

SOMERTON PARISH COUNCIL

FINAL Minutes of the MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL meeting held on 9th May 2023 at
The Village Hall, Cottage Road, Somerton at 7.00pm.

Present: Cllrs J Clift, D Crane, K King, D Shuker, R Starling, R Walters (Chair).

Clerk: Clare Roullier

Cllr James Bensly and 8 members of the public were present.

1 Election of Chairman

Cllr R Walters was proposed as Chair by Cllr J Clift, seconded Cllr R Starling and elected to the post. Cllr R Walters signed a declaration of acceptance of office and assumed the Chair of the meeting.

2 Election of Vice-Chairman

Cllr J Clift was Proposed by Cllr D Shuker and seconded by Cllr D Crane.

3 Co-option to fill vacancy

To consider giving public notice of the council vacancy. AGREED. To be advertised on Noticeboard, Facebook and Somerton News, Clerk.

4 Apologies

To consider and approve apologies for absence – none received.

5 Return of Election Expenses forms

Received.

6 Declarations of Interest

Cllr R Starling expressed a non-pecuniary interest in item 12.8 as a member of Norfolk Wildlife Trust.

7 Receive Declaration of Interest Forms

Received with two outstanding, agreed to be delivered to Clerk by close of Friday 12th May 2023.

8 Review of Delegation Arrangements to Committees, Sub Committees, Local Authorities and External Bodies

8.1 Staffing Committee – Cllr K King, Cllr J Clift, Cllr D. Shuker, alternate member Cllr R Walters - AGREED.

8.2 Thurne Working Group – Cllr K King - AGREED.

8.3 Village Hall Committee – Cllr J Clift - AGREED.

8.4 Parish Liason with Town Hall – Cllr R Walters - AGREED.

9 Review and Adopt Policies and Code of Conduct

Accepted. Clerk to request latest revision of Standing Orders from NALC

10 Public Speaking

10.1 Cllr James Bensly thanked all those who voted for him to represent them for another four years. For interest, Cllr Bensley mentioned that the GYBC election was a very closely contested election and one seat was won by only one vote, showing how important everyone's vote is.

Cllr J Bensly advised that there is no update from GYBC as they are currently moving to a new system.

On behalf of NCC Cllr J Bensly encouraged parishioners to raise highways matters with the Clerk so that they can be raised with the Streetscene Inspectors who are visiting from 29th May 2023. He also advised that the Clerk should cc him on emails to Highways. Cllr Bensly advised the Council that NCC are installing 46 new EV charging points and are open to options on siting. Cllr J Bensly updated the Council on Norfolk Creativity Week to be held 15th–21st May 23; the new NCC trusted trader list; Princes Trust courses starting 22nd May 23; fire brigade call outs; emissions; recycling centres; the good rating received by Childrens' Services; Beryl bikes scheme; and road surfacing.

Cllr R Starling asked if Norfolk is on the list to receive new traffic powers to fine motorists for offences that were previously only the purview of the Police. Cllr J Bensly believed so but will check and get back to the Council.

10.2 District Councillor Noel Galer. Not present.

10.3 Police representative. None present.

10.4 Public. 8 members of the public present.

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- 10.4.1 A member of the public asked if there was a Community Fund policy and, if not, that one is put in place. They requested that the policy should state that it is only for capital expenditure. They suggested that any recurring expenses related to community fund assets should be funded through the precept. Cllr R Walters responded that there is no policy currently but the Council will consider adding it to the agenda for the next meeting.
- 10.4.2 A member of the public asked for dog waste bins in the Village and suggested siting at the Staithe and Kissing Gate due to dog fouling issues. Various health issues from dog waste were raised. Cllr R Walters responded to confirm that this was an item on the agenda and would be discussed. Cllr J Bensly offered to fund the purchase of two bins but advised that emptying dog waste bins is very expensive as classed as hazardous waste. Cllr J Bensly suggested general waste bins to keep emptying costs down and he will speak to GYBC about how they can be emptied as the sites are not easily accessible. Cllr K King asked if a parishioner could empty bins & move bags to another location where they can be collected by GYBC. Cllr J Bensly agreed this was possible.
- 10.4.3 A member of the public raised highways issues with overgrown signs which cannot be seen and tyres being blown by the drain cover on the corner opposite No. 1 Horsey Road. Cllr R Walters assured that these would be raised at the meeting with the Streetscene inspectors. Cllr K King confirmed he had reported both of these matters on the Highways web portal and believed the drain cover issue was due to the road layout.

11 Minutes from Previous Meeting

The full Council minutes dated 7th March 2023 were AGREED with no amendments.

12 Matters for reporting from previous meetings

- 12.1 Insurance claim locum clerk 2022: Following Clerk's advice the Council agreed no claim would be possible - Noted
- 12.2 Website home page: updated – Noted. Website to be updated to give credit to John Crooks for home page photo. Cllr K King agreed to amend the website design to make it relevant and up to date.
- 12.3 Permissive Path along Wind Turbine Track linking Coronation and Mill Lanes - Cllr R Starling reported that the wind turbine owners, Ecotricity, had not replied to several emails concerning the Parish Council's wish to establish a permissive path along the track to link Coronation and Mill lanes. Cllr R Starling suggested that since people had walked the route for many years, the Parish Council should now proceed to ask the County Council to include this path as a right of way by foot only on the definitive map. This would include from the north end of Coronation Lane (at the junction with Church Road) south to the junction with the east end of Wind Turbine Track, along the northern edge of Wind Turbine Track to meet with Mill Lane (Martham Foot Path No.21) – AGREED.
- 12.4 Spring litter pick: 13 large bags of litter were collected, as 3 were delivered later, and fly tipping along Horsey Road was reported – Noted.
- 12.5 Re-opening footpath No. 8 - Cllr R Walters reported that a few emails have been received from BLAF in favour of re-opening footpath 8 and suggesting we contact Ramblers Assoc and apply to NCC. Cllr K King clarified that the Parish Council has to make the application. - AGREED.
- 12.6 Bus shelter – Cllr R Walters reported no new volunteers have applied. Cllr D Shuker volunteered. Cllrs R Walters, K King, J Clift, D Shuker and one parishioner have volunteered. Approach the Village Hall and Hobby Club and advertise in Somerton News for more volunteers - AGREED.
- 12.7 Records disposal archive - leave on future agendas but look to action in Sept - Noted.
- 12.8 Update on meeting with NWT on 28th March –Cllr R Walters met with NWT to look at increasing biodiversity. They advised that it is best to leave areas fallow for 1 year to see what comes up naturally. Cllr R Walters suggested an area 2m radius round the village sign and it is noted we will need the Staithe Trustees to agree. Another area round the telephone booth and a further area around the war memorial. Around the war memorial it is proposed that there is a cut path from the steps and around the war memorial but the rest of the area left fallow. Cllr R Walters volunteered to cut the fallow areas once a year in August. If it doesn't work, cutting can recommence. Cllr R Walters invited the public attending if they had any suggestions and an area around the beacon was suggested. It was AGREED to experiment with a fallow year with Cllr R Walters doing one cut in late August. To be included in the newsletter, Cllr R Walters to write the article. NB It was agreed Cllr R Starling did not need to excuse himself from the meeting as the conflict of interest was not pecuniary.

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13 Planning

- 13.1 To consider consultee response to planning applications received from GYBC and the BA.
- 13.1.1 06/23/0213/TRE – GYBC – Burnley Hall, Burnley Estate, Dark Lane, East Somerton, NR29 4DZ – Proposal to fell 5 no. roadside dead Acer trees. Somerton PC response: No Objection –Noted
- 13.1.2 06/23/0243/LB – GYBC - Burnley Hall, East Somerton, NR29 4DZ – Listed Building Consent for the proposed extension to potting shed to provide additional office accommodation. Somerton PC response: We are aware that the proposed project will alter the overall building and setting in a not insignificant manner. We also have concerns that some of the proposed materials may not match or be in keeping with the existing buildings. Burnley Hall is an important historic grade II listed building and we feel strongly that the views of specialist conservation and archaeological advisers should be sought, as per Historic England's suggestion. Therefore, Somerton Parish Council would like to OBJECT to the planning permission at the current time, subject to specialist advice from conservation and archaeological professionals, on the grounds that the proposed development may not be in keeping with the existing grade II listed historic buildings and therefore may be to the detriment of the site. Somerton Parish Council would be happy to revisit our decision should we see specialist advice as requested – Noted that this statement was agreed according to the planning protocol.
- 13.1.3 16/23/0244/F – GYBC - Burnley Hall, Burnley Estate, Dark Lane, East Somerton, NR29 4DZ – Proposed extension to potting shed to provide additional office accommodation. Somerton PC response: As above - Noted
- 13.1.4 BA/2023/0139/HOUSEH – BA – Staithe Farm, Sandy Lane, West Somerton – Proposed garden room extension on original footprint – NO OBJECTION but point out discrepancy in application which states it can't be seen when site can be seen from footpath 13 and 6.
- 13.2 To receive notification of any decisions taken by GYBC and the BA.
- 13.2.1 BA/2023/0047/HOUSEH – BA – Home Farm House, Horsey Road, West Somerton – Replacement gate – APPROVED subject to conditions – Noted.

