

## **Somerford Parish Council**

### **Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 21 October 2024**

#### **Holmes Chapel Community Centre, 7.00pm**

#### **Present**

- Councillor Geoff Bell (Chairman)
- Councillor Gwyneth Derbyshire
- Councillor Bill Chorlton
- Councillor Paul Crompton
- Councillor Trevor Massey
- Mr Carlton Evans – Clerk

#### **Declarations of Interest**

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

#### **Part 1 Public Forum**

No members of the public were present,

#### **139/24 – Apologies**

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

- Cllr Simon Hughes (work commitments)
- Cllr Jeanette Hardman (personal matters)

### **140/24 - Minutes**

The Council **resolved** that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 30 September 2024 be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

### **141/24 – Accounts**

See Annex 1

### **142/24 - Cheshire East Ward Councillor Report**

No report in Councillor Wray's absence.

### **143/24 - Budget and Precept for FY 25/26**

Councillors again considered the budget and precept request for the next Financial Year, and the list of possible future projects discussed at its September meeting (Minute Reference **125/24**).

The Clerk presented several options for styles and location of signage around the parish. The Council **resolved** to go ahead with all the proposed suggestions (boundary signs, finger posts etc.) although the sign proposed for Hall Drive might need a little more investigation.

In terms of reinforcing the verges along Blackfirs Lane, the Council resolved to set aside in the region of £25,000 for the matting and installation. Further discussion would be needed with the residents of the Lane, many of whom mow the verges themselves, and it would likely need to be done in sections. The Chairman and Clerk will identify possible contractors for the work and seek several estimates.

The Council noted that the pace of housing development in the parish had slowed considerably. As a consequence the tax base to calculate the precept had risen only slightly. Councillors recognised that after several years of reductions per household, the level of the precept per household might now need to increase, not least to keep up with inflation. The Council noted that parishioners were all affected by inflation and other rising costs and accepted that any rise would need to be justified and explained.

### **144/24 - Planning Applications**

None received.

### **145/24 - Policies to Review**

The Council reviewed its Standing Orders and **resolved** to make no amendments to them at this time.

### **146/24 - Parish Signage**

Covered under the budget discussion above.

### **147/24 - Update on the new website and emails**

The Clerk will continue to explore with the service provider how to resolve problems accessing the new email accounts and advise accordingly.

### **148/24 - Rhead's Meadows**

Cllrs noted that the fly tipping by the entrance gate had not been removed by Cheshire East Council and the Clerk will look further into this. The Clerk will chase the Cheshire Wildlife Trust again who had agreed to propose a costed maintenance plan for the Meadows.

### **149/24 - Blackfirs Wood**

As with Rhead's Meadows, the Clerk will chase the CWT who had agreed to propose a costed maintenance plan for the Wood.

### **150/24 – Highways**

Nothing further to report.

### **151/24 – Housing Developments**

The Council asked the Clerk to follow up the offer from Bovis/Vistry to install a defib at the entrance to the Loachbrook housing development; and with Bellway who had offered to pay for the defib at the Blackfirs Lane/Chelford Road junction.

Cllr Derbyshire reported that Bovis/Vistry had been somewhat unresponsive to residents' concerns of late, and that the residents were preparing to contact Ms Sarah Russell MP and seek her help in lobbying Bovis/Vistry to complete all outstanding works.

### **152/24 - Chairman and Members' Reports**

Chairman Bell reported that he will look into contracting someone to install the Christmas lights on the trees at Blackfirs Lane/Chelford Road. The Council asked the Clerk to contact Cheshire East Highways and ask them to repair the damage to the bridge over the Loachbrook at the Chelford Road/Holmes Chapel road junction.

### 153/24 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported that a volunteer completing the Duke of Edinburgh award had been busy removing Himalayan balsam at Blackfirs Wood and had been weeding, loosening the tree ties and collecting redundant tree guards at Rhead's Meadows. Councillors asked the Clerk to pass on their thanks.

The Clerk reported on his recent site visit to Rhead's Meadows and Blackfirs Wood with the Cheshire East dog warden and Community Enforcement Officer. They had seen many dog walkers and their animals both on and off the lead, all of which were under control. They had spoken to one or two people on site about their experience of dogs and none reported encountering any problems. One used dog waste bag had been found at Blackfirs Wood but they had seen no evidence of dog fouling at either site.

**The meeting ended at 2105 hrs.**

X

Chairman

## Annex 1

**Finances as of 01 October 2024:**

Account Balance: **£41,635.70**

**Receipts since 20 September:**

- £nil

**Payments to note since 20 September:**

- £620.70 – Clerk's Salary

**Payments to approve:**

- £None