

Present: Cllrs Mr S Massey (Chairman), Mr A Osbourne, Mrs P Halford, Mr G Fanthom (Vice Chairman), Dr R Painter, Mrs S Woods, Mrs L Page and Mrs D Chandler.

Also, present Clerk Mrs J Cree and County Cllr Mrs V Wilson and 3 members of the public.

31/26. Apologies for Absence.

An apology of absence was received from Cllr Mr S Hewitt. This was noted and accepted.

32/26. To report on Police matters and if available receive a report on Crime and Anti-social Behaviour.

The Police report was not received before the meeting. Cllr Dr R Painter reported he attended the Police meeting at Wombourne, and the new acting commander has stated that no reports will be coming out in the future, this is to be announced officially in due course.

Please report any issues directly to the Police.

33/26. Declarations of Councillors' Interest.

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

34/26. To receive for confirmation and adoption, the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12th March 2026

The minutes of the meeting held on the 12th March 2026 were agreed. They were proposed by Cllrs S Massey and seconded by Cllr Mrs L Page to accept the minutes, these were accepted.

35/26. County Councillor to address the Council on any matters relevant to the Parish

County Cllr Mrs V Wilson sent reported on the following:-

- 3.99% increase on the County Council tax this year. Every £1, spent by the County only 5p goes towards Highways work.
- The settlement from Government for Highways repairs to the County Council is £15 Million, this would only cover one are of the County. This money is purely to deal with outstanding potholes
- There are still capital expenditure projects happening like bridge repairs, traffic lights etc, this is funded from a different source.
- LGR – they are waiting to hear the Government's preferred option and should hear the end of the summer.
- Shadow Unitary Council elections will take place in May 2027, for 1 year. Parish Council are still expected to have an election next year and would cost £4500.

It was asked if the potholes on the end of the Mile Flat could be escalated, as there are 3 altogether. The inspector has been out, and they have looked and most are category 3's, but if Cllr Dr R Painter will send a new picture and the reference number she will look into it.

Chief Executive David Heywood and SPCA representative said that we should be able to share election costs, but this is still to be confirmed officially.

36/26. To discuss Development Applications received and LGR Response

Planning Applications

23/00723/COND Finnley Barns Church Road Swindon
Discharge of conditions 3 (external surface materials) for application 23/00723/FUL

24/00190/COND4 Land Adjacent To Hinksford Substation Hinksford Lane Hinksford
Discharge of condition 11 - landscaping of application 24/00190/FULM

- 24/00190/AMEND Land Adjacent To Hinksford Substation Hinksford Lane Hinksford
Amend the wording of Condition 13 so the Emergency Response Plan is submitted for approval by the Local Planning Authority prior to the installation of batteries on site, rather than prior to above-ground operations.
- 26/00135/FULHH Woodlands Himley Lane Himley
Retrospective planning application for the infilling of an existing boundary wall.

26/00209/FUL Proposal: Construction of a dutch barn Location: Smestow Grange Farm Smestow Road Swindon

Planning decisions

25/01121/LUP - Erection of detached domestic outbuilding - The Old Chapel, Chapel Lane, Smestow – Application refused

Licence application

Grant of a NEW TIME LIMITED premises licence Himley Park, Dudley, for the world cup – noted it was not in the Parish.

The above applications were noted.

LGR

It was agreed for members to make their own responses.

