



SOMERSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held at the Village Hall, Somersham on
Wednesday, 1st April 2026 at 7.30pm.

Present:

Councillors: J Rook (Chair)
J Caston
S Wright

In Attendance J Blackburn – Clerk
K Oakes – County Cllr
A Marriott – District Cllr

SPC01/26/27 – APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE AND APPROVALS

Apologies had been received from Cllr Barrell and Cllr Jousiffe, which were approved.

SPC02/26/27 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None had been received.

SPC03/26/27 – APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION

None had been received.

SPC04/26/27 – APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4TH MARCH 2026

It was AGREED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 4th March 2026 be approved and signed by the Chair.

SPC05/26/27 - PUBLIC FORUM

No members of the public were present.

SPC06/26/27 – COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

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

She had nothing to report and no questions were asked.

SPC07/26/27 – 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 and highlighted the following matters:

- Local Government Reform Decision: Three Councils for Suffolk
- Mid Suffolk Culture Fund
- Former Council Office Site Sold
- Food Waste Action Week 2026
- Voter information resources for the May Elections
- Former Council Office Site sold

- Pride in Place Strategy funding announced
- Government Review into park homes commission charge
- The Renters' Rights Act Information Sheet 2026
- Public Health Update – Individuals eligible for free shingles vaccine urged to come forward

SPC08/26/27 - CLERK'S REPORT AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

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

The Clerk had nothing to report other than what was 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 26th March 2026 was £73,035.89.

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

The following payments were to be authorised:-

Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Pay (Mar)	£308.15
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Office Allowance/Exp (Mar)	£32.30
HMRC	PAYE to end 5th April	£231.20
Tom Hitchcock	Grass Cutting (all areas)	£555.00

It was AGREED: That payments totaling £1,126.65 be authorised and actioned by the Clerk.

d) **FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

It was AGREED: That the Financial Regulations be approved.

SPC09/26/27 - PLANNING APPLICATIONS

None had been received.

SPC10/26/27 – PLANNING DECISIONS

None had been received.

SPC11/26/27 - PLAYING FIELD

a) Update on the maintenance of the field including tree works

Cllr Caston reported that he had undertaken the necessary works to the boundary of the field which had included works to dangerous trees that had been identified. The wood had been taken away with the smaller wood being left in situ as requested to enable insects to use as a bug hotel.

He explained that a bit more work was needed, which would be carried out later this year in the autumn, or next year.

b) Provision of an Inspection and Maintenance Plan

Members discussed the possible provision of a Maintenance Plan but it was felt that the works that had been carried out by Cllr Caston would ensure the area was in good condition for some time to come. If further works were required then the Community Association needed to approach the Parish Council at that time. **All AGREED.**

SPC12/26/27 - FLOODING

Cllr Rook reported that an email had been circulated to members from a resident at Springfield Road who had suffered long term problems with flooding during heavy rainfall.

The resident had informed the Parish Council that engineers had been to see her and whilst initial communications had been positive, the latest visit resulted in the Highways Team informing her that as it was on private land there was nothing they could do.

Members sympathised with the resident's situation and agreed that the pipes in the vicinity were not adequate for the amount of water flowing through them.

Unfortunately, members were in agreement that they were not in a position to be able to help further.

Cllr Rook stated that he would speak with the resident and explain the issues. **Cllr Rook to action.**

SPC13/26/27 - WELCOME PACK

Cllr Rook had completed the Welcome Pack and a copy was viewed by members.

It was agreed that further information could be added as necessary.

SPC14/26/27 - SOMERSHAM 25TH ANNIVERSARY BOOK

There was nothing to report other than Cllr Rook stated that the production of the book was going well.

SPC15/26/27 – PAVILION PROJECT

The following update was received by the Clerk from Terry Fordham and was circulated to members:

1. The architect, Paul Weston, had prepared an outline plan for an extension based on the accommodation schedule that was circulated in the last update. The project team met with Paul last week when he explained his design. The Community Association (CA) were happy that the plan was a good solution with just a few points of detail that would be clarified. They would be things like having a toilet that could be used without giving access to the whole pavilion; configuration of the toilets and extent of window area facing the main football pitch.
2. Paul Weston had engaged a quantity surveyor under the Pro Help Scheme who was John Button of Castons and he would prepare a budget cost estimate. That would identify all likely costs covering professional and building costs. At that point the CA would have a good idea of the funding task ahead.
3. There was little doubt that the cost would be significant and a lot of work needed to manage the process. It was a flagship project for the village and it was vital that the Parish Council and the CA worked together with a big enough team to achieve a good outcome. Obviously, the Parish Council had a vested interest as the land owners in what happened on the playing field. In order to draw together this relationship and to improve the chances of a successful outcome, the CA recommended the following:
 1. The Parish Council became the Principal for the project. As landowners, funders may expect that anyway but there was a big financial advantage as the Parish Council could claim a VAT exemption for the project. That could amount to a £100,000 saving. It may be possible to have joint principals i.e. Parish Council and CA but that would need to be checked with funders. There could be advantages in having a local authority and a charity managing the project.

2. Following on from the above, it would be necessary to have at least one Councillor on the project team. That would demonstrate that the Parish Council was fully involved and would help communication.

4. The CA would like Paul Weston to follow through his support to planning permission. His costs would be identified by the quantity surveyor. Once that was known, the CA would like to ask the Parish Council for funding. Beyond planning permission, they imagined that Paul Weston would undertake the project management.

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council could not claim VAT on a project being undertaken by another body. She was also uncertain about a joint venture and had sought advice from the Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC). A reply had not yet been received.

The Clerk explained that a further confirmation from Terry Fordham in relation to the 'Principal' had been received as follows:

The Principal would be the name on the project for all administrative purposes. Therefore, it would be for funding applications and contracts along the way to complete the project. A joint Principal basis between the PC and S&DCA was preferred as it would better reflect the relationship. However, the CA would need to check with funders as it might cause complications to have separate entities within the project name.

He confirmed that it would be the project team doing all the work.

Following a brief discussion members felt that they would need to wait for the advice sought from SALC.

They would be open for further discussion and would ask a representative from the CA to attend a future Parish Council meeting for that further discussion to take place.

SPC16/26/27 - NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT

No report had been received.

SPC17/26/27 - REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS ON ANY MEETINGS ATTENDED

Cllr Rook informed members that he went to the first 'Village Get Together' recently which was held in the Duke of Marlborough. Whilst attendance was quite low there were more people in the pub than usual.

SPC18/26/27 – MATTERS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

- Metal strips needed to keep noticeboard sturdy – Cllr Rook had found a solution
- Tables chosen for Community Shop looked to be unsuitable – Cllr Rook to speak with Manager
- Road Closures – many roads closed recently in the same area making access from one side of the village to the other impossible. Also, closure signage with inadequate information on them.
- Flooding report received from Flooding Investigation Team required Parish Council's updates – will be carried out by Cllr Rook.

SPC19/26/27 - DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was AGREED: That the next meeting would be held at the Village Hall on **Wednesday, 6th May 2026** (Annual Meetings).

The meeting finished at 8.23pm.

Chairman: Dated: