

Somerford Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 16 December 2024

Holmes Chapel Community Centre, 7.00pm

Present

- Councillor Geoff Bell (Chairman)
- Councillor Gwyneth Derbyshire
- Councillor Jeanette Hardman
- Councillor Paul Crompton
- Councillor Trevor Massey
- Councillor Bill Chorlton
- Mr Carlton Evans – Clerk
- Ward Councillor John Wray (arrived 2015hrs)

Declarations of Interest

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

Part 1 Public Forum

Several Members of the public were present from Holmes Chapel Parish Council, Hulme Walfield and Somerford Booths Parish Council, and Congleton Town Council. Also present were the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Dan Price and his PA. Mr Price set out his priorities for his term of office and took questions. He had produced a 'Plan on a Page', centred around three core areas: Reducing Crime, Listening to the Public and Modernising. He was keen to see more police, a greater police presence on the ground, and more community led policing across Cheshire. He noted that accessing monies from the proceeds of crime scheme should be easier and would no longer need councils to provide match-funding. He was committed to deploying (mobile) noise cameras at strategic locations and noted the scheme was currently being piloted across the County.

Cllr Robert Douglas spoke about the section 106 monies due to Cheshire East Council. CEC had not collected significant amounts of it and had also failed to spend or allocate all that it had. There was a danger that if the money continued to be unspent the developers concerned would seek to have it returned. Cllr Douglas will continue to analyse the data he had been given and keep the Council informed.

174/24 – Apologies

The Council received and **resolved** to accept the following apologies:

- Cllr Simon Hughes (work commitments)

175/24 – Minutes

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

176/24 – Accounts

See Annex 1

177/24 - Cheshire East Ward Councillor Report

Councillor Wray noted that the CEC replacement for their Planning Portal was experiencing widespread problems but didn't know how long it would take to rectify.

178/24 – Cost Recovery for Elections

The Council discussed the CE Council plans to recover the full costs of future 'all out' elections (see budget discussion below for next steps).

179/24 - Budget and Precept for FY 25/26

Councillors considered the budget and precept request for the next Financial Year, and the list of possible future projects discussed at its previous meetings, including any election cost recovery (Minute References **125/24**, **143/24** and **159/24**). They asked the Clerk and Cllrs Hardman and Crompton to meet and discuss the budget further and make a report and recommendation to the full Council in January. Thereafter a piece would be put in the next newsletter explaining our plan for the parish and our decision.

180/24 – Polling District Review

The Council felt that the Cheshire East proposals for Somerford were sub-optimal as they don't reflect the changed population of the parish where the majority of people now live very close to the Eastern boundary of the parish while the proposed polling station (Davenport Chapel) is outside the parish boundary to the West. They asked

the Clerk to respond to the review and make the case for using Congleton High School or Blackfirs Primary school as a more appropriate polling station.

181/24 - Planning Applications

None received – though the clerk noted that an application for ‘permitted development’ at Somerford Park Farm had been made in August but the Council had not been informed about it.

182/24 - Policies to Review

The Council reviewed its Code of Conduct and **resolved** to adopt it unamended.

183/24 - Rhead’s Meadows

The Clerk will contact Streetscape to see if the broken/surplus tree guards could be collected and disposed of. The Clerk will also chase the Cheshire Wildlife Trust for their maintenance plan proposal.

184/24 - Blackfirs Wood

A parishioner had been in touch about the barbed wire on the fence at the rear of the Wood, and the danger this might pose. It appears that a section of the fencing had been broken down, probably so that a shortcut between the housing estates and school could be created. Cllrs Bell and Crompton and the Clerk will visit to see if some sections could be safely removed. Also, it appears that someone, probably a resident of Blackfirs Lane, has been dumping leaves over the fence into the Wood. The Council will try to contact local residents about this.

185/24 – Highways

Nothing further to report.

186/24 – Housing Developments

Cllr Derbyshire reported that some ironworks had been raised and some tarmac had been laid but it all seems to be very haphazard and disruptive, and some of the ironworks are quite hazardous. Cllr Hardman noted that Bovis/Vistry did not seem to be emptying one of the dog bins on the estate and she will follow up with them. Residents had invited Sarah Russell MP to a meeting to discuss matters and Cllr Hardman is trying to fix a suitable date.

187/24 - Chairman and Members’ Reports

Cllr Hardman said she would try to provide some further guidance on switching to the .gov.uk addresses soon. Cllr Massey reported that the carol service at Somerford Chapel had been a great success and the parking much appreciated.

188/24 Clerk's Report

The Clerk will circulate proposals for meeting dates/venues in 2025.

The meeting ended at 2125 hrs.



Annex 1

Finances as of 01 December 2024:

Account Balance: **£36,199.98**

Receipts since 01 November:

- £nil

The following payments since 01 November were noted:

- £69.12 - TCS Management
- £54.78 - NEST, Clerk Pension
- £41.25 - HCCS Room Hire
- £1,231.44 - Crewe Colour Printers
- £159.97 - HMRC
- £450.00 - SLCC, Clerk CiLCA Qualification
- £801.71 - Clerk Salary plus Back Pay

The following payments were approved:

- £1,597.86 – Congleton TC for dog bin emptying