



SOMERSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at the Village Hall, Somersham on
Wednesday, 7th September 2022 at 7.30pm.

Present:

Councillors: T Hallett (Chairman)
J Caston
S Wright
P Jousiffe
S Whiting
S Barrell

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

SPC74/22/23 - APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE AND APPROVALS

Apologies had been received and approved from Cllr Rook.

SPC75/22/23 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Caston declared an interest in item 9 on the Agenda.

SPC76/22/23 – APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION

None had been received.

SPC77/22/23 – APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6TH JULY 2022

It was AGREED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 6th July 2022 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

SPC78/22/23 – PUBLIC FORUM

There were three members of the public present.

SPC79/22/23 – COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

County Cllr Oakes' report was circulated prior to the meeting and would be published on the village website. She briefly reported the following:

- More EV Charging points
- Solar Panels Initiative
- Correct disposal of batteries

Cllr Hallett asked Cllr Oakes if the village could have an EV charging point to which she stated that she would put Somersham forward as a location.

SPC80/22/23 – DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr Field's report would be circulated after the meeting and published on the village website. The points he raised in his report were the following:

- Q1 Performance – Where the challenges were
- 8% proposed increase in salaries
- 244% increase in electric costs
- Half a million pounds put away last year for inflation this year
- Recycling Collections – incorrect waste which contaminated the load – costs the District Council a lot of money
- Parking Strategy
- Tree Canopy Survey

SPC81/22/23 – CLERK’S REPORT AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

a) TO RECEIVE THE CLERK’S REPORT

The Clerk had nothing to report in addition to what was already 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 23rd August 2022 was £71,854.50.

c) TO AUTHORISE PAYMENTS AND NOTE RECEIPTS

The Clerk reported the following payments be authorised:-

Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Pay (Jul)	£282.30
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Office Allowance/Exp (Jul)	£26.00
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Pay (Aug)	£282.30
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Office Allowance/Exp (Aug)	£36.30
Tom Hitchcock	Grass Cutting	£100.00

It was AGREED: That payments totaling £726.90 be authorised and actioned by the Clerk.

d) BANK RECONCILIATION

It was AGREED: That the Bank Reconciliation be approved.

e) BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

It was AGREED: That the Budget Monitoring report would be updated and circulated after the meeting.

SPC82/22/23 – PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Ref: 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

and...

Ref: DC/20/05895 - Full Planning Application - Installation of renewable 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 South Of Church Farm, Somersham, IP8 4PN And Land To The East of The Channel, Burstall

Cllr Caston reported that these applications removed his land from the proposed areas with more being on the Burstall site. He explained that the applications were for less solar panels but more batteries.

The land on which the proposed sites would be was Grade 2 and Grade 2A which was good agricultural land. He felt that it was necessary to be cautious to take away good productive land but on the other side more energy was needed.

Cllr Wright stated that whilst the proposed sites had decreased in size the use of good, productive land for this nature should not be approved. He felt that all the previous concerns for the sites remained and therefore continued to object.

Members briefly discussed the previous concerns.

It was AGREED: That the Parish Council objected to these applications. **Clerk to action.**

Ref: DC/22/04066 - Full Planning Application - Conversion and extension of outbuilding to form 1no. dwelling, together with new vehicular access - Stone Cottage, Flowton Road, Somersham

During a brief discussion members stated that there were no concerns with the application, but felt it was important for any trees that would be removed should be replaced like for like.

It was AGREED: That the Parish Council had no objections to the application. **Clerk to action.**

SPC83/22/23 – PLANNING DECISIONS

None had been received.

SPC84/22/23 – BOLLARDS ON MAIN ROAD/MILL LANE

It was noted that bollards had been installed on Main Road next to Kings Cottage to stop traffic hitting/damaging Kings Cottage, which had happened on occasions. The result of the installation of the bollards though had unfortunately meant that pedestrians with pushchairs, or wheelchairs, did not have sufficient space to pass that part of the road meaning they had to walk on the road on a blind bend.

A few near misses had been reported from pedestrians/residents.

