

SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

16TH FEBRUARY 2010

SWINDON VILLAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL, CHURCH ROAD

Present:

Councillors:

Peter Allen (Vice-Chairman - in the Chair)

Rob Ellis
David Iliffe

Joanna McVeagh
Glenn Simpson

Also Present:

Stephen Holley (Clerk of the Council)
Councillor Suzanne Williams (Gloucestershire County Council)
Ms Helen Down (Cheltenham Borough Council)
Mrs. Jane Griffiths (Cheltenham Borough Council)
Three members of the public

Apologies:

Hugh Evans (Chairman)
Colin Green

Adam Slaughter

PUBLIC SESSION

A. Bee-keeping on the Council's Allotments

A tenant of one of the Council's allotment plots asked if the Council would re-consider its decision not to allow bee-keeping (Meeting held 17th February 2009, Minute 09/022 - Allotments, Item 3 - Bee-keeping in the Allotments referred). The tenant explained that he had discovered that other Councils did allow bee-keeping, even on inner-city allotments. The tenant offered to furnish this information and even offered to draft a Bee-Keeping Policy, as this something which was usually in place in those Councils which did allow bee-keeping.

The Chairman agreed that the information would be referred to the Council's Allotments Working Group for consideration and recommendation to a later meeting.

B. Overgrown Hedge

A resident of Rivelands Road explained that he had noted in 'Village News' that the Council was to request a householder to cut back his/her hedge, which was obscuring the road name sign. The resident stated that the hedge had grown worse since this initial report, it was now causing visibility problems. The Clerk would write to the householder concerned, requesting that the hedge be cut back to the property boundary.

C. Condition of Pavement in Manor Road

The same resident informed the Council that the pavement of Manor Road between Mays Carpets premises and the mobile phone mast was concave; which allowed rainwater to accumulate. The Chairman acknowledged the inconvenience and requested the Clerk to relay this information to Gloucestershire Highways, but advised the resident that priority was being given to the thousands of potholes that had been created or made worse by recent snow and icy weather. Consequently, it was unlikely that the pavement would be attended to in the near future.

D. Noise Disturbance from Industrial Premises

The same resident informed the Council that his family was often disturbed at night by noise from industrial premises in Manor Road, and suspected that the extraction equipment on the roof of Spirax Sarco was the cause. The noise probably did not emanate from the refrigeration equipment on HGVs in the Ralph Davies International Transport Ltd compound, as was suggested.

The Chairman informed the resident that Spirax Sarco had submitted a planning application for rebuilding part of its premises in Manor Road. The Council could make a suitable observation as part of its response to the Planning Department. Also, the Clerk was requested to write directly to the Premises Manager for Spirax Sarco, advising him of the complaint and requesting that suitable measures be taken to reduce noise from such equipment on the new building.

10/014 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

10/015 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council, held on 12th January 2010 be approved as a correct record.

10/016 **NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING**

Cheltenham Borough Council's Assistant Chief Executive, Mrs. Jane Griffiths, and its Partnerships Officer, Ms Helen Down, had requested to speak to the Council on Neighbourhood Working in Cheltenham during the consultation phase which would run until 26th February 2010, and on the proposals that had been put forward in Autumn 2009.

Mrs. Griffiths and Ms Down acknowledged that Swindon was the possibly smallest of the Parish Councils in Cheltenham and had limited resources, being without a full-time Clerk or a Parish Office. However, they wanted to know how to improve community engagement in the Swindon Village area.

The Council's concerns, which had led to its previous decision not to host Neighbourhood Management Meetings were summarised (Meeting held 8th September 2009, Minute 09/107 - Request from Cheltenham Borough Council to Consider Hosting Neighbourhood Management Meetings referred). The Council continued to be concerned that setting up a new series of such meetings, or similar,

would require considerable effort to pursue other organisations' objectives. In contrast, the current system of inviting Officers to attend Meetings of the Council on an 'ad hoc' basis for special items, and writing or emailing for routine communication, was an efficient use of the Council's resources.

It was noted that the Council would later be requested to consider seeking Quality parish status and one of the necessary criteria was to produce a Community Engagement Strategy. It was probable that the Borough Council's views would be sought as part of its preparation.

10/017 BOY RACERS/CRUISERS

It was noted that Councillor Adam Slaughter (apologies for absence submitted) had attended the last meeting of the Cheltenham Cruisers/Boy Racers Working Group. Councillor Slaughter would be requested to report to the next Meeting of the Council.

The Chairman invited Mrs. Griffiths to speak. She explained that the Borough Council's Community Safety Manager had emailed to explain that the Police had withdrawn their request for a Dispersal Order. It was understood that the Police would explain their reasons at the next meeting of the Cheltenham Cruisers/Boy Racers Working Group.

Mrs. Griffiths and Ms Down were thanked for attending and left the Meeting.

10/018 CO-OPTION TO FILL VACANCY ON THE COUNCIL

It was AGREED to delete this item from the Agenda, as the entire Parish Council was due for re-election within three months.

10/019 ADMINISTRATION

1. Correspondence

The Council noted a list of correspondence received.

(i) The Clerk was requested to ask the Elections Office at Cheltenham Borough Council for an updated timetable for the Parish Elections, which would be delayed if the expected General Election was to be held on 6th May 2010.

(ii) The Clerk was requested to arrange for the poster seeking nominations for the 'Gloucestershire Medal for Courage' to be uploaded to the parish website and provided to the Editors of 'Village News.'

2. Award of Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA)

The Council noted that the Clerk had obtained the above qualification. "This is the accredited certificate for our sector, designed to test basic levels of competence for the role of parish clerk. The syllabus has been designed to cover all aspects of the clerk's role and candidates are required to compile a portfolio of evidence to show they fully understand their job. The certificate for clerks is a vital criteria (*sic*) for a council gaining Quality Parish Status." (NALC website, February 2010).

The Chairman presented the Clerk with his certificate.

3. Annual Report

The Council was requested to consider producing an Annual Report, to be presented at the Annual Parish Assembly and subsequently delivered to every household in the parish, as a supplement to Village News.

An example of such a report by relatively small Parish Council (anonymised) had been circulated. The Council noted that a similar report could be provided as an insert to Village News for around £52 (two sheets of A4 folded to provide 8 sides of A5, on white).

It was AGREED that the production of an Annual Report to every household would be an improvement in the Council's community engagement, irrespective of any later decision on applying for Quality parish status (Minute 10/020, below).

It was also AGREED that an Annual Report could be produced as a development of the present Chairman's Report to the Annual Parish Assembly. The new document might also include: a summary of reports of the Council's activities during the year (in the form of a paragraph each from Members on the Cheltenham Boy Racers Working Group, the Snow/Flood Warden, the Council's representative on the Wingmoor Farm Liaison Group, the Allotments Manager etc); a Statement of Receipts and Payments (unaudited); and contact details for Parish Councillors. The Chairman, the Vice-Chairman and the Clerk would be requested to prepare a draft for final approval by the Council at the Meeting to be held on 11th May 2010, in time for any amendments to be made to a version to be circulated at the Annual Parish Assembly (25th May in 2010) and submitted for inclusion in 'Village News'.

RESOLVED that the Council produces an Annual Report, with effect from the Annual Parish Assembly for 2010.

4. Local Government Pay 2010/2011

The Council noted the NALC Employment Briefing E01-10 - "On 20 January 2010, the Employers' Side of the National Joint Council for Local Government Services ('The Employers') formally responded to the trade union pay claim which was submitted in October 2009. The claim is for 2.5% or £500, whichever is the greater. The Employers informed the unions that they are unable to offer any increases in pay. They had decided that a pay increase was not affordable, would compromise the ability of councils to protect services and would jeopardise council jobs. The Employers' decision does not affect the payment of contractual increments during 2010/2011. If an employee is contractually entitled to an annual increment during 2010/2011, he or she should still receive it. NALC will provide an update if there are any further developments."

The Council was reminded that, as part of its decisions on the Budget and Precept for 2010/11, it had followed Cheltenham Borough Council's lead by allocating 1% for increases in salaries. This was a budgetary estimate or allowance, which would not fetter any subsequent decision on actual pay awards.

5. Other Administrative Matters

The Council noted that Swindon Village Primary School had reported a number of

incidents, which may have occurred during the times that the School was left open during Meetings of the Council. In order to improve the School's security, the Council would be offered a new Meeting Room (to be advised).

10/020

QUALITY PARISH STATUS

The Council was requested to [consider](#) embarking on the Quality Parish and Town Council scheme. It was noted that the Council had previously expressed an interest in the scheme a few years previously, but had not been eligible due to the number of non-elected Councillors and the fact that the Clerk did not then possess the CiLCA qualification.

In response to a question as to the benefits of acquiring Quality Parish status, the Clerk advised that it could be seen as a mark of the Council's competence. Whereas larger Town and Parish Councils could use Quality status to indicate their fitness to take on delegated services and activities from the principle Councils (e.g. pothole repairs), this was not a realistic option for Swindon Parish. However, Quality status was a 'badge' identifying to the residents of a parish that their Council had reached nationally recognised standards.

Any efforts to acquire Quality status would not be wasted if the Council subsequently declined to submit an application, as all the preparatory work related to the production of operational and policy documents which had their own value.

RESOLVED that the Council agrees to engage in such work as is necessary to obtain Quality Parish status.

10/021

REPORTS**1. Report of the County Councillor**

(i) County Councillor Suzanne Williams stated that it had been reported to her, that a reference in previous Parish Council minutes stated that the Conservative Administration on Gloucestershire County Council had pledged not to sell its land around Tewkesbury Road to developers (Planning and Licensing - Bloor Homes / Persimmon Homes - Proposed Development at North West Cheltenham, Tewkesbury Road [Minute 09/152 referred]). Councillor Williams stated that this had actually been a statement from two Conservative Councillors and no decision had been made by the County Council or the administration.

(ii) Councillor Williams reminded the Council that Gloucestershire Highways was due to undertake highway surfacing work in Dark Lane, Quat Goose Lane and Rivelands Road, starting the following day.

(iii) Councillor Williams also informed the Council that she and Borough Councillor Bernie Fisher were due to join the Gloucestershire Highways Stakeholder Manager on a tour of the Swindon Village area to identify sites to install road salt/grit bins.

2. Reports from Members of Swindon Parish Council

(i) Councillor Iliffe informed the Council that he had used the Gloucestershire

Highways email address to report a number of bad potholes.

(ii) Councillor Simpson reported that the amount of litter deposited in the Playing Fields adjacent to Beswick Papers was getting worse and included green dog waste bags. The Clerk was requested to relay this to Cheltenham Borough Council's Waste Department.

(iii) Councillor Simpson also reported that two vans were regularly parked in the Playing Field car park overnight and at weekends. The Council regretted the fact that the Borough Council no longer employed Park Wardens to lock up at night and requested that the Clerk relay this information to the Parks Service.

(iv) Councillor Ellis reported that the Bowling Alley was to close down. It was AGREED that the Council should monitor the site once it had closed.

(v) Councillor Allen reported having attended the recent Police and Community Consultative Meeting. He had heard a Police Officer explain that the definition of what caused an 'obstruction' varied according to who or what was trying to get past also, a Police Officer was required to be present at the time in order for the offence to be recorded as occurring.

10/022 PLANNING AND LICENSING

1. Planning Applications referred to the Council for observations

(i) The Council noted the following comments on applications delegated to the Clerk for observations (subsequent to consultation with Members of the Council)

09/01589/OUT – Hunting Butts Farm - (N.B. land outside but adjacent to Swindon parish). Outline application for the erection of 190 dwellings with all detailed matters reserved (Layout, Scale, Appearance, Access and Landscaping). The Council OBJECTS on the grounds that the changes do not substantially address any of the Council's previous objections outlined in its letter dated 29th September 2009 (detailed).

10/000051/FUL – 20 Newland View – Erection of single garage. NO OBJECTIONS, but the Council recommends a flood risk assessment, due to the proximity of the River Chelt.

09/01822/FUL – Unit 1c, Gallagher Retail Park, Tewkesbury Road – Installation of 2 no. display windows to existing front elevation. NO OBJECTION.

09/01888/ADV – Unit 1a, Centrum Park (Dunelm Soft Furnishings), Tewkesbury Road – Illuminated advertising. PART OBJECTION – The 2500 x 2500 internally illuminated flexface signs would be excessive and could be replaced by non-illuminated signs inside the glazing. PART NO OBJECTION - The fascia signs are acceptable.

09/01904/ADV – Bristol Street Motors, Tewkesbury Road – Illuminated advertising. NO OBJECTION, but the relevant Office should be informed that an existing illuminated pole sign is arranged so as to dazzle traffic heading into Cheltenham on the Tewkesbury Road.

(ii) The Council considered responses to the following applications referred to the Council:

07/01246/FUL - Trails End, Stantons Drive - First floor extension to rear and roof alterations including 3 dormer windows. NO OBJECTION.

10/00079/FUL - 36 Church Road - Erection of a single storey rear extension. This application was still be circulated for observations, and it was AGREED that any response be delegated to the Clerk (subsequent to consultation with Members of the Council).

10/00103/FUL - Unit 10, Kingsditch Retail Park (Marks & Spencers Home Store) - Installation of 2 full height external security shutters to main entrance doors. NO OBJECTION.

10/00179/FUL - 42 Glynbridge Gardens - Removal of flat felt roof on integral garage and replace with pitch tiled roof. NO OBJECTION.

10/00204/FUL - Spirax Sarco Ltd, Runnings Road - Recladding of building, minor extensions, internal alterations and erection of a detached shower block. NO OBJECTION. The Council noted that the extraction equipment on top of the building in its present design was to be changed. In view of local complaints about noise from this equipment, Spirax Sarco should be requested to ensure that the new equipment either neutralize or reduce such noise.

RESOLVED that the above observations be relayed to Cheltenham Borough Council.

2. Decisions on Planning Applications

09/01687/ADV - Advertising at Homestore and More, Gallagher Retail Park – Advertising. The Parish Council's only observation was that no lighting should be permitted. Decision notice specifically says "non illuminated". PERMITTED

09/01822/FUL New Shopfront , Unit K, Gallagher Retail Park – New shopfront. PERMITTED

3. Joint Core Strategy

The Council was requested to approve a final response to the Joint Core Strategy. The consultation period for which closed on 19th February 2010. Councillor Iliffe had drafted the bulk of a draft response and Councillor Allen had submitted supplementary comments. It was AGREED that these comments should be combined into a single response for submission.

4. Licence Application(s)

No Licensing applications had been referred to the Council for observations.

10/023 TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAYS

1. Members' reports

(i) It was reported that the car wash premises on Kingsditch Lane was

continuing to park a van bearing advertising material on the Kingsditch roundabout. The Council was aware that this had been the subject of discussion between the Borough Council's Planning Enforcement Officers and Gloucestershire Highways' Enforcement Officers. The Clerk was requested to inform them of the situation.

(ii) It was noted that the car sales premises in Runnings Road and Manor Road were continuing to allow transporters to unload in Manor Road, causing obstruction.

2. Purchase of Road Salt Bin

The Agenda included a request that the Council consider the purchase of a road salt bin. However, in view of County Councillor Williams' previous advice that the County and Borough Councils were considering the same action (Reports - Report of the County Councillor – Minute 10/021.1 (ii) above) it was agreed to DEFER consideration of this item until more information was available.

10/024 ALLOTMENTS

1. Councillor Iliffe passed two cheques in payment for allotment rent to the Clerk, who reported that almost all rent due in respect of 2009/10 had now been collected.

2. Councillor Iliffe (a Member of the Allotments Working Party) reported that the Allotments were in particularly good condition, which was surprising outside the growing season. It was AGREED that the Allotments Manager should be congratulated.

10/025 FINANCE

1. Accounts Approved for Payment

	£	£
Clerk's Salary, (January)	330.00	
Expenses	<u>32.00</u>	
		362.00
Severn Trent Water – Allotment water supply 21 st September 2009 to 5 th February 2010 (estimated reading)		84.31

2. Bank Balances on 3rd February 2010

The Council's bank balances were noted.

3. Appointment of Internal Auditor

The Council was requested to consider appointing an Internal Auditor for the Financial Year ending 31st March 2010.

RESOLVED that Mr. Iain Selkirk, Chartered Accountant, be appointed as the Council's Internal Auditor for the year ending 31st March 2010.

4. Statement of Internal Control

The Council was requested to consider approving a Statement of Internal Control, for the year to end 31st March 2010. The Clerk recommended the circulated document as being fully compliant with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit

Regulations 2003 and advised that the Council's Internal Auditor, Mr. Selkirk, supported the recommendation.

RESOLVED that the Statement of Internal Control be approved.

5. Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Control

The Council was requested to review the effectiveness of its internal audit systems, as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 and noted the following:

Section 2.2 of the Annual Return: Governance Statement asked for confirmation of the following: *"We have maintained an adequate and effective system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness."*

A 'Yes' response meant that the Council had "made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge."

Section 2.6 of the Annual Return: Governance Statement asked for confirmation of the following: *"We have maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the council's accounting records and control systems and carried out a review of its effectiveness."*

A 'Yes' response meant that the Council has "arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether these meet the needs of the council and reviewed the impact of this work."

The Council had checked in previous years and been satisfied that Iain Selkirk, Chartered Accountant, met the 'independent' criteria and continued to do so.

Section 4 of the Annual Return listed ten questions the answer to all of which should be 'Yes'. This, together with the Statement of Internal Control approved above satisfied the 'effectiveness review' criteria.

The Council was requested to confirm that it was satisfied that the areas of internal control as required in the guidance had been adequately undertaken and met and AGREED that this was so.

RESOLVED that the Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Control be noted.

10/026

MATTERS IDENTIFIED FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

The Council was invited to suggest items for possible inclusion on future Agendas. The list now comprised:

- Reconsideration of previous decision not to allow bee-keeping activities on the Council's Allotments
- Agenda items for the Annual Parish Assembly in 2010 (to include an update on Boy Racers and a presentation by the Borough Council's Tree Officer on tree applications and good tree management)
- Publication of the final South West Regional Spatial Strategy
- Items to progress the Council's application for Quality Council status
- Extension of the footpath from the Amenity Area to Swindon Playing Fields

- Donation/Grant to the Village Hall Committee
- Updating the Council's Standing Orders, in the light of the new NALC model

10/027 OTHER BUSINESS ALLOWED BY THE CHAIRMAN AS URGENT

There was no urgent business.

The Meeting closed at 9.55.p.m.

Chairman

Unconfirmed