

SOHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Soham Town Council held at the Pavilion, Soham, on Monday 21 January 2019

Present: Cllrs R Aitchison (Chairman), C Warner, G Dyer, P Lane, G Ginn, H Ross, G Fisher, C Palmer, D Woricker, T Hinsley and Mesdames E Johnston & A Pallett

In Attendance County Cllr W Hunt, County & District Cllr M Goldsack, District Cllr C Sennitt & I Bovingdon

01/19 PUBLIC COMMENT TIME

A resident made representation regarding the closure of the cemetery gates and the inconvenience that this had caused to visitors, particularly the disabled, wishing to visit graves over the Christmas & New Year period. The Clerk confirmed that this had been an unfortunate outcome as both ground staff wanted to take this time off to be with their families but confirmed that the town council had already taken steps towards upgrading cemetery access including installation, subject to relevant planning permissions, of electronic timed gates and that this should alleviate future access problems over evenings, weekends and holiday periods/times.

A resident made representation about the relationship between the corporate entity known as This Land Ltd and the owner and single shareholder Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) and concern regarding both spent and ongoing costs/expenditure by CCC that the taxpayer has and continues to pay/fund since inception/commencement of works to present in its attempts to deliver the Eastern Gateway housing development.

The Clerk noted the resident's concerns however advised the membership that procedurally no decisions or approvals should be taken in the public comment time as the matter had not been formally listed¹ on the agenda and that with membership permission it should be listed for consideration at the next (February) full council meeting.

NOTED Cllr Hinsley stated that Cambridge County Council should provide relevant financial information including all expenditure to Soham Town Council and that this should be on a continuous basis during the lifetime that the Eastern Gateway proposal remains active.

APPROVED a letter requesting Cambridgeshire County Council provide financial (income as well as expenditure) both its original capacity as promoter developer of the Scheme and now as a shareholder of This Land Ltd either under course of normal business between local authorities or where necessary under FOIA request.

02/19 COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

The Chairman invited County Cllr Hunt to make his monthly report to members:

¹ Taking decisions without notification of matters on the formal agenda disenfranchises other residents/members of the public who may wish to add comment to inform members in their deliberations and any approvals made.

- **Ely Bypass-** CCllr Hunt informed the membership that whilst the road was now open to traffic work on the pedestrian footpaths and viewing platforms remained ongoing². The underpass road access to Ely station should be open before the end of February but reminded members that this route was primarily to gain access to the station and that better alternate routes into Ely could be taken using the various exit points off the new bypass.

Cllr Warner questioned CCllr on the delays to the underpass and whether this was caused by instability of the foundations to the bridge. CCllr Hunt answered that he was unaware of any issues.

Cllr Pallett raised concerns about the excessive noise from the vehicles when she had recently walked on the pedestrian viewing platform over the bridge and was reassured that the noise was as consequence of the traffic travelling over the expansion plates which is unavoidable as these structures are necessary for integrity and safety reasons.

Road improvement works required between Ely & Stuntney (A142) have been discretionary delayed until the Summer by CCC and not as result of any financial restrictions but in consideration that residents might need some respite from the extensive roadworks and disruptions to travel that have been happening in the last few years.

NOTED Cllr Pallett's comments regarding the crash barriers that are currently bright silver and her concern that reflection of the sun might act to dazzle drivers posing a safety consideration.
- **A14 upgrade.** CCllr Hunt advised that plans remain active to upgrade the A14 to continuous motorway status between Felixstowe and the Midlands but that this would require local roads and traffic to run alongside any proposed changes (information leaflets left in the Clerks office).
- **Hinchingbrooke Hospital-** CCllr Hunt advised that CCC had invested £25m into upgrading Hinchingbrooke Hospital which it was hoped would take pressures from Addenbrookes and Ely hospital facilities.
- **Pot Hole & Footpath (damage) issues.** CCllr Hunt stated that he receives a weekly update on outstanding road damage issues and expects that after main/arterial roads issues have been dealt with, repair works will then move onto unclassified roads and footpath issues. CCllr Hunt reiterated that if residents have road or footpath concerns or complaints they should initially submit a contact report via CCC's website under 'report a fault' or failing that and in an emergency or difficulty requiring urgent attention he may be contacted directly and he would endeavour to investigate the matter personally.
- **Congestion Charging Cambridge City** CCllr Hunt remains opposed to this action considering that it discriminates and penalises those people who cannot afford to live in Cambridge but need to travel in by car for work.
- **Provision of a new Children's Hospital** proposal to be built on the Addenbrooke's site.
- **Mobile Libraries-** CCllr Hunt indicated that CCC library buildings were now being put to better multi uses acting as community service hubs and that 2 new mobile libraries had recently been purchased with the intention that these will also add value being able to act not only as libraries but include pop-up

² Post meeting note; footpath is open effective w/e 25/01/2019

banks in an expectations that these could provide outreach services to more rural areas and communities.

