



## **SOMERSHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at the Village Hall, Somersham on  
**Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> April 2022 at 7.30pm.**

### **Present:**

Councillors: J Cason (Chairman)  
S Wright  
T Hallett  
S Barrell  
J Rook

In Attendance J Blackburn – Clerk  
County Cllr Kay Oakes  
District Cllr John Field

### **SPC01/22/23 – APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE AND APPROVALS**

Apologies had been received from Cllr Whiting and was approved.

### **SPC02/22/23 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Wright declared an interest in item 12 on the Agenda.

### **SPC03/22/23 – APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION**

None had been received.

### **SPC04/22/23 - PUBLIC FORUM**

There were two members of the public present.

A member of the public raised the suggestion that the surface of the Community Shop was in need of repair/resurfacing. She explained that many groups in the village used the car park as well as parents taking their children to the school.

Cllr Caston stated that it was owned by the Community Association, but if a contribution was needed it would be something the Parish Council could consider if approached.

It was reported that the Hut had now been completed.

It was also reported that the net posts had tried to be removed by somebody.

### **SPC05/22/23 – APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2<sup>ND</sup> MARCH 2022**

**It was AGREED:** That because there was only one member from the previous meeting present, the Minutes should be deferred to the next meeting for approval.

### **SPC06/22/23 – COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

County Cllr Oakes' report had been circulated prior to the meeting and would be published on the village website.

Cllr Oakes gave a brief update on the Reclaim the Rain initiative.

## SPC07/22/23 – DISTRICT COUNCILLOR’S REPORT

District Cllr Field’s report had been circulated prior to the meeting and would be published on the village website.

He highlighted a few points from his report and outlined some improvements in the environmental standards of new housing being driven by changes to building regulations. He was involved with a working party set up to provide member input to the improvements proposed by the planning peer review report. Much shorter officer reports and much less variation between officer assessments of similar applications should result.

He reported that the Green and Lib Dem group had proposed and the District Council adopted a “Net Zero Carbon Toolkit” document a guide for small developers and individuals to the actions necessary to move to net zero for housing and industrial premises. The District Council had published their first climate change and biodiversity annual report and Cabinet had endorsed a Sustainable Travel Vision & Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. The full business case for Freeport East was to be submitted to Government by 15th April. Cllr Field stated “We all want Freeport East to succeed, particularly the Gateway 14 and Port One elements. He was concerned however, at the possible impacts on existing businesses of competitors in the Freeport who were exempt business rates, national insurance and import duty.

## SPC08/22/23 – CLERK’S REPORT AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

### a) TO RECEIVE THE CLERK’S REPORT

The Clerk had nothing further to report other than what was on the Agenda.

### b) TO RECEIVE THE FINANCIAL REPORT

The Clerk reported on the Council’s current financial position and stated that the balance in the accounts as of 31<sup>st</sup> March was £54,484.05.

### c) TO AUTHORISE PAYMENTS AND NOTE RECEIPTS

The Clerk reported the following payments be authorised:-

Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Pay (Mar)	£316.30
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Office Allowance / Exp (Mar)	£35.29
Creeting St Peter PC	Contribution to Printer/Laptop	£300.00
Tom Hitchcock	Grass Cutting	£163.75
HMRC	PAYE (ending 05.04.22)	£5.00
SALC	Payroll Service (6 months)	£45.00
SALC	Subscription 2022/23	£341.92

**It was AGREED:** That payments totaling £1,207.26 be authorised and actioned by the Clerk.

### d) EARMARK FUNDS

Members considered the funds it had and what projects money could be earmarked for. As stated earlier in the meeting, the re-surfacing of the Community Shop car park could be considered if approached, along with refurbishment of the telephone box and possible additional play equipment.

## SPC09/22/23 – PLANNING APPLICATIONS

**Ref: DC/22/01243** - Full Planning Application - Cross Boundary Application - Creation of a Solar Energy Farm with a solar array together with supporting infrastructure which includes a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and associated grid infrastructure and access tracks. (EIA Development) - Land South Of Tye Lane, Bramford (Part in the Parishes of Flowton and Burstall)

And...

**Ref: DC/22/00683** - Full Planning Application-Cross Boundary Application. Creation of a Solar Energy Farm with a solar array together with supporting infrastructure which includes a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and associated grid infrastructure and access tracks. (EIA Development) - Land South Of Tye Lane, Bramford (Part in the Parishes of Flowton and Burstall)

Members had the following concerns in relation to the above planning applications:

**Location** – The Land on which the applications were proposed was Grade 2/Grade 3A land, which was the most productive for crops. Therefore, ‘Food Security’ should be priority when locating Solar Farms and with this land being high quality agricultural land, it was not the location for such applications.

**Efficiency** – With East Anglia being the most productive part of the UK solar farms in locations such as this was an inefficient way to export energy to other parts of the country.

**Visually** – Solar farms adjacent green spaces was not appropriate for nearby residents.

**Environmentally** – The impact of a Solar Farm on wildlife was huge, with such a development affecting their environments and routines.

**It was AGREED:** That the Parish Council objected to the application(s) above. **Clerk to action.**

### **SPC10/22/23 – PLANNING DECISIONS**

The following decision was noted:

**DC/22/00649** - Householder Application - Erection of single storey rear extensions, erection of new front porch, application of external render, minor changes to fenestration, conversion and extension of existing outbuilding and associated works - Peripull, Mill Lane, Somersham – **Granted**

### **SPC11/22/23 - NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT**

Cllr Caston reported that in January the following crimes had been reported:

Somersham - two reports of violence

Offton - two reports of criminal damage

Willisham – No reported crimes

Flowton - No reported crimes

Stowmarket – 129 - violence, 29 - anti-social-behaviour, 28 - public order offence and 27 - thefts.

Cllr Caston reported that in February the following crimes had been reported:

Somersham – no reported crimes

Offton – No reported crimes

Willisham – no reported crimes

Flowton – no reported crimes

Stowmarket – 139 – violence, 34 - anti-social-behaviour, 22 - criminal damage and 19 - thefts.

### **SPC12/22/23 – DEFIBRILLATOR TRAINING**

Cllr Oakes reported that she had spoken to Mike Vondrum, Needham Market 1<sup>st</sup> Responder, who had stated he would be happy to do a training session on a mutually agreed date, which would usually be a Saturday.

Cllr Hallatt would put an article in The Link to promote the session.

**It was AGREED:** That Defibrillator training would be held on Saturday, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at 9am until 10.30am at the Village Hall. **Cllr Oakes to action.**

**SPC13/22/23 – UPDATE ON QUEENS PLATINUM JUBILEE ARRANGEMENTS**

Cllr Hallatt outlined the various events happening over the Jubilee weekend.

Cllr Caston reported that the Duke of Marlborough had contacted him in relation to asking for funding for the BBQ due to be held over the weekend. The Pub would like to provide free burgers and hotdogs for all the village but needed financial help for this event.

**It was AGREED:** That this item be put onto the next Agenda for further discussion and decision. **Clerk to action.**

**SPC14/22/23 - REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS ON ANY MEETINGS ATTENDED**

Cllr Caston reported that a meeting had taken place in relation to the Wheelie Day. He explained that the day would consist of Specialist Cars and Motor Clubs, Stalls, Games, Singers and Bands, BBQ, Raffle and a variety of drinks and food vans.

He explained that volunteers were needed for the day so if anyone could help it would be very much appreciated.

**SPC15/22/23 – MATTERS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

- Cllr Wright reported that the footballers had mislaid the key to the courts and so when a ball went over the fence, in order to retrieve it, the fence now needed to be repaired. He also reported that a lock was needed for the gate as the farmer was not happy with people venturing onto his land.
- Cllr Rook reported for information, that one evening recently at the Village Hall, two youths were acting suspiciously and for members to be aware.

**SPC16/22/23 - DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**It was AGREED:** That the next meeting would be held at the Village Hall on Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> April 2022 following the Annual Parish Meeting which would commence at **7pm.**

The meeting finished at 9.10pm

Chairman: ..... Dated: .....