Somerford Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 February 2024

Holmes Chapel Community Centre, 7.30pm

Present

- Councillor Geoff Bell (Chairman)
- Councillor Paul Crompton
- Councillor Bill Chorlton
- Councillor Jeanette Hardman
- Councillor Gwyneth Derbyshire
- Councillor Simon Hughes (left at 9.30pm)
- Mr Carlton Evans – Clerk

Declarations of Interest

- Cllr Chorlton – Loachbrook Estate discussions
- Cllr Hardman – Loachbrook Estate discussions
- Cllr Derbyshire - Loachbrook Estate discussions
- Cllr Simon Hughes (left at 2130hrs) – planning applications 23/4512C and 23/1928W, and approval of an invoice from Crewe Colour Printers

The Clerk granted a dispensation to Cllr Hughes to remain in the meeting for the planning application discussions on both these applications but not to speak on 23/4512C and not to vote on either.

Part 1 Public Forum

Several members of the public were present. Several spoke against planning application 24/0244C. Others spoke both for and against application 23/4512C.

018/24 - Apologies

- Cllr Trevor Massey (holiday)

019/24 Minutes

The Council **resolved** that the minutes of the Council meeting on 15 January 2024 be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

020/24 Accounts

See Annex 1

021/24 Planning Applications

24/0244C
2 Chelford Road, approval on all matters reserved for 3 dwellings on application 20/5643C.

The Council **resolved** to object to this application on the grounds of traffic, access and safety. The number of cars is likely to be higher than the number of garages provided. Together with the fact that the driveway is narrow and has no turning place, access to each property for emergency vehicles will be difficult. Access for other vehicles, e.g. for refuse collection, will also be difficult which may mean an increase in the number of bins left blocking the Chelford Road pavement.

24/0174C
40 Blackfirs Lane, change of use to provide a garden.
The Council **resolved** to raise no objection.

23/4512C
Ivy Cottage, Back Lane, demolition, relocation and change of use to equine purposes plus Pilates studio.

The Council **resolved** to object to the application on the grounds of scale, traffic numbers, tree loss and the fact that the site is wholly in the open countryside. The application expects several hundred additional car movements per day on an unsuitable 'no through road'. Of the 49 trees surveyed 21 trees are due to be removed as a result of the development, plus five due to their current condition. The development is not 'essential' as defined by the Cheshire East Local Plan and therefore not permitted by Policy PG6.

23/1928W
Sibelco – new quarry at Somerford Farm

In light of the additional documents submitted by Sibelco, the Parish Council felt unable to make further meaningful comment about drainage and flooding unless and until the Environment Agency and Natural England have commented on these documents, since the Council and these agencies appear to share similar concerns. The Clerk will write to the Planning Department accordingly.

022/24 – Policies for Review

The Council considered the Financial Regulations and in particular the thresholds in 4.1 (authority to spend), 5.5.d (Clerk's low value purchases) and 11.1.h (contracts). Given that NALC will issue a revision to their model Financial Regulations in April the Council **resolved** to make no amendments at this time.

023/24 – Ward Councillor Report

Cllr Wray noted a full meeting of Cheshire East Council is due to take place on 28th February and will consider its budget for 24/25. There was some uncertainty as to whether the proposed Ward boundary changes would impact on Somerford Parish. This topic will be discussed at the Parish Council's March meeting.

024/24 – Support to Somerford Chapel

The Council discussed how they might support the Chapel. Congregation numbers are lower than the capacity of the building, the number of services is reducing and they are entirely dependent on voluntary contributions, primarily the collection plate. The Council **resolved** to contribute £600 towards the costs of redecorating the Church, which are a little under £6,000 in total. The Council will discuss options for further support at its next meeting.

025/24 Rhead's Meadows

Nothing further to report.

026/24 Blackfirs Wood

Chairman Bell noted that contractors will shortly be commencing work to improve the paths through the Wood. They had cleared the trees that had fallen onto the paths in the recent storms to permit safe access. Councillors will take stock with a site visit once the paths have been improved to see whether additional safety or other measures are needed.

027/24 Highways

Nothing further to report.

028/24 Housing Developments

Cllr Hardman noted that another meeting with Vistry would take place tomorrow. Vistry are pursuing with Eon the installation of a power supply at the entrance to the development to house a defibrillator. Vistry have also agreed that we can install a noticeboard near the play area, with the precise location and aspect to be agreed.

029/24 - Councillor Vacancies

The Council noted that we now have three vacancies and will consider advertising and encouraging applicants.

030/24 Chairman and Members' reports

Nothing additional to report.

031/24 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reminded the Council that his annual appraisal would need to be conducted soon. He also noted that the defibrillator kiosk door at Chelford Road/Blackfirs Lane is sticking shut, and the Chairman will ask the contractors who had fixed this last time to look at it again.

The meeting ended at 2205 hrs.

X

Chairman

Annex – Accounts

Finances as of **31 January 2024:**
Account Balance: **£50,372.65**

The Council noted income since 31 December 2023:

- £200 – CWT for wildflower seed harvesting

The Council noted payments since 31 December 2023:

- £90.00 – Councillor and Clerk Training
- £49.35 – NEST Clerk Pension
- £224.00 – A G Dale Hedge Trimming
- £54.00 – Parish Online subscription renewal
- £66.00 TCS Management Payroll Services
- £2,832.00 – Equator, Rhead's Meadows mowing and weeding
- £360.00 – Equator, Himalayan Balsam removal at Blackfirs Wood
- £748.80 – Scribe onboarding fee and annual subscription
- £39.20 – Cllr J Hardman NALC training
- £141.00 – HMRC for PAYE
- £131.99 – Parish Legal Textbook 'Arnold Baker'
- £569.42 – Clerk Salary

The Council **resolved** to approve the following payment:

- £1093.20 - Crewe Colour Printers for Newsletter