



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 17th April 2023.

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

In attendance: District Cllr A Jones.
District & County Cllr M Goldsack.
There were 5 members of the public present.

MINUTES

The meeting was opened at 7:15pm.

204/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Cllr Woodbridge (personal).

205/23 COUNCILLORS' DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS
Cllrs Pallett and Jones declared non-pecuniary interests in item 213/23
(h) (members of the Coronation Planning Group).

206/23 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS & TOWN CLLR UPDATES
The following matters were raised at the meeting: -

NOTED – the Chairman thanked Cllrs Philip Lane and Charles Warner for their service on the Council and for their commitment to serving the town. The Chairman said they had served consistently well over a long period of time and that it would be a great loss to the Council and the town that they would be stepping down after the May elections. Both gentleman received a warm round of applause from everyone present.

NOTED – the Chairman will attend a Service of Thanksgiving for the Coronation of Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla on Sunday 7th May in her capacity as Mayor of Soham.

- a. NOTED – Cllr Johnston updated Councillors on Drayton Meadows and thanked Cllrs Aitchison and Dyer, and Mr John Aitchison, for their hard work on this project to date. A meeting had been held with the Council's Land Agent, and a planting and wildlife scheme for the meadow will be brought to the next meeting for consideration.

- b. NOTED – Cllr Pallett said that the Local Highways Initiative at Cyprian Rust Way for double yellow lines had now been completed.
- c. NOTED – Cllr Horgan said that two further trees had now been planted on the High Street. Highways have been asked to remove the plastic barriers and make good the area where a tree could not be planted due to objections from a business owner. When this has been done, the High Street trees project will have been completed in full.
- d. NOTED – Cllr Horgan said that the closing date for the Seen to be Green Competition had passed, and that the judges had examined the entries and unanimously agreed on a winner. The winner will be announced at the Annual Town Meeting on 22nd May.
- e. NOTED – Cllr Horgan had recently helped a resident resolve an issue with Sanctuary Housing regarding a bird infestation at their property.

The following matters were also raised at the meeting: -

- The Chairman reminded Councillors that they are currently in purdah ahead of the local elections on 4th May. This means that normal communications regarding Councillor activities should be curtailed during this time.
- Cllr Aitchison thanked Cllr Johnston for her hard work over the last two years as Chairman. Over that time there had been many difficulties to overcome and Cllr Johnston had risen admirably to the challenge. Councillors and all those present gave Cllr Johnston a warm round of applause in appreciation.

207/23 PUBLIC COMMENT TIME

One member of the public who had booked a speaking slot had not come to the meeting.

Cllr Anne Pallett, speaking as a resident and on behalf of the Coronation Planning Group, thanked members of the Council for their generous financial contribution and free use of the recreation ground for the Big Lunch event due to be held on Sunday 7th May to celebrate the Coronation. The event will include an opening ceremony performed by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire to which all members of the Council are cordially invited. Cllr Pallett also wished to publicly thank all local individuals and businesses who had sponsored the event.

208/23 COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

County Cllr Mark Goldsack gave a verbal report: -

- CCC Highways are currently facing a ‘pothole pandemic’ with between 5 and 6 hundred potholes being marked up every day in the Soham and surrounding areas alone. Cllr Goldsack encouraged members to continue to report potholes online and said that once a pothole has been marked up, residents could expect it to be repaired within 21 days.
- Trees in the Bushel Lane caravan park are causing damage to an adjacent footpath, but it is proving difficult to make contact with the owner of the park to try to remedy this.
- Positive feedback had been received from residents regarding the new double yellow lines at Cyprian Rust Way.
- Sanctuary Housing – it is proving a difficult and lengthy process to re-house families in homes which have been occupied for a long time and then vacated because they have to be brought up to modern-day specifications and legislation.

District Cllr Alec Jones said that he had tried to find out from ECDC how long it would be before the public toilets could re-open on Fountain Lane but had so far not had a response.

209/23

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. APPROVED unanimously – the minutes from the Full Council Meeting held 13th March 2023.
- b. APPROVED unanimously – the minutes from the Planning Meeting held on 27th March 2023.

210/23

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.

- a. NOTED – Clerk’s Report (written).

211/23

FINANCE MATTERS

- a. Neighbourhood planning – Cllr Aitchison said that funds from the Locality grant had now been used up and that further funds would be needed to complete the Neighbourhood Plan (NDP) and put it to a referendum. Although further grant funding may become available, it is possible the Council will have to earmark funds to complete the NDP. The next meeting of the NDP Group is on Monday 24th April.
- b. APPROVED unanimously – Receipts & Payments for April 2023 (as listed at the end of the agenda). Proposed Cllr Woricker, seconded Cllr Horgan.
- c. APPROVED unanimously – bank reconciliation and Q3 financial reports to 31st December 2022. Proposed Cllr Aitchison, seconded Cllr Jones.
- d. APPROVED unanimously – grant application from Summer Reading Challenge for Soham Library for £250. Proposed Cllr Aitchison, seconded Cllr Pallett. The invitation to present medals to the finishers on Saturday 23rd September will be considered by the Mayor after the May elections.
- e. APPROVED unanimously – grant application from Cambridgeshire Search and Rescue (CamSAR) for £500. Proposed Cllr Dyer, seconded Cllr Jones.

