

SOMERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Somerton Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 21st January 2026 at The Village Hall, Cottage Road, Somerton at 7:00pm.

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

Members of the Public: 3 Present.

1.Apologies: Nicola Ledain (NL) – Clerk

Note: Chair informed that the Clerk was ill and unable to attend this evening. Minutes to be taken by Chair and Cllr.RS.

2.Declarations of Interest:

a. Cllr.RS – Agenda item 9b (Nomination of Staithe Trustee). Interest being a user of the Staithe and Boat Dyke.

b. Cllr.DS – Agenda item 9b (Nomination of Staithe Trustee). Interest being a Trustee of the Somerton Staithe and Boat Dyke Charity Trustees.

3.Public Speaking – No questions/comments raised.

4.Minutes of the Previous Meeting (4th November 2025):

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed (Prop:DS, Sec:RS) subject to the following amendments;

Correct spelling of Cllr.P.Beard's name.

6i – Correct spelling of the word 'Broads'.

8b – Preparation of draft minutes – To add 'Draft minutes will still be completed and circulated to all Councillors within 14 days'.

To include an Action List as follows;

i.NCC Highways Engineer visit – NL

ii.Light Pollution – Contact Broads Authority – NL

iii. Seat Bench (Bus shelter, Winterton Road) – NL

iv. Horsey Road – NCC pollarding willows – NL

v. The Lion P.H. Community Asset GYBC – JC

5.Election of Vice Chair:

It was decided not to appoint a Vice Chair as this was not a requirement. In the event that the Chair was unable to attend a meeting then Councillors would appoint a Chair amongst themselves for the meeting only.

6.To receive and consider an update from the Flegg Community Land Trust (FCLT)

Chair welcomed Mr.Terry.Harper and Mr.Shaun.Day from FCLT to the meeting. They informed that Somerton Parish Council (PC) became a founding Member of the FCLT. On behalf of the PC, the FCLT undertook detailed 'need surveys' which were both hand delivered to every home in Somerton and repeated several months later by the Somerton News team. Those surveys identified a need for 2 x 2 bed homes

for discounted rent plus 1 x 3 bed home for discounted purchase plus 2 x 2 bed bungalows at market value (restricted to older person purchase) where as a CLT home they would forever be both regulated to these terms and that local people are to have first opportunity to live there. This was ratified by the Parish Council to take forward. The FCLT appointed an independent expert (Chartered Surveyor) property consultant to analyse and report on potential locations around the village, with a comparison 'point scored' matrix.

The above findings all together have seen local land owners approached, their positions learned and now ultimately having terms agreed to acquire a suitable piece of land to deliver the scheme outlined – subject to planning and funding.

An application is in with Gt.Yarmouth Borough Council, who hold a substantial CLT pot of money, to fund legal purchase and associated costs to acquire the land (e.g. an 'option to purchase') and achieve planning permission.

Once planning permission is granted, the legal agreement on the land can be 'triggered' to acquire the land. All undertaken by the FCLT (and consultants it appoints) funded by the CLT pot from Gt.Yarmouth Borough Council.

The following points were raised and discussed;

a. The pre-construction costs would be funded by CLT pot held by Gt.Yarmouth Borough Council.

b. The construction costs would be funded, substantially if not wholly, by the sales receipts from the 1 x discount purchase home and 2 x older person's bungalows (with development loan finance in the interim)

c. The scheme would be operated by the FCLT (registered as Co-Op & Community Benefit Society) with ultimate control by way of planning s106 agreement tied to the land from Gt.Yarmouth Borough Council restriction.

d. The rented units within the scheme would almost certainly have to be provided before all the sales properties could be sold, regulated by the s106 agreement.

e. Once the funding from the Borough Council is approved and a legal interest in the land secured, the FCLT will update the Parish Council as to the location of the site (and in commercial confidence, the terms of the land deal) which is envisaged to be say 3-6 months hence, then with scheme sketches and planning application progress as it evolves.

The Chair thanked Mr.Harper and Mr.Day for giving the update this evening and answering the points raised by Councillors..

