

MINUTES of St Andrews Parish Council meeting held on Monday 13th January 2025 at 7.30pm in the Redhouse Community Centre, Frankel Avenue.

PRESENT: Cllrs: Jake Chandler (chairman), Daniel Adams, Kola Beyioku, Steve Heyes, Sue MacDonald, Paul Morris, Paul West. Locum Clerk, Deborah Bourne; Grounds Maintenance Manager, Luke Jones; Alex Hughes, Temporary RCC Manager

Also Present: Two members of the public.

Due to the previous resignation of the chair, the vice chair Cllr Jake Chandler will step up to fill the chair position until the Annual Parish Council meeting in May 2025.

Questions /Public Statements to St Andrews Parish Council.

Two members of the public raised questions about the proposed budget due to be discussed later in this meeting.

SBC Cllrs Daniel Adams and Jake Chandler updated the Council on issues concerning the parish; the roundabout and verges on Eastbury Way have been damaged by buses. There is no money within Swindon Borough Council Highways budget to repair this – it is hoped that as the weather improves the situation will improve. Swindon Borough Council are currently considering the Governments White Paper on Devolution. Although not yet resolved in a formal meeting, it is anticipated that Swindon would opt to join with Thames Valley; an incorporation rather than a merger would be preferable.

It was noted that Cllr Jason Mills, did not attend the meeting or send any written report.

The vice-chair of St Andrews Parish Council informed members that Mary Friend and Vera Tomlinson had both resigned from the Council due to ill health. Before her resignation Vera Tomlinson had been chair of the parish council. The vice-chair will now step up to be chairman of the Council until its Annual Meeting in May. It was noted that the Locum Clerk, on behalf of the Council, had written to Vera and Mary thanking them for their hard work and wishing them well in the future.

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Chair

There will be a volunteer tree planting session on Saturday 25th January (weather permitting) at Groundwell West Open Space in aid of Trees for Climate. All Councillors are encouraged to attend and support the staff with this event.

077/ **Apologies for Absence**

FC25-01 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Emma Faramarzi.

078/ **Declarations of Interest**

FC25-02 There were no declarations of interest made regarding items being discussed at this meeting.

079/ **Minutes of the last meeting**

FC25-03 The Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 9 December 2024 were adopted and duly signed by the chairman.

080/ **Annual Estimates of Income & Expenditure**

FC25-04 Members discussed the draft budget laid before them. Various items were discussed including:

- *Provision of a new / extended office*

Members agreed in principle about the suggested £15,000 being added to a “New Office” fund but would like to discuss the detail at a later date.

- *Councillors Allowances*

Historically the Councillors allowances have been incorporated into the staff salaries line. The affect being that salaries look inflated, and residents cannot identify the amount given to councillors’ in the form of allowances.

- *Youth Committee*

Members of the Youth Committee asked that £4,000 be allocated as budget. It is not yet been decided what the money will be spent on, but members are keen to show that youth population within St Andrews is not being forgotten.

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Chair

- *Redhouse Community Centre*

Important that Redhouse Community Centre “pays for itself” discussion took place as to whether Centre should be subsidised by Council Tax. If the facility can produce a profit then it would be part of the private sector.

- *Grounds Committee*

Two vehicles need to be replaced during the next financial year. Many residents are complaining about weed growth around the parish. A course of weed spraying has been costed for parts of the parish.

- *Swindon Borough Council*

Swindon Borough Council are in the process of negotiating with parishes to take on some of the Borough responsibilities. This will require extra training in some areas.

RESOLVED to hold an extra ordinary meeting on Wednesday 22 January 2025 to set the Councils budget for 2025/26.

FC25-05 Setting of Precept Demand

This item is deferred to the meeting referred to above because the budget must be set first.

FC25-06 Licence to Occupy SBC Depot at Waterside Park

St Andrews Parish Council occupy part of the Swindon Borough Council depot under licence. It has been noted that no licence has yet been signed for occupancy to continue in 2024/25.

The grounds staff have been continually using this facility, despite the lack of signed permissions.

RESOLVED to sign the Swindon Borough Council documents allowing St Andrews Parish Council to occupy part of Waterside Park depot, and for payment to be released on production of an invoice for the rental of the site; this amount being £10,490 pa.

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Chair

FC25-07 New Year New Tree Project

It was noted that a tree planting session has been arranged for Saturday 25th January 2025 between 10.00am and 2.00pm.

This is a Community Event with volunteers attending to plant trees in the open space at Groundwell West. St Andrews Parish Council staff will be on site to oversee the project. Councillors will be most welcome to attend.

FC25-08 Date of Next Meeting

The next ordinary Full Council Meeting will be held on Monday, 13th February 2025 at 7.30pm in the Redhouse Community Centre.

It was also noted that an extra-ordinary meeting will take place on Wednesday, 22nd January 2025 to finalise the Council Budget and set its Precept demand.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm

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Chairman

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Chair