37/26. To receive an update and discuss and agree any maintenance and repairs required within the Parish

The Chairman reported on the following outstanding items:-

The following update was received from the County Council:-

1. Swinforge Way – land ownership: I do appreciate this is a long on-going issue, and the residents' concerns that we are not providing an answer to yourselves. Just to give some background on this, unfortunately the land is not registered with land registry (which can happen) and according to our records the area is not showing as forming part of the adopted highway. However, there is street lighting, and the district have cut the area on our behalf in the past. Therefore, it is for us to investigate further as to who is responsible for the land, and any liability with the trees within the unregistered land. We have investigated our archive records but not identified ownership. Sadly, this is not a simple process to clarify the owner, and with workloads it has been difficult with priorities/emergencies to devote the time to explore this further. I will give this another push, and enquiry with our Governance Officer as to taking on responsibility for a decision as to this specific piece of land, as I say I do understand the frustrations, but as this is not posing a highway safety issue this has not taken priority in our workloads. **No further updates on this matter to date.**
2. Consideration of a dropped kerb for pedestrian access along Church Road: as discussed this had been raised with yourselves about residents walking along Church Road to gain access to the High Street, with no dropped kerb to enable them access onto the footpath. We discussed the concerns of lowering a kerb near to the public house as the pub has had history recently of internal flooding, therefore we would be mindful not to exacerbate this matter by lowering the kerb and thus allowing water to travel over the lowered kerb into the PH. I appreciate you stated the area we were considering a dropped kerb was at a higher point to where the water floods, therefore we may need to consider topological surveys to determine if this would be the case. Another more important matter that we would need to take into consideration if a lowered kerb was provided, is that there is insufficient footpath width to enable vulnerable users to pass the public house to make access to the dropped crossing and therefore we could somewhat been seen to be creating a highway safety issues, if we provide a pedestrian crossing point for residents along Church Road to expect them to enter the carriageway to have access to the new crossing point. I do appreciate that this may be what has/is taking place at present, however the layout of the road and footpath here is historical, but if we now make changes, we are not complying with todays safety standards and recommendations. I also explained the costs would involve dropping the existing kerbs and the requirement to reprofile the footpath, and also being mindful of the existing utilities within the area to allow this. The costs could also be beyond Cllr Wilson's DHP budget and may require some funding via the Parish Council should you consider this to be a priority on your agenda. **As stated this request will have limited benefit, as residents would still have to walk in the carriageway on Church Road owing to the limited width available at the pinch point by the public**

house. There are still no funds available for us to consider this site, as it is beyond Cllr Wilson DHP budget, owing to the necessary surveys that would need to be carried out prior to any work taking place.

3. Water dispersing onto Church Road footpath and carriageway, following the contact we made with the residents who live next to this "water leak" we enquired as to the source of the water that has been running along the footpath and road for some considerable time now, the residents kindly confirmed they were not being affected by the water and the source was not within their private ownership, one resident did confirm that the water flows even during the very dry weather we have had through the summer, from my observations and the resident confirming there was an unpleasant smell coming from the water, it is more likely the water contains foul and not a spring that has appear. (albeit until we carry out a dig down investigation we cannot be sure) during our meeting you also provided some useful content to state that residents who use the church are parking lower down the Road and having to walk through the water and slush on the footpath, and have concerns for pedestrian safety during the winter period when the footpath will freeze again, one resident also confirmed to us that they had witness someone fall in this area, but thankfully not hurt. One resident stated their concern with travelling through the said water on a daily basis when entering their property. I will be taking this matter up further at an operation meeting I have on Friday and will update you further on the outstanding dig down work we have. We are all aware that the Water Authority have been out on a couple of occasions and tested the water but stated it was not a water leak for them to repair. It was also observed that the matter has got worse over time, and the defect in the footpath has deteriorated too. I will update you more on this issue following further discussion at our end. It will be for the Highway Authority to carry out the dig down investigation work, if we do establish this is from foul water we would then provide the evidence to the water authority and for them to then take on the ownership, having checked the water authorities asset plans they do have foul system within this location. Unfortunately owing to the very wet period we have recently had, we are still prioritising roads that remain closed, whilst we can consider raising a new job for a dig down investigation, the last work carried out found the source to be coming within the residents garden and therefore we may not be permitted to dig within their land. The landowner did stipulate that they had not experienced any water leaks in their garden. This has not been an easy matter to resolve due to the source starting on private land.
4. I can confirm that it was our team on site at Hinksford Lane, to look at the wall that had caused the footpath closure, Ameys Geotechnical Engineer has suggested some topographical surveys be carried out, and this is a matter that our Structures team are currently investigation, so this is an ongoing matter that is being looked into different options as to how to address the wall and embankment at this location. Our Structure team are dealing with this site, and some geographical surveys are being conducted as to the best solution to prevent ongoing issues at this site, this is ongoing.

