

SOMERTON – ANNUAL PARISH MEETING FINAL MINUTES

TUESDAY 17th MAY 2022 AT 7.00 P.M.

1. Minutes of previous meeting held on 4th May 2021.
The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.
2. Reports received from
 - County Councillor James Bensly not present
 - District Councillors James Bensly not present and Noel Galer as per Appendix A.
3. Police representative not present
4. Reports received from representatives of voluntary organisations within the Parish:
 - Somerton 'Poors' Trustees by Penny Beard per appendix B
 - Somerton Staithe & Boat Dyke Trustees by David Shuker per appendix C
 - Somerton Village Hall by Penny Beard per appendix D
 - Any other village organisation wishing to make a report by Judy Clift per appendix E

5. Parish Council Chairman's Report

After a transitioning period, I would like to start by welcoming the new Clerk, Kate Martin-Smith. Cllr Richard Starling did not stand for Chair this year and I am honoured to have now been elected the new Chair. I would like to take this opportunity to give special thanks to Cllr Richard Starling for his many years of dedicated and tireless hard work on behalf of the parish.

I would also like to thank our previous Clerk, Gill Lack and Cllr Brian Barker, who resigned recently, for all their work. Due to the new councillor vacancy, an election has been called to fill the current position. The polling day will be the 16th June 2022 and polling cards are to be sent out to all Parishioners.

Contractor Ross Bird undertook grass cutting during the year and I am pleased to announce that the contract has now been renewed. The Parish Council receives funding for this from the Borough Council, but this may need to be reviewed in due course. Also, the hedge was cut around war memorial. Unfortunately, the spring litter pick did not proceed, however I would be happy to try to organise this for Autumn. I would like to revert to twice yearly litter picks from 2023 onwards.

Quotes were sought to refurbish the noticeboard but unfortunately none were received, so Cllr Richard Starling offered to sand and revarnish himself and I would like to give him thanks for this as he did a very good job. Cllr Richard Starling and I also repaired the fence off New Road up to the river and removed and disposed of the old kissing gate. I am also grateful for the volunteers who helped clear roadside grips from Somerton Hall to Martham Road, The Street and in centre of village and cleared vegetation around 30 signs, this created a wonderful community spirit.

Flegg Community Land Trust is to evaluate potential sites for new houses and report back to the Parish Council. Three affordable homes and two market value bungalows have been discussed.

We have also been trying to create a permissive path to link Coronation and Mill Lanes but so far, we have not progressed any further, the Parish Council are going to try to push Ecotricity for a response.

The Parish Council were offer a grant made to provide sand bags by County Council, unfortunately it was not possible to facilitate this offer, therefore it was not taken up. The Village Hall took up the Free trees offered after being advised by the Parish Council.

Going forward I feel that it would be beneficial for the SAM sign moved on regular basis. Preparation of a neighbourhood plan has also been considered but decided against as it was OTT.

Finally, two councillors undertook the 'Being an Effective Councillor' training while the locum Clerk reviewed working practices in the Parish Council. As a result, recommended various changes including the Staffing Committee, which has now been now formed and various new policies, protocols and working practices were advised and adopted to help bring the Parish Council up to date.

6. To receive questions on any item/subject None

7. Members of audience – questions on any item/subject.

7.1. Staithe - discussed can the insurance be shared even with say Winterton? Who owns it?
Can the they get a grant from the parish council re upkeep?

7.2. Do we have a grants and awards policy?

7.3. Can we do working parties for locals? Spring litter pick to be pushed forward and autumn litter pick to be agreed.

7.4. Can we increase precept and concurrent funds? There are discretionary grants, we have been advised that there are third parties that can do this for us but take a commission.

7.5. Are there any further permissive paths? We have until 2026 to update the definitive map of forgotten footpaths. There was a path to Hemsby agreed but Hemsby did not agree this.

8. Date of Next Meeting.

3rd May 2022

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.03

Apendix A

Annual Report for Somerton Annual Parish Meeting / Annual Parish Council Meeting 17th May 2022

My apologies for not always being able to make it to Somerton's parish Council meetings. This is often because I am busy attending a meeting at the town hall or another local body as part of my responsibilities as a borough councillor. I am hoping there will be fewer clashes in timetables this year and therefore hope to see you more often.

However, elsewhere in the ward, like the multi million pound rock berm project in Hemsby, begun locally by Save Hemsby Coastline (of which I am a founding trustee), and the recent Pine Developments application to alter the status of the 6 acre Leisure Development at Beach Road for all year round occupation, my fellow ward councillor James Bensly and I have achieved some notable results.

Despite frustrations with the relentless coastal erosion this winter, I am pleased to have made a significant financial contribution to the Hemsby lifeboat from my GYBC ward budget, along with my fellow ward councillor James Bensly. As you will be aware, that service is frequently called out to incidents all over the broads.

Changes in local representation also mean that I will be becoming much more involved in coastal issues, as I have been appointed to the Coastal Partnership East Board, the Local Government Association – Coastal Matters Board and the Norfolk Coastal Partnership Board. Previously, whilst I have been involved with some of these, it was as a Save Hemsby Coastline Trustee. These are in addition to my GYBC Committees that include; Licensing, Housing & Neighbourhoods and Audit & Risk, plus my existing appointments to the Broad's Internal Drainage Board that I attended this Monday at Hickling and the Youth Advisory Board I attend next week.

