



Parish Council
Central Swindon North Parish Council
Pinetrees Community Centre,
The Circle,
SWINDON SN2 1QR

LEISURE & RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Thursday 6th November 2025 19.00

Present:

Councillors:

Cllr John Ballman (Chair)
 Cllr Joy Grotzinger
 Cllr Paul Park
 Cllr James Yeowell - virtually

Clerk:

Mr Andrew Briggs, Head of Operations

Officers:

Mr Andy Reeves, Parish Clerk - virtually

Member of the Public Present: None

Apologies

Cllr Paul Exell
 Cllr Mick Lucas

LR478

Declarations Of Interest

Cllr John Ballman declared a non-pecuniary interest in
 The Library & Leisure Trust, HBUF and RSPB

Cllr Paul Park declared an interest in the Library &
 Leisure Trust.

	RESOLVED: Item NOTED.	
LR479	Public Questions & Public Correspondence None.	
LR480	Vacant Vice Chair Position To APPROVE an acting Vice Chair for the remainder of the 25/26 year. Cllr J Ballman requested committee members put forward their self-nominations for Vice Chair by the next Leisure & Recreation Committee meeting for approval. RESOLVED to NOTE the request.	
LR481	Extraordinary 2026-2027 L&R Committee Budget Meeting To APPROVE the Extraordinary Leisure & Recreation Committee budget minutes. Cllr J Ballman reiterated the importance of providing an adequate budget to fulfil the Parishes obligations each year and to increase coding lines to allow Officers and Councillors a greater visibility on areas that are over or under performing. RESOLVED to APPROVE the Extraordinary Leisure & Recreation Committee budget minutes.	
LR482	Allotments A. To RECEIVE a general update from the Allotment Officer. Mr A Briggs presented an update on behalf of Mr N Jackson, Allotment Officer. Occupancy remains high at around 99% even while heading into the winter season. One new tenant has been helping with allotment clearing. 16 tonnes of leaf mulch have been collected from around the parish and provided to tenants to create compost. Starbucks have provided over 3.5 tonnes of used coffee beans which tenants have gratefully received and used. Cllr J Ballman asked what the tenants used it for. Cllr P Park suggested it was to nourish the soil and prevent pests.	Officers to investigate mulch for roads.

	Cllr J Ballman requested that Officers investigate mulch collected from roads and if it was suitable for allotments due to possible vehicle contaminants. Mr A Briggs explained that both Moredon Sporting Hub (MSH) and St marks will be providing their used coffee beans as well. Cllr J Ballman asked about the Parish tractor and if the Allotment Officer is able to use the tractor to rotavate the plots. How is the tractor used on a daily basis. Mr A Briggs explained that the tractor is used across the Parish for various reasons including allotments. Cllr J Ballman noted the importance of using the tractor efficiently. Mr A Briggs agreed that looking at tractor usage in the future would be useful. Mr A Briggs continued the update. Various tidying up and signage replacement completed, and the crop drop was very well received and used. The skips were used well, and non-cultivation letters have been sent out regularly resulting in the termination of several tenancies. The next Allotment Working Group is the 20th November 2025 where the terms and conditions of allotments will be discussed and reviewed. RESOLVED to NOTE the update. B. To RECEIVE a project update from the Allotment Officer. Mr A Briggs explained that two new troughs are due for installation at Akers Way and Churchward Avenue over the winter. RESOLVED to NOTE the update. C. To RECEIVE an update on the transfer of the Redlynch Allotment site. Mr A Briggs presented an update. Legal papers are being processed at the solicitors at present and Officers will keep Councillors informed as this progresses.	
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	Cllr J Ballman asked what the land would be used for. Mr A Briggs explained that the site would need clearing out and tidying up first. Once this was done the Parish could see how the land is looking and decisions on how to proceed agreed. RESOLVED to NOTE update.	
LR483	Play Areas A. To RECEIVE the date of the Play Area Working Group. Mr A Briggs informed Councillors that the next Play Area Working Group would be on Tuesday the 11th November 2025 at 12.30 to be held at Pinetrees Community Centre. RESOLVED to NOTE the update. B. To RECEIVE the date of the 'Get Swindon Active' play area conference. Mr A Briggs explained that the Get Swindon Active play area conference was yesterday and was very successful. It covers allotments, parks, play areas, open spaces, active work travel and various other areas. The meeting yesterday focused on more inclusive play. Cllr J Ballman requested that the presentations be forwarded to Councillors when Officers received them. He noted the various insights brought up around things like women and girls and making parks accessible to them too and not designing play areas to suit just boys and men. Other ideas included open play areas with no fences, but he felt this was unsafe for small children. Cllr J Grotzinger agreed that protecting children by keeping fences was important. Mr A Briggs responded that there were lots of insights from the meeting that the Parish can use ourselves as we progress with our play area upgrading. Councillors discussed the conference insights. RESOLVED to NOTE the update. C. To RECEIVE an update on completion of snagging items at the Rodbourne Cheney Play Area.	

Mr A Briggs presented a verbal update on the snagging issues and the corrections needed which were minor.

RESOLVED to NOTE update.

D. To APPROVE the Rodbourne Cheney Play Area evaluation report.

Mr A Briggs presented an update from a written report.

See Appendix 1.

Cllr J Yeowell asked what the timeline for Alanbrooke Play Area is as he has EMR funding available which he would like assign to a specific Play Area.

Mr A Briggs responded yes, if the funds are in an EMR for those play areas they can be used to support the works.

Cllr J Ballman agreed that this should be approved before the elections. He asked Mr A Briggs if this means the tendering process could be speeded up by gaining quotes just from the contractor who completed the Rodbourne Cheney Play Area.

Mr A Briggs responded yes, especially as the Parish is extremely impressed with the speed and quality of their work.

Cllr J Ballman asked if the Barnum Court Plat Area was used.

Mr A Briggs responded yes it was.

Councillors discussed the play areas and possibility to alter the positioning and rotation of the play areas.

'It is therefore recommended that:

1. *Committee notes the successful completion and excellent delivery of the Rodbourne Cheney Play Area project by Wicksteed.*
2. *Committee approves the contractor's eligibility for direct award of the next phase of works, specifically:*
 - o Barnum Court Play Area*
 - o Alanbrooke Play Area*
3. *Officers proceed to negotiate design proposals, specifications, and pricing for these sites and*

	<i>bring proposals back to a Play Area Working Group and future committee for review.'</i> RESOLVED to APPROVE recommendations 1, 2 & 3. E. To APPROVE the recommendations within the Play Area Works report. Mr A Briggs presented an update from a written report. See Appendix 2. Councillors discussed the options. <i>'It is recommended that Members:</i> <i>1. Approve the quotation of £4,975.22 for St Marks Recreation Ground. Attributed to remaining play budget and St Marks EMR.</i> <i>2. Defer the quotation of £6,906.72 for Medlar Court Play Area for future consideration.</i> <i>3. Note that the Edinburgh Street / Chapel Street proposal will be reviewed by the Play Area Working Group on 11th November, with a recommendation brought to Committee thereafter.'</i> RESOLVED to APPROVE recommendations 1,2 & 3.	
LR484	Parks and Open Spaces A. To RECEIVE the dog fouling and dog control Borough wide public space protection order update. Mr A Briggs presented an update from a written report. See Appendix 3. RESOLVED to NOTE update. B. To APPROVE the officers report to plant a Tiny Forest at St Marks Park. Mr A Briggs presented an update from a written report. See Appendix 4. Councillors reviewed the public consultation and discussed the responses. Cllr J Ballman suggested looking at creating a 'Friends of St Marks' volunteer group to help maintain the area.	

'It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1. Proceed with the Tiny Forest installation at St Marks Park.*
- 2. Review safety and accessibility concerns raised during consultation:*
 - Improved lighting in and around the park.*
 - Ensuring clear lines of sight are maintained in the forest layout.*
 - Incorporating accessible pathways with appropriate surfaces and gradients.*
- 3. Engage with the local community in selecting the final forest design, using a shortlist of layout options (e.g. Kidney Bean, Amphitheatre, Linear).*
- 4. Involve local groups and schools in the planning and planting stages, particularly:*
 - St Mary's Catholic Primary School*
 - Florence Street Mission Hall youth groups*
 - Interested residents who provided contact details*
- 5. Work with Earthwatch to:*
 - Finalise design and project timeline.*
 - Provide community engagement materials and template options.*
 - Outline ongoing maintenance expectations for the site.*
- 6. Monitor outcomes through post planting engagement and feedback sessions, ensuring ongoing community involvement in the forest's development and upkeep.'*

RESOLVED to APPROVE recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6.

C. To APPROVE the officers' report regarding landscaping plans for Pembroke Gardens.

Mr A Briggs presented an update from a written report.

See Appendix 5.

