



## **SOMERSHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at the Village Hall, Somersham on  
**Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2025 at 7.30pm.**

### **Present:**

Councillors: J Rook (Chair)  
J Caston  
S Barrell  
P Jousiffe

In Attendance J Blackburn – Clerk  
County Cllr Oakes  
District Cllrs Marriott

### **SPC86/25/26 – APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE AND APPROVALS**

Apologies had been received and approved from Cllr Wright.

### **SP867/25/26 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None had been received.

### **SPC88/25/26 – APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION**

None had been received.

### **SPC89/25/26 – APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2<sup>nd</sup> JULY 2025**

**It was AGREED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2025 be approved and signed by the Chair.

### **SPC90/25/26 - PUBLIC FORUM**

No members of the public were present.

### **SPC91/25/26 – COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

Cllr Oakes' report had been circulated prior to the meeting and would be published on the village website.

She reported that the 'big vote' was approaching where the County Council's Business Case was being submitted in relation to Unitary Councils.

She added that the County Council continued to fight against the proposal for pylons from Norwich to Tilbury with many objections being submitted.

### **SPC92/25/26 – DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

Cllr Marriott's report had been circulated prior to the meeting and would be published on the village website.

She briefly went through her report on the following subjects:

- Levels of debt in Suffolk's Councils
- Free ballot for the Suffolk Big Weekend

- Reminder – Consultation on a reformed Decent Homes Standard for social and privately rented homes
- Environmental reforms to break planning system gridlock

Cllr Marriott also reported her involvement with the Park Cottages parking issue. She explained that the issue was first raised with her in December 2023 where a resident had complained about other residents driving over a small, surfaced piece of land at the end of her garden which effectively formed part of a path, giving access to the other properties. The Community Development Officer was informed and it was referred to the Tenancy Management Team who allocated a Housing Officer.

She also stated that as a couple of the families at Park Cottages consisted of children with health issues, she had liaised with the Ambulance Service to explain where the families lived should an ambulance be needed as the houses were at the rear and in the past had been unable to be located by an Ambulance when one had been called.

Cllr Marriott reported that over many months she had liaised with various officers at the District Council in relation to the issues at Park Cottages. She was made aware that a covenant was in place which meant that something could be done by way of installing a permanent driveway, but works would need to be carried out by March 2026. Whilst discussions took place in relation to this, nothing had happened. It had also been confirmed that nothing would happen.

Members noted all the time and effort that Cllr Marriott had put into the issues at Park Cottages and thanked her for her support in the matter.

### **SPC93/25/26 – PARKING AT PARK COTTAGES**

Cllr Caston reported that at the previous meeting the residents had asked for the support of the Parish Council and had asked if it could contact the District Council to ask for the driveway to be installed, which would then unlock some parking.

Members felt that a letter to the District Council would be the best form of contact. It should state the issues and the distress it was causing residents including the problems incurred for the family at the far house who had an autistic child.

**It was AGREED:** That the Clerk produce a letter to Robert Longfoot and cc Chief Executive and share draft with Members before sending. **Clerk to action.**

### **SPC94/25/26 - CLERK'S REPORT AND FINANCIAL MATTERS**

a) **TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S REPORT**

The Clerk reported that SALC had informed clerks of an increase in payroll service costs. The increase for the Parish Council would be approximately £8.40 twice a year. **All Agreed.**

b) **TO RECEIVE THE FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Clerk had circulated prior to the meeting the Council's current financial position and the balance in the accounts as of 27<sup>th</sup> August 2025 was £72,845.86.

c) **TO AUTHORISE PAYMENTS AND NOTE RECEIPTS**

The following payments were to be authorised:-

Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Pay (Jul)	£298.79
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Office Allowance/Exp (Jul)	£32.30
Community Heartbeat Trust	Outstanding - pads for defib	£319.80
Somersham Tennis Club	Annual donation	£1,000.00
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Pay (Aug)	£298.99

Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Office Allowance/Exp (Aug)	£26.00
CFB IT Solutions	Mailbox Hosting (Aug)	£7.20
Tom Hitchcock	Grass Cutting - Churchyard/Playing Field	£500.00
PKF Littlejohn	External Audit 2024/25	£252.00
CFB IT Solutions	Mailbox Hosting (Sept)	£7.20
Tom Hitchcock	Grass Cutting – Churchyard/Playing Field	£250.00

**AGREED:** That payments totaling £2,992.28 be authorised and actioned by the Clerk.

d) **EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT**

The Clerk reported that the External Audit report for 2024/25 had been received which did not contain any comments or recommendations.

**It was AGREED:** That the External Audit Report be approved.

e) **ANNUAL COST OF LIVING INCREASE – CLERK**

The Clerk reported that the cost of living increased for Clerks had been received from SALC. It was an increase of 3.5% and would be backdated to April 2025.

**It was AGREED:** That the increase be approved. **Clerk to action.**

f) **INSURANCE POLICY RENEWAL**

The Clerk reported that the renewal had been received for the insurance policy with a renewal price of £537.72. She confirmed that the policy continued to cover all required aspects.

**It was AGREED:** That the renewal be accepted and approved. **Clerk to action.**

**SPC95/25/26 - PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

None had been received.

**SPC96/25/26 – PLANNING DECISIONS**

None had been received.

**SPC97/25/26 - WELCOME PACK**

A brief discussion took place in relation to putting together a Welcome Pack for new residents. Cllr Rook stated that Stoke by Ash had such a pack. The Clerk reported that Earl Stonham also had such a pack.

Members agreed that someone would be needed to put together one for Somersham and Emma Lister was suggested.

**It was AGREED:** That Cllr Rook contact Emma Lister to ask for her help. **Cllr Rook to action.**

**SPC98/25/26 – COMMUNITY PAYBACK - RAILINGS**

Cllr Caston reported that he needed to get in touch with the Community Payback Team to see if the railings were something they could do.

Cllr Oakes reported that she had checked with the relevant team at the County Council and had spoken to an engineer in relation to these works. It had been confirmed that the works could be carried out, but it

was important to ensure that it would be covered in the insurance policy and also specific paint should be used.

#### **SPC99/25/26 – VILLAGE SIGN**

It was reported that the Village sign had been repainted, but the stem still required attention.

#### **SPC100/25/26 - UPDATE MAINTENANCE OF PLAYING FIELD / TREE WORKS**

Cllr Caston reported that he had purchased a pole saw and planned to carry out the works during November at the end of the birds nesting season.

#### **SPC101/25/26 – SOMERSHAM 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY BOOK**

There was nothing to report.

#### **SPC102/25/26 – PAVILION PROJECT**

The Clerk had received an update from Terry Fordham at the Community Association, which had been circulated prior to the meeting. The update was as follows:

*Due to the likely cost of a pavilion rebuild (£600k minimum) Councillors had accepted the need to investigate thoroughly the viability of an extension to the current pavilion. We progressed the structural engineer's invitations to quote and during the process of liaison it became clear that the more of an outline of requirements we gave the structural engineers the greater the focus of their advice. That thought had led us to doing research on the existing building. We had found the original drawings which would give us structural detail and also who the architect was. He was local and retired but we were hoping to meet with him to go over the possibilities for an extension. Armed with this background and assuming an extension remained feasible we felt that an architectural technician would be the next logical step. This would give us some plan drawings for the structural engineer to report on (as this would still be a requirement of the Football Foundation funding).*

*Pending progress on the above, we had decided to halt any more work by the rebuild architects, KLH, to avoid costs that may become unnecessary. Therefore authorised costs unspent amount to £600 + VAT.*

**It was AGREED:** That members supported the comments above and approved the approach.

#### **SPC103/25/26 – NOTICEBOARD – COMMUNITY SHOP CAR PARK**

There was nothing to report.

#### **SPC104/25/26 - NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT**

The following information had been received and would be published on the village website:

##### **June 2025:**

**Somersham** – 2 violence, 1 anti-social behaviour, 1 public order

**Offton** – 1 criminal damage

**Willisham** – No reported crimes

**Flowton** – No reported crimes

**Mid Suffolk South & West Area** – 72 crimes. Most noted were = 36 violence, 5 thefts, 11 anti-social behaviour and 5 shop lifting

#### **SPC105/25/26 - REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS ON ANY MEETINGS ATTENDED**

No meetings had been attended.

**SPC106/25/26 – MATTERS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

- Road Closed signage – did not state where closure was – not helpful

**SPC107/25/26 - DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**It was AGREED:** That the next meeting would be held at the Village Hall on **Wednesday, 1<sup>ST</sup> October 2025.**

The meeting finished at 8.35pm.

Chairman: ..... Dated: .....