£336.16 to be paid
Clerk HMRC	£84.00 to be paid
TalkTalk	£40.68 inc vat (includes one off payment for Router delivery £9.95 + vat) DD
Office consumables	£15.59 inc vat to be paid to Jenny
Mazars External Audit	£252.00 inc vat (paid)
Wombourne Printers	£108.00 no vat (paid)
Bryland Fire	£76.44 inc vat (Community Centre Extinguisher Service) (paid)
CCTV signs	£18.19 inc vat (paid)
Incoming	£500.00 Trysull Tigers pitch hire

It was proposed by Cllr Dr R Painter and seconded by Cllr Mr S Massey to accept these accounts for payment, on a vote they were carried.

The accounts have been completed by the external auditor and their certificate of completion is attached as appendix 1 to these minutes.

External Audit completed and passed with flying colours with no problems identified, thanks to the Clerk for her work looking after Parish finances, audit submissions, vat reclaims etc.

142/23. To discuss Wombourne Road Speed Limit Reduction

The following is an email from Diane Firkins on the potential costs of reducing the speed limit.

“My apologise I cannot locate the email I thought I had sent to you, so perhaps I did not get this over to you? Sorry.

The £8K cost for consideration for the reduction in the speed limit/40 mph buffer at Swindon is made up as below:

£6K minimum Traffic Regulation Order cost, this is the legal order for the speed limit to be enforceable, the old speed limit TRO will need to be revoked, consultation for the new TRO requires a very lengthy legal process usually taking around 6 months to complete, this involves statutory consultations with Police, Fire, Ambulance, Haulage, HGV ass. Etc.. then a public consultation process must be undertaken, via local newspaper advertisements, local Libraries,

notices placed on site. Should any objections be received these have to be dealt with on an individual basis, should there be too many objections then the TRO would fail but costs would still be incurred. Should the TRO be successful a further round of consultations has to be carried out to advertise the date of implementation so that the public are aware of the new order coming into force. There are also the design fees for the proposed scheme by the Engineers, which involve site visits, CDM compliance, H&S.

Then there are costs for lining, signing works and traffic management to ensure the crews can work safely, these costs are in the region of £2K.

Further to this the rumble strips may need to be removed or relocated and this would add further to the costs for this scheme.

I trust the above information assists with your enquiry."

Cllr Dr R Painter reported that he has been looking into traffic orders from other parishes and the costs are considerably lower. He requested that the Parish Council write and ask for an explanation on reduction and why the costs are so high for a proposed change at Swindon.

He has a petition from 40 members of the school families, along with staff to support the reduction of the speed limit.

It was agreed that the Clerk write and ask for a breakdown of the costs for Swindon and also for further information on other Parishes recent requests. Cllr Dr R painter to supply the necessary details to the Clerk.

143/23. To discuss defib training

Cllr Mrs V Boote reported that we had not found a reasonable priced trainer. She is still looking into this and will report back.

144/23. To receive an update on the Broadband contract for the Community Centre

The Broadband has been changed to Talk Talk, an Openreach Engineer attended 23/08/23 as there was a fault showing online which was repaired and TalkTalk router installed, the speed has increased with the new supplier. This was noted.

145/23. Wombourne Re-Cycling opening times and operations

This agenda item as requested by Cllr Dr R Painter. He wanted the Parish Council to consider whether Swindon Parish Council should approach Staffordshire County Council to consider reviewing opening times and operations to combat the prevalence of fly tipping within the Parish of Swindon.

An e-permit is now required for vans and trailers to use the site from the County Council.

Comments raised on behalf of Cllr Mr S Hewitt were that at Wombourne Recycling Centre, the opening times are clearly published on the net, in his opinion increasing availability will have no effect on fly tipping. If anything, removing the charges for certain waste types e.g., £3 per bag rubble and soil, glass etc may be more effective. In his personal view is he has already paid for a service why should we be charged extra?

It was agreed that the Clerk write to the County Council and copy SSDC to ask why rubble etc is charged and why is the site not open on a Monday and Tuesday, with the aim to reduce fly tipping within the area.

146/23. Items for future agendas (to be submitted by the 3rd October to Chairman and Clerk for consideration)

Defib training, SID Update, Speed limit reduction costs.

147/23. Date of next meeting – Thursday 12th October 2023 at 7.15pm

Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2022/23

In respect of

Swindon Parish Council

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>.

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2023; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2022/23

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with *Proper Practices* and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

Not applicable

3 External auditor certificate 2022/23

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2023.

*We do not certify completion because:

Not applicable

External Auditor Name

Mazars LLP, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1DF

External Auditor Signature

Mazars LLP

Date

1 August 2023

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23 Form 3
Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*

Page 6 of 6