

WEST SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the
FULL COUNCIL
held on **Monday 16th June 2025 at 6.00 pm**
Unit 25, Westmead Industrial Estate, Swindon, SN5 7YT

Present:

Cllr Junab Ali
Cllr Peter Bates
Cllr Leon Grother
Cllr Rose Llewellyn (Chair)
Cllr Trish Philpot
Cllr Caryl Sydney Smith
Cllr Keith Williams
Cllr Sean Wilson

Officers: Paula Harrison (Clerk), Jacqui Jones (Deputy Clerk), Steven Anns (Operations Manager), Mark Jones (Engagement Officer)

Public: Sixteen including representation from Best Be a Better You, Bramptons Social Club.

Public Questions:

Residents present raised questions during public question time. A written response has been circulated as detailed below:

1 a. What evidence is there of local demand?

West Swindon Parish Councillors have prioritised the provision of outdoor play since the inception of the Parish Council. Shaw Ridge Linear Park is the Parish's busiest public open space with high footfall all year round. The current play area at Shaw Ridge has been highlighted as nearing its end of life for a number of years to prompt a decision on next steps before equipment needs to be removed. Geographically the play area is well positioned in the centre of the Parish, midway between two primary schools and at a cross section of popular pathways.

b. How will success be defined and measured?

The Parish Council provides good quality play across the Parish. Success is defined by feedback from residents and will take into account life expectancy of equipment as a rolling programme of refurbishment.

c. What are the project costs for ongoing repairs and maintenance?

The Parish Council has a skilled workforce that can carry out the majority of repairs and maintenance in house. There is an annual budget of £25,000 for repairs and maintenance.

- d. The tender asked for equipment suitable for all ages with particular attention to special needs children. Are you confident that this proposal meets inclusivity and accessibility requirements for children with disabilities?

The preferred bidder has designed many accessible features. Disabilities and special needs vary greatly from one person to another. Accessible play may relate to sensory needs, physical accessibility or motor skills. We will ask the play company to provide a list of those features which we will circulate on receipt. The Parish Council provides outdoor play in public open space. It does not provide public toilets or have any influence on pathways or parking. At this location, there is public parking a short distance away at Shaw Leisure Park and West Swindon District Centre, where this is also access to toilets. There is street lighting and any pathways within the play area itself will be of an appropriate width and surface to accommodate wheelchairs or pushchairs.

2. Clarity on the Alternative Site Offer and Protection of Volunteer Investment

- a. What level of preparation will the Council undertake to ensure the new site has a comparable chance of success?

The new meadow details are not finalised, however, it is expected that surface will be prepared by the grass being removed/treated and ploughed. Seeds and plugs will be planted early Autumn depending on the weather at that time. The Parish Team will add it to the maintenance programme. There is no expectation that volunteers will take on or manage this additional space, however, their involvement, knowledge and expertise to help this take shape is welcome if they are minded to do so.

- b. What are the projected costs of developing the replacement meadow, and have these been included in this year's budget? Will the Council commit to ongoing maintenance and funding in future years until the new site matches the ecological value of the current one?

The Parish Team envisages that the greatest resource will be in the ground preparation which may involve plant machinery hire, it is likely that this can be timed to coincide with other planned hire to avoid unnecessary rehire costs. The Team have wildflower grass and flower seeds already in stock which will be used in the first instance. It is likely that it would take a few members of the team around one week's work to complete the project. These are existing in-house resources. Ongoing maintenance by the team will be added to the mainstream programme.

- c. Can the Council guarantee that the proposed replacement site will be protected for biodiversity in the long term and not be repurposed at a later date?

The current Council is committed to this investment and future maintenance.

- 3.a How will this consultation be carried out, and how wide will its reach be - will it cover the whole of West Swindon or only the immediate local wards?

Prior to the meeting of the Play Working Party, the Parish Council was open to the prospect of potentially having more than one proposal for Shaw Ridge, and potentially more than one location as an option. On that basis, a public consultation to assist in determining the preferred design was anticipated. On review of the submissions, the Play

Working Party were unanimous in their choice of a preferred design and as a result made a single recommendation to Full Council. The project funding has been determined and the open tender process completed. The Council will use the website and social media to engage in an information and awareness raising phase on the chosen design.

- b. What will the Council do if public response is low -would this not suggest a lack of appetite or a weak community mandate for the project?

Councillors at Full Council on 16th June accepted the recommendation of the Play Working Party to appoint a preferred bidder. No proposal for consultation has been initiated at this time.

- c. Given that a decision could be taken today (16th), and an order placed on 20th June, work could begin in August and be completed by September. Is the timeline genuinely sufficient to enable meaningful public input and reflection? Will there be time to revise the plans and report back to committee if necessary?

Councillors have made a decision to commission the Hags UK Design for Shaw Ridge. Timeframes for installation will be subject to manufacture timeframes but is likely to be end of August. It is likely that minor tweaks or swaps may be possible within the approved design but these will be minor and determined by practical considerations.

We were assured by the Chair that our report and questions would be shared with all councillors. Can she confirm that this has happened, and that all members have seen and reflected on its contents?

Information and questions submitted by FAB have been circulated to all Councillors.

Other Questions Raised:

1. Why is the Council intent on spending money on services that should be the responsibility of Swindon Borough Council such as weed control and sign cleaning?

The Parish Council has a remit to ensure that the Parish is well maintained across its public open spaces. For street cleaning and weed control, the Parish Council budgeted to create a resource to tackle the long overdue treatment of kerb lines. For street sign cleaning, the Parish Council has the remit to do this if it chooses to – on this occasion, a commercial provider was used for one day to assess the level of resource required to complete this across the Parish.

2. Provision of benches query.

It is likely that there will be seating within the design. It is not anticipated that any existing benches will be removed.

3. Fencing query;

The Council will review the design with a view to considering whether toddler equipment is positioned in such a way that could accommodate fencing.

4. Current play area – what will happen to it and will it create flooding issues?

The Council will continue to maintain the existing equipment until such time as it requires removal. There are no plans to disturb the current site or drainage within it.

5. Why aren't you enhancing existing play areas:

The Parish Council has conducted a rolling programme of refurbishment over the last 8 years , prioritising each site that has the lowest life expectancy based on play value and repairability.

Meeting start 6.22 pm

36. Apologies & Applications for Dispensation

Apologies: Cllrs Dayan, Ertas, Makofu, G Philpot, Singh, and Swinyard
Applications for dispensation as required by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Parish Council on 19 May 2025: None

37. Minutes of the last Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Full Council meeting on Monday 19 May 2025 be adopted and approved.

Cllr Ali abstained.

38. Minutes of the Planning, Leisure & Environment Committee

RESOLVED that the Minutes from the last Planning, Leisure & Environment Committee meeting, held on Monday 02 June 2025 be approved and adopted.

Cllr Ali abstained.

39. Minutes of the Finance & Staffing Committee

RESOLVED that Recommendation (Minute 32) that the Council approves retrospectively 50 payments totalling £93,052.56 for April 2025 be agreed.

RESOLVED that Recommendation (Minute 33) that Council notes receipt of the Internal Auditor's Report be confirmed.

RESOLVED that the Minutes from the last Finance & Staffing Committee meeting, held on Monday 02 June 2025 be approved and adopted.

Cllr Ali abstained from the above resolutions.

40. Shaw Ridge Play Area Proposal

Councillors received a report summarising the outcome of a review of submitted designs for Shaw Ridge Play area, a copy of which appears as **Appendix A** in the Minute Book. Planning Team have confirmed that providing there is no excess on a height restriction of four metres, no additional planning consents would be required as this would fall under 'permitted development' under the

regulations:

A. The erection or construction and the maintenance, improvement or other alteration by [F1 or on behalf of] a local authority or by [F1 or on behalf of] an urban development corporation of —

(a) any small ancillary building, works or equipment on land belonging to or maintained by them required for the purposes of any function exercised by them on that land otherwise than as statutory undertakers;

The Chair noted the questions raised in public question time. Councillors discussed the proposal and gave feedback that it had been a difficult process finding a balance between the opportunity to improve the play area alongside recognising the contribution of volunteers at Shaw Ridge.

