

SOMERSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Parish Council Annual Meeting, and Notes of the Annual Parish Meeting, held online on May 5, 2021 at 7.30pm

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| PRESENT | Cllrs Stephen Wright, Sam Barrell, Shaun Whiting, James Caston, James Rook and Thomas Hallatt were present, together with one of the public and the Clerk Rod Caird. District Cllr John Field was also present. County Cllr Kay Oakes had sent apologies. |
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1/050521 Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2021/22

Cllr James Caston was elected Chair and Cllr Stephen Wright was elected Vice Chair, both unopposed.

2/050521 Apologies and approvals of absence

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

3/050521 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensation

None

4/050521 To approve the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting on April 7, 2021

The Minutes were approved.

5/050521 To receive comments from members of the public on matters on the Agenda, and reports from the District Councillor and County Councillor

Cllr Field noted that the new District Council is in a good financial state with most Covid costs being covered by the central government. Most routine spending has gone down, and a business rates windfall has been received from wind turbine activity. Four separate £1m pots have been established to assist different aspects of post-Covid recovery. The Joint Local Plan is still with the Planning Inspectorate. The new proposals for Valley Ridge (formerly SnOasis) seem more plausible and sustainable. The current large solar farm proposals seem good for green energy, but on the other hand they consume farming land.

A written report had been received from Cllr Oakes.

6/050521 To receive and consider a Neighbourhood Watch report and an update on activity at the Village Hall car park as raised at the April meeting.

Written reports were presented to the meeting; Colin Burrows was unable to attend, and he continues to need further volunteer support. The police Community Engagement Officer is now involved in the Village Hall car park issue. There is a heightened police presence in the village and the situation will be monitored.

7/050521 To consider updates on any planning issues, including consideration of:

DC/21/01320 | Full Planning Application - Use of land as private smallholding/kitchen garden and for the keeping of horses. Construction of riding arena, stables, borehole and shed, polytunnels, pig pen, chicken coop and fencing/gates. Siting of 3no. Storage Containers | Land East Of Hadleigh Road

It was agreed to make no objection to this application.

8/050521 To consider a request for funding from the Tennis Club

Cllr Rook may be able to source a fridge/freezer unit for the shop at a better price than that so far quoted. He will make further inquiries and the Parish Council will consider the matter further at the next meeting.

It was agreed to set aside £3,000.00 towards the Tennis Club's project costs and more information would be requested on their detailed plans.

9/050521 To consider a report from Somersham Land Trust

The bank mandate has finally been sorted out and the account will soon be online so that the necessary information can be gathered for annual returns.

10/050521 To receive reports from Councillors on any meetings attended

No relevant meetings had been attended.

11/050521 Financial report, including payments due, and approval of the annual accounts for 2020/21.

A bank reconciliation to date was presented, showing a balance of £36,214.92. The first instalment of the precept (£8,654.00) has been received, and a CIL payment from Mid Suffolk of £14,785.13.

The following payments had been made and/or were agreed:

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|----------------|---------------|--------------|------------|--|------------|
| April 11, 2021 | HMRC | Bank payment | £ 8.60 | | PAYE |
| April 15, 2021 | PWLB | DD | £ 3,258.50 | | Loan |
| April 18, 2021 | Safelincs Ltd | Bank payment | £ 87.60 | | Defib pads |

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|----------------|---------------|--------------|----------|---------|--------------|
| April 22, 2021 | SALC | Bank payment | £ 340.02 | | Subscription |
| April 22, 2011 | Vertas | Bank payment | £ 396.36 | £ 79.27 | Grounds |
| April 22, 2021 | Rod Caird | Bank payment | £ 584.80 | | Clerk pay |
| April 22, 2021 | SALC | Bank payment | £ 125.00 | £ 25.00 | Training |
| May 7, 2021 | T. Hitchcock | Bank payment | £ 187.50 | | Grounds |
| May 7, 2021 | Somersham PCC | Bank payment | £ 96.00 | | Grounds |

12/050521 Urgent matters to be brought to the attention of the Parish Council

As the legal authority to hold meetings online expires on May 6, the June meeting of the Parish Council will be held in the Village Hall, observing necessary Covid precautions.

NOTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

1 Apologies for Absence

None

2/3 Chairman's Welcome, introduction and report on 2020/21, followed by reports from village organisations and discussion on matters raised by members of the public

Cllr Caston reported that 2020/21 has been an "interesting" year; but that Councillors had adapted really well to online meetings and the Parish Council's business had continued in spite of the difficulties and restrictions. Issues surrounding the 42 home Hopkins development had occupied a great deal of time and attention. Christmas events had been put on hold but a tree had been erected for the village which was much appreciated. Grants had been made to the Shop, the PCC, the Tennis Club, the Link and the Citizens' Advice Bureau.

Cllr Penny Pearson had retired from the Parish Council after many years of valued service, and Cllr Keith McKeown had also stood down as he was leaving the area. Two new Councillors, James Rook and Thomas Hallatt, had come forward to be co-opted to the Council and their enthusiasm was greatly welcomed. A former Chair of the Council, Nick Dodd, had sadly died and would be greatly missed.

The Parish Council is dealing properly with the solar farm planning applications which are currently working their way through the system.

The unsung volunteer who spends so much time and effort weeding public land in the village was warmly thanked.

Inquiries would be made about the likely pricing of the Hopkins Homes properties as it was felt that early offers to the local community to purchase homes on the site were only meaningful if the prices were affordable.

Other reports received from village organisations will be published on the website.

4 Date of Next Meeting

May 2022, day to be confirmed.