7. Matters for reporting from previous meetings.

a. Chair informed that The Lion P.H. has now been reregistered as a Community Asset with Gt.Yarmouth Borough Council.

b. Somerton to Winterton Rd. Carriageway survey – hedges. Cllr.RS produced some photographs taken of the hedge on the north side of the road near the junction with Collis Lane. The photos demonstrated that the hedge had not been given the promised good cut. It was agreed to contact Burnley Hall to thank them for giving the hedge on the south side of the Winterton Road a good cut but to request an additional cut be given to the north side hedge from the junction with Collis Lane eastwards for approx.50 yards in order to improve visibility at the sharp bend and junction. Furthermore, that an additional cut be given to the Winterton Road north side hedge from the junction with Manor Farm Road eastwards to the next road junction. Cllr.PB would take the matter up with Burnley Hall and the Council would also email Burnley Hall accordingly.

c. Footpaths Update;

i. Footpath No.8 Hundred Stream: Cllr.KK informed that he needed to go to the Records Office in order to progress this matter.

ii. Footpath No.1 (Winterton Rd / High Barn Farm to Hemsby Boundary) Chair was not sure whether Clerk had any update so the matter would be left to the next meeting.

d. The Lion Public House: Chair confirmed that the Parish Council application to have the pub reregistered as a Community Asset was approved by the Borough Council.

f. Dog waste bin update: Cllr.DS informed that the bin had been installed on the north side of the river bank at the Staithe and seemed to be working well. He will continue to monitor usage. Invoices have been received for emptying the bin and waste registration.

g. Highways Visit: Clerk will be asked to continue trying to arrange visit from Highways Engineer and to notify that the following items will be discussed; Traffic Speed, potholes, surface water on Winterton Road, The barrier at FP 5, Sign for Martham Road (overgrown with vegetation), The Lion one way system and the Openreach felled pole.

h. Light Pollution (Hemsby based) – Update from Natalie Beale, Broads Authority. Chair was not sure if Clerk had any update on this but would ask NL. Cllr. RS requested that all Cllrs be informed of response. Cllr.DS referenced light pollution from properties bordering Horsey Road and from the Bacton Gas plant. Mention was made of the Parish being in the Broads Authority's 'Dark Skies Zone'.

8.Planning:

No planning applications had been received for this meeting, Cllr.RS stated that these minutes should include the two applications dealt with by the Parish Council since the last meeting, namely;

Application No: 06/25/0869/TCA – Work to trees in a Conservation area at White House Farm, The Street, Somerton dated 12th November 2025. Agreed No Objections.

Application No: BA/2025/0381/TCAA – Work to trees at Home Farm, Horsey Road, Somerton dated 4th December 2025 (email from Broads Authority). Agreed No Objections.

Cllr.RS informed that page 2 of the Parish Council's planning protocol states that 'the Clerk's response of the Council to applications will be copied to all Councillors after a draft response has been agreed by all Councillors' was not followed with these two applications. Cllr.RS had raised this at previous meetings. Furthermore, the Borough Council's decision report with the White House Farm application states that there was 'No Response' from the Parish Council to this application. Cllr.RS questioned whether the Council's agreed response had been sent to the Borough Council Planning Dept. or not. The Chair would investigate with the Clerk.

9.Matters for consideration;

a. To appoint an internal auditor – Chair informed that the Clerk was awaiting a list of internal auditors from NALC. This matter would be dealt with at the next meeting.

b.Nomination of Staithe Trustees:

Meeting was informed that only the Clerk knows who put their names forward , however, existing Trustee Cllr.DS was willing to stand again plus also Mark Jones of

Cherry Trees, Common Road, Somerton who had expressed an interest to Cllr.DS to become involved with the Staithe. An application had been received by the Clerk on the 8th Jan.2025 which was after the deadline for applications. Despite this, Councillors agreed to appoint Mark Jones and Cllr.DS to serve as Trustees to the Somerton Staithe and Boat Dyke Charity. A recorded vote was requested, as per standing orders;

Those in favour: Cllrs. JC, PY, DC, PB and KK. Those Against – Nil

Abstentions: Cllrs. DS and RS.

c.Devolution / Local Government Review:

Chair informed that there was nothing to report on this.

10.Financial Matters

a.Bank Balances (21.01.26) Community Account = £9,192:03

Business Premium = £7,625:34 (Community Fund)

b.To Agree Payments;

Clerk's Salary Dec.2025 & Jan 2026 = £414:78

Pet Waste Solution – Bin emptying = £033:60

Pet Waste Solution – Waste Transfer = £036:00 (annual payment)

HMRC payment being arranged by Clerk via direct debit.

Bench payment (Bus shelter, Winterton Rd.) being arranged by Clerk with part funding from Cllr.James Bensly's ward fund.

c. To agree 2026/27 budget:

Spread sheet had been circulated to Cllrs earlier this afternoon. Cllr.RS stated that the minutes of the previous meeting record that the budget figures should have been displayed on the Council's website in order for the public to comment. This was not done.

