

Somerford Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 19 February 2025

Holmes Chapel Community Centre, 7.00pm

Present

- Councillor Geoff Bell (Chairman)
- Councillor Jeanette Hardman (vice-Chair)
- Councillor Paul Crompton
- Councillor Trevor Massey (left at 8.15pm)
- Councillor Bill Chorlton
- Ward Councillor John Wray
- Mr Carlton Evans – Clerk

Declarations of Interest

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

Part 1 Public Forum

Three members of the public were present, Congleton Town Councillor Robert Douglas and two members of the public who spoke in favour of planning application 25/5194FUL.

Among other things Cllr Douglas spoke about: his investigations into lost, unused or uncollected s106 monies which might benefit the local area; monitoring instances of fly tipping and how to tackle it; Cheshire East Council's reversal of its decision to remove CCTVs at various locations; proposals for the location of polling stations to serve the parish; and complaints about the state of the highway along Back Lane.

014/25 – Apologies

The Council received and **resolved** to approve absences from:

- Cllr S Hughes, work commitments

The Chairman informed the Council that Cllr Derbyshire had formally resigned from the Parish Council. Councillors extended their sincere thanks and best wishes to her.

015/25 – Minutes

The Council **resolved** that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 15th January 2025 be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

016/25 – Accounts

See Annex 1

017/25 - Cheshire East Ward Councillor Report

Councillor Wray noted that the next full Cheshire East Council which is due to approve the budget for the 25/26 Financial Year will take place on 26th February.

018/25 – Possible Savings Account

Councillors considered whether to open a savings or investment account to run alongside the current account, and asked the Clerk to investigate possible options further.

019/25 - Planning Applications

24/5194FUL

Green Tree Farm, 2 Chelford Road,
Erection of a single, two-storey residential house with a detached garage

The Council **resolved** to raise no objection.

020/25 - Policies to Review

The Council reviewed its Grants and Donations Policy and **resolved** to fix the maximum amount for any single donation at 2% of each year's precept.

021/25 – Newsletter

The Council will aim to have a final draft ready for discussion at the April meeting so that an agreed version could be printed and circulated in May.

022/25 - Rhead's Meadows

The Chairman reported that the Cheshire Wildlife Trust and a company called Hellmers had each put in a proposal for maintenance at Rhead's Meadows and Blackfirs Wood. John Harding already do some work - mowing the edges of the paths at Rhead's Meadows. The proposals are a little difficult to compare, since for

example the CWT had said it couldn't do any siding out of the paths at RM, and we don't know if John Harding would take on the additional activities envisaged (such as spot-weeding), but they do give an idea of the day rate for each.

The most pressing matters to address this Spring are to spot-weed, side out the footpaths and tackle the long grass between the various groups of trees. The Clerk will continue discussions with the contractors and the Council will return to the matter at the March meeting to try to finalise the way forward.

In addition, the Council **resolved** to set aside £500 to replace the silver birch trees that had failed, and the Clerk will ask one of the contractors to plant these soon.

023/25 - Blackfirs Wood

See discussion above.

024/25 – Highways

Cllrs expressed concern at the significant damage to the Wallhill Lane roundabout and the destruction/damage of the highways and advertising signs there which the Clerk will report to Cheshire East Council. They also noted that CE Council are scheduled to do some works near the Radnor Bank bridge, though it is likely to be jetting, not repairs to the retaining wall itself. The Clerk will investigate whether a CE Highways representative could attend a future meeting to discuss their plans and responses to highways problems across the parish.

025/25 – Housing Developments

Cllr Hardman reported on the stop/start nature of activity on the estate and the various outstanding works that need addressing before the roads can be adopted by Cheshire East. The block paving looks as if it has been finished but some of the completed road surfaces will need to be stripped back again. Work by Matthews and Leigh has been pushed back again and the drainage system still needs to be fixed. Sarah Russell MP has offered to write to United Utilities about this.

026/25 - Chairman and Members' Reports

Nothing further to report.

027/25 Clerk's Report

Councillors discussed the current councillor vacancies and felt a more concerted effort needs to be made to advertise and attract candidates from across the parish. A piece will be put in the next newsletter.

The Clerk mentioned that the Council now has 7 dog bins across the parish which are regularly emptied by Congleton Town Council. The schedule for the coming 12 months has been set, the costs are known and the Council will be invoiced quarterly. The Council **resolved** to give the Clerk delegated authority to pay the invoices as they come in without seeking further approval from the Council, unless there is a change in the costs.

The meeting ended at 2125 hrs.

X

Chairman

Annex 1 - Accounts

Finances as of 01 February 2025:

Account Balance: **£41,488.40**

The Council noted the following receipts since 01 January 2025:

- £9,752.76 – VAT Rebate

The Council noted the following payments since 01 January 2025:

- £82.50 - HCCC Room Hire
- £41.25 – HCCC Room Hire
- £56.89 – NEST, Clerk Pension
- £227.00 – AG Dale, Hedge Trimming
- £69.12 – TCS Management, Payroll Services
- £170.14 – HMRC
- £489.60 – SCRIBE, Accounting Software
- £643.73 – Clerk Salary

The Council resolved to approve the following payments:

£2,016.00 – John Harding, Mowing