



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 11th September 2023.

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

In attendance: District Cllrs Lucius Vellacott, Ian Bovingdon and Keith Horgan.
There were 7 members of the public present.

Presentation from Victoria Wingfield re: Soham Station Projects.

Ms. Wingfield has adopted Soham Railway Station from Greater Anglia. The purpose of this initiative is to allow the community to put their own stamp on their local stations. Ideas for the Station include an information board for visitors to the town (with a map and local business information), decorating the Station for annual events and hosting art exhibitions involving local schools. Ms. Wingfield has already put plants in the planters to improve the appearance of the Station and would welcome help from the Town Council, as well as other local groups and organisations, to promote ideas and offer financial assistance where necessary. The Chairman thanked Ms. Wingfield for attending the meeting and asked that any specific requests be made to the Council for consideration at future meetings.

The meeting was opened at 7:15pm.

MINUTES

40/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

41/23 COUNCILLORS' DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

42/23 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS & TOWN CLLR UPDATES

- a. NOTED – Invitation to the Mayor from the High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire to attend a service for His Majesty's Judiciary, Sunday 8th October, Peterborough Cathedral. The Chairman is not able to attend; the Vice-Chair will deputise if available.
- b. NOTED – update on Local Highways Improvement (High Street). Cllr Horgan said that a Local Highways Initiative application to improve safety on the High Street by deterring illegal parking had been

approved by Highways. A Local Highways Officer had met with Cllr Horgan to discuss the scheme and will issue a detailed proposal for the Council to review at a future meeting.

Other matters raised at the meeting: -

- Cllr Woodbridge said that repair and restoration of the cemetery chapel is almost complete, and that the contractor has done a fantastic job. Internal decoration of the chapel will be undertaken in the very near future. Cllr Woodbridge also said that a memorial in the Garden of Rest had been professionally cleaned, free of charge, by Hermitage Memorials.
- Cllr Johnston asked if commercially sensitive information regarding the sale of land could be shared via confidential email after the meeting. This was agreed.

43/23 PUBLIC COMMENT TIME

A member of the public had attended the meeting to update Councillors on a request to CCC to inspect their accounts, with a particular interest in This Land Ltd. The request had so far been largely denied by CCC. The Council was asked by the member of the public to follow up on its letter to This Land Ltd sent in October last year as no sufficient reply had been received.

A member of the public spoke in regard to problems around illegal and nuisance parking and speeding on the High Street.

44/23 COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

District & County Cllr Mark Goldsack had sent his apologies for the meeting.

NOTED – consolidated District Councillors' report.

Cllr Vellacott said that he had represented the Town Council at ECDC's Planning Committee meeting when the development on Brook Street was being considered. The planning application had been approved subject to the signing of an S106 agreement and conditions.

Cllr Horgan had attended a Firebreak Pass Out Parade. Children, including some from Soham Village College, had attended a week's course involving firefighter training to improve self esteem and confidence.

Cllr Woodbridge asked if ECDC is planning to charge for green bin collections. Cllr Vellacott said there were no plans currently to charge, although green waste is the only type of waste that can be charged for in addition to Council Tax.

45/23 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. APPROVED by a majority – the minutes from the Full Council Meeting held 10th July 2023. Proposed Cllr Johnston, seconded Cllr Aitchison.
- b. NOTED – the draft minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held 31st July 2023. The August meeting had been cancelled as there had been no significant applications to consider.
- c. NOTED – the draft minutes of the Community Amenities Committee Meeting held 4th September 2023.

- d. NOTED – the draft minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee Meeting held 4th September 2023.

46/23

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.

- a. NOTED – Clerk’s Report.

47/23

FINANCE & GOVERNANCE MATTERS

- a. APPROVED unanimously – Receipts & Payments for August/September 2023 (as listed at the end of the agenda). Proposed Cllr Aitchison, seconded Cllr Woodbridge.
- b. APPROVED by a majority – bank reconciliation and financial reports for June & July 2023. Proposed Cllr Woodbridge, seconded Cllr Jones.
- c. NOTED – completion of external audit of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2022-23 – no matters raised.
- d. APPROVED unanimously – quotation for cloud-based access to Rialtas software, cost £50.00 per month. Proposed Cllr Woodbridge, seconded Cllr Horgan.

48/23

RECREATION GROUND/PAVILION/TOWN MATTERS

- a. APPROVED unanimously – proposal from Cllr Aitchison re: funding of the Neighbourhood Plan of up to a further £3,256.00 (in addition to its current earmarked reserve of £1,900.00) to bring the Plan to completion. Proposed Cllr Dyer, seconded Cllr Chouler. The Council will receive a further £2,118.80 from the Locality grant fund taking the total received from this grant to the maximum £18,000.00 allowed per applicant. It is hoped that public consultation on the draft Plan will commence on 1st November. The Council thanked Cllr Aitchison for all her work on this.
- b. Pavilion Phase II –
- To consider and approve purchase of 40ft shipping container for storage of grounds equipment, cost £1,450 (15 yrs. old) or £3,150 (3 yrs. old) or £3,800 (brand new with venting system), plus extras – lock box, £65.00, padlock for lock box, £55.00, £480.00 for roof covering (for older models), £450.00 for delivery.
It was proposed by Cllr Johnston to purchase a 3-year-old container plus lock box, padlock and delivery at a total cost of £3,720.00 +VAT. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Aitchison. Councillors voted 6 in favour, 3 against with 1 abstention and the proposal was CARRIED.
 - APPROVED by a majority – purchase of a ramp for the front of the building to allow disabled access, cost up to £1,799.95. Proposed Cllr Johnston, seconded Cllr Woodbridge. It was also agreed to ensure signage is put in place stating the weight limit of the ramp.
 - APPROVED by a majority – plans recommended by the Community Amenities Committee for submission to ECDC. (Cost of submitting planning application to be obtained and agreed at the October meeting). Proposed Cllr Chouler, seconded Cllr Dyer.
 - APPROVED by a majority – further budget of up to £3,000 for demolition related costs including any necessary tree works

and tree protection scheme. Proposed Cllr Chouler, seconded Cllr Jones.

- c. APPROVED unanimously – quotations from Anglian Water (£3,200.40) and Shane White Groundworks Ltd (£1,100.00 +VAT) for connection of water to the Weatheralls Allotments, Proposed Cllr Pallett, seconded Cllr Aitchison.
- d. APPROVED unanimously – quotation for crushed tarmac for car park area at the Weatheralls Allotments, cost £2,450.00 +VAT. Proposed Cllr Horgan, seconded Cllr Woodbridge. This work will take place after the water connection has been completed.
- e. APPROVED unanimously – proposals for Connections Bus to come to the recreation ground one evening per week during term time, and to facilitate two community youth information evenings (some grant funding might be available for the Connections Bus). Proposed Cllr Chouler, seconded Cllr Aitchison. Current youth provision in the town is limited and it is hoped that the Bus will provide an opportunity to establish youth work on the recreation ground, with a view to having a more permanent solution, possibly at the Scout Hut, in the future.
- f. Cllr Horgan declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item (Vice Chair of the Licencing Committee, ECDC) and abstained from the vote. Cllr Pallett proposed that the Council agrees in principle to allow Alina's Kitchen to trade at Kingfisher Drive, subject to terms and conditions to be agreed. Cllr Chouler seconded the proposal. Councillors voted 6 in favour, 2 against with 2 abstentions and the proposal was CARRIED.
- g. APPROVED by a majority – for the Clerk to estimate the cost of maintaining the town's verges, weed spraying, and maintenance of the Brook Dam Lane duck pond area, and bring back to Council. Proposed Cllr Chouler, seconded Cllr Jones. Cllr Horgan proposed that a strongly worded letter be sent to CCC Highways regarding their change of policy on weed spraying, and the proposal was seconded by Cllr Johnston and APPROVED unanimously.

49/23

MATTERS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION AND DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

- Planning Committee – Monday 25th September, 1pm.
- Finance & Policy Committee – Monday 2nd October, 10:30am.
- Full Council – Monday 9th October, 7:15pm.
- Community Amenities – Monday 4th December, 7:15pm.

Internal decoration for cemetery chapel.

Scout Hut Lease.

Letter to This Land and feedback from meeting (Cllr Johnston).

The meeting was closed at 9:05pm.

Approved and signed by the Chairman, 9th October 2023