



## SOMERSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held at the Village Hall, Somersham on **Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 8.05pm.**

### **Present:**

Councillors: J Rook (Chair)  
J Caston  
T Hallett  
S Wright  
S Barrell

In Attendance J Blackburn – Clerk  
District Cllr A Marriott

### **SPC21/25/26 – ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Cllr Rook declared the meeting open.

Cllr Caston proposed that Cllr Rook be elected as Chair, which was seconded by Cllr Wright. All Agreed.  
**Decision** – Cllr Rook was duly elected Chair.

Cllr Rook signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

### **SPC22/25/26 – ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL**

Cllr Rook proposed that Cllr Caston be elected as Vice-Chair, which was seconded by Cllr Hallett. All agreed. **Decision** – Cllr Caston was duly elected Vice-Chair.

### **SPC23/25/26 - APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE AND APPROVALS**

Apologies had been received and approved from County Cllr Oakes, Cllr Jousiffe.

### **SPC24/25/26 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None had been received.

### **SPC25/25/26 – APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION**

None had been received.

### **SPC26/25/26 – APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2<sup>nd</sup> APRIL 2025**

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

### **SPC27/25/26 - PUBLIC FORUM**

Three members of the public were present. No matters were raised.

### **SPC28/25/26 – COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

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

## SPC29/25/26 – DISTRICT COUNCILLOR’S REPORT

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

Cllr Marriott went through her report and raised the following:

- Devolution & Local Government Re-organisation Update
- Free Compost for Babergh and Mid Suffolk residents
- Mid Suffolk Residents with Parkinson’s Disease offered free membership at Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre
- Plug-In Suffolk Car Fund
- New Mid Suffolk Culture Fund
- New Look Community Development Fund

## SPC30/25/26 – CLERK’S REPORT AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

### a) TO RECEIVE THE CLERK’S REPORT

The Clerk reported that Cllr Jousiffe had asked for members to be notified that giant hogweed was spreading in the channel, some of which had been sprayed with a recommended weed killer. Hogweed was also present behind the tennis pavilion, which he would discuss with John Hutchinson.

John Hutchinson was present at the meeting and stated that he would contact Tom Hitchcock in relation to treatment.

### 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 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025 was £82,050.79.

### c) TO AUTHORISE PAYMENTS AND NOTE RECEIPTS

The following payments were to be authorised:-

S&DCA	Professional fees - Pavilion Project	£780.00
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk’s Pay (Apr)	£284.53
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk’s Office Allowance/Exp (Apr)	£35.50
CFB IT Solutions	Mailbox Hosting (Apr)	£7.20
Trevor Brown	Internal Audit for 2024/25	£300.00
Tom Hitchcock	Grass Cutting / Maintenance	£380.00
Suffolk Tennis Courts	Re-surfacing balance	£5,472.00

**It was AGREED:** That payments totaling £7,472.00 be authorised and actioned by the Clerk.

### d) APPROVE CIL REPORT

**It was AGREED:** That the Cil Report be approved and signed by the Chair.

### e) ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT - 2024/25

The Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25 was completed by the Council and signed by the Chair and the Clerk.

### f) END OF YEAR 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2025 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Statement of Accounts was presented for approval. **Decision** – approved and signed by the Chair and the Clerk

g) **INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT**

The Internal Auditor's Report was received and it was noted that no recommendations had been made.

h) **TO APPROVE THE ASSET REGISTER**

**It was AGREED:** That the Asset Register be approved.

i) **DIRECT DEBITS AND STANDING ORDERS**

**It was AGREED:** That the direct debit for the Information Commissioning Office for Data Protection - £52 per year be approved and continued.

j) **STANDING ORDERS**

**It was AGREED:** That the amended Standing Orders, by NALC, be adopted and approved.

**SPC31/25/26 – APPOINTMENT OF OUTSIDE BODIES & ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS**

**It was AGREED:** That all Cllrs be representatives to the Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) and that the annual subscription of £365.40 be approved.

That Cllr Caston be the representative for Wattisham.

**SPC32/25/26 - PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

None had been received.

**SPC33/25/26 – PLANNING DECISIONS**

None had been received.

**SPC34/25/26 – YOUTH CLUB – SHED**

Cllr Hallatt reported that at a recent meeting of the Somersham & District Community Association (S&DCA) it was discussed that the shed had become full with various items including those belonging to the Youth Club.

It was noted that items belonging to the Youth Club could become at risk when the shed was open for other activities and so a proposal for a separate shed for the Youth Club could be received in the near future, with the Parish Council being approached to assist with funding.

**SPC35/25/26 – UPDATE MAINTENANCE OF PLAYING FIELD / TREE WORKS**

It was noted that the dead trees present should be dealt with later in the year so as not to disturb any wildlife nesting within them.

A discussion took place in relation to the boundary of the playing field with residential properties. Two fences were in place with the steel fencing being the inner boundary, within which the Parish Council had responsibility. That fencing should be protected with nothing being allowed to protrude over it.

Should issues arise in relation to the outer boundary fencing, members agreed that any boundary issues were not worth pursuing as it would not be a good use of community funds for legal cases with no possible outcome.

### **SPC36/25/26 – VILLAGE SIGN**

Cllr Rook confirmed that 'Sign of the Times' had quoted £390 (plus VAT) for the sand blasting and painting of the village sign. Others costs included £90 for pickup and again for delivery.

Cllr Caston reported that the sign had become difficult to lift off of the post, with his recent attempts failing and him not wishing to put too much pressure on the sign in order to take it off its post and damaging it. Cllr Wright stated that he would be willing to look at it to see what could be done.

### **SPC37/25/26 – SOMERSHAM 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY BOOK**

Emma Lister reported that a progress meeting was soon to be held. She stated that more submissions had been received.

### **SPC38/25/26 – PAVILION PROJECT**

Terry Fordham was present at the meeting. Prior to the meeting he had circulated an update which stated the following:

- Some refinement on the latest architects plan may yet be received based on community engagement and detailed planning. The Parish Council had funded the S&DCA for RIBA Stages 1 and 2 which took them to pre-planning agreement.
- RIBA Stage 3 was next which focused on refining the design concept, ensuring it met spatial requirements and aligned with project constraints and preparing and submitting planning application. It was hoped the Parish Council would continue to support the S&DCA through that stage and costs would be sought for that.
- The Football Foundation were hopefully going to be one of their major funders and they had advised that they would require a building condition survey of the current pavilion by a structural engineer. In an earlier email dated 26 June 2024 (when the architects quotes were presented) it was pointed out that there would be various other professional advice fees along the way that they would need support on. Quotes would be obtained for that.
- The S&DCA admitted that the funding task was a stretch with costs indicated at between £588,000 and £684,000. Exact costs would be ascertained in RIBA Stage 3 by a quantity surveyor. The funding marketplace was always fluctuating and hopefully they would be successful. However it was prudent to have a fallback position and the S&DCA felt that an extension to the existing pavilion should be examined. It would be useful to have a dual proposal that catered for different funding eventualities. An Architectural Technician would be needed to appraise the building and design a proposal. They did not want to unnecessarily cause more expense but believed the research could be useful. It may be that Councillors had contacts that could achieve that for them or saw it as a sensible expense in any event.
- It was clear that to interest funders they would need a robust plan to maximise use of the playing field especially from the angle of multi-sport plus women/girls sport. They had always had a community engagement exercise in their plan which should identify how the community would like to use the playing field and tease out where more could be done. Anything that would support the health and wellbeing of the community should be up for consideration. Quite apart from the need to attract funding, that was also an exercise that was overdue in terms of engaging the community to make the most of the excellent playing field.

Terry Fordham briefly went through his update.

Members were all in support of the above and depending on the financial amounts, would promote multi-sports and community use of the pavilion.

**SPC39/25/26 – NOTICEBOARD – COMMUNITY SHOP CAR PARK**

Emma Lister reported that she had found someone in the village who may be willing to make a noticeboard and she was waiting for the cost. A proposal would therefore be brought to a future meeting for consideration.

**SPC40/25/26 - NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT**

The following information had been received:

**February 2025:**

**Somersham** – 2 burglary, 2 violence

**Offton** – No reported crimes

**Willisham** – No reported crimes

**Flowton** – No reported crimes

**Mid Suffolk South & West Area** – 57 crimes = 26 violence, 6 burglary, 7 criminal damage and 8 theft.

**SPC41/25/26 - REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS ON ANY MEETINGS ATTENDED**

Cllr Hallett reported that he had attended the S&DCA meeting which was reported on earlier in the meeting.

**SPC42/25/26 – MATTERS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

- VE Day Celebrations

**SPC43/25/26 – DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

The following dates were noted for future meetings (all commencing at 7.30pm):

- Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2025
- Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2025
- Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2025
- Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025
- Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025
- Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025
- Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> January 2026
- Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> February 2026
- Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026

**SPC44/25/26 - DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**It was AGREED:** That the next meeting would be held at the Village Hall on **Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2025.**

The meeting finished at 9.25pm.

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