



Soham Town Council  
The Walter Gidney Pavilion  
Fountain Lane  
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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 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

**Present:** Cllrs D Woricker (Chairman), K Horgan, G Dyer, A Jones, H Ross,  
Glenn Woodbridge, T Chouler and R Aitchison.  
M Strand, Town Clerk, M Francis, Assistant Clerk.

**In attendance:** District Cllr Keith Horgan.  
District & County Cllrs Mark Goldsack and Bill Hunt.  
There were 4 members of the public present.

### **MINUTES**

#### **Presentation from Armstrong Rigg Planning re: development off Blackberry Lane.**

Manor Oak Homes will develop the southern side of this allocated site (SOH6) but has also created a master plan for the whole site. Overall, the plan is to build around 70 homes on the site (below its allocation), with green open spaces and access to local walking routes. An outline application will be submitted in the near future. The Chairman thanked Mr Armstrong and his colleagues for their presentation and said that any questions Councillors have about the development would be collated and sent to them via email.

**Presentation from Victoria Wingfield re: Soham Station Projects** – Ms Wingfield was unable to attend due to work commitments and this presentation will be re-scheduled at a later date. Soham Station Projects is looking at ways to improve the look and facilities at the station, such as installing a notice board to welcome visitors to the town and signpost them to local businesses.

The meeting opened at 7:26pm.

#### **29/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr Johnston (other commitments); Cllr Pallett (personal).

#### **30/23 COUNCILLORS' DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None.

#### **31/23 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS & TOWN CLLR UPDATES**

- a. NOTED – Mayor's invitation to open the Pumpkin Fair – Cllr Woricker said he was honoured to have been invited to open this event and take part in judging the competitions.

- b. NOTED – Drayton Meadows update (written) from Cllr Johnston which was read out by the Chairman. A survey of plants and wildlife will be necessary. A recycled plastic bench has been purchased for the site.

Other matters raised at the meeting: -

- NOTED – Cllr Woodbridge had received an email from a lady who wanted to pass on her grateful thanks for all the hard work that is put into keeping the cemetery so well. The Chairman thanked Cllr Woodbridge for his contribution also.
- NOTED – Cllr Horgan said that he and the Clerk had attended a meeting with CCC Highways regarding moving the planters on the High Street and general tidying of other areas where work had been carried out. These matters should be dealt with over the next few weeks.

### **32/23 PUBLIC COMMENT TIME**

Three members of the public addressed the Council on the following matters: -

- Pavilion Phase II – has the Council consulted residents on its plans to demolish and rebuild the rear hall, particularly those who live nearby? Has the Council considered the surroundings of the new building in terms of crime prevention and anti-social behaviour? The plans put forward do not allow enough space for storage of machinery, tools etc. and for a workshop where repairs can be carried out. Overall, the proposed building does not appear to be big enough to future-proof community facilities for the town.
- Proposed 20mph zone – many residents are concerned with anti-social parking and speeding but ECDC refuses to introduce civil parking enforcement. ECDC issued a report over 12 months ago regarding the use of volunteer parking enforcement officers, but nothing has been put in place. Issues with parking on the High Street continue, with one resident stating they are too frightened to approach anyone who is parked blocking their driveway because of possible confrontation.
- Start-up industrial units – why has Soham not had any built when other towns and villages have?

### **33/23 COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

District Cllr Horgan had submitted a report on behalf of all District Councillors which was NOTED. Salient points included ECDC's commitment to reach carbon net-zero by 2036 (14 years ahead of the government's target) and the Pride of Place Grant fund. It was also noted that there had been no further incidents of vandalism at the Fountain Lane public toilets since additional CCTV cameras had been installed.

District Cllrs Lucius Vellacott and Ian Bovingdon had sent their apologies for the meeting. Cllr Vellacott had sent a written report which was NOTED. This included confirmation that string or festoon lighting can no longer be attached to streetlight columns.

District & County Cllr Mark Goldsack had submitted a written report which was NOTED. Cllr Goldsack confirmed that ECDC's plan for volunteer parking enforcement is progressing, and that a new grant fund has opened with capital funding available up to £40,000. With regard to questions raised of This Land, Cllr Goldsack said these had been answered in a recent report. However, the report is not yet in the public domain. Further updates will be given when available.

District & County Cllr Bill Hunt was welcomed to his first Soham Town Council meeting since being re-elected in May. Cllr Hunt said that he supports the proposed 20mph zones being rolled out by the County Council and said that the 20mph scheme in Haddenham was working well. Eight car charging points had been installed in the Clay Street car park and discussions were taking place as to how to best signpost these for the benefit of all car park users. Cllr Hunt added that he does not support the proposed congestion charge for Cambridge.

**34/23**

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. APPROVED by a majority (with one amendment) – the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023. Proposed Cllr Aitchison, seconded Cllr Dyer.
- b. NOTED – the draft minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held 26<sup>th</sup> June 2023.
- c. NOTED – the draft minutes of the Community Amenities Committee Meeting held 26<sup>th</sup> June 2023.
- d. NOTED – the draft minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee Meeting held 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2023.

