

South Somercotes Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 15 January 2024 at St. Peter's Church, Louth Road, South Somercotes

Present:

Chair	Cllr Mr Antony Baker
Vice-Chair	Cllr Mrs Nicola Barton
	Cllr Mr David Poulter
	Cllr Mrs Denise Day
	Cllr Mr Brian Lewis
	Cllr Miss Julie Stretton

Also Present:

Clerk	Ms Lainey Simpson (temporary)
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Members of Public 10 members of the Public

Item 0124/01 Welcome to the Meeting:

The chair welcomed members of the parish and set out how the meeting would be conducted as there was a long agenda and some items may require questions from the public to be answered. Cllr Baker agreed to be more flexible on public's participation.

Item 0124/02 Apologies:

Cllr McNally and Cllr Rickett sent their apologies.

Item 0124/03 Declarations of Pecuniary Interest in accordance with LGA 2011:

None

Item 0124/04:

Minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2023 were approved as a true record. Proposed by Cllr Lewis and seconded by Cllr Stretton.

Item 0124/05 Matters Outstanding:

a) Grass cutting is currently taking place by Community Team Pride of East Lindsey, arranged by Cllr Baker and has been free on a one-off basis. Grass cutting for churchyard to be arranged one quote currently submitted at £8000. Currently Jubilee field is being cut by Tudor Ground Maintenance. This to be renewed possibly at around £50.

b) Cllr Poulter said he thought positioning the defibrillator nearer the church was not a good idea. Cllr Baker suggested purchasing a new self-contained defibrillator box which did not need an electrical supply that could be sited in the phone box. It was agreed that the Council should investigate the possibility of selling the old box but if this did not happen Cllr Poulter suggested having 2 defibrillators. It was agreed to buy the new defibrillator box. Cllr Baker proposed, Cllr Day seconded.

c) There had been one applicant for the position of Parish Clerk and a panel of councillors had interviewed the applicant who was present and subsequently introduced to councillors.

d) All currently held council documents to be loaded onto the Councils website. The Webmaster has been allocated by LALC who will upload the documents so that parishioners have access to information.

Item 0124/06 Financial Matters:

a) Cllr Lewis said the acquisition of .gov email addresses for clerk and councillors would ensure all council related emails would be kept separate from personal addresses. The clerk would have generic clerk@southsomercotespc.gov.uk The acquisition was proposed by Cllr Lewis, seconded by Cllr Stretton and approved.

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- b) Christmas fete funds. It was agreed that £40.47 of the £220.47 raised be given to the church. The remainder to go to Air Ambulance. Cllr Stretton suggested looking at other local charities in the future.
- c) There have been difficulties in getting a full picture of the accounts. All the bills appear to have been paid from one account. Chairman to speak more about this later in meeting.
- d) A laptop that would fulfil all requirements for the parish clerk has been sourced by Cllr Lewis. The purchase of a laptop up to the value of £500 was suggested. This would include the necessary software. It would not be necessary to purchase a printer as the proposed new clerk already owned one. Cllr Baker proposed, Cllr Stretton seconded, and it was unanimously agreed.
- e) It was proposed that a web-based document backup facility was purchased, Cllr Lewis said the purchase of the Microsoft package of software included a facility that enabled cloud backup. Cllr Baker proposed, Cllr Stretton seconded. Agreed.
- f) It was agreed that the precept does not need to be amended from the 5% previously agreed. The Precept paperwork will be completed and submitted to East Lindsey District Council.
- g) A payment of £576 was outstanding due to noncompliance of audit. A previous payment was queried by Cllr Poulter, and it was explained that this was due to an earlier noncompliance going to be taken to debt collector so one charge had been paid and two more charges were to be paid. Cllr Lewis proposed the £576 should be paid, Cllr Baker seconded. Agreed. Cllr Poulter queried if any further invoices were due, but this was not known due to sketchy previous minutes and other information.
- h) Bank account signatories had been changed to current council members. Regarding electronic internet banking, each transaction needed to have two online signatories to comply with the security arrangements in the financial standing agreement. Signatories to be Cllr Lewis and Cllr Baker. Cllr Stretton proposed, seconded by Cllr Poulter. Approved. Queries as to why there are three accounts - one of which was not recognised by the council - all costing the public purse. Cllr Baker suggested holding just one account and proposed closing the other two. Cllr Lewis seconded, and it was agreed. Cllr Poulter was concerned that costs regarding Jubilee Field should not come out of the parish council account. It agreed there would be separate tabs for accounts to ensure this did not happen. Member of public spoke of earlier times when accounts were considered a charity so did not incur charges. However as there was now a charge for each account Cllr Baker said it would be worth looking for an account that pays interest.
- i) It was suggested that the Council use the LALC external auditor at a cost of £180 in order to get the accounts ready for the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). The auditor will assist the council to complete this. Cllr Poulter thought the old website still had all the info required but it was thought that it had been closed down by the former clerk. Proposed by Cllr Baker seconded by Cllr Stretton. Agreed.
- j) Payments have previously been made to HMRC, but this hadn't been done for a while so enquiries are ongoing as this will need to be set up for the new clerk.

Item 0124/07 Training and Correspondence:

Training was available for new councillors, and it will also eventually be available for the new clerk. Cllr Lewis, Cllr Baker and Cllr Stretton showed interest and Cllr Baker advised that it was open to all councillors if they wished to take it up. Cllr Poulter, Cllr Day declined training, Cllr Barton made a note.

Item 0124/08 Planning Matters:

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No new planning matters however there was an amendment to a planning application previously agreed. The council agreed that this should proceed without comment.

Item 0124/09 External Correspondence:

None.

Item 0124/10 Matters Arising:

a) Church Trust has been contacted regarding the door and it although it had been noted by the Trust the matter is very low priority. Cllr Baker suggested hiring a scissor lift at £50 hire and member of the council replace all the lights as there were many out and it made it difficult to see at meetings. Also as the Church Trust was not proposing to replace the non-functioning old church heaters Cllr Baker suggested purchasing a 50 kw space heater at £253 + gas cylinder, padlock and chain. Cllr Stretton said that this would need the written agreement of the Church Trust. All agreed providing written agreement received.

b) There was disquiet among members of the public at the proposed change of name back to South Somercotes Parish Council. It was agreed to speak to Cllr McNally to see what the options were.

c) Cllr Stretton introduced the Council's media policy document which detailed the use of Facebook, social media and Community Magazine to inform the public of meetings etc. Cllr Stretton will liaise with Community Magazine editor. Cllr Poulter stated that only the agenda and council matters should be published and that anything unusual should be discussed with all members of the council before publishing on social media. Links to the East Lindsey website can be published. Cllr Poulter said that the Council should have its own Facebook page. Cllr Lewis proposed, Cllr Baker seconded. Agreed.

d) No outside bodies reports. Cllr Baker suggested looking at who could attend such as police reps.

e) Town Street/ Billingsgate junction. Overgrown hedge issue to be discussed by Cllr Poulter with the homeowner. If unsuccessful then Cllr McNally to give advice on bylaws regarding obstruction of the pavement. Regarding signage/mirror for Town Street/Louth Road junction, Highways needs to be consulted. White fence at Billingsgate is down and in need of need repair.

f) Dog waste bin approved at last meeting needed chasing. Cllr Day said to leave until the next meeting.

g) The D Day anniversary 6 June 2024 discussed whether the event should be marked possibly by a 40's type party. Cllr Stretton suggested using the church for the event and advertise on FB group. Village fete is planned for September. Cllr Stretton suggested dog show to be held April/May. All were in favour. A member of the public asked whether the field could be hired out for external events. It was pointed out that this would require additional insurance. That could be investigated and taken out by the hirer. Current insurance needs to be revisited when it's renewed as it covers events with fireworks and is expensive.

The asset list needs to be updated to show what assets the council have and where they are kept. Cllr Lewis pointed out that the asset list needs to be included in the completion of the AGAR form. Location of assets was discussed. Cllr Stretton was investigating the various locations discussed.

h) Cllr Baker said with the agreement of relatives - or if no relatives can be located - fallen headstones could be moved and leaned again church wall to make mowing of the churchyard easier.

Item 0124/11 Next Meeting and Suggestions for Items to be placed on the next meeting Agenda:

It was resolved that the next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Monday 19 February 2024 commencing at 6pm and the following meeting on 4 March 2024

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting, and the council went into closed session to discuss the appointment of the new parish clerk.

CLOSED SESSION

New Parish Clerk appointed applicant Binal Sawjani. Cllr Lewis, Cllr Stretton, and Cllr Baker had interviewed the applicant and found her to be well if not overqualified for the position. She had extensive knowledge of the area and would be an asset to the council, she was involved in other activities that benefited the area such as the Community Magazine.

Her appointment was proposed by Cllr Lewis and seconded by Cllr Stretton and was carried unanimously. The newly appointed Clerk was asked to rejoin the meeting and offered the position which was accepted.