

# SOMERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Somerton Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 12 March 2024 at The Village Hall, Cottage Road, Somerton at 7.00pm.

Present: Cllrs J Clift, K King, D Shuker, R Starling, P Young and P Beard  
Also present: Nicola Ledain – clerk, 1 member of the public.

## 1. Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr D Crane.  
Apologies had also been received from County Cllr James Bensly.

## 2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr R Starling declared a personal interest in item 8c as a user of the Staithe and boat dyke.

## 3. Election of Vice Chairman

Cllr David Shuker was duly elected.

## 4. Public Speaking

- a. There were no County or District Councillors present. Regular updates from the County Councillor had been received.
- b. A member of the public made the following points:
  - i. A request that he received an acknowledgement of his email from the official parish council email address in future.
  - ii. He offered to help with the spring litter pick.
  - iii. He asked if the parish council had access to the financial situation. The parish council reported that they finally did have access following a delay by Barclays at carrying out the instructions of the parish council.

## 5. Minutes from previous meetings

- a. The minutes from the meeting held on 21 November 2023 were agreed subject to the following amendments:

*“3. Declaration of Interest:*

*“Cllr. R. Starling declared a Personal Interest as a user of the Staithe & Boat Dyke plus a Pecuniary Interest as a contractor who has carried out paid work for the Staithe & Boat Dyke Charity”.*

*6. Minutes from the Previous Meeting; Please include in part b;*

*“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: Please include in part b;*

*b) Update regarding footpaths – “There had been a public rights of way application to Norfolk County Council regarding the wind turbine track”.*

*9. Matters for consideration. Please include in part b and part c;*

*b) To appoint a fourth trustee for the Somerton Staithe and Boat Dyke Charity. “At this point, Cllr. Starling having previously declared a Pecuniary Interest, left the meeting for this item. It was agreed that Paul Roullier would be appointed.”*

*c).” Cllr. R. Starling returned to the meeting for this item”*

d). *Clarification is needed on this item where it says "In future the"-*

f). *Please add "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"*

*10. Financial Matters: The Forecasted Final Position 2023-2024 table showing individual amounts would be included in this version of the minutes.*

*15. To note the date of the next meeting: This was agreed at the meeting to be the 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024."*

- b. It was agreed that draft minutes would be published within 3 weeks of the meeting. All councillors would have prior sight of the draft minutes to make amends before they were published.
- c. Cllr Shuker reported that with reference to 7f, a parishioner had donated two no smoking signs for the bus shelter and they had been displayed.

## **6. Matters for reporting from previous meetings**

### **a) Barclays**

There were now three signatories on the parish council accounts. There was a short discussion regarding the clerk becoming a signatory so they could instigate online payments as a non-signatory wasn't able to have this ability. JC would ring Barclays to see if there were any other options.

### **b) Update regarding footpaths**

Cllr Starling reported that an application had been made to Norfolk County Council for a right of way to be made covering the track from the north end of Coronation Lane, south to the junction with the east end of the Wind Turbine Track, then west along the Wind Turbine Track to the junction with Mill Lane (Martham footpath no. 21). The matter now rests with Norfolk County Council but thanks were given to all those who took the time to complete the User Evidence Forms as part of the application.

### **c) Grant Award Policy / Community Fund Policy**

The policy was reviewed and the following sentence would be included:

'I understand the terms and conditions'

It was also noted that people would be encouraged to apply for the grant. The clerk would circulate details of what had been spent from the fund.

### **d) No through road sign update.**

There was no indication to users that the Low Road towards Burnley Hall was a restricted byway. JC was in talks with Benjamin Grapes at Norfolk County Council regarding this and noted it concerned footpath number RB11 and RB12.

### **e) Update regarding 20mph zone –. See item 11a.**

### **f) Update from Benjamin Grapes re trails**

This had been discussed under 6d.

### **g) Pub signage**

There had been several attempts to contact the tenant of The Lion Pub to advise him that there was still signage in the village, specifically for boat users, that suggested the Red Lion was still open for business. JC would put a note through the letterbox of the Red Lion to ask if they were happy for the PC to remove the signage.

## **7. Planning**

- a. There were no planning applications to consider.

