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## **SOHAM TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Soham Town Council meeting held at the Walter Gidney Pavilion, Fountain Lane recreation ground, Soham on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

**Present:** Cllrs E Johnston, D Woricker, R Aitchison, G Dyer, K Horgan, A Jones, P Lane, A Pallett, C Warner, and H Ross.  
M Strand, Town Clerk and M Francis, Assistant Town Clerk

**In attendance:** District Cllr A Jones.  
There were 8 members of the public present.

The meeting was opened at 7:17pm.

### **MINUTES**

#### **144/22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr G Woodbridge (work commitments).  
NOTED - Cllr Peter Leonard had tendered his resignation from the Council. All Councillors wished him well for the future. There are now four vacancies for co-option.

#### **145/22 COUNCILLORS' DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Cllr K Horgan declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 151/22(f) – Local Highways Initiative application (applicant).

#### **146/22. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS & TOWN CLLR UPDATES**

- a. NOTED – response from Cambridgeshire County Council regarding This Land. Cllr Warner said that the response was wholly inadequate as it did not answer the questions raised by STC.
- b. NOTED – the Riverside Bridge in Cambridge has been re-named the Equiano Bridge after Olaudah Equiano (c.1745-1797), an abolitionist who married and lived in Soham with his family before moving to Cherry Hinton.

Other matters raised at the meeting:

- PosAbility, a local charity offering chair-based and specialist exercise classes, had presented the Town Council with a clock as a thank you for allowing them to use the pavilion free of charge. Mayor, Cllr Elizabeth Johnston, had accepted the clock on behalf

of the Council at a small presentation ceremony. The clock has been put up in the main meeting room.

- The Ely Standard had reported on yesterday's Remembrance Parade. Cllr Johnston said there had been a good turnout as usual and thanked everyone involved in organising the event.
- Cllr Johnston reminded Councillors of the protocol for progressing the Council's projects. Councillors may only carry out activities on behalf of the Council when mandated to do so by a decision of the Council or its Committees.
- At the recent opening of the new care home, Townsend Manor, Cllr Johnston had asked the Director for any artifacts found when the archaeological dig had taken place on the site.

Alec Jones joined the meeting at 7:25pm.

#### **147/22. PUBLIC COMMENT TIME**

The Chairman read from 'Local Councils Administration' regarding members of the public speaking at meetings. Members of the public have a statutory right to attend meetings however, they may only speak during the public participation time. There should be no debate between members of the public and Councillors at any time during the meeting.

Cllr Horgan wished to speak as a member of the public on item 151/22 (f) – Local Highways Initiative. Mr Horgan asked Councillors to favourably consider supporting the application which would alleviate parking issues on the High Street opposite the Co-op.

Lizzie Wales and Jenny Lambert (Youth in Communities Service) had sent a report which had been circulated and was NOTED. Ms Wales and Ms Lambert said that the recreation ground was a very well-used and positive space for young people. Some additional needs had been identified, for example bigger goal posts, white lining, repairs to the basketball court surface and repairs or replacement of the skate park. There are also some safety issues such as broken glass and a lack of sufficient lighting which should be addressed. They are also engaging with young people on other facilities they might wish to see made available. They concluded by saying that the children and young people are very positive about the recreation ground.

#### **148/22. COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

NOTED – report from County Cllr Mark Goldsack. Cllr Goldsack had sent his apologies for the meeting and asked for any questions to be forwarded to him.

NOTED – written report from District Cllr Alec Jones.

At the meeting, Cllr Jones apologised for being late and reported the following: -

- ECDC had agreed £179, 500 of grant funding towards the new roof at the Ross Peers Sports Centre.

#### **149/22. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

a. APPROVED unanimously – the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held 10<sup>th</sup> October 2022 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

- b. NOTED – Clerk’s Report including a refund from Anglian Water due to an over-estimate of usage.  
APPROVED by a majority - Cllr Horgan proposed that the Council’s Health & Safety consultant be asked to produce a monthly report on what he does and the proposal was seconded by Cllr Aitchison.
- c. NOTED – minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022. Meeting dates for the remainder of the year will be published on the Council’s website.
- d. APPROVED unanimously – the minutes of the Planning Meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022 were approved as a true record.

**150/22. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.**

- a. Byway 113 (Soham – Wicken Cycleway) – Cllr Woricker said there was no update to give at this meeting.

**151/22 FINANCE MATTERS**

- a. Neighbourhood planning (Working Group) – Cllr Aitchison said there was no update to give at this meeting.
- b. APPROVED unanimously – the Receipts & Payments for October & November 2022 as listed at the end of the agenda. Cllr Horgan queried why the Total Energies invoices had not been paid for almost 14 months and the Clerk explained that there had been some confusion when the supplier was changed and that invoices had not been properly issued.
- c. To consider and approve quotations for repairs to cemetery wall and chapel (quotations between £54,00 and £60,000 +VAT) – it was AGREED unanimously to defer this item to the end of the meeting to be discussed to the exclusion of the public.
- d. NOTED – report from land agent re: land valuations.  
APPROVED – for Cllrs E Johnston, R Aitchison and G Dyer to meet with the Council’s Land Agent to discuss plans for Drayton Meadow and report back to Council at the next meeting. Proposed Cllr Johnston, seconded Cllr Aitchison.  
NOTED – complaint from resident re: Brewhouse Lane play area – this had been resolved.
- e. NOTED – draft budget and precept for 2023-24. Following discussion, it was AGREED to finalise the budget and set the precept at the December meeting. Councillors were asked to put forward any other projects for inclusion, before the meeting. Further scrutiny of income and expenditure streams is also necessary before a final budget is approved.
- f. APPROVED by a majority (Cllr Horgan abstained due to his declared interest) – a 10% contribution (up to a maximum of £2,000) towards a resident’s Local Highways Initiative application to alleviate parking issues on the High Street opposite the Co-Op. Proposed Cllr Aitchison, seconded Cllr Dyer. Cllr Pallett as the Council’s lead Councillor on LHI, will work with Cllr Horgan on this.
- g. APPROVED – quotation for handmade Enamelled Pendant for Mayor’s Chain - £1,995.00 +VAT. The Council’s current logo will feature on the pendant. Proposed Cllr Aitchison, seconded Cllr Horgan. Cllr Warner asked for the vote to be recorded. Cllrs Johnston, Woricker, Aitchison, Horgan, Pallett, Dyer, Jones and Lane voted in favour. Cllrs Warner and Ross voted against – CARRIED.

**152/22 GOVERNANCE & ADMINISTRATION**  
a. APPROVED unanimously - Risk Management Policy (2022).

**153/22 RECREATION GROUND/PAVILION/TOWN MATTERS**  
a. APPROVED unanimously – Terms & Conditions of Seen to be Green competition for local businesses (Cllr Horgan). A letter of invitation to businesses was also approved. Proposed Cllr Warner, seconded Cllr Lane.  
b. APPROVED unanimously – procurement of 50 trees (free) from Community Payback and the Queen’s Green Canopy. Proposed Cllr Warner, seconded Cllr Lane. The trees will be planted on the recreation ground, at Kingfisher Drive and on privately owned woodland (agreement of the landowner has been obtained). The trees will be guarded to protect from vandalism however, the Council may need to consider purchasing larger trees for the recreation ground where they are most vulnerable to damage. Cllrs Aitchison and Horgan will progress this project with the Community Payback Team.  
c. APPROVED unanimously – to write a letter in support of Soham Army Cadets’ funding application for premises hire.

**154/22 MATTERS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING**  
Monday 12<sup>th</sup> December, Walter Gidney Pavilion at 7.15pm  
Budget and precept.  
Response to This Land.

**MOTION TO EXCLUDE**

To resolve under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, that public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted – RESOLVED. Members of the public left the meeting.

The meeting was suspended by the Chairman at 8:32pm for 5 minutes.

The meeting was re-opened at 8:37pm and the following item discussed: -

**151/22 FINANCE MATTERS**  
c. APPROVED unanimously – to accept the quotation from CEL Group (1989) Ltd for repairs to cemetery wall and chapel for £54,568.04 +VAT. Proposed Cllr Pallett, seconded Cllr Aitchison. The Council had received three quotations and the specification had been advertised on the Contracts Finder website. All three quotations were similar in value and therefore the final decision came down to references and other information provided by each contractor. Cllrs Woricker and Woodbridge will meet with a representative of CEL Group to discuss the schedule and nature of the works.

The meeting was closed at 8:54pm.  
Approved and signed: