



SOMERSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Annual Parish Council meeting** held at the Village Hall, Somersham on **Wednesday, 6th May 2026 at 8pm.**

Present:

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

In Attendance J Blackburn – Clerk

SPC21/26/27 – ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Rook declared the meeting open.

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

Cllr Rook signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

SPC22/26/27 – ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

Cllr Jousiffe proposed that Cllr Caston be elected as Vice-Chair, which was seconded by Cllr Barrell. 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 Cllr Wright.

SPC24/26/27 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None had been received.

SPC25/26/27 – APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION

None had been received.

SPC26/26/27 – APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1st APRIL 2026

It was AGREED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 1st April 2026 be approved and signed by the Chair.

SPC27/26/27 - PUBLIC FORUM

Five members of the public were present and the following were raised:

- Bug hotel was going well with Greening of Somersham.
- Youth Club had lost the interest of a few children but had also gained interest from others.
- The Link – Parish Council summary – more regular updates

SPC28/26/27 – COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

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

SPC29/26/27 – DISTRICT COUNCILLOR’S REPORT

Cllr Marriott was not present at the meeting. Her report had been circulated prior to the meeting and would be published on the village website.

SPC30/26/27 - PAVILION REFURBISHMENT

Terry Fordham was present at the meeting and reported that they had engaged an Architect, Paul Weston, through the Pro Help Scheme (Pro bono) who would take the project to a Pre Planning application. He was currently working on the submission. A budget cost for this was £500 as mentioned in his email of 16th April 2026 and would therefore ask the Parish Council to consider covering the cost.

Once the Pre Planning application was processed, Paul Weston would be able to quote for his professional fee to progress to detailed drawings and planning permission. With full planning permission the project would be in a better position to undertake funding applications and in fact some funders would not look at an application before planning permission was obtained.

Terry Fordham stated that the focus of the project was important. It was inappropriate to think about the pavilion as just a football pavilion. It was a community space that could be used in a variety of ways. Besides football the pavilion/playing field was currently used for Youth Club, Tennis, Cycle Speedway, Family Parties, Fund raising events, Acoustic music events and Meetings. It was clear that the facilities had more scope to be used for additional activities and the Community Association (CA) were keen to explore these and maximise the multi-use potential. Activities that had been suggested were boules, netball, basketball, talks (in collaboration with village organisations), walking groups, exercise/running, hockey, fielding training for cricket, outdoor gym, table tennis, and female football. Some of these were currently being worked on.

The CA would encourage that football or any other sport was not just judged on the number of local people who actually played but also the enjoyment and attraction for others who got involved, whether they be in management, friends, parents or villagers who liked to watch sport. The Football Club currently had three youth teams and one adult mens team that created the environment.

To achieve funding for the project was a big task and if achieved created a significant asset for Somersham to enable the health and wellbeing of the community.

He explained that in his update email of 24th March 2026 he outlined how it was thought that the Parish Council could support the undertaking, by becoming Project Principal solely, or jointly with the CA. Not only would that show a commitment to making a difference but could save the £190,000 VAT involved in the building cost.

It would also be a positive way forward for a Councillor from the Parish Council to join the project team.

In relation to the VAT reclaim, the Clerk reported that she had sought advice from the Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC), legal team, who had stated the following:

A council that is a custodian trustee cannot normally recover VAT on costs associated with the activities of the charity. There is some extra entitlement when a council is sole managing trustee, but that is not the case here.

The only circumstance when the council could recover VAT on extending the pavilion would be where the council is funding the work out of its own resources and making a gift of the works to the charity. Gifts are treated as a non-business activity, and VAT can be recovered when the council:

- *places purchase orders*
- *receives the supplies of goods and services*
- *receives a VAT invoice made out to the council, and*
- *pays out of council funds (including grants, CIL and Section 106 funds awarded to the council).*

These criteria are set out by HMRC in [VAT Notice 749 section 6.1](#) (section 6.5 covers HMRC's position on custodian trustees).

Unfortunately, many funders will be unwilling to award a grant to a council, towards an extension of a building that the council does not own.

Likewise, if the council receives any payments from the charity, or associated parties, this will also fail to meet the criteria allowing VAT recovery. The council can only reclaim VAT to the extent that it is genuinely using its own funds and making a gift to the charity.

Cllr Caston reported that there would be fund pots coming up for communities from surrounding projects, such as the Norwich to Tilbury Pylons and Port One's application for the old quarry site. Also, District CiL money was available.

Cllr Caston went on to state that he would like to see something 'achievable'.

Cllr Rook stated that he felt clarity was needed on the project for the funds that were needed. He also would like to see who was in agreement in the village for the project.

He explained that the CiL money the Parish Council held was for all groups within the community.

Terry Fordham reported that he would look at the Business Plan and funding matrix and would wait for Paul Weston to produce what was required for planning permission.

Members all agreed that they were in support of the project, but clarity was required on the end result.

SPC31/26/27 - PROVISION OF TABLES FOR COMMUNITY SHOP

Becky Jones, Manager of the Community Shop, was present at the meeting. A brief discussion was had in relation to picnic tables being installed outside the shop, which was felt would bring more business to the shop.

Wooden tables had been considered but it was felt that recycled plastic would be more suitable and would be longer lasting.

Cllr Rook proposed £1,500 CiL money be donated to the Community Shop to purchase picnic tables, which Cllr Jousiffe seconded.

It was AGREED: That £1,500 CiL money be given to the Community Shop for picnic benches. **Clerk to action.**

SPC32/26/27 - UPDATE ON THE FLOODING

Cllr Jousiffe reported that a resident on Springfield Road continued to experience problems with the culvert at the rear of her property during rainfall, which was close to collapsing.

He explained that the resident had had Binders in to look at the culvert and asked for a cost to repair, which she would get builders to look at what was involved.

Cllr Rook reported that he had spoken to County Cllr Oakes in relation to the Highways responsibility of the culvert. Cllr Oakes had stated that she would contact the County Council and would instruct them to look through the archives for evidence of the previous work the Council had completed.

SPC33/26/27 – 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 30th April 2026 was £81,542.44.

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

The following payments were to be authorised:-

Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Pay (Apr)	£308.35
Jennie Blackburn	Clerk's Office Allowance/Exp (Apr)	£38.97
SALC	Membership Renewal	£376.69
Trevor Brown	Internal Audit 2025/26	£250.00
Somersham VH	Mother & Baby Group – Hall Hire	£216.00
Tom Hitchcock	Grass Cutting / Maintenance	£660.00

It was AGREED: That payments totaling £1,850.01 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 - 2025/26**

The Annual Governance Statement for 2025/26 was completed by the Council and signed by the Chair and the Clerk.

f) **END OF YEAR 31ST MARCH 2026 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

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

g) **EXEMPTION CERTIFICATE 2025/26**

The Certificate of Exemption was signed by the Chair and Clerk.

h) **INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT 2025/26**

The Internal Auditor's Report 2025/26 was received and it was noted that no recommendations had been made.

i) **TO APPROVE THE ASSET REGISTER**

It was AGREED: That the Asset Register be approved.

j) **DIRECT DEBITS AND STANDING ORDERS**

It was AGREED: That the direct debit for the Information Commissioning Office for Data Protection - £47 per year be approved and continued.

SPC34/26/27 – 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 £376.69 be approved.

That Cllr Caston be the representative for Wattisham.

SPC35/26/27 – DONATION TO THE LINK MAGAZINE

It was AGREED: That a donation of £100 be made to The Link magazine. **Clerk to action.** Should any more funding be required a more detailed request would be considered,

SPC36/26/27 - PLANNING APPLICATIONS

None had been received.

SPC37/26/27 – PLANNING DECISIONS

None had been received.

SPC38/26/27 – PLANNING COMMENTS TO BE RATIFIED

Ref: DC/26/00928 – Householder Application – Erection of an extension to the front elevation on the first floor – 7 Princes Gardens, Somersham – **No Objections**

SPC39/26/27 - SPEED INDICATOR DEVICE (SID)

Cllr Jousiffe reported that the battery life, for the SID, was becoming shorted and soon new batteries would be required.

SPC39/26/27 – SOMERSHAM 25TH ANNIVERSARY BOOK

There was nothing to report.

SPC40/25/26 - NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT

The following information had been received:

February 2026:

Somersham – 2 anti-social behaviour

Offton – 1 public order

Willisham – No reported crimes

Flowton – No reported crimes

Mid Suffolk South & West Area – 74 crimes = the four most noted crimes being - 34 violence, 7 anti-social behaviour, 6 shoplifting and 6 criminal damage.

March 2026:

Somersham – No reported crimes

Offton – No reported crimes

Willisham – No reported crimes

Flowton – No reported crimes

Mid Suffolk South & West Area – 81 crimes = the four most noted crimes being - 37 violence, 8 anti-social behaviour, 8 shoplifting and 8 vehicle crime.

SPC41/26/27 - REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS ON ANY MEETINGS ATTENDED

Cllr Rook had met with Vicky Jones, Community Shop, to discuss picnic benches.

SPC42/26/27 – MATTERS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

- Tree – Brook Way – Cllr Jousiffe reported it had been taken down by the District Council, but others may need to be checked.
- Cllr Jousiffe had cleaned up the telephone box

SPC43/26/27 – DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

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

- Wednesday, 3rd June 2026 - 7.30pm
- Wednesday, 1st July 2026 - 7.30pm
- Wednesday, 2nd September 2026 - 7.30pm
- Wednesday, 7th October 2026 - 7.30pm
- Wednesday, 4th November 2026 - 7.30pm
- Wednesday, 2nd December 2026 - 7.30pm
- Wednesday, 6th January 2027 - 7.30pm
- Wednesday, 3rd February 2027 - 7.30pm
- Wednesday, 3rd March 2027 - 7.30pm

SPC44/26/27 - DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was AGREED: That the next meeting would be held at the Village Hall on **Wednesday, 3rd June 2026.**

The meeting finished at 9.14pm.

Chairman: Dated: