

SOMERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Somerton Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 2 July
2024 at The Village Hall, Cottage Road, Somerton at 7.00pm.

Present: Cllrs J Clift, K King, D Shuker, R Starling, P Young, P Beard and D Crane.
Also present: Nicola Ledain – clerk, 3 member of the public.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies as all councillors were present.

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr R Starling declared a personal interest in item 10, highways matters; overhanging tree, as he had responded to NCC on this matter as a member of the public. Cllr Bear declared a pecuniary interest in item 10 as she is employed by the landowner on whose land the tree stands.

3. Public Speaking

A member of the public reported that the Poors Trust would have their AGM in November when 2 members of the trust would retire by rotation. It was suggested that a notice could be placed by 15th August to be able to be considered by Somerton Parish Council in September which would allow time for the nominations to be put forward to the Poors Trust at the AGM. Mike Lees would post a notice advertising the vacancies.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 May were agreed.

5. Matters for reporting from previous meetings

a. Barclays and online banking

Cllr Clift had contacted Barclays again. Previous chairs and councillor's names had been removed and the clerks name was on the account with statements going to the correct address. Barclays confirmed that a direct debit with HMRC would be easy to set up. Cllr King had also filled in forms to become a signatory.

b. Right of way application (North end of Coronation Lane to Wind Turbine Track to Mill Lane, Martham) Update from County Council

Cllr Starling reported that he had emailed Ian Sharman, Case Officer at NCC who had replied that a timescale for the application was difficult to determine as they had a backlog. The paperwork sent with the application was helpful and could help speed up the process.

c. No through Road sign update

There was no further information from Benjamin Grapes on the signage on Low Road.

d. Update on review of traffic concerns and possible solutions from NCC

There had been no reply forthcoming from NCC. Cllr King reported that he had been extracting data from the SAM2 sign.

e. Blocked roadside ditch (Common Road, north side)

Cllr Starling reported that a reply from NCC reported that the work order had been time extended due to a change of procedure meaning that a sample of the silt needed to be sent to a laboratory. The current date which the work was hoped to have been completed by was 27th July.

f. Website tidy up and options for alternative providers

Several items on the website needed updating and the clerk would do this before the next meeting. Other options were briefly discussed but it was agreed to look at this in the future.

g. Dark skies / nuisance lights – clarification from Borough Council's Environmental Health regarding nuisance lights

The clerk had contacted GYBC and was awaiting a response. It would be circulated when it was received.

h. Representative on Upper Thurne Working Group

Cllr King was happy to continue as representative on the working group.

6. Matters for reporting from previous meetings.

a. Administration of Somerton Parish Council – preparation and circulation of minutes

It was agreed that the minutes would be circulated approximately two weeks after a meeting to give councillors time to suggest amendments.

b. Annual appraisal for clerk

The annual appraisal for the clerk would take place in the next couple of months. The Chair and Vice Chair would conduct the appraisal. Following discussions, it was agreed that Councillors could submit comments to the Chair and Vice Chair for consideration. Proposed by Cllr Young and seconded by Cllr King.

c. Dog waste bins

A member of the public was present who lives near the potential site of one of the dog waste bins and had concerns with the location of that potential bin. A discussion was held regarding the location of the dog waste bins and other locations were suggested. There was some concern expressed about the amount of use of the dog waste bins, potentially try the North side of the staithe. It was suggested that there were various sources of funding that could be used to aid the purchase of, and waste collection from, the dog waste bins. More information was pending about collection costs from GYBC.

d. Timed agenda

It was felt that a timed agenda was not appropriate, and the council were happy were continue with a two-hour limit on meetings.

e. Councillor roles

The council discussed the idea of having specific roles within the council. Although specific roles were not deemed necessary, the action tracker would be used to help keep a log of outstanding issues that needed to be resolved. If councillors had issues accessing the log, a copy would be circulated monthly.

