

SOMERSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Parish Council Meeting held in the Village Hall on
September 1, 2021, at 7.30pm

PRESENT	Cllrs Stephen Wright (in the chair), Thomas Hallett, Shaun Whiting and Sam Barrell were present, together with the Clerk Rod Caird. District Cllr John Field was present, together with two members of the public. County Cllr Kay Oakes was unable to attend.
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1/010921 Apologies and approvals of absence

Cllrs James Caston, Will Caston Cook and James Rook were unable to attend, and their absence was approved

2/010921 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensation

None

3/010921 To approve the Minutes of the meeting on July 28, 2021

The minutes were approved

4/010921 To receive comments from members of the public on matters on the Agenda, and reports from the District and County Councillors

Cllr Field reported on a quiet month at the District Council. There had been problems with waste collection due to driver shortages and other issues. The Gateway 14 site near Stowmarket has received planning permission. Possible extension to the Viridor landfill site would clash with the Valley Ridge (formerly Snoasis) project. A grant is being made from Cllr Field's budget to the Community Shop and a request has also been made by the Duke of Marlborough.

The Tennis Club wished to thank the Parish Council for its support, which has been very welcome.

There is a drainage issue in the Channel which Cllr Whiting will investigate.

5/010921 To receive and consider a Neighbourhood Watch report

The most recent report was circulated to councillors.

6/010921 To consider the following planning applications:

DC/21/04132 | Householder application - Erection of two storey rear extension. Extension to existing east elevation dormer and insertion of 1no window, insertion of 2no windows to first floor west elevation. | Old Barn Stores Main Road

No objection was raised

DC/21/00060 | Full Planning Application - Installation of renewable led energy generating station comprising ground-mounted photovoltaic solar arrays and battery-based electricity storage containers together with substation, inverter/transformer stations, site accesses, internal access tracks, security measures, access gates, other ancillary infrastructure, landscaping and biodiversity enhancements including Nature Areas | Land to The East Of The Channel, Burstall Hill

It was agreed the Clerk would draft comments on this application in time for the sept 23 deadline, based on the Parish Council's previous opposition to the proposal, and based on a review of the new documentation published on the website.

7/010921 To discuss options for village projects to be supported by the Parish Council, including wildflower planting, play area upgrades and others; to consider compiling a survey to identify residents' preferences

It was agreed to hold this matter, and the following Agenda item, over to the October meeting, which would be better attended by Councillors.

8/010921 To discuss proposals for events to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June 2022, and to consider holding an open village meeting to gather ideas

See above.

9/010921 To discuss management and upkeep of the Parish Council website www.somersham.onesuffolk.net

Cllr Caston Cook is continuing to consider how best to make changes and improvements to the site. Meanwhile the Clerk has updated some material, and has added an Accessibility Statement, as recommended by the SALC audit for 2020/21.

10/010921 To consider a report from Somersham Land Trust

It was reported that the Trust's accounts and reports are now up to date. There are two local residents on the allotment waiting list and Cllr Caston Cook is collecting rents due at the beginning of October.

11/010921 To receive reports from Councillors on any meetings attended

The Duke of Marlborough had a very successful weekend beer festival with good takings and attendance.

12/010921 Financial report, including payments due, to confirm the new arrangements for upkeep of the churchyard, and to review the recommendations of the SALC annual audit report on 2019/20

A bank reconciliation was presented showing a balance of £23,930.70. One payment to SALC for the audit (£238.80) was due for payment. Since the last meeting a payment was made to Tom Hitchcock of £153.75 for grounds maintenance (including hogweed removal from the Channel).

An agreement had been reached with Tom Hitchcock and the PCC so that he would carry out regular churchyard mowing and maintenance and his charge for that work would simply be added to his regular monthly bill to the Parish Council. This would be more economic than the previous arrangement with a different supplier.

The Clerk presented a digest of audit recommendations and action points to the meeting:

Issue	Action
Accounting detail on how to record unpaid/mislaidd cheques	RC to note and action
The Financial Regulations need to be updated to the 2019 version.	RC to action
The Council should minute the fact that it has reviewed its insurance cover at the time the policy is renewed.	RC to ensure annual Agenda item and minute
Reserves should be reviewed to that the General Reserve is no more than 12 months' annual expenditure. Earmarked reserves should be identified as for specific purposes.	Councillors to discuss and decide on priorities. RC to minute
At the time of the audit preparation the Council should formally minute that it is applying for a Certificate of Exemption	RC to ensure annual Agenda item and minute
The Council should adopt a formal Data Protection Policy	RC to source and present to the Parish Council
There is no accessibility statement on the website - guidance is available from SALC	RC to source and add to website

The updated Financial Regulations and Data Protection policy were adopted by the Parish Council. Other matters were noted, and the Clerk will monitor delivery.

13/010921 Urgent matters to be brought to the attention of the Parish Council

None