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## **SOHAM TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Soham Town Council Community Amenities Committee Meeting held at the Walter Gidney Pavilion, Fountain Lane, recreation ground, Soham on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

**Present:** Cllrs E Johnston (Chairman), R Aitchison, G Dyer, A Pallett, and K Horgan.  
M Strand, Town Clerk.

**In attendance:** There were no members of the public present.

The meeting was opened at 7:15pm.

### **MINUTES**

#### **COM10/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr David Woricker (personal); Cllr Jones (other commitments).

#### **COM11/24 COUNCILLORS' DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

None.

#### **COM12/24 APPROVAL OF MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING**

- a) APPROVED by a majority – Community Amenities Committee meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023. Proposed Cllr Horgan, seconded Cllr Dyer.

#### **COM13/24 COMMUNITY AMENITIES PROJECTS FOR DISCUSSION**

##### **Project updates: -**

- a) Soham to Wicken Cycleway – Cllr Woricker had given an update at Full Council on the 12<sup>th</sup> February to say that hedge cutting along the cycleway has begun in preparation for the resurfacing works later in the year. Cllr Horgan had asked if there were any plans for car parking at either end of the cycleway. This was noted and clarification will be sought.
- b) Skatepark – Cllr Pallett presented a revised plan for improvements to the skatepark which had been approved by users but would involve an extension of 4.8m into the recreation ground. Cllr Pallett said that there was no alternative to this because of trees on one side and there being no way of properly improving the park within its current footprint. Cllr Aitchison proposed to recommend to Full Council that the extension to the skatepark be permitted and the proposal was seconded by Cllr Pallett. Councillors voted 3 in favour and 2 against and the proposal was CARRIED.

- c) Goal posts (recreation ground) – Cllr Johnston reported that full-sized, wheeled goal posts had been purchased and installed onto the recreation ground in place of the smaller ones which had been donated to Soham Town Rangers.
- d) Scout Hut Lease – Cllr Johnston said that the lease has now been drawn up by the Council’s solicitors and sent to the Scout Group for signing.
- e) Changing Places facility – this has now been installed by ECDC, and the two disabled parking bays on which it stands will be reinstated elsewhere within the car park. Cllr Johnston asked for it to be noted that ECDC leases the car park from the Town Council.
- f) High Street planters – Cllr Horgan has been following up on this for a year since the first meeting with Highways to discuss this. The latest update is that Highways are awaiting a date from their contractor for work to be carried out.
- g) Cemetery Chapel – CEL Group Ltd had completed the snagging task raised but this did not include replacing the skirting boards as these had not been removed by them. Quotations for the soakaways and internal decoration are still being sought.
- h) Allotments – Cllr Dyer said that there are currently no major projects happening on the Council’s allotments sites at present. There is rubbish to clear on the Berrycroft site but had been proving difficult as there is no vehicular access. However, a possible solution has been found and further information and costs will be brought to a Full Council meeting for consideration in the near future.

**Project decisions: -**

- i) Drayton Meadows – Cllr Johnston said that the wildlife camera had been purchased but has not yet been installed because of inclement weather. Once it has been installed it will be linked to the Council’s website so that residents can view the wildlife it picks up. It was agreed to purchase the bug houses, bird and bat boxes, sculpture and plaque, benches and bins in due course, most of which would be funded from the Pride of Place Grant. It was also agreed to purchase an Owl box. However, Cllr Horgan had recently made one and offered it to the Council free of charge. This was gratefully received. It is unclear where the bird and bat boxes will go as there are not many mature trees in the Meadow at present. Cllr Johnston thanked Cllr Aitchison and her husband, and Cllr Dyer for all their work at the Meadow.
- j) Pavilion Phase II – APPROVED unanimously for Cllr Johnston and the Clerk to apply to any appropriate funding source for the rebuild of the rear hall. Proposed Cllr Dyer, seconded Cllr Aitchison. Andrew Fleet Architects had provided estimated consultancy and build costs for the project and these were shared at the meeting. They will also be circulated to all Councillors by email. The **estimated** cost of construction is £1.14m with consultancy fees estimated at just over £106,000.
- k) Recreation ground – to consider tree planting and Coronation Tree. Cllr Aitchison is picking up a free Oak tree from ECDC in the coming weeks and it was APPROVED unanimously to plant this in the cemetery as the Coronation Tree. Proposed Cllr Aitchison, seconded Cllr Dyer. A plaque to mark the tree may be purchased in future.  
Cllr Johnston proposed that Mr Aitchison advises the Council on costs and variety of up to 7 new trees for the recreation ground and this was agreed.
- l) Moveable Vehicle Activated Sign (MVAS) – to consider purchase and placement of a flashing speed sign (or signs) for recommendation to Full Council. Cllr Horgan

proposed that this is put on hold pending the outcome of the proposed 20mph zone and this was agreed.

- m) To consider and approve budget for D-Day Commemoration. The organisers had revised their request to £975.00 and this was APPROVED unanimously. Proposed Cllr Aitchison, seconded Cllr Pallett. The event will take place on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June and will include a Drumhead Service on the recreation ground and a display of memorabilia with light refreshments at the Pavilion.

**COM14/24 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.

There were no members of the public present.

**COM15/24 COMMUNITY LAND**

- a. Purchase of land for community benefit (sports, recreation, cemetery, events, allotments, green space, woodland, wetland and dog walking) – Cllr Johnston presented Councillors with maps of various locations in the town where land may be available for purchase. The specific areas are commercially sensitive and cannot, therefore, be recorded in the minutes or shared outside of the Council. Cllr Johnston asked Councillors to feedback which areas may be used for what purpose so that a proposal can be considered at the Full Council meeting in April.

**COM16/24 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To be confirmed.

The meeting was closed at 8:50pm.