7. Financial matters

a. The Chairman informed that he had received letters forwarded from the previous Clerk, one from HMRC regarding an outstanding payment and the second from a debt collection agency regarding another outstanding payment owed to HMRC. The Chairman further informed that he and the Vice Chairman had issued and signed two cheques to settle the payments. Cllr. Starling, whilst supporting the payment of the outstanding amounts complained that the action had not been proper in that all Councillors should have been informed of the situation. An extraordinary meeting could have been called and the payment i.e. the issuing of the cheque, undertaken as normal with the public aware and present. The Chairman disagreed and stated that the Council's Financial Regulations permitted him to make such payments if they had to be made promptly.

b. 'Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). The completed form relating to the Internal Audit, signed by David Balls, was circulated. However, as the other forms were not available it was agreed that an extraordinary meeting would have to be called to comply with signing the AGAR forms at a public meeting.

c. The bank balances of current account and deposit account on 28th June were as follows: Current: £14,748.66 and Savings: £804.43. Further to a transfer of the balance of the Community Fund (£7,118.00) into the savings account the balances on 1st July were: Current £7,630.66 and Savings £7922.43

d. The precept had been received on 30th April: £4380.

e. The following payments were agreed;

i. Nicola Ledain – clerk salary June and July: £414.78

ii. HMRC Q1 (April, May, June): £155.40

- iii. Ross Bird – grass cutting: £506.00
- f. Cllr. Starling questioned why there had been a 2-week delay in Mr. Bird receiving his payment which was approved at the previous meeting. It was informed that in future, approved payments/cheques to Mr. Bird would be posted in stamped addressed envelopes brought to the meetings

8. Policies

Cllr. Starling raised that a member of the Public had brought to his attention on the 11th June 24 that the Parish Council had failed to ensure that all planning applications are dealt with in time as stipulated in the Council's Planning Protocol. This was in reference to the Broads Authority Application BA/2024/0162/HOUSE H. Two other outstanding planning applications were also discovered but, fortunately, the Parish Council were able to comment within the stipulated time for planning applications.

Cllr. Starling suggested that the Council's Planning Protocol includes the following additions;

1. That the Parish Clerk and the Chairman and/or the Vice Chair, undertake to monitor the Broads Authority and Great Yarmouth Borough Council websites' planning portals each week to check whether any planning applications have been submitted for Somerton.
2. That the Parish Clerk undertakes to circulate all emails sent to Somerton Parish Council to Councillors whether they relate to planning matters or not.
3. The Parish Clerk's response of the Council to applications will be copied to all Councillors after a draft response has been agreed by all Councillors. Reference was made to Application 06/24/0107/HH to Great Yarmouth Borough Council re 8a Collis Lane, proposed single storey extension which records discrepancies on the Borough Council's website in that the location is given as the Parish of Fleggburgh and that this should have been picked up if the Borough's website was properly monitored. Cllr. Starling requested that a copy of the Parish Council's response to this particular application be circulated to all Councillors.
4. 'Best serving the Parishioners' will include displaying a copy of the planning application's site notice on the Parish Notice Board. If an extraordinary meeting is subsequently called for in accordance with the Planning Protocol then a notice of the meeting will also be displayed on the Notice Board and copied to all Councillors. The Chairman stated that there was not room on the notice board to display site notices. Cllr. Starling replied that these notices had been displayed on the notice board previously. The revised protocol would be approved at the next meeting.

9. Planning

There were no applications to consider.

10. Highways Matters

a. Overhanging tree (Somerton Restricted Byway 11)

It was reported that NCC would be inspecting it and would need to check it was on Highways land in order for them to remove it.

11. Correspondence

- a. There was none received.

12. To receive items for the next agenda

Revised planning protocol, clerk's appraisal, bus shelters (KK),

13. To note the date of next meetings: Tuesday 23rd July (Extraordinary meeting) and Tuesday 3 September 2024 (Full Council)

Meeting finished at 9.07pm

Tuesday 23 July at 7pm