

MINUTES of the St Andrews Parish Council Grounds Maintenance/Play Parks Committee meeting held on Monday 7 April 2025 at 12.15pm in the Shed, Redhouse Community Centre.

PRESENT : Cllrs Steve Heyes (chair), Jake Chandler, Paul West, Vince Williams. Mr Luke Jones (Grounds Maintenance Manager), Mrs Deborah Bourne (Locum Clerk/RFO).

There were no press or public present.

GM25-10 **Apologies for Absence**
Apologies were received from Cllrs Cherie Adams and Sue MacDonald.

GM25-11 **Declarations of Interest**
There were no Declarations of Interest in matters on this agenda.

GM25-12 **Minutes**
The minutes of the St Andrews Parish Council Maintenance/Play Park Committee meeting held on Wednesday 12 February 2025 were adopted as a true record of the meeting and duly signed by the chair.

GM25-13 **Black Bin Bags**
RESOLVED to purchase Black Bin Bags from company B; Spaldings. This company has supplied bin bags in the past and are of an adequate quality. Bags are used for litter and waste bins throughout the parish – which are all emptied twice weekly.

GM25-14 **Vehicle Updates**
Members received a report explaining that the previously agreed purchase of a Toyota Hilux vehicle is now not possible, due to non-availability across the Country – a new model is being launched at the end of this year.

Various other makes and models have been researched, but the only vehicle suitable is the Izuzu D-max.

RESOLVED to purchase, over 60 months, the Izuzu D-max. This will be a slightly cheaper vehicle and requires less servicing.

GM25-15 **Weed Killing**

Grounds Manager submitted a report on weed spraying within the parish. The report detailed the area to be sprayed; this is to be a trial year.

Discussion included:

- Different types of weed killing techniques
- Labour – should it be in-house or contractors
- Extending weed spraying to include around street furniture
- In- house would require more storage for materials + additional man hours
- Schedule a road sweeper to attend three weeks later

RESOLVED to accept quotation from company B to weed kill kerbsides in early May and again in September. The cost being £12,000+VAT.

GM25-16 Review of Policies and Risk Assessments

A written report was presented along side the Agenda detailing various policies and risk assessments that have been reviewed by the Grounds Maintenance Manager.

RESOLVED to accept all policies and risk assessments that have been presented to this meeting. Policies and Risk Assessments are listed below:

Street Cleansing Policy	Drivers Policy	Dog Bin Emptying RA
Painting Procedure	Planting Procedure	Jet Wash RA
Play Inspection Procedure	Use of Hand Tools	

GM25-17 Job Description for new Trainee Position

Discussion was held on a draft Job Description produced by the Grounds Manager.

Members did not make any major comments or suggest fundamental changes. It will need to be placed before the Staffing Committee before recruitment is started.

GM25-18 Open Spaces / Play Areas Call Sheet

There are no resident raised remedial works outstanding. Members reported that residents had thanked the Parish Council for their hard work in keeping Standen Way Play Park well maintained.

There are on-going issues with waste bins at Ironstone and various other sites throughout the parish. Discussion was held on possible solutions, including removing bins or emptying more frequently.

- (a) *Play Areas* : All play areas have undergone their annual external inspections in the last week.

Delius and Adensel play areas are owned by SBC and in need of repair. They may need to be shut if repairs are not carried out quickly.

General discussion on ownership of all Play Areas within the parish.

Members requested that a Definitive answer as to ownership of all Play equipment within St Andrews parish be brought to a future meeting. From the general discussion it would appear some equipment is still owned by the original developers, some by Swindon Borough Council and some by the Parish Council. The same confusion arises over the land ownership at the Play Areas around the parish.

GM25-19 Winter Shrub Cutting /Summer Grass Cutting

Shrub cutting has now stopped because the bird nesting season is now starting. The majority of hedges and shrubs have been cut but it has been difficult to complete this year because of staff shortages and vehicle break-downs. The uncut areas are mainly field hedges so will not be a problem over the summer.

All grass has been cut twice now, the blades have been kept higher which has made it easier, but the appearance is not affected. With the higher cuts it has not been necessary to carry out as much strimming as in previous years because the mower blades will go over the top of the metal utility covers.

- (a) *New (second hand) Equipment* : Members were asked to consider a new piece of equipment. South Swindon Council are selling a Wessex STC 120 collect & cut machine, cost £4,000 complete with Brush unit, flail cutter and scarifier. It would be a useful piece of equipment for this parish, whilst planting wild flower seeds, removing fallen leaves from pathways, and for maintaining wild flower areas.

Members were asked if they could support its purchase when the item is brought before Full Council next week.

GM25-20 Trees for Climate – Phase Two

The Groundwell West tree planting is about 80% finished, some areas have been over planted but the density will even out.

The Cypress trees and stakes have been removed at Vaughn Williams Way, unfortunately Swindon Borough Council only removed them at ground level. This has caused contractors some difficulty in planting new trees. At some locations they have needed to grind the stumps out in order to continue with effective replanting.

Discussion held as to where additional trees can be planted towards the end of the year, new venues should be considered.

GM25-21 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of St Andrews Parish Council Grounds Maintenance / Play Areas Committee will take place on Monday 9 June 2025 at 12.15pm in the Redhouse Community Centre.

The meeting closed at 1.45pm

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Chair