



Soham Town Council
The Walter Gidney Pavilion
Fountain Lane
Soham
Cambridgeshire CB7 5ED
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 9th October 2023.

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

In attendance: County Cllr Bill Hunt.
District Cllrs Lucius Vellacott and Keith Horgan.
There were 6 members of the public present.

- 50/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Cllrs Glenn Woodbridge Rosemary Aitchison and Glenn Dyer (personal).
- 51/23 COUNCILLORS' DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**
Cllr Johnston declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 58c – to consider donation to North Chapel Trustees for storage of pews (Trustee).
- 52/23 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS & TOWN CLLR UPDATES**
- a. Mr Peter Leonard – Cllr Woricker led the Council in a moment's reflection on the passing of Mr Leonard who served on the Council from 2019 to 2022. Cllr Woricker said that Mr Leonard's contribution to the town would live on through his legacy of tree planting on the High Street.
 - b. Soham to Wicken Cycleway update – Cllr Woricker said that CCC Highways & Transport Committee had agreed the plans for a shared cycle/pedestrian path and separate equestrian path, and had accepted funding from Soham Town Council of £1.13m to build this. Funding had been secured by the Town Council from ECDC and the Combined Authority. It is expected that work will begin later into the first quarter of next year to allow for an extended period of public consultation. Cllr Woricker said that he was very proud that the cycleway was now coming to fruition and that it remains very much a Soham Town Council project.
 - c. This Land Ltd – update from meeting & to consider further correspondence – Cllrs Johnston and Woricker had attended the meeting which had been productive, frank and positive. This Land are happy to meet as often as necessary to discuss any issues.

Rather than sending further correspondence, it was agreed that any issues could be raised via Cllrs Johnston and Woricker.

Matters raised at the meeting: -

- A six-week consultation on the Neighbourhood Development Plan will begin on 1st November. All households will receive a leaflet towards the end of October inviting them to take part.
- Funding opportunities – ECDC’s Growth & Infrastructure Fund has been reopened and an application will be made in support of one of the Council’s ongoing projects.

53/23

PUBLIC COMMENT TIME

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

- Eastern Gateway – concerns were raised over the recent numerous amendments to the planning application. In particular, site access through Brewhouse Lane and a proposed wetland children’s play area.
- Mr Dan Schumann (Viva) addressed Councillors in regard to Viva’s request to use the recreation ground for an arts and music festival (see item 58a). Mr Schumann said that the festival would be family-oriented and possibly themed around a current issue such as climate change.

54/23

COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

District Cllr Horgan had submitted a report on behalf of all District Councillors which was NOTED.

District Cllr Vellacott shared the Council’s condolences on the passing of Peter Leonard. Cllr Vellacott reported that the proposed congestion charge for Cambridge had been dropped. An appeal against the refusal of planning permission for an outbuilding on The Butts had been submitted to the Inspector. Soham Village College has applied for outline permission to construct a 3g football pitch. Cllr Vellacott now has a column in the Ely Standard and the Council can email him items of interest for publication.

County Cllr Hunt said that he was delighted to see the Soham to Wicken cycleway getting underway and that he fully supports it. The government has announced plans to improve Ely Railway Junction and the A10 between Ely and Cambridge. Upgrading of the railway network could take up to 98,000 containers off the region’s roads. Cllr Hunt does not support blanket 20mph speed limits but recognises their benefits in particular areas. However, Cllr Hunt would support the 20mph zone in Soham if it is supported by Town Councillors who are the elected representatives of the town.

Cllr Ross asked why a new health centre in Soham was planned for the last phase of the Eastern Gateway development in 2036. Cllr Johnston said that This Land had given assurances that this is a priority and that funding is being made available. Cllr Johnston will seek further clarification on this.

55/23

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. APPROVED unanimously – the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 11th September 2023. Proposed Cllr Johnston, seconded Cllr Horgan.
- b. NOTED – the draft minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held 25th September 2023.

56/23 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.

- a. NOTED – Clerk’s Report.

57/23 FINANCE & GOVERNANCE MATTERS

- a. APPROVED unanimously – Receipts & Payments for September/October 2023 (as listed at the end of the agenda). Proposed Cllr Johnston, seconded Cllr Chouler.
- b. APPROVED unanimously – bank reconciliation and financial reports to 31st August 2023. Proposed Cllr Jones, seconded Cllr Horgan.

58/23 RECREATION GROUND/PAVILION/TOWN MATTERS

- a. APPROVED unanimously (in principle) – use of the recreation ground by Viva for a family arts and music festival in June 2024. Proposed Cllr Pallett, seconded Cllr Horgan.
- b. Scout Hut lease – to consider amendments to existing proposed lease. Cllrs Woricker & Johnston had met with representatives of the Scout Group who had requested that the following matters be considered: -
- Peppercorn rent of £1 per year (previously £412.00 per year). This was APPROVED in principle by a majority.
 - A 99-year term. It was agreed that a 35-year term would give security to the Scout Group whilst not tying them, or the Council, into a long lease which may not work in the future. The lease would include a right of renewal clause.
 - Omission of the clause requesting copies of documentation relating to sub-letting the premises.

