

## Somerford Parish Council

### Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 February 2022

#### Present

- Councillor Geoff Bell (Chairman)
- Councillor Richard Crookes
- Councillor Gwyneth Derbyshire
- Councillor Simon Hughes (arrived 1940 hrs)
- Mr Carlton Evans – Clerk

#### Declarations of Interest

Cllr Derbyshire for any Loachbrook discussions.

#### Part 1

##### Public Forum

Three members of the public were present. One discussed the ongoing question of waste disposal sites and whether there is adequate provision of facilities since the Congleton tip closed. He is still pursuing the matter and trying to ascertain the evidence base on which Congleton Town Council had made their decisions. He also informed the Council of Congleton Town's decision not to introduce car parking charges across the town. Two other members had recently moved into the parish and wanted to hear more about Black Firs Nature Reserve and how they might get involved in its upkeep.

#### Apologies

Councillor Paul Crompton (health matters)

Councillor Jeanette Hardman (shielding)

Ward Councillor John Wray (health matters)

The Chairman noted that since the last meeting Cllr Allan Power had tendered his resignation due to work commitments. Councillors expressed their gratitude to Cllr Power for his service to the parish and the Chairman will write to thank him formally.

#### 13/22 Minutes

The Council **resolved** that the minutes of the Council meeting on 17 January 2022 be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

#### 14/22 Accounts

The account balance at 1 February was noted - £47,698.17.

The following Invoices were approved:

- £210 – TWM for a Speed Indicator Device assessment
- £290 – Shona Amies for ongoing website maintenance
- £120 – Roebuck Agricultural Services for topping at Rhead's Meadows

### 15/22 Planning Applications

**22/0353C** – 9 Chelford Road, Somerford, CW12 4QD – addition of a detached three bay oak car port.

The Council **resolved** not to object to this application but expressed its concern that the construction would spoil the streetscape both because of the positioning at the front of the plot and its aspect to the road (backing onto the road) and ask for the existing hedging to be retained to soften the view. The Council also expressed concern at seemingly inconsistent decisions and the precedent this could set. A previous application had been discouraged although arguably less intrusive on the streetscape, and another had been constructed with a front facing aspect. The Clerk will write to the Planning Department accordingly.

### 16/22 Rhead's Meadows

The Chairman and Clerk had met John Harding for a site visit and were awaiting a formal quote for ongoing maintenance. A site visit with Equator would happen in the next fortnight and a third contractor, Jack Roebuck, had expressed interest in quoting for the work. Flooding by the back of the neighbouring properties had been discussed with Bellway when the Chairman and Clerk met them recently. Bellway said it was not feasible to install drains that would fall and link to their site to use their surface water drainage system. They did however suggest scraping away the topsoil to create a swale that might drain away the water more efficiently. Swales at the two locations that are regularly flooded could cost in the region of £2,000. They could provide more privacy for neighbouring residents as well as providing better conditions for the perimeter hedging.

The Council **resolved** to consult locals on these proposals through the website, social media and Newsletter. The Chairman and Clerk will draft a letter to residents addressing some of their privacy concerns and explain what steps the Council is taking. The Clerk will discuss with CWT promises for additional plug planting and wildflower seeding.

### 17/22 Black Firs Nature Reserve

The recent storms had brought down some significant branches and ivy growth which would need clearing by tree surgeons. The perimeter fence by the verge on Black Firs Lane needs replacing, the verges themselves cleared and, ideally, a pathway created to increase the length of the lane which is safe to walk. The Clerk will discuss with Cheshire East how this can be pursued as they are responsible for the verges.

## 18/22 Housing Developments

**Loachbrook** – Bovis have still not been in touch with residents about the numerous outstanding problems on the estate. The idea of a joint approach with Bath Vale looks unlikely at present despite the similar problems they are experiencing. Bath Vale residents are investigating an alternative management company and Loachbrook residents may follow suit. Cllr Derbyshire will consider pursuing this with Ward Councillor John Wray.

**Somerford Gate** - Chairman Bell and the Clerk had met Bellway on 15 February. **Site Access** – Bellway will review the misplaced signage to try to ensure that subcontractors access the site from the Link Road, not Black Firs Lane or Chelford Road. They reassured us that they will reinstate the hedgerow at the boundary line on Somerford Lane once construction is complete. **Cycleway** – Bellway will consider the precise placement of the route and materials in due course. **Water Supply** – Bellway will investigate whether a supply from their site to Rhead’s Meadows is feasible so that we can more easily water the trees and plants etc. **Foul Water Connections** – Bellway will investigate possible problems with this and revert to us. **Surface Water Sewer Work** – will commence on 28 March, starting from the Holmes Chapel Road end of Chelford Road and will take approximately 16 weeks. **Noise Generative Activities** – this has not been as bad recently but Bellway will continue to press subcontractors to respect permitted hours.

## 19/22 A536 Link Road

Councillors noted that a meeting would take place in March with the Councils in contiguous parishes to discuss matters of mutual interest, especially the CLR.

## 20/22 Future Meetings

The Council noted that the next Parish Council meeting would be held at Somerford Park Farm in March, but that it was fully booked for April. Therefore the Council **resolved** to hold the Annual Parish Meeting at Black Firs Primary School on Tuesday April 19, subject to availability which the Clerk will confirm. The Council will provide biscuits, tea and coffee.

## 21/22 Platinum Jubilee Celebrations

The Council discussed numerous ideas based on local feedback. The Clerk will speak to Revd. Anne Marie Naylor about a service at Somerford Chapel. Councillors were reluctant to support any events e.g. at Rhead’s Meadows as they would be very labour intensive. Community events elsewhere such as on the housing developments would be better organised by residents themselves. Cllr Hughes will investigate whether a beacon could be lit adjacent to the trigonometry stone but he was not hopeful. The Clerk will discuss with Cheshire East the possibility of installing a plaque at the Chelford Road overbridge and renaming it the Jubilee Bridge. The Council will continue to investigate these and other ideas

such as a large tree at Rhead's Meadows, a commemorative bench, or a mural under the Loachbrook bridge.

### **22/22 Report from Cheshire East Councillor**

No report due to Cllr Wray's absence.

### **23/22 Chairman and Members' reports**

Councillor Crookes informed the meeting that he would soon be leaving the area and he was therefore uncertain how long he could remain as a parish councillor. The Council **resolved** to advertise the two vacancies as soon as possible, using the parish Newsletter, website and Facebook pages.

### **24/22 Clerk's Report**

The Council **resolved** to pay the costs of repairs to the SID (£550 plus a £175 callout charge) but the Clerk will investigate the price of replacing the whole thing if more cost effective. The next meeting of the Council will need to review its core policies in advance of the annual audit. Although not a matter for the Parish Council to pursue a parishioner had asked about the CCTV at Somerford Park Farm capturing images of passers-by. The Clerk will direct enquiries to the owners of Somerford Park Farm. The Council **resolved** to keep funding the emptying of dog bins as it does now but keep in mind the possibility of additional bins elsewhere. The police liaison meeting at Holmes Chapel will take place on 14 March, Cllr Derbyshire and the Clerk will attend. A pruning course at Rhead's Meadows will take place on Sunday 6 March. The Clerk reported that study for his CiLCA qualification would likely take in the region of 200 hrs over the course of a year. The Council **resolved** to split the cost of overtime for the Clerk with Astbury Parish Council. The Clerk reminded Councillors that while we are carrying two Councillor vacancies it is even more important that Councillors attend Council meetings if at all possible to ensure that we remain quorate. Cllr Derbyshire signalled that she would likely be absent for the next meeting.

### **The meeting ended at 2200 hrs**

X

Chairman