Cllr Hallett stated that the Parish Council had not been informed about the proposed installation of the bollards and wondered what could be done about them.

Cllr Oakes confirmed that she would make enquiries.

It was AGREED: That the Clerk write to Highways to ask for an urgent review of the bollards.

SPC85/22/23 - COMMUNITY SHOP FUNDING REQUEST

Jennie Hutchinson, Community Shop Treasurer, was present at the meeting and reported that many projects were being planned in order to make the Shop more sustainable with the plans being in the early stages.

She explained that in relation to the energy costs for the shop they were in a fixed deal until 2024, which gave them more time in which to become more sustainable, such as the possibility of solar panels.

Cllr Hallett reported that he had looked through the Community Shop's accounts which showed they were not currently in a sustainable footing, so projects such as solar panels would be an effective way forward.

It was noted that the Parish Council could be approached in the future for funding towards any projects that the Community shop may have as the CiL pot would be an accessible means of funding.

In the short-term the Community Shop asked for a donation towards the running of the shop.

Cllr Whiting proposed £1,000 with Cllr Wright seconded – all agreed.

It was AGREED: That the Parish Council give a donation of £1,000 to the Community Shop.

SPC86/22/23 – PLAYGROUND FUNDING REQUEST

Terry Fordham, Community Association, was present at the meeting and reported on the play equipment on the playing field in the village. He stated that many items of the play equipment were broken including the trim trail. As the play equipment was a reflection of the village he felt that the items needed to be replaced.

A discussion took place in relation to the various pots of money that could be accessed which included the District Council's Development Fund. Terry Fordham stated that he would apply.

SPC87/22/23 – BIODIVERSITY

It was AGREED: That this item be deferred to the next meeting.

SPC88/22/23 - NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT

The Neighborhood Watch reports for May and June were circulated prior to the meeting, which showed the following information:

May 2022:

Somersham - one report of violence

Offton – one report of anti-social behaviour

Willisham – No reported crimes

Flowton – No reported crimes

Stowmarket – 127 violence, 52 - anti-social-behaviour, 37 - public order offence and 33 – criminal damage.

June 2022:

Somersham - one report of violence/assault

Offton – one report of public order offence

Willisham – No reported crimes

Flowton – No reported crimes

Stowmarket – 124 violence, 33 - anti-social-behaviour, 28 - public order offence and 26 – thefts.

SPC89/22/23 – COMMUNITY ORCHARD AND WILDLIFE AREAS

It was AGREED: That this item be deferred to the next meeting.

SPC90/22/23 – SPEED ACTIVATION SIGN

Cllr Wright reported that the recently bought charger for the speed sign battery was incorrect and that a normal charger was sufficient. **Clerk to return charger.**

SPC91/22/23 – MAINS WATER LEAKS

Cllr Wright reported that there seemed to be a mains water leak, which should be monitored. He advised Members that if any green patches were apparent on the currently very dry grass it would indicate a leak.

SPC92/22/23 – ODOUR FROM SEWAGE WORKS

It was AGREED: That this item be deferred to the next meeting.

SPC93/22/23 - ENSO ENERGY

This item was discussed in the planning item on the Agenda.

SPC94/22/23 - REFURBISHMENT OF TELEPHONE BOX / RAILINGS

Cllr Hallett reported that the works could be undertaken as he had been given the go ahead from the Environment Agency. Paint that contained lead could not be used. He added that before any works could be undertaken a risk assessment would need to be carried out.

Cllr Whiting explained that the difficulty would be protecting the work area, as it would be a lot of wet paint within a long area.

SPC95/22/23 – REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS ON ANY MEETINGS ATTENDED

No meetings had been attended.

SPC96/22/23 – MATTERS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

- The Wheelie Day event had been the most successful to date. A large amount of classic cars were present and the stalls made more money than ever before. Overall, a net profit of approximately £4,200 was made.
- Defibrillator battery will soon need to be purchased.

SPC97/22/23 - DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was AGREED: That the next meeting would be held at the Village Hall on Wednesday, 5TH October 2022.

The meeting finished at 10.12pm.

Chairman: Dated: