

Somerford Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 April 2024

Holmes Chapel Community Centre, 7.30pm

Present

- Councillor Geoff Bell (Chairman)
- Councillor Jeanette Hardman
- Councillor Bill Chorlton
- Councillor Trevor Massey
- Councillor Gwyneth Derbyshire
- Ward Councillor John Wray
- Mr Carlton Evans – Clerk

Declarations of Interest

- Cllr Chorlton – Loachbrook Estate discussions
- Cllr Hardman – Loachbrook Estate discussions
- Cllr Derbyshire – Loachbrook Estate discussions

Part 1 Public Forum

No members of the public were present.

049/24 - Apologies

- Cllr Paul Crompton (conflicting engagement)
- Cllr Simon Hughes (conflicting engagement)

050/24 Minutes

The Council **resolved** that the minutes of the Council meeting on 18 March 2024 be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

051/24 Accounts

See Annex 1

052/24 Planning Applications

24/1051D - 40, BLACK FIRS LANE, SOMERFORD, CW12 4QQ

Discharge of Condition 4 on 23/1267C - Demolition of the existing garage & re-construct the garage in an alternative location.

The Council **resolved** to raise no objection to this application.

24/0755C - 26, BLACK FIRS LANE, SOMERFORD, CW12 4QQ

Approval for self-contained flat above garage with open plan living dining kitchen, shower room and bedroom.

The Council **resolved** to raise no objection to this application.

23/1928W – Somerford Farm, Sibelco

The extraction of industrial sand, pipeline to transfer minerals to the existing bent farm plant site associated ancillary development, retention of the Bent Farm plant site and progressive restoration.

Previously the Council had reserved its position until the views of the Environment Agency had been published. Absent a response from them the Council **resolved** to adopt the same position and submit another holding reply.

053/24 – Ward Councillor Report

Cllr Wray reported that Cheshire East Council had appointed a new CFO who would start at the end of May. The Council noted that the Clerk had submitted a response to the Boundary Commission on their current Ward Boundary Review, which did not accord with Cheshire East Council's own proposals.

054/24 – Business Plan Review

No substantive discussion in the absence of Cllr Crompton. Given recent changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and other Cheshire East policies the Council **resolved** to revisit the Business Plan later in the year. Cllr Hardman offered to look at making some small, non-strategic changes to bring it more up to date.

055/24 - Spring/Summer Newsletter

The Clerk reminded the meeting that a draft was online awaiting edits from Councillors and urged them to make their contributions as soon as possible. Items on pavement parking, dog fouling, road safety etc would be welcome.

056/24 - Somerford Chapel Support

Cllrs discussed what further support the Parish Council could offer to Somerford Chapel, primarily to increase publicity and improve the viability of the historic building as a community asset, as well as encourage greater use and footfall which could increase income and strengthen its financial self-sufficiency. Several possibilities were discussed and the Council **resolved** to ask Cllr Hardman and the Clerk to continue to explore dates for a meeting with Rev Ann-Marie Naylor to take the discussions forward.

057/24 Rhead's Meadows

The Chairman reported that as per a previous resolution approximately £1,000 worth of replacement trees and shrubs had been planted to replace those that had failed, plus some additional laurel hedging. The concrete base for the newly donated bench had been put down and the contractor will install it soon – and remove some of the other benches for refurbishing before replacing more securely.

058/24 Blackfirs Wood

Chairman Bell reported that Equator had made good progress with improving the internal and perimeter paths at Blackfirs Wood. However, they had had to cease works because of the poor weather. Given the amount of work already undertaken and volume of materials purchased the Council **resolved** to make a payment of £20,000 for the first phase of the works, with the balance to be paid on completion.

059/24 Highways

The Council asked the Clerk to investigate and report on the options for additional boundary signs on the main roads in and out of the parish and finger posts at various other locations. The existing signs at apex of Chelford Road/Blackfirs Lane would be simpler to replace than refurbish and the Clerk will look into this also.

060/24 Housing Developments

Cllr Hardman reported on slightly more promising progress on the Bovis/Vistry Loachbrook estate. She was arranging a meeting with Fiona Bruce MP, and understood that United Utilities had now said that they would adopt the drains if the Matthews and Leigh repairs were to an acceptable standard. The Council were in favour of installing a parish noticeboard on the estate, once a suitable location could be identified and agreement obtained from Bovis/Vistry.

061/24 Chairman and Members' reports

Mindful of their previous discussion on daffodil planting (Minute Ref: 047/24, March 2024) the Council **resolved** to undertake a more intensive planting scheme and **resolved** to purchase approximately 10,000 bulbs over the summer for planting in the autumn. Areas for mass planting would include Sandy Lane and the apex of Chelford Road and Blackfirs Lane, and Chelford Road and Blackfirs Lane verges. The Council will return to the question of who should be asked to help with the planting. This could be volunteers, or Sibelco who had helped at Rhead's Meadows previously.

Cllr Hardman informed the Council that TCS Management who provide payroll services to the Council would increase their charges slightly from £66.00 per quarter to £69.12 per quarter. The Council **resolved** to accept this small increase.

Chairman Geoff Bell will attend the Parish Liaison meeting with neighbouring parish councils on 22 April. One of the key topics is a common interest in noise and speed of vehicles on the Congleton Link Road.

The Clerk was asked to follow up with Bellway about their offer to cover the cost of the defibrillator at Chelford Road/Blackfirs Lane. Bovis/Vistry had been in touch and confirmed that they would assist with costs and installation of a defibrillator at the entrance to the Loachbrook Estate and Scottish Power were happy to connect the electricity to the existing feeder pillar.

062/24 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reminded the Council that a date for his annual appraisal still needed to be agreed. Cllrs Crompton and Hardman and the Clerk will also fix a time for a meeting to discuss Parish Council finances.

The Clerk had received a quote from John Harding & Son LTD for the mowing of Blackfirs Lane and Chelford Road verges and a strip either side of the paths at Rhead's Meadows. This would be a continuation of their previous contracts. The Council **resolved** to accept this quote for six seasonal cuts priced at £195.00 plus VAT per cut for the 'Somersetford Triangle' and £85.00 plus VAT per cut for Rhead's Meadows.

The meeting ended at 2105 hrs.

X

Chairman

Annex – Accounts

Finances as of **31 March 2024:**

Account Balance: **£55,324.86**

Receipts since 29 February 2024:

- None

Payments to note since 29 February 2024:

- £45.00 – Everybody Health, HCCS room hire
- £600.00 – Somerford Chapel Donation
- £49.35 – NEST, Clerk’s Pension
- £41.25 - Everybody Health, HCCS room hire
- £141.00 – HMRC
- £571.85 – Clerk Salary

Payments approved:

- £559.36 – ChALC affiliation fee
- £528.00 – Parish Online for new website
- £20,000 – Equator interim payment for Blackfirs Wood internal path restoration and external path improvements
- £66.00 – TCS Payroll management