

SOMERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Somerton Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 6 May 2025 at The Village Hall, Cottage Road, Somerton at 7.00pm.

Present: Cllrs J Clift (JC), D Shuker (DS), R Starling (RS), P Young (PY), P Beard (PB) and K King (KK).

Also present: Nicola Ledain (NL) – clerk, 3 members of the public.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Diane Crane, County Councillor James Bensly and District Councillor Noel Galer.

2. Election of Chairman

Having been nominated by Cllr Clift, seconded by Cllr King, with no other nominations and all in agreement, Cllr Shuker was duly elected as Chairman for the ensuing year.

3. Election of Vice Chairman

Having been nominated by Cllr Beard, seconded by Cllr King, with no other nominations and all in agreement, Cllr Clift was duly elected as Vice Chairman for the ensuing year.

4. Declarations of Interest

- Cllr Starling declared a personal interest in respect of item 7.1 as he attended the Upper Thurne Working Group meetings representing the Broads Reed and Sedge Cutters Association.
- Cllr Starling declared a personal interest in respect of 14.1 as he had worked with the Internal Drainage Board and Environment Agency on a voluntary basis during the last rescue.
- Cllr Shuker declared a personal interest in respect of item 14 as he was a trustee of the Staithe and Boat Dyke.
- Cllr Shuker and Cllr Young declared personal interests in respect of item 11.5 as they were owners of electric vehicles.
- Cllr Beard declared an interest in respect of items 8.2 and 5 as she was an employee of Burnley Estate.

5. Public Speaking

There were no requests from the public to speak. (One member of the public raised the subject of item 11e stating that this was a matter of the village hall committee. A second member raised the matter of the Lion Public House and it was agreed that he could speak during item 8d when the matter would be raised.

6. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 4 March 2025 were agreed following a proposal by Cllr Starling and seconded by Cllr Clift.

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

- Upper Thurne Working Group** – Cllr King would remain as representative on this group. Cllr King advised that he had not attended the last two meetings as he had not received an invite. This would be investigated by the clerk.
- Patient Participation Group** – Cllr Clift would remain as representative on this group. She would feedback to the council once a meeting had been attended. It was also reported that anyone was welcome to attend the meeting as they were open. Cllr Clift would inform the council when the meetings were taking place.
- Staffing Committee**

This would remain as Cllrs Clift, Young and King. Cllr Young was appointed as the Chair.

8. Matters for reporting from previous meetings

a. Review Action List

The action list from the previous meeting minutes was reviewed. All actions were on the agenda.

b. Carriageway Survey

Since the last meeting a survey report had been received from the highways research team regarding the Somerton to Winterton Road fronting Burnley Hall. It was agreed that the survey report be accepted by the Parish Council and a copy of the report be forwarded to the Parishioner who first raised the matter in September 2024. The report identified that the northern verge had encroached onto the carriageway. There was no evidence that the southern boundary had moved but there was damage which had been caused by heavy traffic. The information would be passed to the area highways team who would determine the course of remedial action to be carried out. The Parish Council agreed to reply to the County Council to;

- Thank them for undertaking the survey and for sending us the report.
- Given that the verge on the north side of the road has encroached onto the carriageway due to overgrowth of the vegetation extending the verge and, on the southern side, the hedge has extended significantly towards the carriageway which is impeding the usable space for pedestrians to safely walk, can we request that County Council's Area Team liaises with the Landowner (Burnley Hall) to ensure that the hedge on the north side is reduced in width i.e. cut back at least 2 feet as soon as possible / practical and that the accumulated silt/vegetation on the north side of the road be removed back to the edge of the highway. Likewise, the hedge on the south side of the road also be given a similar cut back to ensure a usable space for pedestrians to walk safely.

c. Footpaths Update

- i. Footpath No 5 – Cllr Starling had replied to Sarah Price, Countryside Access Officer, on the 5 March 2025 as agreed at the last meeting but was awaiting a response.
- ii. Footpath Number 8 – A sift through the council archives had been hampered by the missing keys for the filing cabinet. Once this had been rectified, evidence could be sought to prove that a footpath existed.
- iii. Coronation Lane – Still awaiting progress from the County Council who were considering the evidence submitted.
- iv. FP 1 – Hembsy PC had been contacted regarding the reopening of their section linked to Somerton footpath 1 and a response was being awaited.

d. Lion Public House

A parishioner gave an update regarding the progress of Somerton Village Association (SVA) and the acquisition of Lion Public House. The timeline on the Community Asset according to GYBC was 18th March 2025. The SVA were looking to change to a Community Benefit Society and issuing shares. This would be explained further in the next newsletter. After a proposal by Cllr Clift and seconded by Cllr Starling, it was agreed that the council would not apply to relist the pub as an asset of community value.

e. Horse Riding

The Chair reported that, following the last meeting, he attempting to meet with Burnley Hall Estate. However, it had also become apparent that there was a lack of signage warning drivers of horseriding on The Street and Church Lane. It was also noted that the speed limit could be extended along the Winterton Road to Dark Lane Corner since this was also considered too high and it was suggested that the highways engineer was approached to see if this could be reduced to 30mph. The council agreed that communications with Burnley Hall should be exhausted in the first instance and this can't be achieved there was a range of options which could be explored to help the situation as suggested above. The Chair agreed to email Councillors regarding future discussion with Burnley Hall.

- f. Replacement of Telecommunication pole on verge close to Collis Lane junction with Winterton Road - To request NCC to urgently inspect pole's distance from highway to establish any risk implications for traffic**

After a proposal by Cllr Starling, seconded by Cllr Clift it was agreed that the chair would contact NCC via the My Norfolk site to report this issue.

- g. Cottage Road name sign**

This had been replaced on 10 April 2025..

- h. Bus Stop bench seats**

At the last meeting, the Chair had reported that the bench at the bus stop on Winterton Road had been removed as it was very rotten. The 'Mardlers' bench by the noticeboard needed repairing as well as the bench near the Lion. The Chair presented some quotes of replacement benches. After a proposal to limit the budget to £500 per bench by Cllr Young, seconded by Cllr King, it was agreed that other alternatives could be sought and it would be discussed in July. It was also suggested to ask district and county councillors for a donation.

- i. Councillors' register of interests**

It was confirmed that the new councillors' register of interest form had been completed. A reminder had been sent to all councillors to re-issue an interest form.

- j. Dog waste bin**

The contract had been sent back to Pet Waste Solutions. The waste bin would be installed on the north bank of the river at the staithe in due course.

- k. Police Check on Horsey Road**

The police have been contacted about carrying out a speed check on Horsey Road following concerns about the speed of traffic and a response was still being awaited.

- l. Horsey Road drain cover**

This had been reported as dangerous, and signs had appeared but there had been no repairs started. There had been a recent accident and it was agreed that highways should again be contacted.

- m. Draft minutes.**

After a proposal by Cllr Starling, seconded by Cllr Clift, it was agreed that the draft minutes would be circulated to all councillors within 14 days of the council meeting. It was also agreed that the draft minutes would only be posted on the website and circulated to third parties once councillor comments had been included. Councillors agreed to respond to draft minutes within 48 hours of receiving them from the clerk. It was further agreed that Somerton News would have to receive commented draft minutes the following month if there was not enough time.

9. Policies

Subject to the below amendments, the Standing Orders were agreed after a proposal by Cllr Young, seconded by Cllr Beard;

- To remove the initial blurb paragraph
- Rename the document with 2025
- To check that the internal arrangements regarding the timely issue of minutes was accurately represented in the document, if appropriate.

10. Planning

- a. BA/2025/0099/TCAA - Bank House, Horsey Road, West Somerton, Somerton: T1 – Willow – pollard to three metres.**

The council had NO OBJECTIONS to the above application but wanted it noted that they should be sensitively pollarded and that the diseased tree in particular was coppiced.

- b. The council also received a communication regarding the installation of additional height to the mobile phone mast on Collis Lane which was duly noted.**

Matters for consideration.

- a. Insurance Premium renewal**

Cllr Starling proposed that the insurance renewal of £327 was accepted. This was seconded by Cllr Beard and all agreed.

- b. Winterton Road signs** The council agreed to contact GYBC to install new road name signs 'Winterton Road' one near The Lion PH and one opposite near Primary House.

- c. Archiving of council papers**

This item would be deferred to the next meeting.

- d. Litter picking dates**

Cllr Young thanked everyone for their involvement in the litter picking and to Richard Walters for organising. He would liaise with Richard regarding litter picking dates for the autumn.

- e. Electric Vehicle Charging Point**

This would be deferred to the next meeting.

11. Financial matters

- a.** The Annual Governance Statement was agreed and signed by the Chair and the Clerk. Cllr Starling raised that VAT had not been recovered, but was advised that this can be done within 3 years of the transaction. However it was preferable to do this in the same year. Cllr Beard raised the amount in reserves. The Chairman confirmed that grass cutting budget was no longer funded by GYBC but by the Parish Council directly.
- b.** The Accounting Statements were agreed and signed by the Chair and the Clerk.
- c.** It was agreed that the council's income and expenditure was less than £25k and the clerk and the chairman signed the certificate of exemption.
- d.** It was noted that the first instalment of the precept £3837.50 had been received.
- e.** The following payments were agreed:
 - i. Nicola Ledain – clerk salary April and May £414.78 (chq no. 200054)
 - ii. Ross Bird: £270 (chq no. 200055)
 - iii. Insurance Premium: £327 (chq no. 200056)

12. Highways Matters

- 1. It was still hoped that the Highways Engineer would visit the parish as there were now several matters that needed attention.
- 2. It was noted that the hedges around the village were frequently cut before needed and it would be more environmentally friendly to leave them unless they were interfering with the environment. Cllr Cliff would draft an email to be sent to NCC.

13. Correspondence

Correspondence had been received from the Environment Agency requesting permission for parking and access to the staithe should a fish rescue be required. The council advised that it was a matter for the Staithe Trustees and the clerk would pass the matter to them.

14. To receive items for the next agenda

Electric vehicle charging points, SAM data, HMRC Direct debit, litter picking, archiving council papers

15. To note the date of next meetings: Tuesday 1 July 2025

The Annual Parish meeting would take place on Tuesday 13 May 2025 7pm

Meeting finished at 8.50pm

Action list

- **Item 8b – carriageway survey – DS**
- **Item 8cii – footpath 8 - KK**
- **Item 8c iv – Somerton footpath 1 – NL**
- **Item 8e – Horse Riding – DS**
- **Item 8f – Telecommunications pole – DS**
- **Item 8h – Benches - NL**
- **Item 8j – dog waste bin – NL**
- **Item 8k – police check – NL**

- **Item 8I – Horsey Road drain cover – NL**

