

Minutes of the SWINDON PARISH ANNUAL MEETING
held on 4th May 2021 at Swindon Village Hall

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic no meeting had taken place in 2020 and this meeting was conducted virtually in accordance with The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

Present:

Councillor Peter Allen (Chairman of the Parish Council)
Shaun Cullimore (Clerk to the Parish Council)
13 members of the public

Apologies:

None.

Minutes of Previous Annual Parish Meeting:

The minutes of 16th May 2019 were accepted as a true record.

Introductions:

The members of the Parish Council introduced themselves.

Presentation by Councillor Peter Allen (Chairman of Swindon Parish Council)

Cllr. Allen started by thanking Karren Parsons for taking on the role of Village News editor, enabling this valuable publication to continue. Cllr. Allen also thanked the parish volunteers who had assisted others by collecting shopping and medicines during the pandemic, and Cllr. Cornish for organising this initiative.

Cllr. Allen was sad to report that Cllr. Pirso had resigned from the Council but was delighted to have been able to welcome Cllr. Whitaker. He also thanked the Clerk for his support to the Council in difficult times and the other members of the Council for continuing to give their time.

The Local Green Space (LGS) that the Council, and Cllr. Wells in particular, is now in the Cheltenham Local Plan. The LGS had to be defended through two rigorous reviews. We had benefited from the Active support of Borough Councillor Clucas and Borough and County Councillor Fisher. We can expect more challenges to the LGS in the future.

We now have a Facebook page in addition to the website. It is good that we are moving with the times but for people uncomfortable with technology the Village News remains a vital means of communication.

This time last year we were involved in putting in place a new Village Hall Committee. The facility is being well run by Ben Williams (Chairman) and a group of new volunteers.

The level crossing in Brockhampton Lane was closed for an extended period of time. It was unfortunate to lose such a pleasant walk during the pandemic.

The boy racer activity seems to have quietened down. Queuing at McDonald's in the evenings is a problem as the queue grows to the point where it impedes traffic on the roundabout.

We are hopefully we will be able to extend the footpath past the gym.

As a first tranche of Elms Park there is a planning application to build 264 houses adjacent to Manor Road. The Parish Council continues to comment on the various planning applications that arise.

Presentation by Shaun Cullimore (Clerk to Swindon Parish Council)

In his role as Parish Clerk Mr. Cullimore ran through the Parish Council finances.

The accounts for the year ending 31st March 2021 have been prepared and are on the website (and below).

Our annual internal audit has been completed with no major observations.

Our main source of income (nearly three quarters) is the precept collected via council tax. We have also received a grant of £2000 from the County Council which we will use for the improvement of our footpaths.

Our main items of expenditure are my salary, publishing the Village News and subscriptions to relevant organisations.

In the year we generated a surplus of £5,248.43. We only have four councillors and they are in full time employment. The time that can be expended progressing our projects is understandably limited.

We have a number of initiatives that we wish to undertake, including:

- Improving footpaths (e.g. outside the gym on Wymans Lane, the track by Next)
- Performing maintenance actions on the war memorial
- Undertaking tree works in the Amenity Area
- Restoring or replacing the Sundial Mosaic in the park

Overall our reserves stand at a healthy £29,649.42. On that basis we chose not to increase our portion of residents' council tax bills for 2021-2022. We hope to use a significant proportion of our reserves on the projects outlined above and others. We are more likely to meet these objectives if we can recruit more members to the council.

The financial results for 2020-2021 appear as attachment 1.

Matters Raised by Borough and County Councillors

Cllr. Clucas acknowledged the work undertaken by the Parish Council and its volunteers.

An initiative called Heads Up Cheltenham is being launched to help people with their mental health. Cllr. Clucas is also involved in initiatives to encourage people to learn gardening skills and to make use of green spaces for the growing of food. Land is being sought for use, either permanently or temporarily, as community garden space. In Cheltenham computers have been donated and refurbished and £15,000 has been raised to assist people living in digital poverty.

Cllr. Clucas stated that she was very proud of the work of the Parish Council.

Cllr. Fisher said that he had been pleased to support the Parish Council during the year and encouraged locals to join the Council to fill the vacancies.

Cllr. Fisher stated that he believed that the path by the gym should be financed by the County Council.

Local food banks have been supplying people in difficult circumstances.

Cllr. Fisher noted that, at the moment, Cheltenham does not have a five year land supply. This makes us vulnerable to developers.

Cllrs. Clucas and Fisher were thanked for their continuing involvement in our local issues.

Question and Answer Session

Cllr. Whitaker led a question and answer session with Cllrs. Wells and Cornish to give people an insight into the role of a local councillor.

Any Other Business

There was discussion around the role of the Parish Council and its members, how one qualifies as a councillor and the process of election/co-option.

The meeting closed at 9:12pm.

Shaun Cullimore
Clerk to Swindon Parish Council

Attachment 1 – Accounts for 2020-2021

SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
INCOME				
Precept	£12,218.28	£11,862.41	£11,516.90	£11,181.46
Other income				
Allotment rents	£1,193.00	£1,271.00	£1,166.00	£884.00
Village News adverts	£387.00	£630.00	£444.50	£586.50
Misc (see note 1)	£260.23	£20.23	£20.23	£179.74
Interest	£1.00	£1.92	£1.94	£1.92
Growing Our Communities grant	£2,000.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
"Being a Better Councillor" course (see note 4)	£550.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Support grant	£0.00	£0.00	£340.00	£618.18
Total income	<u>£16,609.51</u>	<u>£13,785.56</u>	<u>£13,489.57</u>	<u>£13,451.80</u>
EXPENDITURE				
Staff costs	£5,588.20	£5,406.16	£5,247.13	£5,192.08
Loan repayments	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1,843.41
Other costs				
Administration	£2,189.82	£1,217.22	£1,601.40	£1,651.18
Communications (see note 2)	£2,432.82	£1,758.92	£1,754.50	£1,964.33
Ground works	£462.08	£0.00	£555.00	£0.00
Allotments	£17.29	£17.83	£0.00	£16.88
Meeting room costs	£0.00	£240.00	£240.00	£240.00
Grant to Royal British Legion	£90.00	£80.00	£188.84	£80.00
Special projects (see note 3)	£580.87	£1,426.16	£1,356.00	£0.00
Total expenditure	<u>£11,361.08</u>	<u>£10,146.29</u>	<u>£10,942.87</u>	<u>£10,987.88</u>
Surplus (deficit) for year	£5,248.43	£3,639.27	£2,546.70	£2,463.92
Retained surplus b/f	£24,400.99	£20,761.72	£18,215.02	£15,751.10
General fund c/f	<u>£29,649.42</u>	<u>£24,400.99</u>	<u>£20,761.72</u>	<u>£18,215.02</u>
REPRESENTED BY				
Cash at bank	£31,831.57	£25,414.16	£21,383.45	£19,432.80
Debtors including reclaimable VAT	£240.77	£2.10	£450.58	£2.40
Pre-paid expenses	£22.37	£11.65	£0.00	£0.00
Creditors	-£2,445.29	-£873.92	-£928.31	-£1,053.68
Pre-paid income	£0.00	-£153.00	-£144.00	-£166.50
	<u>£29,649.42</u>	<u>£24,400.99</u>	<u>£20,761.72</u>	<u>£18,215.02</u>

Note 1 – Includes waiving of room hire fees by Village Hall in 2019-2020

Note 2 – Cost of Village News and web site

Note 3 – Includes £580.87 for coronavirus support

Note 4 – Swindon Parish paid £450 to GAPTC for putting on the course and collected £550 from attendees from other parishes