

# SOMERSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Parish Council Meeting held online on October 7, 2020 at  
7.30pm

<b>PRESENT</b>	Cllrs James Caston, Stephen Wright, Penny Pearson, Sam Barrell, and Will Caston Cook were present, together with the Clerk Rod Caird. County Cllr Kay Oakes, District Cllr John Field and eight members of the public were also present.
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**1/071020 Apologies and approvals of absence**

Keith McKeown and Shaun Whiting had sent their apologies and their absence was approved.

**2/071020 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensation**

Cllr Caston declared an interest in the solar farm proposal referred to in item 6. He will leave the room during that Agenda item, passing the chair to Cllr Wright.

**3/071020 To approve the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on September 2, 2020**

The Minutes were approved.

**4/071020 To receive comments from members of the public on matters on the Agenda, and reports from the District Councillor and County Councillors**

Cllrs Oakes and Field had both submitted written reports; no questions were asked relating to either report.

**5/071020 To receive and consider a Neighbourhood Watch report**

Colin Burrows was unable to attend the meeting; the written reports he submitted were noted. Volunteers are still sought to help Colin with NW activities.

**6/071020 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**

Before formal consideration by the Parish Council, a presentation was made by Enso Energy on the proposal. The Powerpoint slides shown to the meeting are available from the Clerk for inspection.

After discussion in the absence of Cllr Caston and the representatives of the applicants, it was decided to comment as follows: ***It was agreed after***

*discussion led by the Deputy Chair, Cllr Stephen Wright, that the Parish Council is broadly supportive of the proposal. Some concern was expressed about the effect on wildlife and the visual environment of the fencing surrounding elements of the site, and the "corridors" that would be created by the fencing. Parish Councillors will take a close interest in all aspects of the detail of the plan as it is developed over coming weeks.*

**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**

**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**

**After discussion it was agreed to comment on both applications as follows:**

**20/04005:**

*The Parish Council opposes the detail of the proposal on the grounds that elements of the design - specifically the rooflights and balcony - are not in keeping with the character of the Grade II listed barn.*

*The principle of a barn conversion on the site would not meet opposition from the Parish Council if the design was a proper reflection of the style and heritage of the site.*

**20/04004:**

*The Parish Council is not opposed to the proposal but is very concerned about the visibility splays to the main road, which appear inadequate for the anticipated traffic.*

*In addition, the footpath access to the SW of the site must not be obstructed by the gate currently shown on the plans; all users of the path including those with pushchairs must have ready access to the right of way.*

**DC/18/05313 Outline Planning Application (Access and Layout to be considered) Erection of 32 dwellings on Land On The South Side Of Bildeston Road, Offton, IP8 4RR – appeal *dismissed*; application outcome currently listed as “unknown”.**

**Noted**

**DC/18/03114/15 Land South West of Main Road, a development of 42 new homes – to consider the drawings related to the s278 agreement, highways improvement scheme, circulated to Councillors**

*It was agreed that the current footway proposal is not acceptable, and the Clerk would write to Highways as follows:*

*I am afraid that the Parish Council is acutely disappointed. From the very beginning of this long process, the Parish Council has been completely*

*consistent in saying that, whatever the other merits or disadvantages of the housing scheme may be, there is a specific and obvious problem with it - there is no safe pedestrian access from the proposed new homes to the rest of the village.*

*The Highways proposal shown on the map you sent does absolutely nothing to solve this problem. Pedestrians (with or without pushchairs), wheel chair users, cyclists and anyone else not actually in a motor vehicle, are being asked to walk on the roadway round a blind bend; and giving them a designated space on which to walk only narrows yet further the space for vehicles and increases the risk of two-way traffic being unable to pass safely.*

*This can't be dressed up, and no one on the Parish Council felt in the least bit reassured by the drawings. The fact is that the pinch point on the road is simply too narrow to accommodate pedestrians and vehicles in reasonable safety.*

*So, the Parish Council is unable to support this, and does not regard it as satisfactory mitigation. Councillors are also intensely aggrieved that their reasonable and oft-stated views on this have been consistently sidelined. This is not a mitigation partnership between the Parish Council, the planning authority and the developer; it feels like an agreement between the planners and the developers with nothing but a gesture offered to the Parish Council.*

*The Parish Council rejects the proposed roadway plan and looks forward to seeing an alternative solution which takes proper account of local opinion.*

**7/071020 To Consider an Update on the Land Trust**

New allotment rental agreements are being distributed; the Clerk is still sorting out the Lloyds Bank mandate for the Trust.

**8/071020 To consider the Parish Council's response to the government's white Paper on planning**

Discussion of this would be deferred to the next meeting; by then NALC will have presented comments to the government on behalf of councils.

**9/071020 To receive reports from Parish Councillors on meetings attended**

The Duke of Marlborough team is trying to get Hopkins Homes to pay for cleaning of the pub and immediate surroundings following the mess caused by construction traffic.

**10/071020 To receive a financial report from the Clerk including any payments due**

A bank reconciliation was presented showing a balance of £24,318.02. Since the last meeting the following payments were made or would shortly fall due:

Sept 9, 2020	Suffolk Preservation	S/O	£ 30.00		Subscription
Oct 4, 2020	Rod Caird	130	£ 292.40		Clerk Pay
Oct 4, 2020	SALC	131	£ 9.36	VAT£ 1.86	Training
Oct 4, 2020	SALC	132	£ 195.00	VAT£ 39.00	Audit fee

Oct 30 2020	Vertas	133	£ 396.36	VAT£ 79.27	Grounds work
Oct 30, 2020	Rod Caird	134	£ 292.40		Clerk Pay
Oct 30, 2020	Somersham PCC	135	£ 96.00		Mowing
Oct 30, 2020	CAS Ltd	136	£ 234.08		Insurance

**11/071020 Correspondence and urgent matters to be brought to the attention of the Parish Council**

It was agreed future meetings would be held online for the time being.

An email had been received about footpath obstruction in the area of Flowton Wood and Flowton Road; Cllr Caston undertook to resolve the problem as quickly as possible, the weather having recently been too bad to move equipment on to the relevant field. He also undertook to cut the hedge at the corner of the playing field.

Cllr Pearson said she is considering resigning from the Parish Council after many years of service; current arrangements for the meetings, caused by the coronavirus crisis, make it extremely difficult for her to attend as she would wish. Parish Councillors expressed great regret at this news and thanked her for her tireless service to the village – which it is hoped will continue, inside or outside the Parish Council.

The next meeting will be held online on November 4, 2020 at 7.30pm.