This leads me on to mention the new mayor, Graham Plant who is a familiar, approachable, able and experienced borough and county councillor. He has pledged to support Young People during his term, and I will be discussing my vision for a community tech workshop focussed on stimulating the imagination, skills and creativity of our local youngsters. I am currently organising a visit a site in Norwich, that is our nearest neighbour and a shining example of how these can benefit our communities.

Concurrent Function Grants – Somerton Parish Council may have been asked about these by GYBC. The fact is that these grants are a very efficient way for the borough council to provide services via the parishes and they have majority support. It is true that there have been some confused reports in the press and calls to end them, but there are no such plans, quite the reverse. However, GYBC needs as much information as possible to help the parishes keep these grants and to show all the good work that is achieved. Please help GYBC to help you by supporting this if you have not already done so.

In the past it has been my pleasure to support, amongst other things, the local staithe that benefits Somerton and Winterton residents and to help provide emergency sand bags to help protect Somerton from flooding. I will once again be looking to help any well deserving local projects where I can this year.

Finally, as we begin to emerge from the pandemic, it is good to see Wild Flowers Returning to the area. I have noticed a number of wild flowers making a comeback locally, including groups of primroses & cowslips. Hopefully, local mowing regimes will favour their further propagation into more shady spots on our roadsides and ditches.

Appendix B

W Somerton Poors income is derived from 4 connecting marshes of about 6ha in total on the west side of the Horsey Road, which are let for grazing and shooting. After expenses, which is mainly insurance, money is distributed to people in West Somerton. Each autumn we put a notice in Somerton News asking for people in need to apply to the secretary. The names of the recipients remain confidential. During the winter, a group of us walked the marshes to see if any maintenance was required and deemed no work was necessary. Additional meetings have been held during the year to ensure Policies are in place and to review our Governance Documents.

Appendix C

Report of the Somerton Staithe & Boat Dyke Trust for the Annual Parish Meeting in West Somerton Village Hall, 17th May 2022

Following the appointment of two new trustees (David Shuker and Jim Whitehouse) to the Trust in January 2022 the Trustees have met on two occasions since the new committee was formed – minutes of both are available.

In May the acting chair, Martin Hall, stepped down and the post is currently vacant. A mooring agreement for 2022 was sent out and most, but not all, boat owners have responded by sending in a signed agreement and making a donation towards the upkeep of the staithe and boat dyke.

In line with current legislation the Trustees will be taking an insurance policy to cover the work of the Trustees and volunteers

The Trustees propose to draft a new mooring agreement for 2023 to be presented at an open meeting of boat owners to be scheduled in October.

Appendix D

It is taking sometime for bookings to recover from the lengthy lockdown. We decided not to hold a fete in 2021 as there was a degree of uncertainty about rising Covid cases. Instead we held a "Get Together Day" in August, which was a great success. To get together, chat, eat and drink and play table tennis was what people needed. Bookings and numbers coming to the hall are picking up but there are still people who are cautious about indoor events.

We were very grateful to Norman Grayling's family for donating more than £1,600 from his funeral collection. In conjunction with his family, a seat was chosen and is now in place outside the hall. The plaque asked for by the Grayling family reads "Norman Grayling 1929-2020. Invites us to share the view and rest awhile"

During the winter, with the help of many volunteers and with hedging given from a grant scheme, we planted a hedge along the south side of the Playing Field and despite the dry weather it is growing very well. We still need to agree on what to do about replacing the fencing on the west side.

It is planned to have a new front door to the hall.

Policies are in the process of being reviewed.

We are now in the final planning stages for the Queen's Jubilee on 2nd and 3rd June. We would like to mark the occasion with something of a permanent nature but nothing has yet been decided.

I can't thank enough the trustees, committee members and all the people who give their time, machinery, money, prizes and use of land for parking. I know if I begin to name them I will leave out someone!

We look forward to closer working with the Parish Council, to bounce ideas and maybe have joint events which benefit the whole village

The plaque on the wall near the door "To Commemorate our Community's Resilience in the Year of the Pandemic 2020-21" sums up what I try to do in life and for the village and sometimes that is the harder way. "Live Your Best and Act Your Best and Think Your Best Today"

Appendix E

- 1) Bus Shelters: both bus shelters are in good condition
- 2) War memorial looks to be in good order, clean and well tended. The bottom step is cracked at one end. It is not dangerous, but should be repaired when funds permit.
- 3) Benches: all the benches look to be in good structural condition. The benches on the Staithe would benefit from oiling/treatment, not urgent.
- 4) Road signs: mainly in good condition.
One of the speed signs in Cottage Road has been damaged, presumably by agricultural machinery, though its opposite number is OK. No urgent need for repair.
The street sign for Cottage Road at the junction with Sandy Lane has been damaged, but is still readable. The street sign for Common Road at the junction with Cottage Road has been slightly damaged, again, presumably by agricultural machinery. Still legible. These three signs should be replaced at some stage.
- 5) The Staithe area is in good condition
- 6) Staithe Road: the Please No Parking signs along Staithe Road are very effective. The contrast with the random parking of a few years ago is marked