'Committee is asked to:

- 1. **APPROVE** the proposed Pembroke Garden Landscaping and MUGA Enhancement Project concept.*
- 2. Authorise officers to proceed with community consultation, planning, and necessary impact assessments.*
- 3. Support the exploration and submission of funding applications (Sport England, Football Foundation, Trees for Climate, NLCF).*

	4. Request a further report with detailed design, confirmed costs, and final funding package.' Councillors discussed the recommendations. RESOLVED to APPROVE recommendations 1, 2, 3 & 4. D. To APPROVE the total grant submission to Trees for Climate for Y6 planting. Mr A Briggs presented a verbal update. There is a grant to cover the 1,610 whips & 157 standards to be purchased. Total cost £15,465, which does include labour. The request has been agreed and will be completely funded by the grant along with some funding for maintenance. Cllr J Ballman asked who would be doing the work. Mr A Briggs responded Idverde. RESOLVED to APPROVE the total grant submission to Trees for Climate for Y6 planting.	
LR485	Sports A. To RECEIVE an update regarding the FA agronomist drainage survey at Mannington Rec. Mr A Briggs presented a verbal update. He explained that the agronomist drainage survey had been completed and the gentleman completing the report were extremely positive around the work that could be done to improve drainage. Mr A Briggs explained that there will be an element of match funding, but the funding will reduce the costs dramatically. RESOLVED to NOTE the update. B. To RECEIVE a report regarding football booking issues. Mr A Briggs presented an update from a written report. See Appendix 6. Cllr J Ballman asked if this was at all sites. Mr A Briggs responded it varies site to site.	Mr A Briggs to talk to Wilts FA & several security companies with solutions and costings and to return to a future committee with the information, including funding options.

	Cllr J Yeowell noted as an ongoing problem this situation needs to be looked out, and a security solution needs to be implemented. Cllr J Ballman asked about unauthorised football games, are the players insured under the clubs using the pitch or would the Parish be responsible. Mr A Briggs responded that he does not know the legal position on this but there could be some type of culpability the Parish may have. Cllr J Ballman asked if Officers have reached out to other Parishes/Football organisations to find out if this has happened to them and how they managed the situation. Mr A Briggs responded that this is not something that has been investigated yet. Councillors discussed the options. Cllr J Ballman asked how secure the system was. Cllr P Park responded that it is 99% secure. Mr A Briggs suggested that Officers communicate with Wilts FA to get some more background information and possible examples, also to talk to some of the security companies to provide quotes. This can be brought back to the Committee with funding options as well. <i>'Recommendations:</i> <i>1. Note the current challenges and risks associated with football pitch bookings, payments, and access control.</i> <i>2. Approve immediate focus on improving access control and compliance at Seven Fields.</i> <i>3. Support the introduction of mechanical code locks as a cost-effective interim measure, with codes issued only following confirmed booking and payment.</i> <i>4. Request a feasibility assessment of long-term digital access solutions, including potential phased implementation or funding opportunities.</i> <i>5. Note that officers are actively reviewing reconciliation processes to improve financial tracking and reporting.'</i>	
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	RESOLVED to APPROVE recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5. C. To RECEIVE an update on the Football Foundation Pitch Improvement Programme. Mr A Briggs presented an update explaining the works and reporting are being completed. RESOLVED to NOTE the update. Exclusion of Press and Public to RESOLVE that in accordance with the provision of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, Section 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations, the public and press be excluded during consideration of the following item due to confidentiality reasons. Cllr Joy Grotzinger left the meeting.	
LR486	Allotment Matter To RECEIVE an update regarding an ongoing tenant matter at the Pickards Field allotment site. Mr A Briggs presented an update from a written report to the Committee regarding the ongoing tenancy and welfare matter at Pickards Field Allotments. The item was discussed under P&C due to its sensitive nature and data protection considerations. Members were reminded that this matter had been referred from the Finance & General Purposes Committee following its earlier decision to terminate the tenancy. The Leisure & Recreation Committee reviewed the situation in light of recent welfare concerns that had been raised. As the meeting was not quorate, no formal decisions could be made. However, members present expressed agreement that: • The eviction timeline should be extended until January 2026 to allow the tenant additional time to clear the plots in a managed and safe way; and • Officers should continue to monitor welfare, provide reasonable assistance with clearance, and report any further welfare or conduct concerns through appropriate safeguarding channels.	

	RESOLVED to NOTE the Committee recorded the update and members' views. Officers will continue to manage the matter under existing delegated authority, and a further update will be provided at a future meeting.	
	Meeting Closed 21:01	

Signed.....

Date.....