Disposal of the old flagpole, three options are detailed below:-

1. Scrap
2. Private resident has expressed interest
3. A charitable organisation has expressed interest – Air Scouts

It was proposed by Cllr L Page and seconded by Cllr Mrs D Chandler for the Air Scouts to have the pole. On a vote this was agreed.

38/26. To receive any updates / discuss improvements to the community centre

The Chairman reported on the Community Centre that Solar system has been signed off and is fully working. Flagpole installed

Solar system is up and running, they are awaiting fitting of Smart meter by the energy provider to be installed before Smart export guarantee can be applied for, this is in hand.

39/26. To discuss the CCTV costs for the High Street

The Chairman reported that he has spoken to Maggie Quinn at SSDC, he explained that Swindon Parish Council will incur additional costs for the replacement roadside cabinet and reinstatement of the power supply if a claim is not pursued against the vehicle insurers. South Staffordshire District Council have agreed that the Parish Council can progress the claim on their behalf, they will be writing to the Insurer to provide them with authority for the Parish Council to deal. A quote has been requested for reinstatement of the power supply.

40/26. To note the SID Data

The speed statistics for the past month are detailed below: -

Hinksford Lane February 2026

V85: 33mph (V85 = Average speed of 15th fastest vehicle in every 100)

Vd: 28mph (Vd = Average speed recorded during evaluation period)

Vmax: 64mph (Vmax = Highest speed recorded during evaluation period)

Speed violations: 28%

Volume 41449

Church Road February 2026

V85: 37mph (V85 = Average speed of 15th fastest vehicle in every 100)

Vd: 31mph (Vd = Average speed recorded during evaluation period)

Vmax: 73mph (Vmax = Highest speed recorded during evaluation period)

Speed violations: 52%

Volume 20616

Small sample data for Church Rd as one SID on loan to Bobbington PC.

The sign on the High Street will be going to Bobbington for 2 weeks.

The speed-watch equipment owned by the Parish Council was asked to be returned to the Parish Office from Cllr Dr R Painter as soon as possible.

There is no update on funding for the 20mph scheme.

41/26. To receive the report of the Clerk

The following item was noted

SPCA Member Survey

Farm and rural business survey

Review Magazine now live - Help us spread the word

Staffy funding bids - For community groups and parish councils

Protect UK link SSDC

42/26. To agree accounts for payment

The accounts for payment are detailed below:-

Admin	£478.54
Talktalk	£32.34
Flagpole	£1425 + vat
Flag	£75 + vat
Newsletter	£115 No vat
Recoded email	£50 + vat
Insurance	£2861.70 (last year £2827)
Cricket Club	£250.00 (donation towards gate locking)
Bowls Club	£250.00 (donation towards gate locking)

The Solar power invoice of £5500.00 + vat was paid to the supplier MyLowCarbon and the grant paperwork submitted to the District Council int ime before the year end deadline. £5,500.00 has been received from the UKSP fund, vat will be recovered at a later date.

It was proposed by Cllr S Massey and seconded by Cllr Dr R Painter accept the accounts for payment above. On a vote this was carried.

In the insurance renewal the cost of £1700 of the premium is just for the building, this was queried by the insurer and it was agreed to get a valuation, and this should be happening every three years. The insurers have given the details of a valuers and the Chairman will report back to the next meeting with an update.

43/26. Items for future agendas (to be submitted to Chairman and Clerk for consideration by the 1st April).

Insurance value of the Community Centre, year-end accounts.

44/26. Date of next meeting – Thursday 9th April 2026

Meeting closed at 8.40pm.