The budget includes funding for grass cutting, Clerk's Salary, Clerk's expenses, Hire of Village Hall for meetings, Insurance, Elections, Bus Shelters, Benches, Training, Website, membership of NALC (Norfolk Association of Local Councils) and the dog waste bin emptying. A separate amount for the Churchyard maintenance will be paid by the Borough Council. It was agreed that the Chair would verify the Clerk's salary and then circulate the amounts to all Cllrs and to the Clerk. A copy of the agreed amounts will be displayed on the Council's website as soon as possible.

Proposed: Cllr.RS Seconded:Cllr.PY.

d. To agree the precept request to submit to Great Yarmouth Borough Council.

The Chair will liaise with the Clerk to submit the request.

11.Highway Matters:

Chair had asked Cllr.RS to report on the felled 'Openreach' pole on the south side of the Winterton Road, close to the junction with Collis Lane. This occurred earlier this month. Pole had been felled previously last year and the matter raised at the meeting on the 6th May 25. The matter was not reported until the 2nd Sept. meeting and Cllrs had not received any further information from the Clerk on this.

This time the County Council were informed and they promptly replied stating "To expedite attention to this safety hazard, please contact Openreach's dedicated emergency line to report the issue and request that the pole be moved further from the carriageway". Openreach was then sent a copy of the County Council's email report on the safety hazard. A letter was then received from the Openreach 'Pole Objection Team' which was not dated, had no address to indicate where their office was located and was not signed but came from an individual who did not use their surname. The letter informed that Openreach found no legal reason to remove, replace or re-site the pole but they could carry out a survey to provide a quote which would be at the Parish Council's cost.

A copy of this letter together with the County Council's email was then sent to County Councillor James Bensly suggesting that NCC Highways meet on site with Openreach to resolve this safety hazard. Cllr.DS viewed that the person responsible for striking the pole was irresponsible for not reporting it. Cllr. KK mentioned that the erosion of the verge and subsequent widening of the road had presented difficulty with the positioning of the pole's guide / support wires. The same situation existed with another pole on the north side of the Winterton Road further east .

It was agreed to email James Bensly to inform that the Parish Council would contact the press on this matter in 30 days time if Openreach fails to respond.

ii. At the last meeting a Parishioner had raised the subject of the overgrown hedge near the Parish Notice board which presented problems for pedestrians walking on the west side of the Horsey Road between Staithe and Common roads. Cllr. RS circulated a photo of the hedge taken yesterday (20.01.26) and considered that the growth was not excessive but should be given a cut otherwise the coming summer's growth would present problems. After discussion, it was agreed to ask Somerton News to mention that all hedges bordering the Horsey Road from Ivy House down to the Staithe should be given a cut in order not to present an inconvenience to pedestrians.

12. Correspondence

a.North Norfolk Plan. This was adopted on the 17th Dec.25. Noted.

b. NCC Updates. It was assumed that this referred to the County Councillor's reports.

c.Upper Thurne Integrated Project Newsletter. It was assumed this referred to the replacement of the local drainage pumps.

d. Healthwatch Newsletter: Noted.

Cllr.RS stated that it would help in the future if correspondence received could be circulated to all Parish Councillors when it is received by the Clerk.

13. To Receive Items for the Next Agenda

Highways Engineer visit, Painting Village Sign lettering, Openreach Pole update, Bus shelters, Appointment of Internal Auditor, Dog waste bin insurance, Planning Protocol, Winterton Road hedges.

ACTION LIST

Hedges Horsey Road – Newsletter - PY & DS.
Light Pollution – Contact Broads Authority – JC and NL
Openreach Pole – Contact Cllr. Bensly - RS
Village Sign letter painting - DS & KK.
Internal Auditor - NL
Budget 2026/27 display on website - NL
Highways Engineer visit – NL
Footpath No 1 – Hemsby link – NL & JC
Footpath No 8 – Records Office – KK
Winterton Road Hedge – Email Burnley Hall – JC & NL
Review Assets – KK
Add dog waste bin to insurance – NL
Confirm Staithe Trustees appointments – NL, JC

There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for attending this evening and closed the meeting at 2039hrs on Wednesday 21st January 2026

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 3rd March 2026.
7:00pm Village Hall, Cottage Road, Somerton

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Date: