



Somerford Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 16 September 2026

Holmes Chapel Community Centre, 7.00pm

Present

- Councillor Geoff Bell (Chair)
- Councillor Jeanette Hardman (vice Chair)
- Councillor Bill Chorlton
- Councillor Jake Saxton (left at 8.40 pm)
- Councillor Gill Laidler (co-opted onto the Council at 8.38 pm, left at 8.40pm)
- Ward Councillor John Wray
- Mr Carlton Evans – Clerk

Declarations of Interest

None.

Part 1 Public Forum

Congleton Town Councillor Robert Douglas noted that the Government had introduced a tiered system of penalties for fly-tipping with a maximum fine of £5,000, as he had recommended, and Cheshire East Council has agreed to implement it.

CE Council will also begin a mobile waste recycling service with a vehicle based at the West Street car park, but only for one morning per month.

Internal Auditors have examined CE council's performance with completed s106 agreements since 2024. Although the failure rate was 'horrific', the report appears not to take this very seriously.

Cllr Douglas reminded the Council about some unused s106 monies that could possibly be spent in Somerford. He and the Clerk will liaise further about this.

112/26 – Apologies

The Council received and **resolved** to accept apologies from:

- Councillor Simon Hughes (prior engagement)
- Councillor Trevor Massey (unwell)

113/26 – Minutes

The Council **resolved** that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 19 August 2026 be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

114/26 – Cheshire East Ward Councillor report

Councillor Wray updated the meeting on the press notice from CE Council about their poor performance with bin collections.

115/26 – Accounts

See Annex 1

The Council noted the accounts and **resolved** to make the payments presented.

116/26 – External Audit

The Council took note of the unqualified opinion from the External Auditor.

117/26 - Planning Applications

None Received.

118/26 - Local Council Award Scheme

The Clerk and Cllr Hardman explained that the Council's Gold Status under the LCAS had lapsed, partly because by the end of the 4-year accreditation period the Clerk had not achieved the Certificate in Local Council Administration, and partly because the Council does not have two-thirds (seven) elected members. Should next May's elections return seven or more candidates we will be able to reapply, but since there are only four LCAS intakes per year it is most likely we'd re-apply in September 2027.

119/26 - Registers of Members' Interests

The Clerk explained that because of changes to the Localism Act 2011 Councillors are no longer obliged to publish home addresses in their Registers. However, Councillors are still obliged to provide Cheshire East Council with unredacted versions. All Councillors should update their Registers and those who do wish to redact their home addresses should send two versions to the Clerk who will forward them to Cheshire East Council.

120/26 – Contractors for works at Rhead's Meadows and Blackfirs Wood

The Chair reminded the meeting that we had entered agreed a Service Level Agreement with Congleton Town Council's Streetscape team which would need close monitoring until the arrangements have fully bedded in.

Councillors discussed the tree surveys commissioned from Eden Arboriculture and the Chairman and Clerk will inspect the trees identified as needing attention.

121/26 – Road Signs or Finger Posts

The Council asked the Clerk to purchase four Remembrance Day figures and 25 large poppies to place around the parish, and obtain quotes for two finger posts for the north and south entrances to Rhead's Meadows, The Chair, vice-Chair and the Clerk will meet to finalise the design/wording of the two additional signs previously discussed, at Somerford Hall Drive and the junction of Chelford Road/Blackfirs Lane.

122/26 – Councillor Vacancy and co-option

The Council interviewed a candidate for one of the Councillor vacancies and **resolved** to co-opt Ms Gill Laidler onto the Council.

123/26 – New National Association of Local Councils (NALC) pay scales

The Clerk informed the meeting that NALC had published new pay rates for staff, and the Clerk had achieved the CiLCA qualification, with consequent implications for the Clerk's salary.

124/26 – Highways

No further discussions.

125/26 – Housing Developments

Cllr Hardman has been in touch yet again with the new Vistry regional director to request a meeting with residents.

126/26 - Chairman and Members' Reports

No further discussion.

127/26 - Clerk's Report

The Clerk mentioned his discussions with Grassmats about reinforcing the verges along Blackfirs Lane and will continue to investigate options.

The meeting ended at 2055 hrs.

 Chairman

Annex 1 - Accounts

Bank Balance as of 01 September 2026: **£82,531.56**

Of which: Current Account: **£11,816.29** PSDF: **£70,715.27**

Received since 1 August 2026:

- £nil

Payments to approve:

- £1,540 – G Bell, reimbursement of payments to Andrew Douglas for installation and maintenance of benches and sign repairs

Payments to note since 1 August 2026:

- £49.98 – NEST, Clerk Pension
- £3,468.00 – Streetscape, Q1 maintenance
- £3,468.00 – Streetscape, Q2 maintenance
- £81.24 – Community Heartbeat, defib battery
- £124.31 – G Bell, varnish etc for bench maintenance
- £162.00 – Community Heartbeat annual subscription
- £568.64 – Clerk August Salary
- £187.35 – HMRC
- £240.00 – Shona Amies, annual website management