



Soham Town Council
The Walter Gidney Pavilion
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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 12th June 2023.

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

In attendance: District Cllrs Ian Bovingdon, Keith Horgan & Lucius Vellacott.
District & County Cllr Mark Goldsack.
There were 15 members of the public present.

MINUTES

Presentation from Riding & Skating, Ely re: Carnival Consultation Skatepark Designs.
Mr. Stan Hickish gave a presentation on the results of a recent competition to design an extension to the skatepark. Many young people who use the skatepark had entered and there had been lots of good ideas amongst the entries. Mr Hickish said the young people were very excited to be involved in the development of the facility. The Chairman thanked Mr. Hickish and said that the design, tender and future plans for the skatepark would be discussed at the next Community Amenities Committee meeting on 26th June.

The meeting was opened at 7:25pm

AGENDA

16/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Cllr Tony Chouler (personal). Cllr Woodbridge was absent from the meeting.

17/23 COUNCILLORS' DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS
Cllr Johnston declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 26/23(a) – Neighbourhood Plan (NP) consultancy (member of NP working group).

18/23 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS & TOWN CLLR UPDATES

The following matter was raised at the meeting: -

- NOTED – the Chairman has accepted an invitation to the Bishop of Ely's Garden Party on Wednesday 12th July in his capacity as Mayor of Soham.

- a. NOTED – Cllr Pallett said that records and documents from recent Royal Events will be archived at Cambridgeshire Archives and Cambridge Library.
- b. NOTED – Cllr Pallett said that Geoff Armstrong (of Armstrong Rigg Planning) will attend the July Full Council meeting to present outline plans for development at land off Blackberry Way.

19/23 PUBLIC COMMENT TIME

None.

20/23 COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

The Chairman welcomed all District and County Councillors to the meeting and congratulated Cllr Mark Goldsack on his election as Chairman of ECDC. Written reports had been received and were NOTED.

District & County Cllr Goldsack said that there was no update on the Eastern Gateway proposal except that he had received a response from This Land to questions previously raised by residents and the Town Council. His report contains details of these and is available on the Council's website. Cllr Ross questioned Cllr Goldsack further regarding the finances of This Land, the recent treatment of the land in relation to ground-nesting birds and the estimated biodiversity net gain and Cllr Goldsack replied to the questions with the information available to him. Cllr Goldsack asked that Councillors and residents write to him directly with any concerns in relation to the Eastern Gateway or This Land at: mark.goldsack@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

Cllr Goldsack also said that the Cambridgeshire Community Fund had re-opened with funding available up to £40,000.

District Cllr Horgan read out the salient points of the consolidated District Councillors' report which is available on the Council's website.

Cllr Horgan also said that he was pleased to learn today that Soham TC had been successful in its application to the High Street Fund for repairs to the churchyard wall.

District Cllr Vellacott said that one of the main focuses of residents currently is the proposed 20mph zone for the town, with particular concern around the areas of Mill Corner and the portion of the High Street which is not already 20mph. Cllr Vellacott is a member of the Operational Services Committee which is looking into acquiring a new fleet of Hydro-Treated Vegetable Oil (HVO) fuelled vehicles for waste collection.

21/23 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. APPROVED unanimously – the minutes from the Annual Full Council Meeting held on 15th May 2023.
- b. NOTED – the draft minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held 22nd May 2023.

22/23 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.

- a. NOTED - Clerk's Report (written).

23/23

FINANCE MATTERS

- a. APPROVED unanimously – Receipts & Payments for June 2023 (as listed at the end of the agenda). Proposed Cllr Johnston, seconded Cllr Aitchison.
- b. APPROVED unanimously – bank reconciliation and Q3/Q4 financial reports to 31st March 2023. Proposed Cllr Johnston, seconded Cllr Dyer.

24/23

GOVERNANCE & ADMINISTRATION

- a. NOTED – Internal Auditor’s report for the 2022-23 financial year. Appropriate action will be taken to address issues raised.
- b. APPROVED unanimously and signed by the Chairman and the Clerk – the Annual Governance Statement for 2022-23. Proposed Cllr Johnston, seconded Cllr Aitchison.
- c. APPROVED unanimously and signed by the Chairman – the Annual Accounting Statements for 2022-23. Proposed Cllr Dyer, seconded Cllr Jones.
- d. NOTED – review of payments by Direct Debit (as per Financial Regulation 6.7).
- e. APPROVED unanimously proposal to end the Council’s PO Box address and purchase a post box for deliveries directly to the Walter Gidney Pavilion for a trial period. Proposed Cllr Ross, seconded Cllr Pallett.

25/23

STAFFING MATTERS

- a. APPROVED unanimously – to raise the Clerk’s hours permanently to 30 hours per week (from 25) from September 2023. Proposed Cllr Aitchison, seconded Cllr Johnston.
- b. To consider options for additional help with grounds maintenance for the growing season – Cllr Aitchison proposed to employ somebody part time during the growing season to carry out tasks such as weeding, spraying and pruning which would not impact on the Council’s groundsmen. It was agreed to explore this idea with the groundsmen and also to conduct a review of all staffing as there may be need of additional staff in other areas such as the allotments.

26/23

RECREATION GROUND/PAVILION/TOWN MATTERS

- a. Neighbourhood Planning: APPROVED by a majority – further consultancy work to complete the Plan, cost £6,825.00 +VAT. Proposed Cllr Ross, seconded Cllr Horgan. Cllr Johnston abstained from the vote.
- b. APPROVED unanimously – requests for community litter bins on Fordham Road, Centre Road and Orchard Row, cost approximately £400-£500 each (ECDC to approve locations, install and empty). Total cost up to £1,500 +VAT. Proposed Cllr Horgan, seconded Cllr Pallett.
- c. APPROVED unanimously to use £250.00 from Witham Oil & Paint for a ‘green’ bench at Drayton Meadows (no concrete, use of recycled materials). Proposed Cllr Aitchison, seconded Cllr Dyer.
- d. APPROVED unanimously – request from Soham Baptist Church to use the recreation ground for ‘Craft in the Park’ events on 9th and 29th August. Proposed Cllr Pallett, seconded Cllr Aitchison.

- e. APPROVED unanimously – Fuller Long as the Council’s Planning Consultant (as required). Proposed Cllr Pallett, seconded Cllr Johnston.
- f. To consider request for support re: ECDC’s Youth Event, 26th July – Cllr Aitchison proposed the Council has a stall at the event to engage with young people and ask them about their ideas for facilities within the town. It was agreed to make arrangements for this. It was also agreed to ask ECDC for a more specific funding request in relation to the event for consideration at the next meeting.
- g. APPROVED by a majority – commando switches to streetlights from Red Lion Square to Pratt Street to facilitate Christmas motifs, costs approximately £10,500.00 +VAT. Councillors were extremely concerned by the increasing cost of facilitating Christmas lights. Cllr Ross asked for the vote to be recorded as follows: - In favour – Cllrs Dyer, Jones, Ross, Aitchison and Woricker. Against – Cllrs Pallett, Johnston and Horgan. Proposed Cllr Woricker, seconded Cllr Dyer. Cllr Ross asked that the minutes record that he voted in favour only because the town was in danger of missing out on Christmas lights if a decision could not be made tonight. The Clerk will try to find cost savings where possible.
- h. Considered and approved unanimously **not** to remove and reposition the bench on north side of recreation ground. Councillors said that the bench had been there for many years and that any anti-social behaviour in the recreation ground should be dealt with by the police and not by removing a well-used bench in a pleasant location.
- i. APPROVED by a majority – new ‘No Dogs’ signage in English and other languages (Polish and Portuguese) following complaints of dogs on the recreation ground. It was also agreed to look into the possibility of an arch over the entrance to the playground to put the new signage on, and ‘No Dogs’ markings on the tarmac. Proposed Cllr Johnston, seconded Cllr Aitchison. Councillors voted 6 in favour and 2 against.

27/23 CORRESPONDENCE

- a. NOTED – grant thank you letter from Coronation Planning Committee.

28/23 MATTERS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- Planning Committee – Monday 26th June, 1pm.
- Community Amenities Committee – Monday 26th June, 7:15pm.
- Finance & Policy Committee – Monday 3rd July, 10:30am.
- Full Council – Monday 10th July 2023, 7:15pm.

The meeting was closed at 9:02pm.

Approved and signed 10th July 2023