## **8. Matters for consideration**

- a. **Frequency of meetings**

The recent change to the frequency of the meetings had been agreed with the workload of the clerk in mind and to allow the backlog of actions to be completed. Cllr King had produced an action log which would help all councillors keep track of all actions for the parish council. He would circulate it to all to enable it to be tested. There was then a short discussion regarding returning to bi-monthly parish council meetings. After being put to the vote, this was AGREED, starting with immediate effect. The meetings would occur on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month where possible and the dates would be updated on the website. The dates would be as follows: 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2 July, 3 September, 5 November. The Annual Parish Meeting would take place on 7 May 2024.

**b. Memorial Bench Request**

Further to previous discussions regarding the proposed memorial bench at the Staithe, the pad had been measured by the family, and would be wide enough for a double sided bench. The original bench request was to go on the North Side of the Staithe however it was reported that there was hemlock and thistles behind the proposed bench. It was agreed to suggest to the family that the bench the other side of the river was replaced.

A notice had been published regarding offers for the old bench but no offers had been received to date. In view of this, the bench would be disposed of.

**c. Uncut grass at the Staithe**

The council discussed the areas of uncut grass at the Staithe. It was agreed that the area by the war memorial would be kept uncut.

**d. Spring Litter Pick**

Cllr Starling welcomed the resumption of litter picking, however, since volunteers would be covered by the Parish Council's insurance, it was therefore essential that a Parish Council should be responsible for organising future litter picking events to ensure that all participants had completed the necessary risk assessment forms. Cllr Peter Young was duly appointed and would liaise with Richard Walters (who had volunteered from the village to assist) regarding the spring litter pick. A provisional date of the weekend of 6<sup>th</sup> / 7<sup>th</sup> April 2024 was agreed.

**e. Cleaning of the Bus Shelters**

The following rota for the cleaning of the bus shelters was agreed as follows;

April – David Shuker, May – Judy, June – Peter, July - Kevin

There had also been some volunteers from the village.

**f. The future of The Lion**

The future of The Lion public house was discussed. Cllr Beard reported that having spoken to the owner last year about selling The Lion he did not say no to the idea and suggested the community spoke to him again this year. Cllr Shuker reported that there were means of communities taking over such places in villages with help from Government through the Community Ownership Fund from the Department of Levelling Up. The criteria was that it had to be an application from an incorporated body i.e parish council or charity. It was acknowledged that this would be an incredible amount of the work for the community and in the first instance it was still owned and it was agreed that the Chair would give the clerk some words for a letter to the owner of the pub to ask what his intentions were.

**g. Blocked Roadside Ditch – Common Road**

Cllr Starling had reported a blocked roadside ditch on Common Road to County Councillor James Bensly. He had received a response and further news were being awaited.

**h. Grasscutting 2024/2025**

Taking into consideration what had been budgeted, it was agreed that Ross Bird would continue the grasscutting in the village. The council agreed that invoices could be paid when they were received to prevent delay.

**i. To appoint an Internal Auditor**

David Balls was agreed as the internal auditor.

**9. Financial Matters**

a. The Council agreed the financial statement to date.

b. The following payments were agreed:

- i. Nicola Ledain -clerk salary: £829.36 (chq no. 200033)
- ii. HMRC: £207.40 (chq. No. 200034)

#### **10. Policies**

- a. The Code of Conduct was agreed in principle however there seemed some ambiguity regarding the term coopted member. An alternative version of the code would be sourced.
- b. The Lone Working Policy was AGREED. It was suggested that if the clerk were to attend any meetings alone, they would alert the Chair / Vice Chair and keep a note of them.
- c. Co-option policy was AGREED.

#### **11. Highways Matters**

- a. The Chair reported that she had received a response regarding the requested 20mph limit. A Traffic Regulation Order would be needed and this could be a long process. The Council had a discussion regarding the safety in the village and it was agreed that James Bensly would be asked to review the situation.

#### **12. Correspondence**

- a. The Council had received correspondence from a parishioner who felt that the dog waste issue had not improved. After a short discussion, it was agreed that costs for a new dog waste bin and the associated collections would be investigated.
- b. Information from Hornsea had been received and circulated regarding a community fund that Somerton were eligible to apply for.

#### **13. To Receive Items for the Next Agenda**

Dog waste bin and collection costs, website tidy, election of Chair, noise form wind turbine / Collis Lane, future meetings to be recorded by the Parish Clerk to assist in the preparation of minutes.

#### **14. To note the date of next meeting: Tuesday 14 May 2024**

Meeting ended at 8.30pm