212/23

GOVERNANCE & ADMINISTRATION

- a. NOTED – March Health & Safety report from Adams Payne Safety Ltd. It was agreed to consider at a future meeting whether to continue asking for monthly reports.
- b. APPROVED unanimously – to close Barclays bank accounts and transfer funds to Unity Trust Bank and/or Public Sector Deposit Fund. Proposed Cllr Johnston, seconded Cllr Horgan. The accounts will be closed, and funds transferred to Unity Trust Bank. Further information on the Public Sector Deposit Fund will be considered at the next meeting.
- c. APPROVED unanimously to consider sale of land at Brewhouse Lane and Guntons Close. Proposed Cllr Dyer, seconded Cllr Aitchison. This will be brought back to the May meeting for further consideration when more information on the process will be available.

- d. APPROVED unanimously – to join The Open Spaces Society, cost £45 per annum. Proposed Cllr Aitchison, seconded Cllr Ross. Membership includes regular newsletters and advice on protecting accessible green spaces.
- e. APPROVED by a majority – request from Soham Gardening Club to pay for their insurance, cost £196.31. Proposed Cllr Dyer, seconded Cllr Pallett.
Cllrs Aitchison and Warner declared non-pecuniary interests in this item (members of Soham Gardening Club).
- f. APPROVED unanimously – virement of funds from general reserves to telephone expenses of £10,000 for the year 2023-24. Proposed Cllr Aitchison, seconded Cllr Jones.

213/23

RECREATION GROUND/PAVILION/TOWN MATTERS

- a. NOTED – quotation for repair of boundary wall at Brewhouse Lane play area, cost £8,865.00 +VAT. It was agreed that the wall would need to be repaired despite the possibility of selling the land in the near future. Further quotations will therefore be obtained and considered at the next meeting. Proposed Cllr Aitchison, seconded Cllr Jones and APPROVED unanimously.
- b. APPROVED unanimously – to restart Councillor ‘surgeries’. Proposed Cllr Pallett, seconded Cllr Horgan. The surgeries give residents an opportunity to meet and question Councillors on matters that concern them. The surgeries will begin after the May elections and take place monthly during the Council’s office hours.
- c. NOTED – documents relating to responsibility for the repair and maintenance of St Andrew’s (closed) churchyard wall (see also Clerk’s report). The Clerk had advised that the repair and maintenance of the wall is the responsibility of the Council. However, Councillors thought that the Council’s position was unclear from the information provided. It was AGREED unanimously to consider this matter again at the May meeting when further information on the ownership of the wall would be available. Proposed Cllr Ross, seconded Cllr Aitchison.
- d. APPROVED unanimously – removal of dumped waste and re-siting of gate to the front of the car park at Weatherall’s Allotment, cost up to £2,000.00. Proposed Cllr Aitchison, seconded Cllr Jones. It was also agreed to increase the height of the gate so that rubbish cannot be thrown over it. The possibility of siting a CCTV camera in the vicinity will be considered at the May meeting.
- e. To consider and respond to correspondence from a resident re: allotment deposit scheme, management and maintenance of allotments and proposal to invite allotment holders to a special meeting to discuss – it was agreed that all matters concerning the allotment sites were being managed within the normal running of the Council and that it was not necessary to hold a special meeting with allotment holders, many of whom had told Councillors that they are happy with the new deposit scheme to help manage the sites. Proposed Cllr Dyer, seconded Cllr Warner and APPROVED unanimously.
- f. To consider and respond to correspondence from a resident re: the cemetery and chapel – it was agreed that there is little that can be done to stop people walking on graves, and that the scaffold on the

chapel is necessary for continuing repair work. Proposed Cllr Warner, seconded Cllr Aitchison and APPROVED unanimously.

- g. To consider and respond to correspondence from a resident re: tree planting on the recreation ground – it was agreed that the trees planted would not pose any nuisance as they were specifically chosen for the area and planted sufficiently far enough away from the boundary of the property in question so as not to cause damage from either the roots or, later, the canopy. It was proposed by Cllr Horgan to meet the resident along with the Trees Officer to discuss further. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Pallett and APPROVED unanimously. It was NOTED that the resident does not have a 'right to a view' under current planning regulations.
- h. To consider invitation for the Mayor to attend the opening ceremony of the King Charles III Coronation Big Lunch and Live Concert, Sunday 7th May – The Mayor is unable to attend due to other commitments. The Vice-Chair is also unavailable to attend.
- i. APPROVED unanimously to consult the Trees Officer at ECDC before allowing the trees on Soham Football club grounds to be felled due to subsidence of nearby property. If the Trees Officer is satisfied that the trees should be felled, the property owner may go ahead with the work without delay. Proposed Cllr Warner, seconded Cllr Lane. Councillors will discuss the planting of substitute trees at its next meeting.

214/23

CORRESPONDENCE

- a. NOTED – thank you letter from PosAbility for financial support given.
- b. NOTED – response from the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough re: vandalism of public toilets. It was agreed to write two letters, one to the police asking for a progress report on the investigation into the vandalism, and one to ECDC to ask when the toilets will be re-opened and what needs to happen to facilitate this. Proposed Cllr Warner, seconded Cllr Pallett and APPROVED unanimously.
- c. NOTED – T2 Assessment carried out by The CDS Group (awaiting further response from the Environment Agency).

215/23

MATTERS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- Annual meeting of the Town Council, Monday 15th May and Annual Town Meeting, Monday 22nd May.

It was agreed to invite the winner of the Seen to be Green Competition and Mr John Shropshire, Chairman of G's Growers, to the Town Meeting, as well as all community groups and organisations.

The meeting was closed at 9:06pm.