

SOMERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Somerton Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 21 November 2023 at The Village Hall, Cottage Road, Somerton at 7.00pm.

Present: Cllrs J Clift, D Crane, K King, D Shuker, R Starling

Also present: Nicola Ledain – clerk, 5 members of the public.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr P Beard. Apologies had also been received from County Cllr James Bensly and District Cllr Noel Galer.

2. Election of Chairman

Cllr J Clift was duly elected (proposed by Cllr Starling, seconded by Cllr Shuker, all in agreement).

3. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Starling declared an interest as a boat owner and user of the Staithe and Cllr Shuker declared an interest as a trustee of the Staithe and Boat Dyke Trust.

4. Co-option of a Parish Councillor

There had been one application to become a parish councillor from Peter Young. The Council duly co-opted Peter Young.

5. Public Speaking

- A member of the public asked if the agenda could be published on the website and the minutes published within 30 days.
- With regards to item, 9c on the agenda, the members of the public were present who had requested that they placed a memorial bench on the north bank of the boat dyke. A short discussion ensued regarding the request. Plans and the design for the bench had been circulated. There was a small concern that the proposed stone base of the bench would cause an issue when machinery was needed to clear the boat dyke or maintenance being carried out, recycled materials were suggested. The 360 design of the bench was well received.

6. Minutes from Meetings

- a. The Council approved the minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2023 and they were signed by the Chair.
- b. The Council approved the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 26 September 2023 and they were signed by the Chair, subject to adding the below amendments:
To include “There was then a short discussion between councillors only. Cllr R Walters (Chairman) disagreed with the proposals to resolve the complaint and at 7.46pm, informed the meeting that he resigned as a Parish Councillor and then left the meeting. The Vice Chair, Cllr J Clift took the Chair”.

7. Matters for reporting from previous meetings

- a) Barclays bank change of mandate was being processed.
- b) Update regarding footpaths – There had been an public rights of way application to Norfolk County Council regarding the wind turbine track which was awaiting response.
- c) Community Fund Policy was on the website.
- d) No though road sign update. CRF 12 still had footpath signs up, but they needed to be replaced with bigger restrictive byway signs. The Highway Engineer would be contacted.
- e) Update regarding 20mph zone – this needed to be progressed.
- f) To receive an update regarding the bus shelters.
Cllr Shuker reported that they had been re-painted. The current no smoking signs needed to be replaced due to lifting and this was approved.
- g) Update on dog waste bins

The problem with dog waste had eased but this would be monitored especially going into warmer months.

- h) Update on Flegg Community Land Trust – the update received had been noted.
- i) Update from Benjamin Grapes re trails
There was no further update
- j) Pub signage
The owners had been contacted but there had been no response. This would be chased.

8. Planning

- a. None received.

9. Matters for consideration

- a. To consider and agree how the Council business would be managed following the agreement to reduce to the minimum number of meetings.
There was a short discussion regarding the council business that needed to be transacted and fitting this into four meetings. An action tracker was suggested that could be circulated before each meeting but could also be a live document and be stored somewhere similar to google docs. Cllr King would advise.
- b. To appoint a fourth trustee for the Somerton Staithe and Boat Dyke Trust.
It was agreed that Paul Roullier would be appointed.
- c. To agree how to replace the broken bench on the north bank of the boat dyke and to consider the memorial bench request
Following earlier discussion in the public speaking item, it was agreed that the broken bench would be replaced by the memorial bench. The family involved would review the design slightly and let the Council know.
- d. To agree the grass cutting tender invitation
The specification was agreed. A post would be advertised, and applications would be agreed via email on this occasion. In future, the
- e. To agree the SAM2 traffic sign volunteer
Cllr King agreed to be the traffic sign volunteer and would contact Richard Walters.
- f. That a review of the Staffing Committee's effectiveness and it's policies be undertaken by the full council.
The clerk produced a policy timetable which would ensure that the council approved relevant policies in a timely manner and this was agreed. It was also agreed that the council would be kept informed of issues of the staffing committee where possible.
- g. To review the latest play area inspection
This would be forwarded to the Village Hall Committee.

10. Financial Matters

- a. The budget for 2024/2025 was agreed.

Forecasted Final Position 2023-2024

Title	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Budget	2023-24 Current Spend	Estimated Additional Forecast	2023-24 TOTAL	Variance	2024-2025 Proposed Budget
Donation to St Mary's PCC Churchyard	760.00	760.00		760.00	760.00	-	760.00
Parks/Open Spaces - Concurrent.	1,134.00	1,800.00	1,158.08	600.00	1,758.08	41.92	1,800.00
Clerk's Salary	1,616.57	3,500.00	746.58	2,000.00	2,746.58	753.42	3,500.00
Clerk's Expenses	-	100.00	20.00	50.00	70.00	30.00	100.00
Hire of Vill.Hall	54.00	100.00	132.00		132.00	- 32.00	100.00
Insurance	349.36	350.00	327.00		327.00	23.00	350.00
Elections		1,400.00					
Bus Shelters - Concurrent		250.00	-		-	250.00	100.00
Benches	-	-			-	-	200.00
Seminars/Training	-	150.00		210.00	210.00	- 60.00	250.00
Admin	169.03	170.00	248.94		248.94	- 78.94	275.00
Contingency							500.00
TOTAL	4,082.96	8,580.00	2,632.60	3,620.00	6,252.60	927.40	7,935.00

- b. The precept request for 2024/2025 was agreed at £8000.
c. The Council received the financial statement to date.
d. The following payments were agreed:
- Nicola Ledain – clerk salary amount (since 10th July): £976.10
 - HMRC: £244.00
 - St Mary's Church churchyard contribution: £760
 - Materials for bus shelter (R Walters): £37.46 + £22.45 = £59.91
 - Ross Bird: £345
 - NALC training invoice: £216

11. Policies

- The policy list was AGREED.
- The financial regulations were AGREED.
- The planning protocol was AGREED.

12. Highways Matters

- None at present

13. Correspondence

- To consider the ongoing issue regarding the pothole causing damage to tyres.
It was noted that the drain cover was still causing damage to tyres, and any correspondence would be forwarded to NCC.

- b. The Proposal from UK Power Networks to install new electric line at: Somerton South Pumping Station, NR29 4EB was NOTED.

14. To Receive Items for the Next Agenda

None at present, but a reminder would be sent closer to the time of the meeting.

15. To note the date of next meeting: Tuesday 12 March 2024

Meeting ended at 8.58pm.