



Soham Town Council  
PO Box 21  
The Walter Gidney Pavilion  
Fountain Lane  
Soham  
Cambridgeshire CB7 9PL  
Town Clerk: MJ Strand  
Tel: 01353 723472  
Email: info@soham-  
tc.gov.uk  
Web: www.soham-tc.gov.uk

## **SOHAM TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Soham Town Council meeting held at the Walter Gidney Pavilion,  
Fountain Lane recreation ground, Soham, on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

**Present:** Cllrs E Johnston (Chairman), D Woricker (Vice-Chair), K Horgan,  
G Dyer, A Jones, P Lane, A Pallett, C Warner and H Ross.  
M Strand, Town Clerk and M Francis, Assistant Town Clerk.

**In attendance:** District Cllrs A Jones and I Bovingdon.  
District & County Cllr M Goldsack.  
There were 22 members of the public present.

### **MINUTES**

The following presentations were made before the meeting was opened: -

Mayor Johnston presented Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Awards to five members of Soham Boys' Brigade. Each award was received to a round of applause from all those present. Mr Paul Whitmel, one of the leaders of the Brigade, thanked Councillors for the support they had given when they agreed a grant of £500 to help with insurance costs during the Covid 19 pandemic.

Mayor Johnston presented a Pride In Our Town Award to the family of the late Kate Bavester. Kate had loved Soham and had worked tirelessly on behalf of the community. The family thanked the Council, saying that they were extremely proud of Kate and all that she had achieved. Councillors and members of the public gave a warm round of applause as the award was presented.

Following the presentation, 6 members of the public remained present.  
The meeting was opened at 7:19pm.

**193/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
Cllr Aitchison (personal) and Cllr Woodbridge (work commitments).

**194/23 COUNCILLORS' DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**  
Cllrs Pallett and Jones declared non-pecuniary interests in item 200/23 (h) (members of the Coronation Planning Group).  
Cllr Johnston declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 202/23 (b) (Trustee of the North Chapel).

Cllr Lane joined the meeting during this item.

## **195/23 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS & TOWN CLLR UPDATES**

- a. Pride in Our Town Award – presented before the meeting opened.
- b. Presentation of Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Awards to Soham Boys' Brigade members – presented before the meeting opened.
- c. NOTED – NALC's blog encouraging Local Councils to get involved in their community's Coronation Events, and His Majesty's wish for the occasion to be a joyful reflection of the diversity of the UK in 2023.

Other matters raised at the meeting as follows: -

NOTED – the Chairman attended the Viva Awards ceremony on 26<sup>th</sup> February in her capacity as Mayor of Soham. The chairman had also visited the new community building in Littleport which had been enlightening with regards to plans for the Phase II renovation of the pavilion.

NOTED – Cllr Johnston said she would like to see Council 'surgeries' restart. These had stopped during Covid-19.

NOTED – Cllr Pallett will be meeting with a representative from Pigeon Investment Management on 24<sup>th</sup> March to view the proposed development site at land rear of 81 Brook Street. Cllr Pallett also said that ECDC Planning Enforcement had confirmed that no breach of planning regulations had occurred at 2-4 Churchgate Street (formerly Poppies), and that an appeal had been upheld against ECDC regarding 32 Celandine View (change of use of part of garage to office) which the Town Council had not objected to.

## **196/23 PUBLIC COMMENT TIME**

A member of the public complained about the rubbish that has been dumped at the Weatheralls allotment and asked what the Council is planning to do about it.

A member of the public, representing the Coronation Planning Group, advocated for the grant application (Item 200/23 (h)) for an event on the recreation ground on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May.

## **197/23 COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

County Cllr Mark Goldsack gave a verbal report: -

- A road closure is in place on Pratt Street and Ten Bell Lane due to long-awaited work to upgrade water drainage pipes to prevent flooding.
- Potholes – please report these online. Where they have been repaired and have broken open again, the contractor is required to repair them free of charge.
- The LHI for yellow lines at Cyprian Rust Way is due to be carried out shortly.
- Councillors will shortly be entering a period of purdah ahead of the elections on 4<sup>th</sup> May.

Cllr Warner asked about flooding around the Cherry Tree, and District Cllr Bovingdon said he would investigate this. Cllr Warner also asked about the state of the A142 towards Ely from Soham after The Shade roundabout.

District Cllr Jones said that he believes Anglian Water are planning to carry out a review of drainage and general water supply but will give more details at the next meeting.

**198/23**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. APPROVED by a majority – the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held 13<sup>th</sup> February 2023.
- b. APPROVED unanimously – the minutes of the Extra-Ordinary Full Council Meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2023.
- c. APPROVED unanimously – the minutes of the Planning Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

**199/23**

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.**

- a. NOTED – Clerk’s Report (written). It was confirmed that repair work at the playground would be carried out on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> March. It was also confirmed that a two-week design drawing period is required for the scaffold at the South Chapel before work can restart.

**200/23**

**FINANCE MATTERS**

- a. Neighbourhood planning – Cllr Aitchison had sent an update which was NOTED. The update was a response from the Headteacher at Soham Village College to say that students had suggested a centrally located ‘drop-in’ centre within the town which might help to combat mental health issues and promote wellbeing amongst young people.
- b. Wave invoice for £846.99 – due to a leak at our end. APPROVED unanimously to close off two taps in the older section of the cemetery to prevent leaks caused by damaged standpipes. Of the remaining two taps, one will be replaced with a self-closing tap and the standpipe reinforced to prevent damage, and the remaining tap will be capped off and left as a back-up. Proposed Cllr Horgan, seconded Cllr Jones.
- c. APPROVED unanimously – Receipts & Payments for March 2023 (as listed at the end of the agenda) Proposed Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr Horgan.
- d. APPROVED unanimously – no increase in the current hire charges for the Pavilion and Recreation Ground. Proposed Cllr Woricker, seconded Cllr Lane.  
APPROVED unanimously - free hire of the Pavilion during the day for community groups for 2023-24. Proposed Cllr Dyer, seconded Cllr Horgan.  
APPROVED unanimously – free hire of the recreation ground for the Carnival, Pumpkin Fair and Beer Festival. Proposed Cllr Warner, seconded Cllr Pallett.
- e. APPROVED unanimously – a 5% increase to cemetery fees and allotment rent for 2023-24. Proposed Cllr Pallett, seconded Cllr Dyer.
- f. To review and agree Councillor expenses 2023-24. Cllr Warner proposed that Councillors fill in an expenses form listing their day-to-day expenses as they are incurred, but this proposal was not seconded and therefore not taken to a vote. Cllr Woricker proposed to keep the expenses as they are currently – £620 per year for the Chairman, Vice-Chair and Committee Chairs and £500 for all other Councillors. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Horgan and

CARRIED by a majority. A further similar proposal made by Cllr Ross was, therefore, not taken to a vote.

- g. APPROVED unanimously – quotation for removal of sheds at Drayton Meadows, cost £150 per day for 3 days (JF Staples). Proposed Cllr Dyer, seconded Cllr Ross.
- h. APPROVED by a majority – grant application from Soham Coronation Planning Group for funding towards HM King Charles III Coronation celebration - £5,000 plus waiver of hire fees for recreation ground. Proposed Cllr Warner, seconded Cllr Ross. Councillors voted 4 in favour (Cllrs Pallett and Jones abstained due to their declared interests) and the proposal was CARRIED. The proposal did not include the £400 for public liability insurance which had also been requested.  
It was agreed that the funding would be taken from the Civic budget. Although it had been reported that the football club had offered their venue free of charge for a Coronation event, it was agreed by the majority of Councillors that the recreation ground would be a more suitable, central location which is preferred by residents.
- i. NOTED – report from Cllr Johnston re: community grant funding. Cllr Johnston said that since 2015, the Council had given £94,391.92 in grants and other financial support to community groups. It was agreed to have the figures independently audited and then publicised to make residents aware of the Council's ongoing commitment to serving the community.
- j. Seen to be Green Competition: APPROVED unanimously to accept offer from G's Growers to provide £100 prize money and to extend the closing date from 17<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> March. Proposed Cllr Ross, seconded Cllr Pallett.

**201/23**

#### **GOVERNANCE & ADMINISTRATION**

- a. NOTED – February Health & Safety report from Adams Payne Safety Ltd.
- b. APPROVED unanimously to agree in principle the quotation from Microshade for hosted computing and applications. Alongside this, other providers will be asked for quotations for burials software, telecoms, and website upgrade for consideration at a future meeting. Proposed Cllr Pallett, seconded Cllr Horgan.

**202/23**

#### **RECREATION GROUND/PAVILION/TOWN MATTERS**

- a. APPROVED unanimously – repair of boundary wall at Brewhouse Lane play area. Proposed Cllr Horgan, seconded Cllr Ross.
- b. To consider questions raised by the Trustees of the North Chapel (cemetery) regarding storage of pews from the South Chapel. The pews are currently being stored in the North Chapel. Cllr Woricker proposed to ask the Council's contractor if as many of the pews as possible could be stored in the South Chapel. The rest can then be brought down to the pavilion to be stored in the back hall. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Jones and APPROVED by a majority (Cllr Johnston did not vote due to her declared interest).
- c. APPROVED unanimously – request from ECDC re: youth events on the recreation ground on either Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> July or Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> August. Proposed Cllr Warner, seconded Cllr Jones.
- d. To consider request from CCC regarding proposed 20mph zone for public consultation. It was agreed to run a Facebook poll and

consultation on the Council's website to ascertain public opinion on the proposed 20mph zone. The closing date for responses to CCC is 31<sup>st</sup> March.

- e. APPROVED by a majority – to apply to the CCC Local Projects 20mph scheme for a 20mph speed limit at Townsend (if the proposed scheme discussed in Item 202/23 (e) does not go ahead). Proposed Cllr Pallet, seconded Cllr Horgan.

**203/23 MATTERS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023, Walter Gidney Pavilion, 7.15pm

Update on St Andrew's churchyard wall – Cllr Johnston.

Removal of waste from allotments – Cllr Warner.

Update on public toilets, Fountain Lane.

The meeting was closed at 8:58pm.