- **Bridge over Soham Lode** – CCC has now accepted responsibility for the maintenance for the road and bridge over the railway line and Soham Lode which enables traffic to access Soham Village College.

A resident was allowed to question CCllr Hunt on the status of reintroduction of railway station to Soham and whether this was contingent on the housing and population growth increase for Soham defined in the current Local Plan. CCllr Hunt responded that the introduction of the railway station to Soham was not connected to any aspect or housing requirements in the Local Plan. Noting that the plans are now at GRIP 3 stage a station with necessary disabled accessibility provision should hopefully be delivered by 2022 (confirmed by DCllr Bovington) although it is likely to remain a step-on step-off platform arrangement on a single line. The proposed station and line improvements would not allow direct access to and from Cambridge (require onward connection via Ely or Newmarket).

Cllr Warner noted that the original budget proposed allowed for a looped circuit in line which could have provided the possibility of direct train travel from Soham to London and Cambridge.

- **Soham Rotary Club** CCllr Hunt requested whether Soham Rotary Club might be contacted regarding certain matters that needed clarification/formalising to ensure smooth delivery of next year's Christmas tree donation to Soham (High St) and Cllr Fisher agreed to contact the executive officers in regards to this matter.

The Chairman thanked CCllr Hunt for his county council report and having no further questions from members, left the meeting at 7:50pm. Thereafter Cllr Aitchison invited DCllr Goldsack to provide a monthly report on district matters to members:

- **Soham Community Group** – this initiative spearheaded by DCllr Sennitt for the last year and with financial support from Soham Town Council for 3 months accommodation at Millbrooke had its first session recently attracting 29 residents. All residents are welcome as this group was set up to reduce social isolation especially for people over 60. If you know someone who would be interested in attending or for more information please contact DCllr Sennitt.
- **Soham's Man-shed** DCllr Goldsack confirmed that the inaugural meeting of volunteers will be held on 31st January 2019 to launch the service. Initial accommodation have been kindly provided by Town Cllr David Woricker at Angle Farm, and he remained hopeful that a High Street presence (former St Johns ambulance station) might eventually be possible, subject to resolution of ownership and tenancy issues. DCllr Goldsack highlighted not only the practical benefits of 'man shed' members who could offer residents gardening and DIY services but the social health and wellbeing that group members could offer each other tackling issues such as social isolation, depression, loneliness as well as learning new skills. DCllr Goldsack indicated that equipment such as a lathe, belt plane and circular saw and some commercial sponsorship for materials had already been secured for the group to use and that they are also working with Neighbourhood Cares to try to secure a Tuk-Tuk to act possibly as an informal transport service for other community groups in the town.

- **Soham free WiFi-** DCllr Goldsack confirmed that effective 4th February 2019 a free to use WiFi service paid for by ECDC would be available for residents and visitors to Soham High St between the war memorial and Cross Green using the existing CCTV signal link from these cameras on the High St via the antennae on St Andrews church³ and onto Ely Cathedral. Being a free to access service there would be no sign up and log in (code) requirements. Testing of the system is currently underway and initial feedback indicates that all connections are working well.

03/19

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs Chapman & Horman which were duly authorised by the membership. Cllr Woodbridge was marked as absent.

04/19

CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS & TOWN CLLR UPDATES

The Chairman noted that the next Planning Committee meeting would be held on Wednesday 30 January 2019 (commencing 1pm Pavilion).

Cllr Aitchison was pleased to report that a number of Cllr members had recently attended courses and also networking opportunities with other towns and Parish Cllrs as part of their continued professional development (CPD). Cllrs Johnston & Dyer conformed that post-meeting handouts from their recent attendance on a course on Commons and Village Greens management had been circulated to all Cllrs.

NOTED WITH A VOTE OF THANKS to the organisers of this year's Winter fair and to those volunteers who assisted in putting up the Christmas lights and decorated the tree in the High St.

NOTED receipt of thanks to Soham Town Council from Cllr Palmer on behalf of St Andrews Church carol concert for the financial contribution used to provide the outside PA system and banners.

The Chairman mentioned her recent invitation from Soham Town Rangers Football Club to attend one of its local matches and provision of refreshments afterwards noting that the team is ranked higher in the league than either Ely or Newmarket and that as consequence and to continue to progress the club is looking for town support to upgrade its changing rooms to comply with FA (dimension and size) regulations.

Cllr Johnston noted that the planned meeting with Soham Youth Football and Soham Village College had been postponed and would be rescheduled as soon as possible to progress discussions relating to ongoing pitch needs and provisions in the town.

05/19

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by members to items on the agenda.

06/19

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 10 DECEMBER 2018

RESOLVED and APPROVED that the minutes of the meeting on the 10 December 2018 as printed and attached to these minutes as a true record of proceedings which were duly signed by the Chairman.

³ CCTV provision and management of High St cameras will transfer over to Soham Town Council effective 1st April 2019

MATTERS ARISING FROM CURRENT AND WHERE NECESSARY
PREVIOUS MINUTES:

a) Local Plan (Update) – Examination stage (155/1/, 125/18, 141/18 and attached – see also 09/19a Neighbourhood Plan)

NOTED grants from Central Government are available to help with preparation of Neighbourhood Plans.

NOTED that currently ECDC Local Plan is considered by the Inspector to be potentially unsound and in its current format without revision will be rejected.

NOTED concerns raised by members to the resources (time and effort), level of work and commitment needed to produce something meaningful

NOTED that in 2010 a masterplan for Soham was produced which with some revision could form the basis for a neighbourhood plan

NOTED Cambridgeshire ACRE attended one of Soham Town planning committee meetings in 2018 and would continue to offer support should there be appetite by the full council/ community to prepare a neighbourhood plan⁴ for Soham

NOTED a Neighbourhood Plan cannot change housing numbers or be counterintuitive or undermine ECDC's Local Plan but does carry the same statutory recognition and weight and requires the Planning Authority (ECDC) to take into consideration its contents when deciding/approving planning applications

APPROVED for Chairman and Vice chairman to undertake some preliminary investigations including likely costs, resources required, likely support in the community and feasibility of producing a neighbourhood plan to be relisted for consideration by members at the next (February 2019) meeting.

b) Response Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) to letter of complaint from STC (lack of police presence in town, 157/18)

NOTED with disappointment the response received from the PCC and corresponding email which indicatedbut did not include Soham as one of the listed proposed community meetings venues.

NOTED Cllr Johnston's assertions that the domestic rate monies raised, particularly the additional £1 a month per Band D house, had not increased or improved outcomes to community police or presence in the town.

APPROVED Clerk to respond to the Cambridgeshire Police & Crime Commissioner

APPROVED all town council correspondence in complaint and PCC replies be posted on the town council website for residents to join in the debate on lack of daily police presence in the town.

c) MHS (Barcham Road 190/18)

⁴ Requires boundary identification and referendum (greater than 85% of residents to approve for it to pass)

NOTED Clerk had advised Highways Officer of the error in funding amount on the application form submitted by residents

APPROVED in principle to provide funding/ financial support to 10% of anticipated costs of £15 000 (CCllrs Hunt and Goldsack to be copied in on email exchange to ensure that this amendment is reported correctly to the determination panel convening in March 2019).

APPROVED that any increased funding required for delivery of this project would require relisting on a future agenda for further consideration and decisions by members.

d) Approved supplier – Architects Fees – Pavilion Phase II (157/18)

APPROVED Saunders Boston as approved service suppliers for architect matters quote to include phase 0-3 inclusive of redesigning floor layout and elevations up to and including planning resubmission to a total cost of £15, 000 (net).

APPROVED thereafter build costs and any decision to commence works would require preparation of a suitable business plan including identification of sources of finance/funding (post May 2019 elections)

e) Draft response letter Soundings (Eastern Gateway 158/18a)

APPROVED consistent with its previous approval the draft letter to Soundings, This Land Ltd ECDC Planning and Cambridgeshire County Council highlighting Soham Town Council's objections to town access from Eastern Gateway development proposal via Brewhouse Lane inclusive of a summary to its own expectations and parameters under which it will be guided when considering whether to lend support to this large scale housing development (copy to be issued to District Cllrs, Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough combined Authority

APPROVED letter in response be placed on town council website for resident information.

08/19

MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the following committees as printed and recommendations contained, unless otherwise specified under matters arising (below), be duly adopted.

Finance & Policy	-	10 December 2018
Planning	-	19 December 2018

09/19

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

a) Neighbourhood Plan (PL100/18)-see min 07/19a above

10/19

PAYMENTS OF ACCOUNTS MADE IN DECEMBER 2018 & STATEMENT OF BALANCES AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2018

NOTED & APPROVED receipts and schedule of payments to 31 December 2018. totalling £42490.65 (inc vat) respectively and as attached to the council minutes as appendices

NOTED & APPROVED statement of balances to 31st December 2018 including those budgetary transfers/virements of current funds to ring fenced

allocated reserves⁵, reserves and provisions as directed by full council at its December 2018 meeting under min 189/18.

11/19

BUDGET REPORT APRIL – DECEMBER 2018.

NOTED & APPROVED (net income and expenditure in year) budget report indicating likely surplus £ amount to year end (31st March 2019) made primarily of income received dedicated, ring fenced, designated expenditure (grants) and/or CIL contributions (i.e. monies that will not add to town council general funds).

NOTED & APPROVED of £553696.42 current funds available at bank and cash balances, £499,077.1 of this amount (90%) is allocated, ring fenced or designated funds which require full council to approve its expenditure (not annual precept monies).

NOTED that outturn to 31st March 2019 currently suggest a surplus (more income than expense) but that this estimate is based on sustaining normal (known) running costs only to year end and that where surplus (profit) is generated for carry over purposes is likely to be made up solely from monies received in the year for dedicated use/expenditure.

12/19

CORRESPONDANCE – TO BE NOTED ONLY UNLESS OTHERWISE RECORDED (*italicised* and in **Bold**) IN THE MINUTES.

NOTED East Cambridgeshire District Council Planning Newsletter Nov 2018

NOTED Roadworks & Events Bulletin 1st - 15th November 2018 16th - 31st December 2018 1st - 15th January 2019

NOTED Parish (and town) Council Elections May 2019

NOTED NALC Chief Executive Bulletin - 30/11/18, 07/12/18, 14/12/18, 04/01/19

NOTED CAPALC 2018 AGM Minutes & Members Letter

NOTED Reminder Consultation - Suffolk Minerals & Waste Local Plan – Appropriate Assessment

NOTED ECDC licensed premises initiative –‘Ask for Angela’

NOTED Cambridgeshire Acre National launch event for Village Halls Week 2019 Tuesday 22 January 2019, from 09:45am – 12pm, at Little Thetford Village Hall

NOTED East Cambridgeshire Tourism Strategy - Stakeholder Engagement Session NOTES 22.11.2018

NOTED Press release Alzheimer's Society Walk Wednesday 19th December 2018

NOTED CAPALC Bulletin December 2018

NOTED Neighbourhood Planning Grants (email via DCllr Schumann)

NOTED East Cambridgeshire Parish Conference 2019 (29 January The Grange)

See min 04/19

NOTED Stronger for Longer’ strength and balance campaign toolkit (ECDC)

NOTED LCPAS (Cllr CPD opportunities) - Public Nuisance and Bye-Laws - Bury St Edmunds - 10 January 2019, Village Greens and Common Land - Bury

⁵ Includes new budget heading ‘amenity provision expenditure’

St Edmunds - 08 January 2019, Elections, By-Elections, and Co-option 17 January 2019

See min 04/19

NOTED Invitation to Chairman Soham Town Rangers match and catered event afterwards 19th January 2019

See min 04/19

NOTED Christmas message from the Police & Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough

NOTED Buckingham Palace Garden Party - 29th May 2019

NOTED CCC Highway Events Diary - January 2019

NOTED ECDC initiative Soham Free Wi-Fi (information c/o DCllr Goldsack)

See min 02/19

NOTED Suffolk Minerals & Waste Local Plan Notice of Submission

NOTED Tony Payne (HSE Consultant Adams Payne Ltd) Winter 2019 Newsletter

13/19

MONTHLY PAPERS/BIBIOGRAPHY/PERIODICALS/BULLETINS (LIST TO APPEAR IN MINUTES ONLY)

The Clerk Magazine
Clerks & Council Direct

Vol 50 January 2019
Issue 121 January 2019

14/19

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Soham Town Council will be held on Monday 11 February commencing 7.15pm Walter Gidney Pavilion Soham (Finance and Policy Committee meeting from 6:30pm)