



September 2026 – Recruitment Special

A parish where community will always be our priority



Chairman's View

Following our record-breaking summer, which is not yet over, we are looking forward to returning to a more familiar, greener, Somerford in the next few weeks. The grass is always the first to show signs of returning to a normal hue but, with many of our trees and shrubs, we will not know the full damage until we are well into Spring '27. However, we can already see that many of the less drought tolerant trees, such as mountain ash, are less likely to be returning next year. We expect to see an impact in Rhead's Meadows and are already planning for some additional planting next autumn.

Turning to Rhead's Meadows, we are expecting to be connected to the Somerford Gate development in the next 4 weeks or so, both by footpath and cycleway. The footpath will be connected at the north entrance gate and the cycleway will connect to the north end of Rhead's Lane, both giving easy access to the junction of Blackfirs Lane and Holmes Chapel Road. This should make for a much safer, and more direct, route to Congleton High School and Blackfirs Primary School and to the West Heath area of Congleton generally.

We have very recently had a somewhat bizarre incident of large “plaster board” size pallets being removed from the Somerford Gate estate onto Rhead’s Meadows, but we thank Bellway for their co-operation in getting them returned from whence they came! We are grateful to all those who have reported this unauthorised waste dumping through various channels and hope you will all continue to draw our attention to any such activity which threatens our parish.

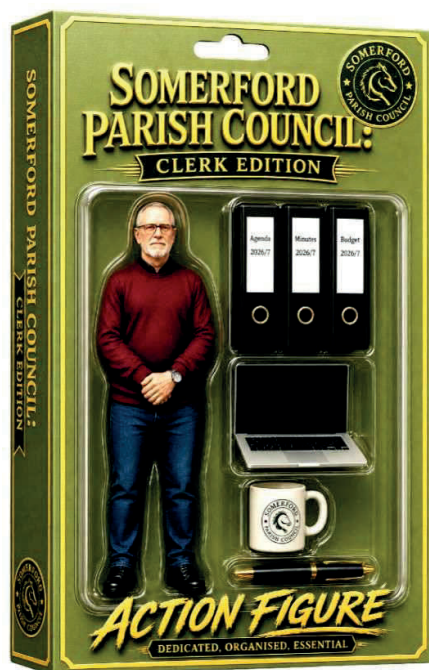


The Congleton Link Road has continued to draw our attention in the last few weeks with its popularity, for some, as a race-track – when it first opened, we referred to it as “Somerford Speedway”. Although speed is always a concern, it is the noise which has most impact upon Somerford residents, with a few drivers intent on drawing our attention to their excessively loud, and sometimes “popping”, exhausts. We were very pleased, therefore, to see the recent article in the “Chron” regarding increased police activity being directed at these noise merchants. Some of them may live near you – if so please do not hesitate to respond to the police request for public co-operation in identifying offending vehicles. Meantime, we will continue to pursue every opportunity to have noise cameras installed at local “noise-spots”!

Finally, I would urge you to come and join us – we need four more councillors to bring us up to our full complement of 10.

Please read the article about becoming a Councillor and be willing to put your hand up. You would be very welcome.

Clerk's Corner



Unfortunately, the company that used to print and post our Newsletters is no longer trading so we’re looking at some alternative arrangements. If you’re reading this in hard copy then it looks like we’ve succeeded, at least for now! But do let us know if you’ve experienced any problems with delivery or the quality of the Newsletter.

The first stage of the annual audit process has been completed and we’ve sent all the relevant documents to the External Auditors and posted them on our noticeboards and website. We expect to receive the External Auditor report soon and don’t anticipate any problems, certainly none were identified by the Internal Auditor. Although the audit is a lengthy and sometimes frustrating exercise it does reassure us that we have suitable and robust financial measures in place to look after our parishioners’ monies.

We now have a Service Level Agreement in place with Congleton Town Council’s Streetscape team. They will take on the regular maintenance of Blackfirs Wood and Rhead’s Meadows as well as other ad hoc activities around the parish. For example, Rhead’s Meadows needs regular spot spraying of the docks, ragwort and thistle that try to take over every year, while the Himalayan balsam in Blackfirs Wood needs to be pulled up every year by hand. We’ve struggled in the past to find contractors who are available to tackle these sorts of jobs, so having

a longer term contract with Streetscape means they can schedule in advance all the work that needs to be done. We continue to have very good relations with Bellway as they near completion of the Somerford Gate site. Previously they had donated a defibrillator to the parish, located in the phone box at the junction of Chelford Road and Blackfirs Lane. Bellway are installing a water supply at Rhead’s Meadows so we can water the trees and plants as needed, without having to arrange for bowsers to be delivered there. At one point we didn’t think we’d need one but after this year’s heatwaves it’ll be a good insurance policy. And they’ve also fixed the faulty grid on the Chelford Road which we know was annoying people during the day and keeping people awake at night with the loud clanking noise as cars went over it.

We also have good relations with Anwyl as they near completion of the Elmy Fields site. They have agreed to install defibrillators and a parish notice board on the site and have also listened to our feedback on their proposed public art and have put in place better signposting of the Public Footpath which has had to be diverted around the edge of the site for the duration of its construction.

The role of Somerford Parish Council and why should I become a Parish Councillor?

Your local parish council is the first tier of local government. Cheshire East Council is the second tier of local government.

We are a statutory body, and we do have a very strong voice. We represent all our residents and make sure that the money you entrust to us is spent wholly within the parish, even if it benefits our neighbours. We represent you all on many levels. We work closely with our community, other local authorities, local organisations and with our MP and government bodies. Planning matters are of great importance, and we work with developers from the start of the process to ensure our residents are represented throughout.

Somerford Parish Council is a team of dedicated and committed people who want to achieve the very best for Somerford and all who reside within its borders.

With the first housing development of Loachbrook Meadow starting in 2014, to the additional 7 housing developments and the building of Wolstenholme Elmy Way (A536) the parish is changing. A once semi-rural village consisting of farming, equine and a relatively small local rural community has now grown into a highly populated semi-rural area with a diverse community.

As with all our neighbouring parishes we are facing many challenges in our role and the expectations of our residents with the constant changes. Problems with the services provided by our unitary authority, Cheshire East Council, and their financial difficulties are having an impact on all. Despite this, we try to make sure that we all enjoy a safe and clean environment that maintains the character and identity of Somerford. Where Cheshire East Council is unable to provide, we do all we can to ensure our residents do not suffer as a result.

We have always engaged with our community and understood what is expected of us. With our historical Chapel of Ease, Rhead's Meadows and Blackfirs Woods, public open spaces within housing developments and open countryside around us, Somerford remains a very pleasant place to live and we are proud of all we have done to protect this.

We want those who are new to life away from towns and cities to embrace the freedom and tranquility that can be found within the parish. We have a strong community and despite all the disruptions around our surrounding areas, we all continue to enjoy all that Somerford still has to offer.



What is Somerford Parish Council and who are we?

Somerford Parish Council is nonpolitical. Unlike many other local councils, we do not represent any political parties and we never discuss politics in any way, as they have nothing to do with our aims, objectives and goals. A lot of our work in the current climate is establishing good working relationships with housing developers, contractors, Cheshire East Officers and our neighbouring local councils. Looking at planning applications and the possible effects of more new builds on road safety, local facilities and services.

Engaging with our community is paramount and we want to include as many people as possible by keeping all informed and listening to what their concerns are. We would like to have a mix of councillors who reside in all areas of Somerford as there are different matters that can be addressed, ranging from the old established areas to all that the new developments bring.

How are we funded?

Residents in any area, be it town, or parish, all pay their local council in addition to the unitary council (Cheshire East Council), police and fire services. Your council tax bill will show the full breakdown of costs for each. Cheshire East Council are responsible for the collection of all taxes shown. Parish and Town Councils are funded by the precept. This is collected by Cheshire East Council as part of your council tax bill each year. The precept is paid to Somerford Parish Council and with this funding we set our budgets. Our responsibilities are to control and monitor all our finances. It is for us to provide value for money, transparency. We always want to achieve the very best for the parish.

Who can be a councillor?

Anyone can apply to be a councillor; you do not need to have a public sector background. It is a voluntary role, no allowances or general expenses are paid, time is given freely. Being able to dedicate time to the role is very important. Although it is mainly a case of doing what you can, when you can, it must be pointed out that by becoming a parish councillor you are committing to a number of duties. It is a shared responsibility by the whole council.

Attendance at monthly meetings, some required training courses (normally virtual), respond to residents' enquiries and matters of concern. Deal with emails and matters arising throughout the month and attend extra meetings when necessary. Most of our duties can be carried out at our monthly meeting but with the challenges we face often something will require extra attention. Our role is ongoing and may require additional time during the month.

What can you contribute to the Parish Council?

You can contribute a lot! The current membership is a mix of people who have lived here for over 40 years. They are known in the community and have been very much part of Somerford

Then there are the newbies, ranging from living here for 1 to 12 years. Some new to Somerford and life in the countryside.

If you look at social media or listen to conversations in surrounding areas, there are many incorrect and distorted views of life in the parishes. Misconceptions of what residents of the parish pay for and even the view that those on housing developments don't pay council tax. We all have to pay for our council's services at local and unitary level.

Part of our role is to keep everyone fully informed about what we do, providing details of our financial management and projects we carry out. We are always here to help as much as we can.

We would love to hear from you if you wish to join our team and help us to continue achieving this. All are welcome at any of our meetings. Come and meet us and see if it is a role for you. We pride ourselves on our approach to all and how we carry out our duties. We always want to hear from the people we represent and welcome new ideas.

If you want to know more, please contact any of us for an informal chat or message us to find out more about the tasks involved and what it is like to be a Somerford Parish Councillor and why we took the role.

Read a brief introduction from our latest recruit, Councillor Jake Saxton

Hello, my name is Jake Saxton and I joined Somerford Parish Council in June 2025. I've really enjoyed getting involved so far, attending the monthly meetings and learning more about the area and the community. I have an interest in sustainability initiatives, community engagement, and supporting practical ideas that make Somerford a great place to live for both long-standing residents and new families.

I moved to Somerford in December 2022 with my partner. We're originally from Heaton Moor in Stockport.

Outside of work, I enjoy going to concerts, clay pigeon shooting, and spending time with family and friends. In the summer, I'm a keen gardener and enjoy making the most of the lighter evenings with a BBQ and a G&T. Although I have a busy work schedule, I joined the parish council to be more involved locally and to play a small part in supporting Somerford as it continues to grow and welcome new families.

Everyone is very welcome to attend parish council meetings, which are a great way to keep up to date with local issues, planning applications, and ongoing improvements in the area.

Community Spaces within Somerford



Rhead's Meadows



Sandy Lane Community Park (Loachbrook Meadow)



Blackfirs Wood



UPCOMING SUNDAY SERVICES

September 27th.
Harvest Festival

December 12th.
Christmas Carol Service



Please help us keep Somerford clean and safe for all to enjoy

Our Vision for Somerford: Next 3 Years

Our priority is to care for Somerford's character, support our growing community, improve shared spaces and use parish funds wisely for everyone's benefit. As Somerford continues to grow, we want it to remain a welcoming, attractive and distinctive place where residents feel informed, included and proud to belong.

Our priorities.

• Financial Management

Careful financial management helps us support the things that matter most to local people. Through responsible budgeting, we can make positive, practical improvements for Somerford while continuing to use public funds wisely and bring real benefits to local residents.

• Improving Safety and Local Infrastructure

We aim to provide additional noticeboards and defibrillators in newer residential areas. We work with residents on local road safety and vehicle noise concerns. These matters can then be raised with Cheshire East Highways and we will work to ensure improvements are made. Reduction of speed limits, pedestrian access and safety is a main concern.

• Managing Growth and Development Responsibly

New development brings opportunities, and we want it to be planned carefully, managed responsibly and shaped with residents in mind. We work with developers, planning authorities and partners so residents' views are heard early and taken seriously. We raise matters that cause concern as the building project progresses and will support residents throughout. We can also advise residents on setting up committees to work with the management companies and ensure good communications with residents.

• Protecting and Enhancing Our Rural Environment

Somerford's open spaces and rural setting are valued by many residents and protecting them remains one of our key priorities. We will continue to care for Rhead's Meadows and Black Firs Wood, improve signage around the parish and support better access wherever possible. Our contractors carry out regular maintenance across the parish; we provide dog bins and benches within our public open spaces. Our aim is to help keep Somerford clean, safe and enjoyable for everyone.

• Building Strong Community Connections

We warmly invite residents to come along to meetings, share their ideas and play a part in shaping Somerford's future. Your views matter to us, whether they relate to current concerns, local priorities or thoughts on how we can continue to support the parish in the years ahead.

• Keeping Residents Informed

We keep residents informed and connected through newsletters, noticeboards and digital channels. New housing is bringing more residents and fresh perspectives. We want this growth to strengthen local connections while always preserving Somerford's rural character.

Our vision is to guide Somerford's growth with care, use parish funds responsibly, protect the parish's rural character, strengthen community connections and make practical improvements that benefit residents now and, in the years ahead.





Geoff



Jeanette



Simon



Trevor



Bill



Jake



Carlton

Somerford Parish Council, your local council, is here to support all our residents. We are a strong voice for our community and strive to keep the identity of Somerford Parish.

Your Councillors and Clerk

Further details can be found on our website.

Geoff Bell	Chairman and Councillor	gbell@somerfordparishcouncil.gov.uk
Jeanette Hardman	Vice Chair and Councillor	jhardman@somerfordparishcouncil.gov.uk
Simon Hughes	Councillor	shughes@somerfordparishcouncil.gov.uk
Trevor Massey	Councillor	tmassey@somerfordparishcouncil.gov.uk
Bill Chorlton	Councillor	bchorlton@somerfordparishcouncil.gov.uk
Jake Saxton	Councillor	jsaxton@somerfordparishcouncil.gov.uk
Carlton Evans	Clerk	clerk@somerfordparishcouncil.gov.uk

How to contact our clerk.

Telephone 07734808677

Write to us at

**Somerford Parish Council
1 Overton Meadow, Overton Green,
Smallwood, Cheshire CW11 2UP**

Parish Noticeboards

Parish noticeboards are located throughout Somerford and display meeting notices, community updates and important information.

Somerford Parish Council Website and Social Media Channels

Website www.somerfordparishcouncil.gov.uk



SomerfordParishCouncil



somerfordparishcouncil



SomerfordParishCouncil

Somerford residents are also represented by

Your Cheshire East Ward Councillor for Brereton Rural

John.V.F. Wray F.Inst.D Email john.wray@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Your MP

Mrs Sarah Russell MP Email sarah.russell.mp@parliament.uk

Parliamentary office
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Note: Please address all post to the Parliamentary office.

Constituency office
Phone Number: 020 7219 6638



Website www.cheshireeast.gov.uk

Council Contact Centre Tel 0300 1235 500

If you are hearing or speech impaired, you can use RELAY UK 18001 then 0808 808 0123

By post Cheshire East Council, C/O Delamere House, Delamere Street, Crewe .CW1 2LL

All services provided by Cheshire East Council

- Schools and libraries
- Waste and recycling collections
- Highways, roads and potholes
- Council tax and business rates
- Planning and building control
- Social services and adult care
- Environmental and public health
- Parks, play areas and open spaces
- Car parks, CCTV and licensing
- Gritting, footpaths and regeneration

Full details can be found on the Cheshire East Council website

Bins, Waste & Recycling

www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/waste_and_recycling

Missed bin collections

Collection calendars

Garden waste [subscriptions www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/waste_and_recycling/bins/garden-waste-recycling-scheme/subscribe-to-the-service](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/waste_and_recycling/bins/garden-waste-recycling-scheme/subscribe-to-the-service)

Trace

www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/council_information/website_information/trace

Report potholes, street lighting faults, fly-tipping, fallen trees, dog fouling and gritting issues

Environmental Health & Dog Services

www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/environmental_health

Lost or stray dogs

Noise complaints

Pest control services

Planning & Building Control

www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning

View and comment on applications

Submit applications and planning enforcement queries

Roads, Parking & Travel

www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/roads-parking-and-travel

Roadworks and disruptions

Parking information

Roadworks map: www.one.network/uk/cheshireeast

Gritting & Winter Services

www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/gritting

Gritting routes

Grit bins and winter service maps