RESOLVED that

- a) the Parish Council approved the recommendation to commission the refurbishment of Shaw Ridge Play area as proposed by Hags UK at a value of £130,000.
 - b) the Parish Council liaises with West Swindon FAB and offers new meadow space at least the size of any land being utilised by the new play area, on the grass area slope adjacent to the current meadow area.
 - c) if West Swindon FAB volunteers do not wish to adopt an additional/alternative meadow space, that the Parish Council commits the team to create an additional meadow area and adds it to the maintenance programme.
- 41.

Services Report

Councillors received a report setting out a summary of activity from the Parish Team, a copy of which appears as **Appendix B** in the Minute Book. Councillors noted the report. The Parish Manager outlined the projects and progress of the team to date. The report highlighted the option to commission weed control through applying a herbicide and a follow up road sweep. Council advised that this was a priority for action.

RESOLVED that the Parish Team commission an application of herbicide to all kerb lines up to a cost of £12,000 and that this be initiated as soon as possible, with a second road sweep commissioned shortly after.

42. **Grant Applications**

Councillors received a report and a copy of grant applications for consideration, a copy of which appears as **Appendix C** in the Minute Book. Councillors reviewed the applications as follows:

- **Swindon Community First Responders: £464.86**
- **BEST Be a Better You: £2,560**
- **The Bramptons Social Club: £2,001**

Representatives from Best and Bramptons Social Club were present and were invited to put summarise their applications. Councillors discussed the applications.

RESOLVED that the following applications be approved subject to the necessary checks;

- **Swindon Community First Responders: £464.86**
- **BEST Be a Better You: £2,560**

43. Internal Auditors Report

The Parish Manager circulated the Internal Auditors Report from Auditing Solutions for the financial year 2024/25, a copy of which appears as **Appendix C** in the Minute Book, noting that there were no recommendations or matters of improvement. Councillors noted the report and thanked the Parish Manager.

44. Year End Accounts 2024-25 – Annual Governance Statement

The Parish Manager circulated the Annual Governance Statement as part of the 2024-25 Annual Return and Councillors reviewed the statements therein. A copy appears as **Appendix D** in the Minute Book.

RESOLVED that the Annual Governance Statement as part of the 2024-25 Annual Return be approved, signed and submitted.

45. Year End Accounts 2024-25 – Accounting Statement

The Parish Manager circulated the Year End Accounts 2024-25 and the Accounting Statement as part of the 2024-25 Annual Return, a copy appears as **Appendix E** in the Minute Book.. Councillors reviewed the document.

RESOLVED that the Year End Accounts 2024-25 and the Accounting Statement as part of the 2024-25 Annual Return be approved, signed and submitted.

46. Notice of Public Rights for 2024-25

The Parish Manager circulated the Notice of Public Rights for 2024-25 for approval, a copy of which appears as **Appendix F** in the Minute Book.

RESOLVED that the Notice of Public Rights for 2024-25 be approved and published.

47. Local Consultations

The Parish Manager circulated a report highlighting a number of consultations currently live with Swindon Borough Council

- Anti Social Behaviour Survey
- Borough Wide - Public Space Protection Order (PSPO)
- Lydiard Park Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) renewal consultation

Councillors noted the information and agreed that the Parish Manager to make a submission on behalf of the Parish Council as appropriate.

7.05 pm

48. Admission of Public and Press

RESOLVED in accordance with Standing Order 3 (d) that 'in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it was advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they be instructed to withdraw for a discussion of staffing matters.

49. Staffing Matters

The Parish Manager and Operations Manager gave an update on staffing including a workplace injury. Councillors requested an absence and health surveillance update to the next meeting of the Finance & Staffing Committee

Meeting closed 7.19 pm

Signed:

Chair, Full Council

Date: