



SOMERSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at the Village Hall, Somersham on
Wednesday, 5th November 2025 at 7.30pm.

Present:

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

In Attendance J Blackburn – Clerk
District Cllrs Marriott

SPC108/25/26 – APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE AND APPROVALS

Apologies had been received and approved from Cllr Wright. County Cllr Oakes had also sent her apologies.

SPC109/25/26 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None had been received.

SPC110/25/26 – APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION

None had been received.

SPC111/25/26 – FORMAL APPROVAL OF CANCELLATION OF OCTOBER MEETING

It was AGREED: That the October meeting had to be cancelled at short notice due to illness which resulted in the meeting being inquorate.

SPC112/25/26 - APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3rd SEPTEMBER 2025

It was AGREED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd September 2025 be approved and signed by the Chair.

SPC113/25/26 - PUBLIC FORUM

Four members of the public were present at the meeting.

Emma Lister reported the following:

- Possible social event at the Duke of Marlborough for all volunteers, current and new. It was hoped that more volunteers could be gathered as longstanding ones would soon be leaving.
- Possible Festive Walk – Boxing Day village walk being arranged which would start and end at the Duke of Marlborough.
- Thanks to District Councillor Marriott for locality funding given to the Community Association.
- Community Association also looking into funding from the Mid Suffolk Sport Infrastructure Fund (Sport England)
- Seven new members had joined the Community Association

SPC114/25/26 – COUNTY COUNCILLOR’S REPORT

Cllr Oakes was not present at the meeting and a report for November had not yet been received.

SPC115/25/26 – 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 the main points on her report as follows:

- Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils make listed building energy upgrades easier
- Community Governance Review
- Renters’ Rights Bill receives Royal Assent
- Applications for the Social Housing Innovation Fund now open
- Regulator of Social Housing publishes annual stocks and rent sector statistics
- Awaab’s Law – Update
- Call for evidence: Reforming the licensing system
- New approach to environmental regulation to support new homes drive
- UKHSA weekly winter surveillance bulletin
- Food Standards Agency: Christmas Campaigns
- Warning: Dangerous Baby Self-Feeding Products
- Housing measures introduced to protect poultry and other captive birds

SPC116/25/26 – LEASE RENEWAL – COMMUNITY SHOP

The lease for the Community Shop was due for renewal which needed the consent of the Parish Council and signature of two Councillors.

It was AGREED: That the Lease be renewed and Cllr Rook and Cllr Caston signed the Lease.

SPC117/25/26 - CLERK’S REPORT AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

a) TO RECEIVE THE CLERK’S REPORT

The Clerk had nothing to report in addition to the items already on the Agenda.

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 28th October 2025 was £78,392.18.

c) TO AUTHORISE PAYMENTS AND NOTE RECEIPTS

The following payments were to be authorised:-

Jennie Blackburn	Clerk’s Pay (Oct)	£308.35
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk’s Office Allowance/Exp (Oct)	£33.49
Jennie Blackburn	Poppy Wreath Reimbursement	£19.99
CFB IT Solutions	Mailbox Hosting (Nov)	£7.20

The following payments were to be ratified:

MSDC	Bin Emptying 2025/26	£589.08
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk’s Pay (Sept)	£355.15
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk’s Office Allowance/Exp (Sept)	£32.30
HMRC	PAYE to end 5th Oct	£242.47
CFB IT Solutions	Mailbox Hosting (Oct)	£7.20

Tom Hitchcock	Grass Cutting & Maintenance	£715.00
SALC	Payroll	£54.00

AGREED: That payments totaling £2,364.23 be authorised and actioned by the Clerk.

d) **BANK RECONCILIATION**

It was AGREED: That the Bank Reconciliation be approved.

e) **BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

It was AGREED: That the Budget Monitoring Report be approved.

f) **DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2026/27**

It was AGREED: That the Draft Budget be approved.

g) **DONATION TO VILLAGE CREATIVE**

Three members of the group, Village Creative, were present at the meeting and gave a brief overview of what the group was about.

It was organised by a team of four Project Leaders and a Support Group, all of whom lived in the village, as well as 30+ creative people who were giving their time, energy, expertise and enthusiasm to get the trial project off the ground. They had received outstanding support from the Community Shop in circulating and discussing Village Creative with their customers, as well as the management and staff of The Duke of Marlborough pub, who were also providing a meeting space and an exhibition venue.

Their initial proposal was to keep the first Village Creative project small in order to gauge the future viability of immersive Creative projects in Somersham, with a long-term view to broaden the Village Creative concept to the whole Somersham district next year and beyond.

Extra investment for planning time and raising funding would be needed to involve the other villages, but it was hoped that the 'testing of the water' would demonstrate an exciting possibility for expansion and economic development across the whole Somersham district.

Their aim to encourage a cohesive, vibrant and creative community which enabled people of all ages and creative practices to get involved.

Everyone was working voluntarily and without a budget for materials, and it was with that in mind that the Parish Council was being asked if they were able to support the team with some of the costs.

An exhibition was planned from 10th January until 31st January 2026 and held at the Duke of Marlborough. It would focus on creatives such as welding, poetry, cake decorating etc.

Other funding would be explored moving forward when much larger amounts would be needed.

The Clerk stated that a letter could be written and given to the group which could be used in support for any funding application.

The Parish Council had been provided with a list of initial outgoings for purchases needed which included rechargeable lighting to supplement the current lighting levels for exhibitions. The total of costs were £800.

Members discussed the costs and all were in support of the project and for funding to be awarded.

Cllr Rook stated that the lights, if purchased by the Parish Council, could be then used for a variety of functions within the Parish and would be the responsibility of the Parish Council.

The Clerk asked the members of the group if they had a bank account, to which they explained they were in the process of setting one up. She explained that as soon as a bank account had been arranged the payment could be made.

It was AGREED: That £750 be contributed to costs from the Parish Council's CiL account.
Clerk to action.
That a letter of support be provided when required. **Clerk to action.**

SPC118/25/26 – DOMAIN NAME FOR WEBSITE AND CLERK'S EMAIL ADDRESS

The Clerk explained that all local councils were being urged to change their website and email addresses to a gov.uk domain, which was all part of the Assertion 10, a new "Digital and Data Compliance" requirement for parish and town councils introduced in the 2025 edition of the Smaller Authorities' Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP) Practitioner's Guide.

It required councils to demonstrate proper governance of their digital presence, which included using an authority-owned domain for emails and complying with website accessibility standards.

Assertion 10 was going to be a mandatory declaration that must be made as part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the 2025/26 financial year.

Cllr Caston proposed that a gov.uk domain be set up for the website and Clerk's email address and Cllr Rook seconded. **All AGREED. Clerk to action.**

SPC119/25/26 - PLANNING APPLICATIONS

None had been received.

SPC120/25/26 – PLANNING DECISIONS

None had been received.

SPC121/25/26 – PARKING AT PARK COTTAGES

It was noted that a reply email had been received from Robert Longfoot, Head of Housing Management, in relation to the issues of parking at Park Cottages.

He explained that parking remained a significant challenge across many residential developments in the District (particularly in areas where properties were built at a time when car ownership was far less common) and that he needed to consider the broader implications of, and precedents set by, any local action.

In response to the concerns raised he explained that the District Council had taken steps to improve the existing communal parking provision at Park Cottages, which included re-marking the bays and tidying the area to maximise its usability, in the hope that it would alleviate some of the pressures residents had been experiencing.

SPC122/25/26 - WELCOME PACK

Cllr Rook reported that he had seen a Welcome Pack from another parish and would start to draft something which he would bring to the next meeting.

SPC123/25/26 – COMMUNITY PAYBACK - RAILINGS

There was nothing to report.

SPC124/25/26 - UPDATE MAINTENANCE OF PLAYING FIELD / TREE WORKS

Cllr Caston confirmed he would begin works this month now that the nesting season had passed.

SPC125/25/26 – SOMERSHAM 25TH ANNIVERSARY BOOK

Emma Lister was present at the meeting and reported that a meeting had been arranged to move the Book forward. She explained that more volunteers had come forward and people who wished to contribute to the books content.

SPC126/25/26 – PAVILION PROJECT

The following update had been received from Terry Fordham and was circulated to members prior to the meeting:

- A meeting had taken place with Sarah-Jane Hatt and Sloane Potter from the District Council where they introduced the Sports Infrastructure Fund. The background of the project was explained and the current stage. They had stated that the criteria for the funding had been met which was up to £250k. An expression of interest was not yet ready to be submitted as firstly it was needed to get clarity on the extension possibilities, some costings and then at least pre-planning guidance. Nevertheless, it gave more confidence that an extension was affordable if feasible.
- As Parish Councillors knew and had acknowledged an architectural technician needed to be appointed to help assess what could be done in the way of an extension. That was still being worked on and would submit estimates for approval as soon as possible.
- In the meantime the Community Engagement Log was being moved forward. It would be good to get someone on board specifically to progress that by looking at relationships within the ideas, engaging with the community to take them forward and identifying how the playing field facilities could change. That could be a need for outdoor gym equipment and addition of lines on the arena and tennis courts to support basketball and netball.

SPC127/25/26 – NOTICEBOARD – COMMUNITY SHOP CAR PARK

It was noted that the original person who would provide the noticeboard could no longer help.

Cllr Rook stated that he had looked at stand alone noticeboards, which were very expensive. Whilst the Community Shop were reluctant to have a noticeboard attached to the wall of the shop, it seemed a better and cheaper alternative. Cllr Rook confirmed he would speak with the Shop again.

SPC128/25/26 - NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT

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

July 2025:

Somersham – 1 violence, 1 public order

Offton – No reported crimes

Willisham – No reported crimes

Flowton – No reported crimes

Mid Suffolk South & West Area – 84 crimes. Most noted were = 44 violence, 7 thefts, 9 anti-social behaviour and 7 public order

August 2025:

Somersham – 1 criminal damage, 1 public order

Offton – 1 theft

Willisham – No reported crimes

Flowton – No reported crimes

Mid Suffolk South & West Area – 71 crimes. Most noted were = 31 violence, 10 shop lifting, 6 anti-social behaviour and 6 public order

SPC129/25/26 - REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS ON ANY MEETINGS ATTENDED

None had been attended.

SPC130/25/26 – MATTERS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

- Flooding – Jetting Crew had attended Springfield Road in the village. An update received from a resident was that the culvert was “inadequate” – water flowed into the surface water drain, not the Channel. Channel was “inadequate”. A report was being written in relation to the findings.

SPC131/25/26 - DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was AGREED: That the next meeting would be held at the Village Hall on **Wednesday, 3RD December 2025.**

The meeting finished at 9.15pm.

Chairman: Dated: