

# **CENTRAL SWINDON NORTH PARISH COUNCIL**

## **EXTRAORDINARY FULL COUNCIL MEETING**

Minutes of the Extraordinary Full Council Meeting held at Pinetrees Community Centre,  
The Circle, Swindon, SN2 1QR  
on Tuesday 21 September 2021 at 7.00pm.

- Present** Cllr Telcy Araujo (via Zoom)  
Cllr John Ballman  
Cllr Ray Ballman  
Cllr Ian Edwards  
Cllr Paul Exell  
Cllr Steph Exell (Chair)  
Cllr David Patey  
Cllr Javes Rodrigues (via Zoom)  
Cllr Kevin Small  
Cllr James Yeowell
- Officers** Gladys Barr (Grants Officer)  
Aaron Cripps (Libraries Manager)  
Johanna Edwards (Press & Marketing Officer, via Zoom)  
Andy Reeves (Parish Clerk)  
Jodie Smart (Head of Finance & Governance)
- Public** There were no members of the public present.  
*The meeting started at 7.04pm due to technical issues.*
- FC078** **Apologies**  
Apologies were received from Cllr Paul Baker, Cllr M Beale, Cllr Raj Patel and Cllr Will Stone.
- FC079** **Declarations of Interest**  
Cllr J Ballman declared interests as a Member of the RSPB, Hreod Burna Urban Forest.  
Cllr J Ballman, Cllr P Exell, Cllr S Exell and Cllr K Small declared non-pecuniary interests as Trustees of the Central Swindon North Parish Library & Leisure Trust.
- FC080** **Moredon Sports Hub Governance**  
Members NOTED the report of the Clerk regarding the governance of the Moredon Sports Hub once the build work is complete, a copy of which appears as Appendix A in the Minute Book.  
Members NOTED the report of the Chair of Finance & General Purposes Committee (Cllr K Small), regarding draft budgets for both governance models of the Moredon Sports Hub, a copy of which appears as Appendix B in the Minute Book.  
Cllr Small added that in the case of the in-house model the Parish Council could ring fence a loan from General Reserves for any contingency required, to be repaid over a number of years.  
Cllr Small informed Members that the liability of the Moredon Sports Hub remains with

the Parish Council regardless of the management model, as the agreement is with the Parish Council, Swindon Borough Council and the Funders. The Parish Council would have to bail out the Trust if they came into financial difficulties or decided to cease operating. If the Trust is no longer viable due to the Moredon Sports Hub then there will also be an effect on the Tennis at St Marks and the Library provision.

Cllr Small stated that there was no financial risk assessment on paper but the whole process of the working party had been a risk assessment to look at all of the options. Cllr Small expressed that he believed the working party had gone through all of the issues.

Cllr Small moved that the recommendation of the Moredon Sports Hub Working Party, that the Moredon Sports Hub be directly managed by the Parish Council be approved. Cllr James Yeowell seconded the motion.

Cllr J Ballman stated that the Trust had not been asked to evidence how they would provide the outlay for capital and stated that there were still options to consider before making this decision. Cllr J Ballman suggested that the options were, do nothing, look at the Central Swindon North Parish Library & Leisure Trust, create and tailor a trust for this particular project or commission an existing organisation to run the Hub.

Cllr J Ballman went on to say that Members of the Parish Council had visited several sites, all of which are run by Trusts. Cllr Ballman elaborated on one particular project which utilised the One in a Million Trust.

Cllr J Ballman presented a report regarding existing Trust organisations and commercial organisations which currently manage similar community facilities, a copy of which appears as Appendix C in the Minute Book.

Cllr J Ballman proposed that no final decision was made until Officers and Members of the Moredon Sports Hub Working Party had met with organisations similar or the same as those mentioned in his report, to determine whether or not these organisations could offer a better and more cost effective means of managing the Moredon Sports Hub.

Cllr Javes Rodrigues commented that this matter could have been dealt with at the previous week's Full Council meeting. Cllr Rodrigues added that he felt the report of the Clerk was a sales pitch for the in-house model. Cllr Rodrigues expressed concern for the rush in the decision and overall financial commitment of the project for such a new Parish Council.

The Chair stated that as Cllr Small is the proposer of the motion he will answer the questions at the end of this debate.

Cllr Ray Ballman questioned the proposed charges for the gym, and stated that she had found a local gym with more facilities for £16.00 per month. Cllr R Ballman also asked how the Parish Council could make a decision when it had not consulted with the residents yet.

Cllr R Ballman expressed concern over the in-house model as other projects would get pushed back and the Parish Council will still have to employ more staff as existing Officers do not have the capacity.

The Chair invited the Clerk to answer some of the questions posed.

The Clerk stated that before the Parish Council were offered the Moredon Sports Hub, Swindon Borough Council did all of the due diligence on investigating commercial operation management of the site. They did a market test with GLL and it would have needed too much investment and it was too small to be of interest to them. The Clerk agreed that the Parish Council had not liaised with the Trust but that the Trust had not contacted the Parish either. Information from Swindon Borough Council had been very slow, the Parish Council had only just received the list of minor capital requirements.

The Clerk stated that there were conversations within the Trust minutes where running the sports hub was discussed and part of the reason for wording the constitution to include Leisure services was due to the potential for the Moredon Sports Hub. The borrowing options for the trust are the same regardless of their involvement in producing the information.

Cllr J Ballman reiterated that one of the options is to create a trust, tailored to suite this particular activity.

Cllr Small responded that the financial models remain the same regardless of the Trust.

Cllr J Ballman questioned why the Clerk had not contacted GLL directly.

Cllr Small reiterated that this was ruled out by Swindon Borough Council.

The Clerk responded to Cllr J Rodrigues' earlier comments, that his presentation had focused on the recommendation and that the risk summary had been circulated to all Members on 3 September 2021.

Cllr K Small surmised that he understood where Cllr J Ballman was coming from and appreciated his concerns. A lot of his concerns had been answered in the process which the Parish Council had gone through to reach this recommendation. In any semi-commercial project there was a risk element. The risk will always lie with the Parish Council. For example for Swindon Borough Council, when a projects viability is lost they have to subsidise or take over the project. Regarding commissioning an existing organisation, the working party have followed direction by the Parish Council, the Trust and in-house models were directed to be reviewed.

Cllr K Small stated that to answer Cllr J Rodrigues' concerns about the money, the Parish Council have to separate the £680,000.00 which is a 25 year loan, so it is not something that the Parish Council will pay back in one financial year. The Parish Council cannot borrow money to support the revenue, this will come from the revenue budget. As part of the budget plan for this year, money was allocated to fund the capital borrowing to build the pavilion which has not happened yet. The next agenda item is to increase 'up to', so no money will be borrowed over what is needed. The reason for the additional money is that the Parish Council is unsure if the items listed in the report will be paid for by Swindon Borough Council. Therefore that would be paid for out of borrowing rather than the revenue budget, which then could have an impact on other projects.

Cllr K Small answered Cllr R Ballman's concerns, as this would not affect other projects because funds had already been allocated in the current budget. Due to the delayed start in the project the Parish Council had saved some money this year which could underwrite the borrowing costs.

Cllr Small stated that the income for the gym was potentially the Achilles heel of the project. There will be £50,000.00 in the sinking funds to pad out the risk. Regarding staffing, yes there is additional staff that will be on the parish model, which includes a Manager. The in-house model provides an oversight by the Parish Officers rather than day to day management. There is identified administrative assistance for the bookings and financial processing.

Cllr K Small finished by stating that any trust model will have to provide a booking system where there will be an initial cost. That will have to be found by the Trust by reducing costs or looking for funds from the Parish Council. Though there are Members with concerns which they are right to air. There is an issue about accountability, staff pay and conditions, and managing the liability, which will always remain with the Parish Council even if it goes to a private organisation. Cllr Small stated that he did not feel that the

Parish Council had the time that Cllr J Ballman thought it does. The Parish Council does need to go to public consultation regarding the borrowing and commit itself to the building of the pavilion. Cllr Small urged Members to reject the delay and support the recommendation.

**RESOLVED** that the Central Swindon North Parish Council will assume direct management of the Moredon Sports Hub.

**FC081**

**Public Works Loan Board Application**

Members NOTED the draft consultation document regarding the application for the Public Works Loan, a copy of which appears as Appendix D in the Minute Book.

It was noticed that the addition of how much the loan will cost had not been included in the consultation leaflet as agreed at the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

**ACTION:** Clerk to add the cost of the loan to the consultation leaflet.

Cllr J Ballman asked if there were any parameters for the results of the consultation.

Cllr K Small responded that all households will have opportunity to respond, there is no set target.

Cllr J Yeowell asked that the leaflet goes to all households with the Parish Newsletter as there were some streets missed in the previous newsletter delivery.

The Clerk confirmed that this would be arranged.

Members NOTED the report of the Clerk, presented by the Chair of Finance & General Purposes Committee (a copy of which appears as Appendix E in the Minute Book) and the recommendation of the Finance & General Purposes Committee regarding increasing the Public Works Loan Board Application in relation to the Moredon Sports Hub to, up to £680,000.00 to include minor capital expenses.

**RESOLVED** to increase the Public Works Loan Board Application in relation to the Moredon Sports Hub to, up to £680,000.00 to include minor capital expenses.

The meeting closed at 8.28pm

Signed.....

Date.....  
Chair of the Council.