

WEST SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL**Peatmoor Woodland****1. Background**

- 1.1 Land transferred from Swindon Borough Council to the Parish Council for maintenance excluded woodland areas. These areas are retained by Swindon Borough Council alongside retention and responsibility of trees across the Parish. As a result the Parish Council only undertakes work that is maintenance from the ground and removes only dead or diseased trees as permitted by Swindon Borough Council. Peatmoor Community Woodland Group have submitted a proposal to this Parish Council for consideration of changing the existing lease – see Appendix A.
- 1.2 Peatmoor Community Woodland Group have been awarded a grant for £1850.00. One of the grant conditions asks that

The Organisation will comply with all necessary legislation applicable to the Project including all appropriate health and safety legislation, public liability insurance and all those involved in the project will have had the necessary Criminal Records Bureau checks.

Peatmoor Community Woodland Group have proposed that the Parish Council insures Woodland Group volunteers.

2. Detail

- 2.1 West Swindon Parish Council has checked with its insurers whether or not volunteer groups that are undertaking work in copses are covered by the Parish Council's insurance. The Insurance company have advised that where volunteers are contributing towards the activities of the Parish Council such as planting, litter picking, grounds maintenance etc. they can be covered by the Parish Council's insurance provided that they operate within the Safe System of Working and that the Parish Council has a risk assessment for outdoor working.
- 2.2 Where volunteers are undertaking activity on land that is not transferred to the Parish Council and those volunteer activities are outside of the Parish Council's remit, then the Insurance Company have advised that these groups should take out their own public liability insurance to cover themselves and other residents. This is in the event that someone injures themselves in the course of the volunteering activity.
- 2.3 If the Parish Council wished to reconsider its current obligations for Peatmoor Copse, it should also consider that Swindon Borough Council has not agreed to any leasing of woodland areas and if it did agree a change in the lease, it is likely that all future tree management responsibilities to transfer to the Parish.

3. Recommendations:

- 3.1 That Councillors note this report and the proposal from Peatmoor Community Woodland Group.
- 3.2. That the Committee consider the Parish Council's lease arrangement in relation to Peatmoor Copse

Paula Harrison
Parish Manager