14 Administrative Matters

- 14.1 The Calendar of meetings for 2023/24 was AGREED 1st Tuesday in July, Sept, Nov, Jan, Mar and May. Village Hall to be advised. Clerk.
- 14.2 Insurance quotes reviewed - Cllr Shuker noted that the Council own the body of water at the boat dyke (not do not have any responsibility for its management). Proposed that the Clerk ask NALC if Council is responsible for insuring boat dyke (Cllr Walters asked to supply Land registry documents to Clerk)– AGREED. Clerk. Clerk advised main differences between insurance quotes. Council to authorise insurance up to £430.00 in principal and once information received then agree by email.
- 14.3 Authority to Clerk to update name and address where necessary - AGREED.
- 14.4 Authority to update Clerk name and address with Barclays Bank - Cllr R Walters has removed previous Clerk from Barclays records and will contact Barclays to update.
- 14.5 New bank mandate signatory - Cllr J Clift to replace previous Cllr T Jones - AGREED.
- 14.6 Approval to set up a Viking Direct account, in the name of the Parish Council, for stationery requirements, expenditure limit of £50.00 and to be detailed at meetings - AGREED.
- 14.7 Cllr Walters updated the meeting to advise he received a call from the Mayor of Stalham to advise data breach. Cllr R Walters reviewed and nothing there of interest. Memory stick destroyed . Noted.

15 Financial Matters

- 15.1 To note receipt from GYBC Of £5,492.00 - Noted
- 15.2 To confirm Ear Marked Reserve Value of Community Fund of £7,922.97 – Noted.
- 15.3 To agree payments:

	Nett	VAT	Total
March salaries/HMRC/NI (paid)	£386.20	£0.00	£386.20
April salaries/HMRC/NI (paid)	£252.20	£0.00	£252.20
Somerton Village Hall – Hall hire	£ 60.00	£0.00	£ 60.00
NALC subscription & website 2023/24	£188.94	£0.00	£188.94
Clerk expenses mobile phone top up	£ 20.00	£0.00	£ 20.00

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	Nett	VAT	Total
D Balls – internal audit	£ 30.00	£0.00	£ 30.00
Insurance, see point 14.2 above	£	£0.00	£

RESOLVED to make the above payments – Proposed Cllr K King, seconded Cllr J Clift.

- 15.4 Website costs 2023/24 have increased from £35 to £70 – Noted.
- 15.5 Internal Audit: Written quote of £30 from Mr D Balls. Clerk is arranging. Clerk to advise Council on procedure to approve AGAR forms – Final accounts will need to be approved by the Council before end of June, therefore it may be necessary to convene an Extraordinary meeting before then. Noted.
- 15.6 Financial update below – Noted. Cllr D Shuker asked if fund should be in a separate interest-bearing account. Clerk requested to make enquiries & add to agenda for next meeting - AGREED.

SOMERTON PARISH COUNCIL
Summary of Receipts and Payments
Year ended 31.03.2023

	Budget	Paid	Accrued	Estimated Future Expenses	Variance
	£	£			£
Grass Cutting concurrent	1,025.00	1,362.00			- 337.00
Village Hall Hire	100.00	120.00			- 20.00
Insurance	300.00	349.36			- 49.36
Clerk Salary	1,487.00	4,651.61			- 3,164.61
Clerk Expenses	50.00	47.69			2.31
Bus Shelter concurrent	250.00	-			250.00
Admin	170.00	430.48			- 260.48
Church concurrent	760.00	760.00			-
Total	4,142.00	7,721.14	-	-	- 3,579.14
Parish Council Opening Balance		2,918.09			
Community Fund opening balance		3,029.24			
Add: receipts		4,143.74			
Less: payments		- 7,721.14			
Less: VAT		- 39.92			
Community account income		5,000.00			
Community account payments		- 106.27			
Balance per Bank Statement as at 31.03.2023		7,223.74			
Estimated					
Parish Council Closing Balance		- 699.23	-	-	- 699.23
Community Fund Closing Balance		7,922.97			7,922.97
Predicted Bank Balance (year end)		7,223.74			7,223.74

16 Highways Matters

- 16.1 Cllr R Walters invited parishioner to attend Streetscene inspection. Advised he will meet with the inspector to raise the issues, including the ones raised by the public at the commencement of the meeting, and ask for comments, hopefully in writing. Clerk to send email & cc Cllr J Bensly.
- 16.1.1 Sign on Dark Lane near Burnley Hall which has been knocked over and propped up.
- 16.1.2 Reminder of poor state of Horsey Road and to extract a date for when repairs will be carried out.
- 16.1.3 Repairs made to the edge of Winterton Road (between The Street & Dark Lane) directs water away from the drain and it pools at the end of the drive to Somerton Hall causing hydraulic damage.
- 16.1.4 Signage for RB12 from Manor Road to Low Road is inadequate and cannot be seen by drivers.
- 16.1.5 Signage for Back Road RB11 still has the previous footpath signs. This needs to be updated.
- 16.1.6 Ask Streetscene Inspectors if they have any influence with satellite navigation providers, mainly Google, that still identify RB11 and RB12 as legitimate routes for vehicle drivers. The Councillors' submissions to Google for correction have not been successful.
- 16.1.7 Three potholes to be repaired along the side of Winterton Road.

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- 16.1.8 Request cutting of the high growth within the visibility splays to the junction of Manor Farm Road and Winterton Road.
- 16.1.9 Consider any other highway maintenance issues to be raised prior to the inspection.
- 16.2 Cllr R Walters advised meeting that the SAM speed sign recorded 32,000 cars in one month. This did not seem accurate as lots of recordings were at 1am with a speed of 0-5 m/hr, possibly a herd of deer. Cllr R Walters noted that the speed recorded is taken prior to reaching the change in speed limit. The speed sign will continue to be moved each month.

17 Other Matters

- 17.1 To consider consulting with Parishioners to reduce number of council meetings to statutory minimum of 4 per year. Suggested consultation period of 2 month - AGREED.
- 17.2 It was decided to issue a Council statement regarding the Precept increase for 2023/24 – AGREED. To be issued in the newsletter and on noticeboard.
- 17.3 Seek quotes to paint bus shelters – AGREED.
- 17.4 Consider providing dog waste bins at select locations. Cllr J Bensly confirmed he would fund two general waste bins and suggested they were small so that they don't get too much rubbish. He would need an email from the Clerk requesting funding and giving locations. The possibility of volunteers to empty bins and deposit bags at a site accessible by GYBC operatives was discussed. Hazardous waste and the need for a risk assessment for volunteers discussed. Cllr J Bensly offered to arrange for an Environment Ranger to visit and discuss practicalities. Would need locations (with nearby homeowners consulted). Potential sites of Kissing Gate and Staithe – AGREED.

18 Correspondence

- 18.1 Two emails from parishioners regarding the increase in precept for 2023/24 and requesting a statement from the Council in The Somerton News. See point 17.2 – Noted.
- 18.2 Another email received from a parishioner regarding the increase in precept for 2023/24 and requesting dog waste bins. See point 17.4 – Noted.
- 18.3 Email received from a parishioner regarding high growth reducing visibility at the junction of Manor farm Road and Winterton Road. Clerk to include in report to Streetscene Inspectors. See point 16.1.8 – Noted.
- 18.4 Email received from Flegg Community Land Trust requesting attending Parish Council meeting in official capacity. Discussed at end of meeting – Exclusion of Press & Public for Confidential Session due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.
- 18.5 Email received from Hobby Club to request Yarn bombing the War Memorial for the celebration of the King's Coronation. PC responded politely requesting this did not go ahead as they felt it was not appropriate (an internal poll of councillors showed that one councillor was in favour, 3 against, one was ambivalent and one abstained) – Noted.

19 Next Agenda

- 19.1 Propose a 20 mile per hour zone through village.

20 Date of next meeting:

Tuesday May 23rd at 7pm, Village Hall – Annual PARISH Meeting.
Tuesday July 4th at 7pm, Village Hall – PARISH COUNCIL Meeting. To be confirmed.

In accordance with the Public Bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960 the meeting RESOLVED to exclude the press and public during consideration of the following item due to the confidential nature.

20.1 Correspondence from Flegg Community Land Trust

After consideration it was proposed to accept FCLT's request to make a representation to attend at the end of the next meeting for information purposes only – AGREED.

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