The Scout Group will undertake to pay for their water usage.

It was APPROVED unanimously to engage the Council’s solicitor to draw up a draft lease to include these terms. Proposed Cllr Jones, seconded Cllr Ross. The Finance & Policy Committee will approve the expenditure for this.

Cllr Horgan said that all District Cllrs would be pleased with this outcome.

c. Pavilion Phase II –

- APPROVED unanimously – Andrew Fleet Architectural Technologists as the Council’s preferred supplier for the duration of the project. Proposed Cllr Jones, seconded Cllr Johnston.
 - To consider and approve architect’s costs for submitting plans to the Local Planning Authority (ECDC) for construction of a new rear hall and associated facilities – this item was deferred to November meeting as the quotation had not been received.
 - It was noted that this item does not relate to Pavilion Phase II. APPROVED by a majority – donation of £250.00 to North Chapel Trustees for storage of pews. Proposed Cllr Pallett, seconded Cllr Ross. Cllr Johnston abstained from the vote due to her declared interest.
- d. Churchyard wall repair – structural engineer’s specification (NOTED) and to consider and agree any shortfall in funding. Cllr Horgan said that ECDC had agreed to extend their funding of this project to cover the new quotation of £6,892.35. It was proposed by Cllr Horgan to proceed with the work now that the Council had complied with everything the Diocese had requested. The proposal was seconded

by Cllr Chouler. The vote was recorded as follows: Cllrs Jones, Pallett, Horgan, Ross and Chouler voted in favour, Cllrs Johnston and Woricker abstained. CARRIED.

- e. APPROVED by a majority – quotation for weed spraying, cost approximately £1,300.00 +VAT. It was agreed to wait for the next CCC Full Council meeting before proceeding to see if they reverse their decision not to spray and, if so, whether they will do the spraying before the winter. One further quotation is awaited and it was agreed to delegate a decision to the Clerk (the cheapest quotation will be taken up as both companies are equally reliable). Proposed Cllr Horgan, seconded Cllr Johnston. The vote was recorded as follows: Cllrs Jones, Pallett, Horgan, Johnston and Chouler voted in favour, Cllr Ross voted against, Cllr Woricker abstained. CARRIED.
- f. APPROVED unanimously – cost of moving the Council’s CCTV system to OpenEye Cloud, cost £375.00 +VAT. Proposed Cllr Chouler, seconded Cllr Horgan.
- g. CONSIDERED and approved unanimously **not to** allow use of the pavilion toilets for Soham Carnival 2024 in line with Council policy. There are disabled toilets in the car park available to anyone with a Radar key, and a Changing Places Pod will also be in place by the time of the event.
- h. APPROVED unanimously – signing of the Armed Forces Covenant. Proposed Cllr Chouler, seconded Cllr Johnston. The Council will pledge to continue its current support of the local Royal British Legion and associated events, as well as the use of the Council’s website to signpost to other support services.

59/23

CORRESPONDENCE FOR INFORMATION

- a. NOTED – Downfields Windmill Open Day re: thank you for grant and breakdown of expenses.

60/23

MATTERS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION AND DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

- Planning Committee – Monday 30th October, 1pm.
- Finance & Policy Committee – Monday 6th November, 10:30am.
- Full Council – Monday 13th November, 7:15pm.
- Community Amenities – Monday 4th December, 7:15pm.
- Councillor surgery – 6th November, 12pm.

61/23

MOTION TO EXCLUDE

It was RESOLVED unanimously 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 item of business, as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. Proposed Cllr Ross, seconded Cllr Johnston.

The meeting was closed to the public at 8:50pm.

62/23

PURCHASE OF LAND

- a. Purchase of Land (Millcroft) update and confirmation of purchase price and costs – Cllr Johnston said that contracts have been signed on behalf of the Council. The cost of the land is £49,500.00 plus legal fees of approximately £2,000.00 +VAT. Once completion has taken place, T1 and T2 assessments of the land will be undertaken to

ascertain its suitability for burials. It was made clear that the land is to be used as an extension to the cemetery and that there are no plans to build on it. It was agreed to apply for a change of use when the land has been deemed suitable for burials. All Millcroft allotment holders had been given a year's notice to vacate their plots, with the offer of a transition to the Weatheralls site. Millcroft allotments are non-statutory.

The sale of two pieces of land owned by the Council will be discussed at the November meeting. It was NOTED that the wall at one of the sites is unsafe and in urgent need of repair. It is currently fenced off with Heras fencing.

The meeting was closed at 9:10pm.

Approved and signed 13th November 2023.