



SOMERFORD
PARISH COUNCIL



Somerford Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting on 20 September 2021

Present

Councillor Geoff Bell (Chairman)

Councillor Paul Crompton (vice-Chairman)

Councillor Richard Crookes

Councillor Jeanette Hardman

Councillor Simon Hughes

Councillor Gwyneth Derbyshire

Mr Carlton Evans – Clerk

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Hardman for any Loachbrook Estate discussion.

Councillor Derbyshire for any Loachbrook Estate discussion.

Part 1

Public Forum

One member of the public was present. He spoke about the impending Cheshire East Transport Committee meeting which would consider introducing and 'levelling up' car parking charges across the Borough. He thought this a retrograde step and counter-productive, as it would likely encourage people to shop at retail centres and elsewhere, rather than in Congleton town centre. Therefore he felt the proposal should be rejected.

He also brought the Council up to date on the closure of the Congleton recycling centre. Despite the Environment Committee having identified 2 alternative sites, and numerous complaints, this had all been ignored. He said there had been an increase in fly-tipping already. The Council took note and felt there should be an easier way to report instances of fly-tipping, and a system to provide hard data on whether/how much it was increasing.

Apologies

Councillor Allan Power (work commitments)

Ward Councillor John Wray (conflicting engagements)

111/21 Minutes

The Council **resolved** that the minutes of the Council meeting on 16 August be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record, subject to a small clarification on which companies were responsible for some of the difficulties at the Loachbrook Estate; and that there is a problem of poor drainage rather than flooding at the Estate.

112/21 Accounts

The following receipts were noted

- £0.70 – Lloyds Dividend

The following previously approved expenditure was noted

- £2,218.82 – Materials etc. for public footpath at Rhead's Lane works
- £300 – Skip hire at Rhead's Lane
- £5.99 – Microsoft subscription
- £200.80 – HMRC in respect of the Clerk's salary

The following payments were approved

- £30 – ChALC (finance training for the Clerk)
- £49.99 – Printer Ink (paid by the Clerk)

The Council also noted that the second tranche of the Cheshire East precept (£20,000) had been received. The current account balance as of 20 September 2021 is £62,936.

113/21 Planning Applications

21/4513C Proposed single storey extension at 46 Black Firs Lane - the Council **resolved** to object since the wrong address had been given and therefore the appropriate neighbours had not been properly notified.

21/4621C Proposed side facing single storey extension at 14 Oak Tree Avenue, CW12 4QF - the Council **resolved** that they had no objection to this proposal.

114/21 Rhead's Meadows and Black Firs Nature Reserve

On Rhead's Meadows the Council noted that it had now been mown except between the tree plantings. It had not been possible to remove the cuttings as there was so little to collect. Chairman Geoff Bell had contacted Cheshire Wildlife Trust (Hannah Dalton) to discuss this but had not so far received a response. Councillor Richard Crookes offered to mow the mound again in October.

Despite the loss of a few saplings that had been planted the Council decided not to act to procure replacements yet. The Council did however discuss the need to continue

investigating a longer-term maintenance contract. The Clerk reported that despite repeated attempts to contact them he had not received any responses from potential contractors.

Chairman Geoff Bell reported a conversation about collections from the dog bins. Some were being used very frequently, e.g. near the DWH site, and we could expect to receive a communication from Congleton Council about paying for more frequent collections. He also reported on continuing meetings with Bellway to discuss drainage in and around their sites. They were receptive to tackling those matters that were in their control.

The Council discussed the Himalayan Balsam at Black Firs which would need spraying in Spring next year, probably in May/June before it sets seed. There needed to be a longer-term plan to tackle this. The Clerk reported that he had tried to contact Equator several times by email and phone about clearing the ponds at Black Firs but had not received a response. The Council **resolved** to discuss longer term maintenance plans for both RM and BF at a future Council meeting, which would entail setting aside money from future budgets for maintenance, repairs, planting and new plans etc. based on more formal costings. Councillors agreed to meet at the site on 14 October to discuss this further.

The Council **resolved** that Chairman Geoff Bell should go ahead and sign the lease to transfer ownership of Black Firs to the Council.

115/21 New Housing Developments

Chairman Geoff Bell updated the meeting that he had contacted DWH to remove their advertising banners and had removed several other informal advertising notices from other locations in the Parish.

Councillor Gwyneth Derbyshire informed the meeting that discussions with Bovis, United Utilities and Matthews & Leigh had been arranged and would take place within the next few days, but she was not confident that all would attend.

Councillor Jeanette Hardman reported that although Matthews & Leigh were supposed to have been on site for several weeks to rectify/address numerous problems it appeared that they had left after only a few days. A small section of paving had been fixed. Elsewhere, the footpath at Loachbrook had been fixed, and there were now some raised kerbs at the sites of some bus stops.

Councillors noted that the speed indicator device (SID) on Holmes Chapel Road was defective. The Clerk will investigate further.

116/21 Policies for review – Adult Safeguarding Policy

Discussion was postponed until the next meeting.

117/21 Business Plan Refresh

Discussion was postponed until the next meeting.

118/21 Report from Cheshire East

No report due to Councillor John Wray's absence.

119/21 Chairman and Members' Report

Councillor Richard Crookes reported that Footpath 2 had been repaired but there were still 'no entry' signs in place. The Clerk will check whether these can now be removed.

120/21 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported that he had contacted Cheshire East Highways about boundary signs on the CLR and was waiting for a reply. He had also been in touch with Cheshire East and Miller Homes about the ragwort on their verges/sites.

The meeting ended at 2145 hrs