

Somerford Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 17 June 2024

Holmes Chapel Community Centre, 7.00pm

Present

- Councillor Geoff Bell (Chairman)
- Councillor Jeanette Hardman
- Councillor Paul Crompton
- Councillor Simon Hughes
- Councillor Bill Chorlton
- Councillor Gwyneth Derbyshire
- Councillor Trevor Massey
- 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

One member of the public was present to discuss Planning Application **24/1711C**

080/24 - Apologies

- None

081/24 Minutes

The Council **resolved** that the minutes of the Council meeting on 20 May 2024 be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

082/24 Accounts

See Annex 1

083/24 Internal Audit

The Council received, considered and **resolved** to approve the Internal Auditor report for 2023-2024

084/24 Annual Governance Statement

The Council received, considered and **resolved** to approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2023-2024

085/24 Annual Accounting Statements

The Council received, considered and **resolved** to approve the Annual Accounting Statements for 2023-2024

086/24 Bank Reconciliation

The Council received, considered and **resolved** to approve the Bank Reconciliation for 2023-2024

087/24 Analysis of Variances

The Council received, considered and **resolved** to approve the Analysis of Variances for 2023-2024

088/24 Notice of Public Rights

The Council received, considered and **resolved** to approve the notice period for the exercise of public rights – 1 July to 9 August 2024.

089/24 Planning Applications

24/1711C

Proposed extension and remodel of existing dwelling
CALDER HOUSE, 9A, BLACK FIRS LANE, SOMERFORD, CW12 4QG

A member of the public outlined his concerns as the neighbour to the south of the property as set out in his submission to Cheshire East Planning Department – and those of the neighbour to the north. After discussion the Council **resolved** to raise no objection, but seek the installation of fixed (non-opening) frosted windows to the sides of the property to maintain privacy for the neighbours.

090/24 – Cheshire East Ward Councillor Report

Cllr Wray reported that the General Election announcement meant a flurry of activity at Cheshire East Council. Cllr Crompton and Cllr Wray had raised the matter of the feasibility of installing noise cameras on the CLR and were waiting for a reply. In the meantime Cllr Crompton will write to the new Police and Crime Commissioner, Dan Price, to seek a meeting.

091/24 Policy Update – Financial Regulations

The Council **resolved** to adopt the current Financial Regulations as they stand, and to look at them again when the revised, corrected template is issued by NALC.

092/24 - 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. Cllr Hardman will trim down the 'public information' sections by directing people either to our social media or other online sources of information – while still offering the option of hard copy information if requested. Cllrs agreed to finalise their sections by the end of the week and the Clerk will send a copy to the printers to mock up a printed version.

093/24 - Somerford Chapel Support

Councillors reiterated their desire to support the Church. The idea to improve the car parking arrangements is being pursued but it will be for the Church to approach the landowner to seek permission for any works. Cllr Massey will take this forward. Concrete 'grasscrete' appears to be very expensive. The Chairman had investigated some plastic grass reinforcing mesh which would be much cheaper, almost invisible once the grass had grown and equally effective for the volume of cars expected to use the carpark. The Chairman and Clerk will seek a site visit with a representative from the company that supplies the mesh to get a more accurate costing.

094/24 Rhead's Meadows

The Chairman reported that after a visit with the Clerk it appears that the latest donated bench has been put in the wrong place. The Council **resolved** to have a new concrete pad installed and the bench moved. The dock, thistle and ragwort needs tackling again soon, and more generally the Meadows are in need of some attention such as loosening the ties/straps on the saplings and additional weeding or weed suppression around the bases of them. It was unclear whether the edges of the paths had been treated. Cllrs discussed whether they should employ some sort of part-time resource for these types of relatively minor jobs. The Clerk will approach contractors to gauge any interest. The Chairman and Clerk will make a site visit in the Autumn with Bellway to discuss the installation of the perimeter cycleway which is currently full of weeds.

095/24 Blackfirs Wood

Councillors were very pleased with the paths that had been installed. One concern however is the regeneration of mature trees as some areas were a bit thin in places especially since some trees, primarily silver birch, had fallen during the winter storms. The ferns were very vigorous though there were also some brambles which if left

unchecked could strangle other plants and take over. The Council will consider planting other 'decorative' tree species and the Clerk will invite the Cheshire Wildlife Trust to meet us and advise on options.

096/24 Highways

The Council noted that some containers belonging to United Utilities had been placed on Sandy Lane though how long they will be there is unknown. The Council **resolved** to remove and renovate the two benches at the junction of the Holmes Chapel Road and Blackfirs Lane, and re-install them on some concrete bases.

097/24 Housing Developments

Cllr Hardman reported that parts of the road on the Loachbrook Estate had been tarmacked and block paving is being installed, and she hoped that the drains work would continue once these other elements had been completed.


098/24 Chairman and Members' reports

The Chairman will ask someone to look at the door of the telephone kiosk housing the defib as the opening seems to be restricted.

099/24 Clerk's Report

Items already covered above – no further reports.

The meeting ended at 2115 hrs.


Chairman

Annex 1 – Accounts

Finances as of 31 May 2024:

Account Balance: **£28,449.90**

The Council noted the following payments since 30 April 2024:

- £49.35 – NEST, Clerk Pension
- £56.25 – Everybody Health, Room Hire
- £140.80 – HMRC
- £1,302.60 – Equator, planting and spraying at Rhead's Meadows
- £23,706.28 – Equator, Path installation at Blackfirs Wood, phase 2
- £496.07 – Zurich Insurance
- £345.00 – S Amies, website management and hosting and email renewal fees
- £2,250.00 – Jonathan Douglas, various, bench installation, maintenance etc.
- £605.03 – Clerk Salary

The Council noted the following receipts since 30 April 2024:

- £2.26 – Lloyds Share dividend

Payments to approve:

- £None