

WEST SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the
WEST SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL on
MONDAY 16 December 2019 at 7.00 pm at
WEST SWINDON LIBRARY

Present:

Cllr Mike Burtenshaw
Cllr Steph Exell
Cllr Suresh Gattapur
Cllr Geoff Gould
Cllr Prakash Khaitan
Cllr Nick Martin – Vice Chair
Cllr Mary Martin
Cllr Caryl Sydney Smith
Cllr Tim Swinyard

Cllr Nick Martin chaired the meeting.

Officers:

Paula Harrison (Parish Manager)

Public: Four

Public Session:

Resident thanked Councillors for the work of the Parish Council.

Resident asked why the overall budget was not lower than previous years now that work is well established and costs should be lower.

The Parish Manager indicated that in previous years, the Council did not always complete budget expenditure within the financial year due to elections creating delays in decision making. The Parish Manager also indicated that 2020 costs would be increasing approximately 3% for staffing on grounds and street services which make up approximately 60% of the overall budget. Cllr Gould replied that work is underway to review overhead costs for streetsmart services.

Resident asked why the allocation for Councillor allowances had increased significantly. The Parish Manager indicated that at a previous meeting of the Parish Council, it had voted to increase the allowance following no increases in the previous years and taking into account the Remuneration Panel report. The resident reported that feedback from Councillors was generally brief and it would be good to hear something from all Councillors. The Chair noted the comments.

Resident reported that clearance work had taken place in Jersey Park however work to fence railings was still outstanding. This was noted.

Meeting start 7.14 pm

255. Apologies

Apologies received from Cllr Timothy Makofu, Cllr Simon Firth and Cllr Umar Ali due to work, Cllr Trish Philpot due to another committee commitment and Cllr Gibbons due to illness.

RESOLVED that the apologies are accepted and approved.

256. Declarations of Interest & Applications for Dispensation

Cllr Caryl Sydney Smith declared an interest in Toothill Big Local as a member, Cllr Swinyard noted he was a trustee for Freshbrook and Roughmoor Community Centres.

257. Minutes of the previous meetings

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 25 November be confirmed and adopted.

258. Minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee

It was noted that the minutes did not reflect that Cllrs Nick Martin and Tim Swinyard withdrew from the Planning & Environment meeting on consideration of the Planning Applications.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on Wednesday 04 December 2019 be approved and adopted subject to the revision noted above.

259. Minutes of the Finance & Staffing Committee

RESOLVED that Recommendation (Minute 244) that 18 Payments totalling **£52,722.50** be approved

Noted the Recommendation that the draft Budget for 2020-21 and Precept be approved (Agenda Item 10).

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Finance & Staffing Committee meeting held on Wednesday 04 December 2019 be approved and adopted.

260. Minutes of the Leisure & Amenities Committee

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Leisure & Amenities Committee held on Thursday 05 December 2019 be approved and adopted.

261. Update from Parish Councillors

Cllr Gould reported that the Services Working Party had visited Stratton St Margaret Parish Council to gain insight into the way that grounds and cleansing services are delivered. It was interesting to note the comparative costs. The Working Party would be making a visit to another Parish Council in the New Year.

Cllr Gattapur reported that volunteers had planted 500 english bluebells in Westlea park.

Cllr Mary Martin noted the impact of the hit squad team with long standing issues being resolved. Cllr Martin noted that it would be helpful to look at how to progress managing the encroachment of greenery onto the public highways better together.

262. Update from Borough Council Representatives

Cllr Swinyard reported that he would be resuming a project to clean street signs now that the election period had passed.

Cllr Swinyard reported that he was keen to support work to assist in signposting people to support services for mental health issues/crisis.

Cllr Mary Martin reported that within her Cabinet portfolio work is undertaken to address County Lines/drug selling, there is a useful Guide for parents on behaviours that is available and would be of interest to adults/carers generally.

Cllr Mary Martin reported that the slip road from the Mannington Retail park is now open following tests on the safety barrier.

263. Consultation on BT programme of intended public payphone removals

The Parish Manager circulated a report setting out an update of information available regarding public payphone use in West Swindon, a copy of which appears as **Appendix A** in the Minute Book.

Councillors discussed the data and expressed concern that a single set of figures was not being used collectively across the current consultation. Councillors agreed that the new figures gave a different perspective on community usage. Councillors also agreed that the poor cleaning and maintenance regime of BT discouraged public use.

RESOLVED that the following be given as feedback to the Planning Department in response to the consultation:

- the Planning Committee should be made aware that there is likely to be disparity in the data relating to payphone useage across the Borough that could impact on future decisions
- the new data indicates that the payphones in West Swindon appear to be used in a social manner, the exception being Westlea Drive. It is therefore recommended that the Westlea Drive payphone is removed.

Councillors Nick Martin, Tim Swinyard and Steph Exell abstained.

264. Budget and Precept 2020

Councillors received a budget report presenting a budget as recommended by the Finance & Staffing Committee, a copy of which appears as Appendix B in the Minute Book. It was noted that there was no change to the West Swindon Parish tax base. It was also noted that budget reductions had been applied across a number of budget lines. The budget proposed a 3% increase on the previous precept and would generate a total income of £873,661.50.

RESOLVED that the budget for 2020 be approved and a Precept Demand be submitted for £873,661.50

Date of next meeting: Monday 27th January 2020, 7.00 pm, West Swindon Library.

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm

Signed.....

Date.....

Chair of the Council

