

SOMERSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Parish Council Meeting held online on January 6, 2021 at 7.30pm

PRESENT

Cllrs James Caston, Stephen Wright, Sam Barrell and Shaun Whiting were present, together with the Clerk Rod Caird. District Cllr John Field was present; County Cllr Kay Oakes was unable to attend. Thomas Hallett joined the meeting as a co-opted councillor during Item 5 of the Agenda

1/060121 Apologies and approvals of absence

Cllr Will Caston Cook had sent apologies and his absence was approved.

2/060121 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensation

Cllr Caston declared an interest in planning application DC/20/04125 referred to in item 7 on the Agenda. He will leave the room during that discussion, passing the chair to Cllr Wright.

3/060121 To approve the Minutes of the meeting on December 2, 2020

The minutes were approved.

4/060121 To receive comments from members of the public on matters on the Agenda, and reports from the District and County Councillors

No written reports had been received and no member of the public attended. Cllr Field noted that the solar farm application was soon to be validated and published for wide consultation. Complaints about HGV movements around the Hopkins Homes site had been referred to Highways. It was important to ensure that developers observe requirements in their planning permissions. The annual district budget has gone to cabinet and will then go to a full council meeting. A 1.66% increase will be applied to council tax. Additional costs incurred as a result of Covid will be met by central government. Sufficient reserves are available to deal with any problems.

5/060121 To consider the current vacancy on the Parish Council

It was agreed without dissent to co-opt Thomas Hallett to the Parish Council with immediate effect.

6/060121 To receive and consider a Neighbourhood Watch report

The November report, showing one incident of anti-social behaviour in

Somersham during that period, was presented to the meeting. A volunteer is still sought to support Colin Burrows (who was unable to attend the meeting) on neighbourhood Watch activities.

7/060121 To consider updates on current planning applications, including:

DC/20/04125 | Request for formal Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Opinion. Proposed solar farm and battery storage facility | Land South of Church Farm Somersham IP8 4PN And Land East of The Channel IP8 4JL – listed as EIA required. It was agreed that an open public meeting would be held before the Parish Council meets to agree its position on this planning application (once formally published and once the consultation timetable is known). A printed leaflet would also be produced and distributed door to door in an effort to collect opinion from residents who do not use the internet.

DC/20/04005 | Listed Building Consent - Change of use and conversion of Grade II listed barn to 1No dwelling, alterations as Design & Access inc Heritage Statement | Watering Farm Main Road Nettlestead – application withdrawn

DC/20/04004 | Full Planning Application - Change of use and conversion of Grade II listed barn to 1No dwelling and erection of 3no new dwellings. | Watering Farm Main Road Nettlestead – pending consideration

DC/18/03114/15 Land South West of Main Road, a development of 42 new homes – various conditions discharged or pending, new footway plan awaited. To be considered: the proposal from Hopkins concerning the strip of land owned by Hopkins but outside their marked boundary, abutting the allotments and footpath. It was agreed the current financial proposal was not good enough, and Cllr Rook agreed to go back to Hopkins to discuss. The matter would be considered again at the February meeting.

8/060121 To consider a request for financial support towards construction of a new hut at the tennis court

More information about plans and costs is awaited.

9/060121 To consider maintenance of the grass banks, trees and bushes fronting the new housing development.

It was agreed to write to the resident who had raised this to say that responsibility rests with Hopkins Homes, which owns the land in question.

10/060121 To consider an update on the Land Trust

The revised bank mandate is still awaited from Lloyds Bank. It is likely a

vacancy has arisen at the allotments which could be filled by the person at the top of the waiting list.

11/060121 To receive reports from Parish Councillors on meetings attended

The Duke of Marlborough is likely to remain closed during the current lockdown, with the loss of £1,500-£2,000 per month. The financial situation would need to be reviewed once it is possible to re-open.

12/060121 To receive a financial report from the Clerk including any payments due; to consider the budget and precept for 2021/22

A bank reconciliation was presented showing a balance of £19,256.98. The following payments had been made since the last meeting:

Jan 4, 2021	CAS Ltd	139	£ 50.00	VAT £ 10.00	Web hosting
Jan 4, 2021	Rod Caird	140	£ 292.20		Clerk Pay

It was agreed the precept for 2021/22 should be unchanged at £17,308.00. The budget presented for the year, showing anticipated spending of £14,992.00, was approved.

13/060121 Correspondence and urgent matters to be brought to the attention of the Parish Council

It was noted that Brett had paid the cost of the public Christmas tree and had made good the damage caused to the village green by its cement truck.

It was agreed to request detail from Vertas of the grounds maintenance work carried out annually at a fee of £1,600.00 in order to explore the possibility of an alternative quote for the work.

The next scheduled meeting will take place on February 3, 2021.