



SOMERSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at the Village Hall, Somersham on
Wednesday, 6th November 2024 at 7.30pm.

Present:

Councillors: T Hallett (Chair)
J Rook
S Wright
J Caston
R Hodson-Gibbons

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

SPC132/24/25 – APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE AND APPROVALS

Apologies had been received and approved from Cllr Jousiffe and Cllr Barrell.

SPC133/24/25 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None had been received.

SPC134/24/25 – APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION

None had been received.

SPC135/24/25 – APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2ND OCTOBER 2024

It was AGREED: That the Minutes of the meetings held on 2nd October 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

SPC136/24/25 - PUBLIC FORUM

Three members of the public were present and the following issues were raised:

- Broken footbridge on a parish footpath, which had been reported 9 months ago. On the 'Highways Report It' tool its status was 'report received' with nothing further being done. **Clerk to chase.**
- Village sign was in need of attention. **Clerk to put on next Agenda.**
- Railings along the Channel in need of painting – members explained that the re-painting of the railings had been explored in recent years but it quickly became apparent that Suffolk County Council Highways would not undertake the works as it was not a priority and the Parish Council did not have the capacity or the funds. It had been agreed therefore to not carry out the works.

SPC137/24/25 – COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr Oakes' report would be circulated after the meeting and would be published on the village website.

She briefly went through her report on the following points:

- Government's new housing targets must put infrastructure first

- Suffolk launches pothole prevention programme ahead of winter weather
- Council to offer interest-free loans to make homes more energy efficient
- Suffolk County Council set on major investment to further protect Suffolk from flooding as it calls on Government to 'step up'
- Loft Insulation Offer gives Suffolk residents 50% off eco-friendly insulation

SPC138/24/25 – DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr Marriott's report would be circulated after the meeting and would be published on the village website.

She briefly went through her report on the following points:

- Household Eligibility for winter support schemes
- MSDC Public Realm Enhancements
- Renewable Energy Initiatives
- The Council's Borrowing Position & Funds
- Reducing Right to Buy discounts and enabling councils to keep all the receipts generated by sales
- Social and Affordable Housing
- Money for Affordable Home Programme (announced in the Budget)
- Competition & Markets Authority's Housebuilding Study
- Public Health Update
- Flood and Coastal Innovation Programmes – mid-term report

SPC139/24/25 – TENNIS COURT MAINTENANCE

As discussed at the previous meeting, the Tennis Club were researching contractors to resurface the tennis courts. Three quotes had been received and presented to the Parish Council in order to request a contribution to the costs. The quotes ranged between approximately £8,000 and £9,200.

A representative from the Tennis Club, who was present at the meeting, explained that the courts were used by the Club where children's attendance was good. He stated that with a new surface it would be used a lot more and therefore well worth the investment.

He explained that cracks had started to emerge in the current concrete surface, which over the winter months would become worse. The Club had been advised to have the works completed over the next 6 months.

One of the quotes had been received from Suffolk Tennis Courts, who Sproughton Parish Council had used for their courts and who had been extremely happy with their work.

Cllr Caston proposed that the Parish Council agreed to spend Cil Money on the project and accept the quote for £9,120 (inc. VAT), which was seconded by Cllr Wright – **All Agreed.**

SPC140/24/25 - PLAYING FIELD WORKS - BOUNDARY

Terry Fordham was present at the meeting and reported that various quotes had been received to give an idea of what the maintenance works would cost.

The works would include clearance of all the overgrowth for the whole boundary of the playing field, especially the boundary with Princes Gardens. The quotes received ranged between approximately £4,000 and £6,000.

Members agreed that it was a lot of money and Cllr Caston suggested a working party with volunteers to carry out some of the work in the first instance. Following that, if work was left outstanding, then a contractor be sought to complete what was needed.

In relation to the trees, it was acknowledged that some trees had died and needed to be felled.

It was AGREED: That a working party be put together, a date to be arranged and a letter drop to houses in Princes Gardens to inform them of the work due to be carried out – **All members**

SPC141/24/25 - REFURBISHMENT OF PAVILION

Terry Fordham gave an update and explained that an architect's plan of the proposed works would soon be received. He explained that it was hoped the new pavilion would bring in and cater for more hirers and not just for football.

Currently, the Youth Club could only be ran outside so the new pavilion would provide somewhere for the Club to be held in the winter months.

It was still being decided where the pavilion would sit on the field.

Terry reported that he had a list of potential funders which included the District Council's CiL pot, which could be in the region of £100,000 and Suffolk FA which could be around £250,000.

The Clerk reported that an invoice had been received for professional fees to the sum of £600.

SPC142/24/25 – GRIT BINS

It was confirmed that the County Council could fill all grit bins in the autumn and that the Parish Council needed to check all bins were in good condition and in their correct locations.

Cllr Wright reported a grit bin that should be located on Brook Way, was in fact located on Church Lane and therefore needed moving.

Cllr Oakes suggested that the Clerk email the details to her and she would liaise with the correct person to have the bin moved. **Clerk to action.**

SPC143/24/25 – CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU (CAB)

Members discussed an email received from the Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice Bureau. It explained that they had helped 7 residents in Somersham over the past 12 months with over 60 issues.

Members felt that a donation should be given to the CAB and £300 was agreed.

It was AGREED: That a donation be given to CAB for £300. **Clerk to action.**

SPC144/24/25 – FLOODING PLANS

Members discussed the Channel following receipt of many photographs taken by Cllr Hallett of the area and an email received from a resident to the Clerk raising concerns.

The pictures clearly showed that the Channel narrowed in areas, which would make it difficult for water to flow during heavy rainfall.

It was also clear that at the bridge at one end of the Channel, had a large amount of concrete around it, plus many sandbags, which would block 50% of any running water passing through.

Members discussed the issues and whilst they were mindful of the situation and raised concerns, the Channel was the responsibility of the Environment Agency (EA) and therefore the Parish Council's hands were tied.

Cllr Caston suggested that the photographs should be forwarded to the EA and the concerns raised, again. **Cllr Hallett to action.**

SPC145/24/25 - CLERK'S REPORT AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

a) **TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S REPORT**

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

b) **TO RECEIVE THE FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Clerk had circulated prior to the meeting the Council's current financial position and the balance in the accounts as of 30th October 2024 was £82,815.90.

c) **TO AUTHORISE PAYMENTS AND NOTE RECEIPTS**

The following payments were to be authorised:-

Jennie Blackburn	Poppy Wreath Reimbursement	£19.99
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Pay (Oct)	£314.10
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Office Allowance/Exp (Oct)	£33.30
SALC	Payroll Service - 6 months	£54.00
CFB IT Solutions	Mailbox Hosting (Oct)	£6.00
CFB IT Solutions	Mailbox Hosting (Nov)	£6.00

It was AGREED: That payments totaling £433.39 be authorised and actioned by the Clerk.

d) **ANNUAL INCREASE – CLERK'S SALARY**

The Clerk reported that the annual increase for Parish Clerks had been received with a raise of 4% to be backdated to April 2024.

It was AGREED: That the annual pay increase be approved.

e) **DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2025/26**

It was AGREED: That the Draft Budget for 2025/26 be brought to the December meeting for approval.

f) **MAINTENANCE OF TREES IN CHURCHYARD - DONATION**

It was AGREED: That the Parish Council donate £200 towards the maintenance of the trees in the churchyard. **Clerk to action.**

SPC146/24/25 – PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Ref: DC/24/04776 - Householder Application - Erection of a cartlodge - Orchard House, Main Road, Somersham

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

SPC147/24/25 – PLANNING DECISIONS

None had been received

SPC148/24/25 – UPDATE - 25TH ANNIVERSARY 'THE STORY OF SOMERSHAM' BOOK

There was nothing to report.

SPC149/24/25 – NOTICEBOARD – COMMUNITY SHOP

Quotes for new noticeboard(s) had been received.

It was suggested that the Community Shop be approached and asked if one could be installed on the wall, rather than a free standing one. **Clerk to action.**

SPC150/24/25 – EMERGENCY PLAN

There was nothing to report.

SPC151/24/25 - NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT

There was nothing to report and no information had been received.

SPC152/24/25 – OTHER ATTENDED MEETINGS

None had been attended.

SPC153/24/25 - MATTERS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

- Christmas Tree – Cllr Rook

SPC154/24/25 - DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was AGREED: That the next meeting of the Parish Council Meeting, would be held at the Village Hall on **Wednesday, 4th December 2024.**

The meeting finished at 9.20pm.

Chairman: Dated: