

**Somerford Parish Council**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 March 2024**

**Holmes Chapel Community Centre, 7.30pm**

**Present**

- Councillor Geoff Bell (Chairman)
- Councillor Paul Crompton
- Councillor Bill Chorlton
- Councillor Jeanette Hardman
- Mr Carlton Evans – Clerk

**Declarations of Interest**

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

**Part 1 Public Forum**

No members of the public were present.

**032/24 - Apologies**

- Cllr Trevor Massey (holiday)
- Cllr Simon Hughes (conflicting appointment)
- Cllr Gwyneth Derbyshire (conflicting appointment)
- Ward Cllr John Wray (conflicting appointment)

**033/24 Minutes**

The Council **resolved** that the minutes of the Council meeting on 19 February 2024 be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

**034/24 Accounts**

**See Annex 1**

**035/24 Planning Applications**

None Received.

### **036/24 – Ward Boundary Review**

The Council considered the Ward boundary changes proposed by Cheshire East Council. The current Brereton Rural Ward does indeed seem too large but Cllrs questioned the wisdom of including parishes such as Warmingham and Coppenhall in the new warding arrangements, as Somerford has no relationship and seemingly little in common with them. The Chair will respond to the CE consultation accordingly with some alternative suggestions.

### **037/24 – Ward Councillor Report**

No report in Cllr Wray's absence

### **038/24 – Business Plan Review**

The Council discussed how to approach the anticipated review for the period 2025 to 2030. They noted that by the end of that period there would be several hundred more houses in the Parish which could impact the level of precept and the nature of the activities that the Parish Council might undertake. Councillors will start refreshing the Business Plan accordingly to set out its vision for the coming years and will return to the matter next time.

### **039/24 - Policies for Review**

The Council considered the Financial Regulations and in particular the level at which quotes or estimate need to be sought. Given that NALC will issue a revision to their model Financial Regulations in April the Council **resolved** to make no amendments at this time.

### **040/24 - Spring/Summer Newsletter**

The Clerk reminded the Council that he had sent a list of potential topics and had allocated responsibility to each Councillor for writing contributions. The plan is to have a draft to discuss at the next meeting in April and publish at the end of May. A key item will be to make sure that we have the most up to date list of addresses for the occupants at all the new housing developments.

### **041/24 - Somerford Chapel Support**

Cllrs discussed what additional financial support the Council could provide to make sure that the Chapel is a well-used community asset, and will showcase the Chapel through the Newsletter. Parking is a significant factor that would need to be addressed so that access can be maintained across the whole of the year. The Clerk and Cllr Hardman will meet Revd Anne-Marie Naylor once a convenient time can be found to discuss options further.

### **042/24 - Annual Parish Meeting**

The Council discussed the format, timing and venue for the next Annual Meeting of the Parish which will take place in April. The Council **resolved** to hold the meeting at the Holmes Chapel Community Centre at 6.30pm, just before a regular meeting of the Council at 7.30pm. Items for discussion will be determined by any parishioners who attend.

### **043/24 Rhead's Meadows**

The Chairman will ask whether the contractors on site at Blackfirs Wood can be available to plant the replacement trees that have been ordered for the Meadows. He will also chase another contractor about the installation of the newly donated bench. Cllrs noted that grass is growing over the edges of the pathways and will need tackling, especially so that the pathways don't degrade. The Council will return to the possibility of a longer term maintenance contract in due course.

### **044/24 Blackfirs Wood**

Chairman Bell noted that the Contractors are already making safe the trees that had fallen in the Wood, and they will shortly be installing the edging for the improved pathways.

### **045/24 Highways**

The Clerk will continue to investigate the installation of fingerposts at Rhead's Meadows, Rhead's Lane and Hall Drive, and new/replacement boundary signs for Sandy Lane and along the CLR. Councillors felt that the hedge by Goodwin's Pool which had been cut back last year does not yet appear to need cutting back again. The Clerk will investigate the signs at the junction of Chelford Road and Blackfirs Lane and the Council will consider their replacement.

### **046/24 Housing Developments**

Residents of the Somerford Grove estate had contacted the Clerk and Cllr Hardman about a large tree that had been felled by the Management Company, with very little notice, and for which the residents will now be billed. Cllr Hardman had been in touch with them about setting up their own Residents' Committee to liaise with the Management Company about any future works.

The Clerk will try to fix up another meeting with Bellway representatives to discuss progress with the Somerford Gate development.

Vistry and United Utilities are at an impasse, again, about the drainage and pipework at the Loachbrook Estate. They will meet again soon and will hopefully resolve matters satisfactorily.

#### **047/24 Chairman and Members' reports**

Cllr Crompton reported that discussions on implementing a PSPO and placing noise cameras on the CLR were making slow progress. Cllrs discussed the poor state of Sandy Lane and **resolved** to purchase a number of daffodils to improve its appearance.

#### **048/24 Clerk's Report**

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

**The meeting ended at 2210 hrs.**

X

Chairman

## **Annex – Accounts**

Finances as of **29 February 2024:**

Account Balance: **£56,773.31**

The Council noted the following **Receipts** since 31 January 2024:

- £965.52 – donation for bench at Rhead’s Meadows
- £7,684.32 – VAT Refund

The Council noted the following **Payments** since 31 January 2024:

- £250.00 – Chairman’s Allowance
- £49.35 – NEST, Clerk Pension
- £141.00 – HMRC for PAYE
- £1,093.20 – Crewe Colour Printers
- £140.00 – Shona Amies for website management
- £575.63 - Clerk Salary

The Council approved the following **Payments:**

- None to approve