



SOMERSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held at the Village Hall, Somersham on **Wednesday, 10th May 2023 at 8.16pm.**

Present:

Councillors: J Rook (Vice-Chair)
S Wright
J Caston
S Barrell
P Jousiffe

In Attendance J Blackburn – Clerk
County Cllr K Oakes
District Cllr A Marriott

SPC025/23/24 – ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Rook declared the meeting open.

Cllr Rook proposed that Cllr Hallett be elected as Chair, which was seconded by Cllr Jousiffe. **Decision** – Cllr Hallett was duly elected Chair.

Cllr Hallett would sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office following the meeting.

SPC026/23/24 – ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Cllr Wright proposed that Cllr Rook be elected as Vice-Chair, which was seconded by Cllr Jousiffe. **Decision** – Cllr Rook was duly elected Vice-Chair.

Cllr Rook took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

SPC027/23/24 - APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE AND APPROVALS

Apologies had been received from Cllr Hallatt.

SPC028/23/24 – CO-OPTION OF COUNCILLOR

James Caston had liaised with the Parish Council on continuing to join the Parish Council as a Councillor.

Cllr Jousiffe proposed that James Caston be co-opted onto the Council, which was seconded by Cllr Wright. All agreed.

SPC029/23/24 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Jousiffe declared an interest in item 13, CiL Bids, on the Agenda as he was on the Community Shop Committee.

Cllr Wright declared an interest in item 13, CiL Bids, on the Agenda as he was on the Duke of Marlborough Committee.

SPC030/23/24 – APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION

None had been received.

SPC031/23/24 – APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5TH APRIL 2023

It was AGREED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 5th April 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

SPC032/23/24 – APPOINT REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

It was AGREED: That all Cllrs be representatives to the Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC).

SPC033/23/24 – ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

It was AGREED: That the annual subscription to SALC for £342.19 be agreed.

SPC034/23/24 - PUBLIC FORUM

There were six members of the public present.

Members of the public commented on the amount of potholes in the village, which is was confirmed could be reported online.

SPC035/23/24 – COUNTY COUNCILLOR’S REPORT

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

She stated that she had nothing further to report other than the speed survey was due to commence in the village.

SPC036/23/24 – DISTRICT COUNCILLOR’S REPORT

District Cllr Marriott stated that she didn’t have a report for the meeting as she had been newly elected as District Councillor.

Members congratulated her on her success as District Councillor and were pleased to be working with her.

SPC037/23/24 – 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 4th May 2023 was £98,045.38.

c) TO AUTHORISE PAYMENTS AND NOTE RECEIPTS

The Clerk reported the following payments be authorised:-

Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Pay (Apr)	£294.85
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Office Allowance/Exp (Apr)	£44.66
SALC	Membership Renewal	£342.19
Trevor Brown	Internal Audit - 2022/23	£240.00
Westcotec	Battery for Speed Sign	£109.80
Tom Hitchcock	Grass Cutting	£347.50
MSDC	Bin Emptying	£517.56

It was AGREED: That payments totaling £1,896.56 be authorised and actioned by the Clerk.

d) **APPROVE CIL REPORT**

It was AGREED: That the Cil Report be approved and signed by the Chair.

e) **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

The Annual Governance Statement was completed by the Council and signed by the Chair and the Clerk.

f) **END OF YEAR 31ST MARCH 2023 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

The Statement of Accounts was presented for approval. **Decision** – approved and signed by the Chair and the Clerk

g) **INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT**

The Internal Auditor's Report was received and it was noted that the following recommendations had been made:

Recommendation 1: *The Council's Policies and Procedures should be reviewed and updated as soon as practicably possible to ensure they are still fit for purpose and display up-to-date contact details.*

Recommendation 2: *In the interests of overall transparency and for disclosure to local residents and local council taxpayers, the amount of the Precept determined by the Council each year should be clearly recorded in the Council's Minutes.*

Recommendation 3: *In respect of documentation for the year 2022/23 the Council should ensure that all documents required to be published by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 are published on the Council's website.*

h) **COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) BIDS**

The following bids were received from the community prior to the meeting:

- Community Association and Community Shop – Car Park Resurfacing - £16,779
- Community Shop – Solar Panels - £25,000
- Primary School – Outside Covered Area and Storage - £10,000
- Duke of Marlborough Pub – Solar Panels - £15,300
- (fallback – Dishwasher items - £5,175)

The Play Area Project quotes were also sent to the Parish Council for the proposed play equipment, which was in the region of £60,000.

Cllr Rook suggested the Duke of Marlborough and the Community Shop merge, which would make the running of the businesses as a whole more economical, therefore reducing all costs.

A general discussion took place in relation to the above suggestion with the cons being parking and the contents of the shop not fitting into the pub.

Cllr Rook stated that the return for solar panels for the shop needed to be understood and it was agreed that Jennie Hutchinson would attend the next meeting with more information.

In relation to the resurfacing of the car park, it was suggested that an application be made to the District Council's CiL Funding/Grants team with the Parish Council contributing towards the project.

It was AGREED: That the Parish Council supported the Resurfacing project and a contribution be made in the future.

In relation to the play equipment project it was noted that the project would be extremely expensive and the Parish Council were aware other pots of funding were being applied for. Members felt that Terry Fordham should be invited to the next meeting in order to give members an update on those applications.

It was AGREED: That the Parish Council supported the Play Equipment Project and a contribution should be made in the future.

In relation to the Primary School's bid for an undercover area and storage, Cllr Oakes confirmed that she would be in a position to contribute from her Locality Funding.

It was AGREED: That a contribution of £3,500 be made to the School for their project. **Clerk to action.**

SPC038/23/24 – PLANNING APPLICATIONS

None had been received.

SPC039/23/24 – PLANNING DECISIONS

None had been received.

SPC040/23/24 – GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

It was AGREED: That the Parish Council met the conditions of eligibility set out in the Schedule to the Parish Council (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012, thereby enabling it to use the General Power of Competence. This would remain valid until the Annual Meeting following the next Ordinary Election in May 2027.

SPC041/23/24 - NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT

The following information had been received:

March 2023:

Somersham – No reported crime

Offton – one report of anti-social behaviour on or near Castle Road

Willisham – No reported crimes

Flowton – No reported crimes

Stowmarket – 253 crimes = 103 violence, 28 thefts, 31 anti-social behaviour and 24 criminal damage.

SPC042/23/24 – GIANT HOGWEED IN THE CHANNEL

Cllr Jousiffe reported that giant hogweed had been seen in the Channel, which needed getting rid of as soon as possible.

It was AGREED: That Cllr Jousiffe speak with Tom Hitchcock to dispose of the Hogweed.

SPC043/23/24 - REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS ON ANY MEETINGS ATTENDED

There was nothing to report.

SPC044/23/24 – MATTERS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

- Telephone box had been completed

- Noticeboard – new lock and keys required

SPC045/23/24 - DATES OF FUTURE MEETING

The following dates were approved:

- Wednesday, 5th July 2023
- Wednesday, 6th September 2023
- Wednesday, 4th October 2023
- Wednesday, 1st November 2023
- Wednesday, 6th December 2023
- Wednesday, 3rd January 2024
- Wednesday, 7th February 2024
- Wednesday, 6th March 2024

SPC046/23/24 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was AGREED: That the next meeting would be held at the Village Hall on **Wednesday, 7th June 2023.**

The meeting finished at 9pm.

Chairman: Dated: