

SOMERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL meeting held on 5 September 2023 at
The Village Hall, Cottage Road, Somerton at 7.00pm.

Present: Cllrs D Crane, K King, R Starling,
Clerk: Nicola Ledain
2 members of the public were present.

The Clerk opened the meeting and informed the Council that although both the Chairman and Vice Chair were not present this evening there were three members in attendance and this constituted a quorum. The Cllrs should elect one of themselves as Acting Chair for this evening's meeting. Cllr. R.Starling was duly appointed.

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from R Walters, D Shuker, J Clift and P Beard. County Cllr James Bensly had also sent apologies.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared.

3 Public Speaking

3.1 District Councillor Noel Galer. Not present.

3.2 Police representative. None present.

3.3 The acting Chair then invited members to address the Council on matters on the agenda only in accordance with standing orders.

3.3.1 Matters Raised;

a). Pub signage on the river bank. Visitors arriving by boat were given the impression that the Lion Public House was open since the sign was still being displayed. The Clerk informed that the Chairman Cllr.Walters was aware of the situation and he would be raising this matter with the pub's occupants.

b). Drain & Cover opposite Ivy House, Horsey Road: Ongoing problems being dealt with by the County Council. James Bensly (County Councillor) aware and this was noted.

4 Minutes from the Previous Meeting held on the 31st July 2023 (Extraordinary Meeting).

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 July were agreed subject to the following amendments;

a). To include that Cllr.P Beard was present.

b). Item 3 Minutes from Previous Meeting dated 4th July 2023 be amended to include;

i). Present: To include after Clerk that "No Clerk was present so Cllr. Clift took the minutes".

ii). That the name and contact details of the Clerk, at the bottom of the first page of the draft minutes, were incorrect.

iii). That part 2.1.2 be changed to read, "The previous Clerk was present as a member of the public and informed that they had not been paid outstanding wages and no reply had been received to emails sent to Cllr. Clift in her capacity as Chair of the Staffing Committee. Apologies were then given to the previous Clerk by the Chairman Cllr. Walters and Cllr. Clift. The Chairman said that this was being dealt with and would be actioned as soon as possible. Cllr. Starling stated that neither himself nor Cllr. Crane were aware of this situation".

It was agreed that the Acting Chair would sign the minutes at a later date after the Parish Clerk had included the agreed amendments.

5 Matters for reporting from previous meetings

- 5.1 The Clerk had met with the Chairman and Vice Chair and the handover completed. The records disposal was being looked into. The AGAR (accounts audit) was completed. The Viking account for stationery etc deemed not necessary. Noted.
- 5.2 Barclays bank change of mandate is being processed with forms needing to be signed. Chairman has forms needing to be signed by Cllr.Starling. Noted.
- 5.3 Update regarding footpaths - Cllr.King to action i.e. email Clerk concerning missing footpath No.8 (Hundred Stream path).
- 5.4 Community Fund Policy had yet to be progressed. Noted.
- 5.5 No though road sign update. This referred to CRF 12 (track along Low road to Winterton). To be included on agenda for next meeting.
- 5.6 Update regarding 20mph zone. This was still in progress. Noted.
- 5.7 To receive an update regarding the bus shelters. The Clerk informed the Council that the shelters had been painted by Cllr.Walters and Cllr.Shuker. The material costs need to be reimbursed. Noted.
- 5.8 Update on dog waste bins. Awaiting report from GYBC. Noted.
- 5.9 Update on Flegg Community Land Trust. No further correspondence received. Noted.
- 5.10 Councillor training agreed for Monday 3 October at 6.30 at the Village Hall and Monday 9 October via zoom at a cost of £180 plus travel costs.
- 5.11 Update from Benjamin Grapes re trails. which included larger signs for CRF 12, (Rural Byway 12) additional tarmac for east end of track /junction with Manor Farm Road loop. RB 11 (Back Road – N.side Burnely Hall) old footpath signs will be removed and replaced with appropriate signs. Cllr. King raised the ongoing problem with the blocked drain on south side of the Somerton/Winterton road at the entrance to Somerton Hall.

6 Planning

- 6.1 There were no planning matters.

7 Matters for consideration

- 7.1 To consider and agree if the Parish Council should reduce the number of meetings from 6 to the statutory minimum of 4.
 - 7.1.1 The Acting Chair informed that he had proposed this at the May meeting purely to reduce the workload for the then Clerk adding that several matters agreed at meetings had not been actioned. Apart from being mentioned at previous meetings, an article had been included in the Somerton News to consult Parishioners on the matter. At this point, being 7:45pm, two members of the public verbally disrupted the proceedings. The acting Chair ruled that Council proceedings should not be disrupted and reminded the public that item 3 on this evening's agenda had included Public Speaking when they were invited to address the Council on matters on the agenda. The public had not raised this matter when they had the opportunity to do so. Cllr.King considered that more information was needed. Cllr.Starling suggested that the Council should cancel the January and July meetings then review the matter. Cllr. Crane agreed. Approved.
- 7.2 To agree to advertise for a fourth trustee for the Somerton Staithe and Boat Dyke Trust.
 - 7.2.1 The Council agreed to this and would ask the Chairman, Cllr.Walters to progress.
- 7.3 Broken Bench on the north bank of the boat dyke - To consider the call for donations, or expressions of interest in donations, to replace the broken bench on the north bank of the boat dyke.

7.3.1 Clerk informed no quotes had been received to undertake repairs/refurbishment. Cllr. Starling informed that the seat had become unsafe and posed a risk and should be removed. It was agreed that the seat be removed on Sat. 9th Sept.23 by Cllrs.Starling & King. The Clerk would obtain quotations for a replacement seat bench.

7.3.2 No quotes had been received for the work.

7.4 Litter pick to be arranged for end of September.

7.4.1 This was agreed that this would be left to Chairman Cllr.Walters to organise as with the previous litter pick.

8 Financial Matters

The following payments were agreed:

Nicola Ledain – clerk salary (this would be paid once details with HMRC had been submitted)

Mr Balls – internal audit £30.

9 Highways Matters

Cllr.King will email regarding the blocked drain mentioned earlier this evening in point 7 h

10 Other Matters

There were no other matters.

11 Correspondence

a. Clerk informed email received from the Parochial Church Council regarding payment contribution towards the grass cutting of the churchyard. This will be actioned at the next meeting in November.

b. The Lion P.H. signs along the riverbank. Email received from Parishioner. Matter had been dealt with earlier during Public Speaking.

c. Parishioner reporting overgrown hedge next to footpath to Chairman Cllr.Walters. It was not clear as to which footpath this referred to. Cllr.King suspected this was The Street to Horsey Road footpath (Somerton F.P.No.5) Noted.

d. Ongoing issue regarding pothole causing damage to tyres. Not sure which pothole this referred to but Cllr Starling suspected this was in fact the drain and drain cover on the south side of the bend opposite Ivy House. It was again noted that County Councillor James Bensly was aware of the situation and this was a matter for the County Council Highways to resolve. Noted.

e. Email from former Clerk regarding an official complaint against the Council suggesting administration and procedural errors relating to the timely provision of her P45 and payslip. Clerk informed that an Extraordinary meeting of the council to consider this matter had been arranged for 7:00pm on Tuesday 26th September in the village hall. Cllr. Starling asked if members of the public would be able to attend and the Clerk informed that advice was being sort on this.

12 To Receive Items for the Next Agenda

There were none received at present.

13 Date of next meeting:

Tuesday 26th September and Tuesday 7th November 2023.

Meeting ended at 8.01pm.