

Somerford Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on 20 May 2026

Holmes Chapel Community Centre, 7.00pm

Present

- Councillor Geoff Bell (Chair)
- Councillor Jeanette Hardman (vice-Chair)
- Councillor Trevor Massey (left at 8.30pm)
- Councillor Jake Saxton
- Councillor Bill Chorlton
- Ward Councillor John Wray
- Mr Carlton Evans – Clerk

Declarations of Interest

Cllrs Hardman and Chorlton for any discussion of the Loachbrook Estate.

Cllr Hardman for Planning Application **26/1514/CLPUD** (as a neighbour)

Cllr Geoff Bell for planning application appeal **26/3451/PIP** (as the neighbouring property)

The Clerk asked Cllrs Hardman and Bell to remain in the room for the discussion of these planning applications as they have important local knowledge, and granted them a dispensation accordingly.

048/26 – Election of the Chair for 2026/2027

Cllr Geoff Bell was unanimously elected as Chair of the Council for 2026/2027, and duly read out and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

049/26 – Election of the Vic-Chair for 2026/2027

Cllr Jeanette Hardman was unanimously elected as vice-Chair of the Council for 2026/2027, and duly read out and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Part 1 Public Forum

One member of the public was present, Congleton Town Councillor Robert Douglas. Cllr Douglas spoke about his further research on outstanding s106 monies including some that were in or relevant to Somerford parish and will continue his investigations.

050/26 – Apologies

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

- Councillor Simon Hughes – work commitments

051/26 – Minutes

The Council **resolved** that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 15 April 2026 be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

052/26 – Accounts

See Annex 1

Councillors noted that the rate of spend in the parish had slowed and therefore previously agreed business plan activities should be pursued as quickly as possible. These include: additional, larger dog bins at Rhead's Meadows; replacement signs at Rhead's Meadows (North and South entrance); replacement signs at Blackfirs Lane/Chelford Road and Somerford Hall Drive; tackling the brambles and weeds at the southern end of Chelford Road and possible refurbishment of the Cheshire Railings; improvement to the verges along the unpaved southern stretch of Blackfirs Lane.

053/26 – Cheshire East Ward Councillor report

Councillor Wray noted that Cheshire East Council had held its annual meeting at Tatton Hall and Ms Judy Snowball had been elected as Cheshire East's mayor.

054/26 – Risk Assessment

The Council **resolved** to approve the latest version of the Council's Risk Register as updated by the Clerk.

055/26 - Insurance Policy Renewal

Having considered the Risk Register the Council **resolved** to renew its insurance policy with Zurich Insurance.

056/26 - Planning Applications

26/1514/CLPUD

Certificate of lawful development for proposed single storey rear extension.

63 Field View Road, Congleton

The Council **resolved** to raise no objection

25/3451/PIP

Appeal against the refusal of this application

Construction of up to 5 no. dwellings, Land adjacent to 33A Chelford Road

The Council **resolved** to make no further representations on this appeal

057/26 – Policies to review

The Council **resolved** to approve the updated Financial Regulations including the set of regular payments that are delegated to him.

058/26 - Somerford Footpath 2 Diversion

The Council **resolved** to make no further representations.

059/26 – Register of Members’ Interests and Declarations of Interest/Dispensation Requests

The Clerk reminded Councillors to update their Registers of Interests and to seek, if necessary, a dispensation to discuss any known topics that might come up for discussion during the year.

060/26 – Newsletter

Cllr Hardman had circulated a simpler and more streamlined layout for the Parish Newsletter. The next edition should include a piece to advertise current councillor vacancies, and she and the Clerk will continue to develop the content.

061/26 – Business Plan

Discussed under item **052/26** above.

062/26 - Rhead’s Meadows and Blackfirs Wood

Councillors noted that the Meadows need urgent weeding and the Clerk will press the Streetscape team on this. The Clerk will also schedule a discussion of some requests that had been received to plant commemorative trees in the Meadows.

063/26 – Highways

No substantive discussion.

064/26 – Housing Developments

Cllr Hardman reported on some personnel changes at Bovis/Vistry and there had been no further information on completion of works at the Loachbrook development.

065/26 - Chairman and Members' Reports

Cllr Hardman had received messages of concern about vegetation encroaching onto the pavements on the Sandbach Road between Box Lane and the shopping precinct, and Cllr Robert Douglas will investigate this further.

066/26 - Clerk's Report

The Clerk noted that the June meeting would need to approve all the annual audit documents.

The meeting ended at 2110 hrs.

X

Chairman

Annex 1 - Accounts

Finances as of 01 May 2026:

- Current Account Balance: **£43,894.51**
- PSDF Balance: **£50,069.92**

Payments noted since 01 April 2026:

- £49.98 – NEST, Clerk Pension
- £1,020.00 – N&J Douglas Bench Renovation
- £200.00 – Jonathan Douglas Boundary sign raising and Christmas lights
- £528.00 – Parish Online Web Hosting
- £69.12 TCS Payroll Management
- £187.35 – HMRC, PAYE
- £568.64 – Clerk Salary

Payments approve:

- None

Receipts noted:

- £27,500.00 – Precept first tranche