

HAYDON WICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Haydon Wick Parish Council Full Council meeting held on Tuesday 26th November 2024 at 19.30 held at Parish Council Offices, Thames Avenue, Swindon, SN25 1QQ.

- ATTENDANCE MEMBERS:** Councillors V Manro (Chairman), S Heyes (Vice Chair), J Ali, E Baker-Walker, J Fuller, S Fateru, R Hailstone, J Jackson, A Jimmy, J Jackson, A John, O Munagala, P Park, R Ross, A Roupelis, L Stevenson and R Worman
- OFFICERS:** Georgina Morgan-Denn, Chief Officer/Clerk & RFO
Jodie Smart, Finance Officer and Deputy RFO
Julie McMorow, Meetings Administrator
- FC 111** Apologies were received and noted from Councillor G Choudhury (Personal Commitments). No apologies were received from Councillor B Patrick-Okoh.
- FC 112** **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
There were none.
- FC 113** **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
There were none.
- FC 114** **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**
The Chairman reminded Councillors that there needed to be volunteers helping with the Christmas Carnival on Friday 6th December.

19:37 - Councillors A Jimmy and S Fateru joined the meeting.
- FC 115** **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**
Members confirmed as a true record the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 22nd October 2024.
Proposed: Councillor S Heyes **Seconded: Councillor A John**
Vote: Agreed with two (2) Abstentions
RESOLVED: Members confirmed as a true record the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 22nd October and the Chairman signed the minutes.

19:38 – Councillor J Ali joined the meeting.
- FC 116** **SWINDON BOROUGH WARD COUNCILLOR REPORTS**
None received.
- FC 117** **COUNCILLOR REPORTS**
Councillor R Hailstone – Attended the Swindon Local Councils Forum and Swindon Borough Council's Code of Conduct Working Party.
Councillor P Park – Attended the Council's stall at the Orbital market on Saturday to promote the Christmas Carnival. Also advised members that there was a wonderful display of poppies over at the memorial bench near Tadpole.
Councillor L Stevenson – Has attended many events including the Memory Café Disco, Halloween party and assisted in creating the poppies that were on display at the front the Parish Council Office. Also attended the Orbital market on Saturday. Was honoured to be asked to represent the Council at the Town's Remembrance Service at the Cenotaph – As an ex-serving personnel was very proud to be present.
Councillor J Jackson – attended Parish Council's own Remembrance event at the Parish Council Office.
Councillor O Munagala – Attended and enjoyed the Diwali event at the Parish Council Office but sadly noted there was a poor attendance from other Councillors.
Councillor E Baker-Walker – Attended Parish Council's Remembrance event and read a poem and laid the wreath on behalf of the Councillors.

Councillor R Ross – Attended the Halloween biscuit making event, which was lovely for the local children, the Memory Café Barn Dance which was a great success. Also helped to set up the stall at the Orbital market on Saturday. Finally, went along to the Menopause Café last night, which was engaging and successful.

Councillor R Worman – tree issue is being resolved by SBC but it's flagged a boundary issue between Haydon Wick and Central North parishes. Clerks are dealing with it.

Councillor A John – attended the Parish Remembrance service and presented the wreath at Havisham, it was a moving service. Attended the Swindon Local Councils Forum meeting. Confirmed the 'Bob the cat' memorial plaque has been installed.

Councillor S Heyes – attended the Orbital market on Saturday to help promote the Christmas Carnival and the meeting at Swindon Oasis to establish what is to be done with the building.

Councillor V Manro – Attended the Memory Café Disco and the Barn Dance. Also had a meeting with Wiltshire Local Council Branch Secretary to discuss ways in which Swindon and Wiltshire could work together.

No Representation at Parish Activities, Meetings or Events This Month

Councillor S Fateru – nothing to report

Councillor A Roupelis – nothing to report

Councillor J Ali – nothing to report

Councillor J Fuller – nothing to report

Councillor A Jimmy – nothing to report

FC 118

CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT

Reminded Members they had been invited to Swindon Borough Councils 'Let's talk Swindon' event on 8th December 2024 at Greenbridge Rugby Club. Encouraged all to try and attend – it is running from 3.30pm – 5.30pm.

FC 119

ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS

Members noted the actions.

FC 120

FINANCE MATTERS

FC 121

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE FACILITY

Noted that there have been no Contractor invoices to authorise.

FC 122

BUDGET

FC 122A

Ear Marked Reserves (EMR) – noted the current EMRs.

FC 122B

Budget Aspirations 2025/26 – noted the report and Members acknowledged that it is still a working document, which is subject to change in the coming few weeks. There is an accompanying report which explains why some aspirations have not been added to the future budget as these are longer reaching and will need the evidence/business plans to justify adding them to any future budget. Final decisions will be made in January 2025 when Council can see the cumulative effect of all aspirations on the existing budget. It was confirmed that the purchase of traffic calming tools - Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) had been removed from the aspirations list because it is envisaged the Parish Council would work with SBC Highways in the future, and they would use their own SIDs.

FC 122C

Public Works Loan (PWL) Drawdown – meeting discussed the report and the Finance & Policy Committee's recommendation to go with Option 2. Council has permission to borrow up to £768,590.00 from the Public Works Loan Board to fund the build of the new Grounds Maintenance Facility. The deadline for the draw down of the loan is 17th December 2024. Interest rates have fallen by a small amount, since last week's Finance & Policy Committee meeting, which currently stand as approximately a £10k reduction over the period of the loan. These rates are subject to constant change as they are revised twice daily, so may alter slightly between approval tonight and approval of the drawdown from the public works loan board. A decision must be

Initials _____

made tonight to ensure it is submitted by the 17th December 2024 deadline as we must give two weeks processing time.

The following items were noted during the appraisal:

1. The interest rate used to provide repayment sums and net present value calculations is 5.79%, which is the interest rate set by the Public Works Loan Board as at 12th November 2024. As mentioned above, this may differ slightly at the point of applying for the funds to be drawn down.
2. Net present value is an accounting calculation which uses a discount factor that takes into consideration the time value of money over the loan term of 30 years. This figure estimates what the value of the repayments or savings will be equal to in 30 years.
3. The build costs estimated at 12th November 2024 have been used. This may increase slightly depending on any additional requirements at the end of the build.
4. The Precept impact given is based on the 3-year budget set for loan repayments set in January 2024. This **does not** account for the precept impact of using existing funds to reduce the loan and how this will affect funding of alternative future projects.

Council noted the four comprehensive options in the Officer's report and the Deputy RFO explained the rationale behind choosing Option 2:

- Draw down a loan of £743,324.00.
- Utilise the full contingency EMR 365 of £37,621.00 to reduce the loan value.
- Utilise the S106 income of £5,520.54 to reduce the loan value.
- Consider allocating the estimated surplus general reserves of £58,141.00 to alternative aspirations and/or supplementing the 25/26 precept.
- Supplement the 25/26 loan repayment by the £37,500.00 currently held in EMR 357 from the accumulated public works loan repayments budgeted for over the past 2 years, to reduce the 25/26 loan repayment as planned.

Option 2 provided the balance of a slightly reduced loan amount whilst maintaining a subsidy for the first-year repayment as planned in 2023 budget setting and provided a reasonable level of reserves for other capital projects in 2025/26. Whilst Option 4 included using projected underspends from the current year, this could not be confirmed until April 2025, which is four months after committing to the loan amount. Therefore, this option was deemed too risky and was not being recommended by the Officers nor the Finance & Policy Committee.

It was confirmed that once the loan draw down has taken place, the interest rate at the time is fixed for the duration of the loan. This is an annuity loan which we have permission to borrow. There are no benefits to early repayments. The same amount with the interest will be payable regardless.

Councillor R Worman presented a case for considering Option 4 however, no one Seconded the proposal.

The Chief Officer and Councillors expressed their sincere gratitude to the Deputy RFO for their due diligence and hard work in enabling Members to decide on the PWL drawdown this evening. The quality of research and ability to take complicated financial data and turn it into comprehensive reports was impressive and well received by all.

Initials _____

Action: Deputy RFO to submit the application on the 27th November 2024 and report as soon as the funds are received.

Proposed: Councillor J Fuller

Seconded: Councillor J Jackson

Voted: Agreed with two (2) Abstentions.

RESOLUTION: To proceed with the Finance & Policy Committee's recommendation of Option Two:

- **Draw down a PWL of £743,324.00.**
- **Utilise the full contingency EMR 365 of £37,621.00 to reduce the loan value.**
- **Utilise the S106 income of £5,520.54 to reduce the loan value.**
- **Consider allocating the estimated surplus general reserves of £58,141.00 to alternative aspirations and/or supplementing the 25/26 precept.**
- **Supplement the 25/26 loan repayment by £37,500.00 currently held in EMR 357 from accumulated public works loan repayments budgeted for over the past 2 years, to reduce the 25/26 loan repayment as planned.**

FC 123

INDEPENDENT RENUMERATION PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS /COUNCILLORS ALLOWANCE 2025-26

Members considered the options and recommendation from the Finance and Policy Committee. Full Council heard that the Committee had favoured reconnecting with the Parish Council's historical decision, which was to align their allowances with the employees' Cost of Living annual increase. For 25-26 this would be an uplift of 4.41%. It was noted that Swindon Borough Ward Members had increased their allowances by 5.58% this year. It was acknowledged that Councils should annually review their allowances to encourage diversity amongst membership because their allowance, albeit a nominal one, helps towards personal expenses such as childcare or care costs incurred whilst attending meetings.

Action: Chief Officer to inform SBC of Council's Allowances decision, to arrange a public notice of the decision and publish widely. Include an article in next magazine.

Action: Finance Officer and Deputy RFO to include the agreed Councillor allowances in the budget setting for 2025/26.

Proposed: Councillor L Stevenson

Seconded: Councillor S Heyes

Agreed with two (2) Abstentions.

RESOLUTION: To agree an uplift of 4.41% on Councillor Allowances in 2025-26. This equates to a new rate of £78.28 per month for Councillors and £145.55 per month for the Chairman. The total cost is £15,837.00 per annum (for eligible allowances). Equivalent to an additional £2,309.22 (0.17%, £0.26 per annum per band D household) impact on the precept as recommended at November Finance and Policy Committee.

FC 124

ENABLING REMOTE ATTENDANCE AND PROXY VOTING AT LOCAL AUTHORITY MEETINGS

Members noted the report. The Government's consultation is asking for feedback on a proposed legislation to enable remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings. Councillors acknowledged that during the pandemic the Parish Council was able to continue discussions and transacting business using a formal Scheme of Delegation and a series of regular Informal Discussion meetings held remotely. This arrangement worked well and the Council was able to react quickly to the community's emergency needs and still be able to complete significant projects such as a refurbishment of the Skatepark.

Recommendations for implementation would include:

1. Develop clear guidelines for hybrid meeting procedures
2. Ensure adequate technical infrastructure and support
3. Provide comprehensive training for all participants

Initials _____

4. Establish clear protocols for voting and decision-making
5. Regular review and adjustment of procedures based on feedback

The Government will ultimately decide on the legislation.

Members were unanimous in NOT allowing Proxy votes at meetings.

Action: Chief Officer and Chairman to submit a response to the consultation in favour of implementation but only if Government gave councils the ability to implement their own terms. And to confirm they rejected Proxy Voting.

FC 125

MP DEFIB LETTER

Members noted the correspondence from Swindon North MP Will Stone. Currently in the Parish there is not a definitive number of defibrillators as the various websites offer different information. It was discussed that the parish would benefit from bleed kits as well and both (defibs and bleed kits) must be placed in locations for people to access in an emergency, not just shops and schools.

The meeting agreed for the Chairman to respond to the MP asking any funding, statistics and where the defibs are. In the meantime, Councillors Baker-Walker, Park and Stevenson agreed to champion the project and compile a report and help to establish some statistics. *Action: Councillors E Baker-Walker, P Park and L Stevenson to progress the project, find out where the defibs are, get some statistics and report back at a future meeting. Chairman to send an initial response to the MP.*

FC 126

CAPESTHORNE DRIVE PLAY AREA REFURBISHMENT

Members noted the Council's response following a request for a play area to be refurbished. The letter and publicity of the refurbishment will continue in the coming weeks and months. Councillors were thankful to the officers for such an engaging and positive response.

FC 127

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC & PRESS

There were none.

FC 128

TADPOLE

Members noted the report of a recent working party which took place on the 19th November. The meeting between railway representatives four (4) and the Working Party Councillors Manro, Heyes, Worman, Hailstone, Stevenson, covered several key areas of the potential railway partnership. The railway, having faced a setback with rejected lottery funding, has shifted focus to their own operations and expansion plans. Discussions concentrated on long-term lease arrangements and future funding, emphasising the need for sustainable planning.

A significant portion of the meeting was dedicated to exploring a collaborative effort to create a joint-use car park, addressing both the railway's needs and the council's requirements for allotment parking. The team also discussed plans for expanding and improving existing facilities, including considerations for transportation, visitor access, and initial maintenance plans. Both parties agreed to explore the possibility of a joint-use car park for community benefit, rather than building separate parking facilities. It was noted that the railway is only likely to use the car park for up to ten to fifteen (10-15) events per year, leaving space available for parish council events such as markets, outdoor cinema etc.

Plans for the permissible path need to be considered factored into site layouts. The Council originally bought the land as agricultural, so no land searches have been undertaken. It is not envisaged to have lighting/electrics at the car park or to charge cars to park. The timeline is flexible but could aim for December 2025

completion. The Chairman offered to attend their monthly (1st Friday) Trustees Meeting to discuss the potential partnership further.

Actions

1. *Arrange a walk-around of the site to assess potential car park expansion and entrance planning (JM/VM)*
2. *Improved access to the proposed car park will be made possible by removing part of the hedge to increase visibility, particularly for right-side views. (TBA)*
3. *Provide railway with previous entrance planning application to check what local searches may be required (JM/GMD)*
4. *Legal guidance on merits of a Memorandum or Understanding versus a Long-Term Lease (GMD)*
5. *Explore possible grant funding for generating new allotment space at Tadpole (GMD/LM)*
6. *Site layout to include permissible path and existing tree planting (VM/RH).*

The meeting closed at: 20.47

Chairman _____

Initials _____