

SOMERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Somerton Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 4 March 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 D Crane (DC).

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

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Kevin King, County Councillor James Bensly and District Councillor Noel Galer.

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Beard declared an interest in respect of 5f as she was an employee of Burnley Estate.

3. Public Speaking

A member of the public raised the issue of horse riding on some of the tracks on the Burnley Hall Estate and explained that it had been a long term issue. The previous owner of Burnley Hall had granted them access to ride on the tracks but when the Estate was sold, the new owner had declined access. Some Parishioners were able to ride horses on the tracks but some were not. There had been attempts to discuss the possibility of riding on the estate's tracks but these had not been engaged with. This would be discussed further at 7f of the agenda.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 7 January 2025 were agreed following a proposal by Cllr Starling and seconded by Cllr Clift, subject to the below amendment.

- to insert 'one abstention' at point 7d after 'all agreed'

5. 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

An enquiry from a resident, first made in September 2024, suggested that the position of white lines on a section of Winterton Road had moved over the past 15 years and that the verge on the south side had also become narrower. The Norfolk County Council highways boundary research group had been contacted to help identify if there had been any changes. There had been an exchange of e-mails requesting further information and a response was being awaited. The resident would be informed of the situation.

c. Footpaths Update

- Footpath No 5 – Sarah Price, Countryside Access Officer, had visited the parish on the 30th January to assess the chicane style opening onto The Street, having sent the parish council an email asking for it to be removed, and to meet with Cllrs. Clift, & Starling. Having reported from the site visit, the parish council agreed to reply to Sarah Price and for the moment there was no need to consider any changes i.e. that the barrier could remain in place for the time being. The Parish Council will suggest the installation of a swing gate. This was proposed by Cllr Clift and seconded by Cllr Crane. Subsequently it was agreed that Cllr Starling would reply to Sarah Price and he read out a draft.
- Footpath Number 8 – no further action at this stage.

- iii. Coronation Lane – This had been referred to the PROW case officer, of the Legal Orders and Registers Team, Michelle Sergeant. A 6 week consultation process was underway and further information is likely to be available for the May meeting.
- iv. After a question regarding footpath 1, Cllr Starling reported that the south end of Somerton Footpath 1 led to the Somerton boundary with Hemsby and thereafter the Hemsby part was closed. To reopen that part, Hemsby parish council would need to make an application to NCC. It was agreed to liaise with Hemsby parish council regarding this.
- d. **Lion Public House**
The Chair reported that Somerton VA were still working on an application for funding with a view to putting in a bid to purchase the Lion with a deadline of the end of April.
- e. **Cottage Road road name sign**
The Chair reported that he had sent another reminder to the Borough Council to replace the sign which has been damaged for over a year. It was also suggested to ask the District Councillors to chase it up.
- f. **Horse Riding**
The Chair reported that, following the last meeting, he had written to the Burnley Hall Estate to request if they would allow residents to use the estate tracks from the north end of the The Street, along part of the Winterton Holmes road/track and around 'Honeypot' track for horse riding. The reply received stated that this was not possible to allow residents of Somerton to ride on the estate. It was noted that the bridleway passing to the north of Burnley Hall (RB11) and on to Low Road is accessible to all horse riders from the Winterton Road. Other options such as an application to convert the existing right of way by foot only from The Street along the Winterton Holmes Road/track and around Honeypot to a bridleway were discussed at length. It was noted that cyclists had used this route for many years and so did some horses ridden by Parishioners. It was agreed to make a further approach to Burnley Hall in the meantime.
- g. **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. It was hoped that this could have been carried out during seal season, but it would still be taken forward. A response from the highways engineer relating to speed limits and other traffic concerns had been received in mid-February but it had not been possible to arrange a site meeting.
- h. **Bus Shelter maintenance**
The Chair reported that the bench at the bus stop on Winterton Road had been removed as it was very rotten. This would be written off the asset register. There 'Mardlers' bench by the noticeboard needed repairing as well as the bench near the Lion. It was suggested that the three benches needed replacing and it would be appropriate to replace them with recycled plastic alternatives. The clerk would source some quotes.
- i. **Parish noticeboard**
The Chair reported that the parish noticeboard had been stripped down, revarnished and fitted with a new magnetic board inside. It was hoped that the refurbished board would be reinstalled within the next week. The council thanked DS and Richard Walters for their work.

6. Planning

Cllr Starling reported that, with regards to BA/2024/0452/EIA Regulation 10 Consultation on Environmental Statement Upper Thurne Integrated Drainage Improvements Update, it was not a public consultation but rather an internal one and the Broads Authority were being consulted on the various drainage station improvements in the Upper Thurne area.

7. Matters for consideration.

a. Internal auditor

Cllr Starling proposed that David Balls would undertake the internal audit at a cost of £30 and Cllr Clift seconded. All were in agreement.

b. Website

The website had been updated with final minutes and policies.

8. Financial matters

- a. The bank account balances were circulated. The balances as of 28 February 2024 were £7992.01 (Current Account) and £8001.78 (Deposit Account).
- b. The following payments was agreed:
 - i. Nicola Ledain – clerk salary February and March £414.78 (chq no. 200049)
 - ii. Somerton village hall £108.00 (chq no. 200050)
 - iii. HMRC Q4 £155.60 (chq no. 200052)
 - iv. SSAF £89.88 (chq no. 200053)

9. Policies

- a. Sickness Absence Policy

The Council agreed the policy subject to adding

‘telephone the chair of the Staffing Committee, who will then inform the council’
at the first bullet point on page 2.

10. 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. Having spoken to the Broads Authority planning department, planning permission was not needed to place the dog waste bin on the north bank of the boat dyke. The bin would now be ordered.

11. Correspondence

Correspondence noted which had been circulated to councillors prior to the meeting:

Response from Burnley Hall Estate re horse riding in byways

Responses from Highways Boundaries re enquiry 31552 (Winterton Road)

12. To receive items for the next agenda

Archiving of council papers, Fallen telegraph pole near Collis Lane, Horsey Road broken drain cover, update of councillor's register of interests, Litterpicking.

13. To note the date of next meetings: Tuesday 6 May 2025

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

Meeting finished at 8.50pm

Action list

- Item 5ci - Footpath No 5 - RS
- Item 5c vi – Somerton footpath 1 – NL
- Item 5e – Cottage Road name sign – DS
- Item 5f – Horse Riding – DS
- Item 5g – Police check Horsey Road - NL
- Item 5h – bench replacement quotes – NL
- Item 10.1 – Highway Engineer visit – NL
- Item 10.2 – Dog waste bin - NL