**35/23**

#### **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.**

- a. NOTED – Clerk’s Report.

**36/23**

#### **FINANCE MATTERS**

- a. APPROVED unanimously – Receipts & Payments for July 2023 (as listed at the end of the agenda). Proposed Cllr Woodbridge, seconded Cllr Chouler.
- b. APPROVED unanimously – bank reconciliation and financial reports for April and May 2023. Proposed Cllr Aitchison, seconded Cllr Jones.
- c. APPROVED unanimously – to write off VAT claim from 2021-22 for £1,464.34 due to lack of evidential invoices. Proposed Cllr Dyer, seconded Cllr Jones.
- d. APPROVED unanimously – to pursue external funding applications for Drayton Meadows, Pavilion Phase II, Skatepark and other agreed projects as they arise. Proposed Cllr Horgan, seconded Cllr Aitchison.
- e. APPROVED unanimously grant application from Soham Downfield Windmill of **up to** £500.00, depending on need. Proposed Cllr Aitchison, seconded Cllr Ross.

**37/23**

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

- a. Neighbourhood Planning – to consider and agree Local Green Spaces for designation in the Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Aitchison said the Council would have to write to each of the landowners to obtain their permission. Designation of the land would not place any restrictions on the landowners. All the sites put forward were AGREED.
- b. CONSIDERED and approved unanimously **not to** continue with further investigations costing £18,810.00 +VAT on the new cemetery land following the decision of the Environment Agency not to allow burials at this location. It was agreed to continue with work to clear and tidy the land, and to use it for ashes interments and as a well-being area.

- c. APPROVED unanimously – quotation from Anglian Water for £2,500.00 for water connection at the Weatheralls Allotments. Cllr Dyer said it was unlikely to cost as much as this because the water main is not far from the site. Cllr Dyer proposed a budget of up to £3,000.00 to have the water connected, run piping from the mains to a central location and install a water trough costing £368.89 +VAT. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Chouler. It was noted that the Council has earmarked a total of £8,000.00 for this project.

Cllr Woodbridge left the meeting.

- d. APPROVED unanimously quotation from DemCom for £14,478.00 +VAT for the removal of asbestos and demolition of the pavilion back hall, toilets and storage buildings (Pavilion Phase II). It was also APPROVED to delegate to the Clerk up to £20,000.00 (including this quotation) to engage the necessary services to prepare the building for demolition. This will include water, gas and electricity supplies being capped off and the removal of the gas oven. Proposed Cllr Horgan, seconded Cllr Ross. Further costs may be incurred to weather-proof the remaining building.
- e. Pavilion Phase II – to consider indicative quotation for the purchase of a portacabin canteen unit, cost £6,150.00+VAT (with buyback option) for use until phase II is complete. (Delegated to Clerk if necessary to purchase before the next Full Council meeting). It was proposed by Cllr Chouler to proceed with a refurbished portacabin at a cost of £7,750.00 +VAT and the proposal was seconded by Cllr Dyer. Councillors voted 5 in favour, 1 against with 1 abstention and the proposal was CARRIED.
- f. Pavilion Phase II – to agree plans for submission by architect to ECDC for planning permission – plans agreed by CA committee. Some Councillors thought the main hall, kitchen and toilets were too small or inadequate. Cllr Woricker proposed to ask the Council's architect to submit the plans to ECDC for planning approval and the proposal was seconded by Cllr Chouler. Councillors voted 3 in favour and 4 against and the proposal was therefore NOT CARRIED. It was agreed to re-think the plans over the summer and discuss this matter again at the September meeting.
- g. To consider request from resident re: seesaw in the playground – it was AGREED to ask developers to consider installing a seesaw when planning a new play area as there is not enough space within the playground area at the recreation ground.
- h. Final review of proposed 20mph Zone – NOTED and AGREED.
- i. CONFIDENTIAL – cemetery matters. The Chairman proposed to defer this item to end of the meeting – AGREED.

**38/23**

#### **CORRESPONDENCE**

- a. NOTED – CCC re: Crossing Diversion Order – Public Footpath no. 124. Cllr Aitchison proposed that the Council writes to request funding towards installing a bridge across the Lode to the Lode-side walks which will be difficult to access once the crossing has been closed – AGREED.

**39/23**

#### **MATTERS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION AND DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS**

- Planning Committee – Monday 31<sup>st</sup> July, 1pm.
- Finance & Policy Committee – Monday 7<sup>th</sup> August, 10:30am.

- Community Amenities – Monday 4<sup>th</sup> September, 7:15pm.
- Full Council – Monday 11<sup>th</sup> September, 7:15pm.

APPROVED to waive Standing Orders (3(x)) and continue the meeting beyond the 2-hour time limit.

### **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.

The meeting was closed at 9:12pm and members of the public left the meeting.

The meeting was reopened under closed session at 9:15pm.

**37/23** i. CONFIDENTIAL – cemetery matters. The outcome of this matter was agreed unanimously and will be recorded in confidential minutes.

The meeting was closed at 9:21pm.

Approved and signed by the Chairman, 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023.