

St Andrews Parish Council

Draft Minutes of the ST ANDREWS' PARISH MEETING
Held on Wednesday 24th May 2023 at 7:30pm
at Redhouse Community Centre, Frankel Avenue, Swindon

Present: Cllr Daniel Adams, Cllr Kola Beyioku, Cllr Jake Chandler, Cllr Steve Heyes, Cllr Sue MacDonald, Cllr Paul Morris, Emma Sylvester (Parish Clerk), Cllr Vera Tomlinson (Chairman) and Cllr Vince Williams with one member of the public

1. INTRODUCTION

The Chairman, Cllr Vera Tomlinson, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

Cllr Mary Friend and Cllr Paul West

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on 18th May 2022 were approved and signed as true record by the Chairman.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman read out her report as follows:

We have had a very busy year this last municipal year and have achieved quite a lot including producing the second lowest precept in the whole of the Borough and yet our StreetSmart services are second to none. We receive very few complaints from residents and any we do receive are dealt with promptly by Luke Jones and his team – so a big thank you to them.

I will now go through some of our achievements this past year:

At the start of this last year Bradley Williams won the parish election to take over the seat vacated by Jean Blake. He won his seat standing for the Green Party and has settled in well with the rest of the parish councillors.

Community Grants

We received an application for a grant from Tadpole Garden Village in Bloom and they were voted to receive the full £500 grant.

Youth Work

This committee felt we should be doing more for young people in our parish and consequently set up a Youth Task Group to find out how we could help. Under the chairmanship of Kola Beyioku, it has now turned into a full parish committee. During this year we paid the fees of several young people to attend a holiday sports camp who would have had to leave halfway through each day due to personal finances. We also set up, under Cllr Kola Beyioku, our own youth camp in the summer which was very well attended.

Play Parks

This committee under the leadership of Cllr Steve Heyes has achieved a remarkable amount of work this year.

- Steve persuaded Swindon Borough Council to allow us to give a permanent home to the painted rocks that children in our parish had made during the Covid lockdown. They now lie in the form of a snake around the perimeter of Standen Way play park. Well done to those children for their beautiful artwork!

- Steve along with Luke bought and installed two new pieces of play equipment at this same park. One was a sign language board and the other a play electric charger for the bike tracks used by the children.
- Talking about play parks, I feel I must give a mention to Steve and Luke for their hard work of the refurbishment of Wallis Drive play park. As you know when Swindon Borough Council handed the responsibility of the park to us it was in a dreadful state. We were led to believe Swindon Borough Council would contribute to the cost of its improvement – Swindon Borough Council reneged on this, and we had to fund all of the cost. Steve and his committee undeterred worked on the improvements the children enjoy today which are a double slide, a basket swing and a new MUGA. The whole park was given a good clean up and new paint applied to the climbing frame and swings. A good all-round result so a big thank you again to Steve and Luke.
- Continuing our play park theme, towards the end of the year we made vast improvements in Brook Park play area. Steve Heyes negotiated a deal with Kompan to supply the inclusive adult gym equipment. North Swindon MP Justin Tomlinson opened it for us, and it has proved to be a huge success as many people are now using it. Well done again Steve, Luke and his team for all their hard work on this project.

Redhouse Community Centre

Redhouse Community Centre is operating very well and is running a profit under the current Centre Manager, Verity. All profits have been spent back on the centre and this year two new air conditioning units were purchased, and the entire centre has been redecorated. Verity and her staff have worked extremely hard throughout the year to bring back hirers and replace those we had lost during lockdown. So, our very grateful thanks go to Verity and her team.

Climate Change

During this last year a climate emergency was declared. So that our parish can play an active role and take this emergency very seriously, we are discussing introducing a new committee for climate change.

New Staff Member

Due to the growing size of our parish and its increasing number of residents it was decided to employ a Deputy Clerk, as deputy to Emma who was finding her increasing workload too onerous. We appointed Debbie Braiden, an experienced parish clerk. She has proved herself invaluable over the months she has been with us. A huge thank you to Debbie and thank you for all the work you do for us all and Emma.

Grounds Maintenance

And now I come to singing the praises of a very valued part of our workforce. Luke Jones and his team who keep our parish looking its very best at all times. We get very few complaints now and on the rare occasion we receive one, Luke or one of his men sort it out straight away – usually on the same day. I now get lots of residents ringing me to thank me for the work he does. Also, it was Luke's brainchild to place daffodil bulbs at the entrance to Eastbury Way, when in bloom reading "Welcome to St Andrews Parish". So many residents have remarked on it. Thank you, Luke.

Vice Chairman

I would now like to thank Vince Williams who has chaired several committees this year and been Vice-Chairman of the Parish.

Parish Clerk

My last mention tonight is to acknowledge the hard work of our clerk Emma Sylvester. She is a great help to all of us, she is very highly qualified and because of her guidance has kept me as Chairman on the right side of the law. So, all our thanks to you Emma, we would find it difficult to function without you.

I started out tonight talking about St Andrews Parish Council achievements and will finish by saying we have achieved all this and have still through your commitment returned the second lowest precept in the borough. Its no mean achievement and as Chairman I would like to thank you all. I could not wish for a better team of people.

Thank you All.

5. COUNCILLORS' FORUM

With no questions for councillors the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8:31pm

Chairman _____

Date _____