

## SOHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Soham Town Council held at the Pavilion, Soham, on Monday 11 November 2019.

Present: C Warner (Chairperson), P Lane, D Woricker, H Ross, G Dyer, G Woodbridge, C Gipp & Mesdames R Aitchison, E Johnston, A Pallett, A Curtis & A Woricker.

In Attendance County Cllr M Goldsack & DCllrs A Jones, I Bovingdon & D Schumann.

*At 7pm and prior to the start of the meeting Cllr Warner made a formal request for all present to stand to observe one minute of silence in act of reflection and respect following the announcement of the death of former town Cllr Mr Tony Hinsley<sup>1</sup> earlier in the day. Thereafter in session:*

### 131/19 PUBLIC COMMENT TIME

Shooting Officer (SO) Liam Burch and Staff Sergeant Instructor (SSI) Nathan Drummond, Soham Army Cadet Group, were invited by the Vice Chairman to make representation regarding their request to use Pavilion (back hall) for firearms training and practise. SO Liam addressed the membership on the uses, learning and skill opportunities afforded by such instruction with any on-site provision being restricted to specific training dates and times. Noting that there would be health and safety instruction which would be paramount and mandatory to the target age group (12-18 year cadets) with the actual construction of the mobile 'range' being able to collect (spent) shell pellets so there would be no rubbish generated or damage to the building or its fabric. Being a 'mobile range' it would constitute a temporary installation and therefore there would be no need for storage either of the guns or the structure itself on the premises. SO Burch and SSI Drummond confirmed that the Army Cadets as an affiliated organisation retained the requisite/necessary Public Insurances that would hold Soham Town Council harmless in the event of incident and that all risk assessments would be undertaken annually, copies of which would be provided for retention by the Office.

Questions were raised by Cllrs which included the level of and chain of Responsibility, the dimension/size of the mobile range, whether alternate facilities, other than the back hall at the Pavilion (such as those provided to cadets at Waterbeach) would be a better choice of venue for such an activity and with Soham Cadets being taken there by suitable transport.

APPROVED the matter of allowing a mobile range (and shooting) should be deferred to be formally listed as an agenda item at the next (December 2019) meeting.

Thereafter a resident addressed a question through the Chairman to the DCllrs present regarding a recent news report referring to a statement in comment made by the District Planning Committee Chairman (DCllr Hunt) who indicated that the cost to 'call in' a planning application for consideration by its Committee was in region of £1000. Noting surprise at such amount in cost the resident nonetheless hoped that Soham Town Council would not be dissuaded from requesting this level of due process and scrutiny on planning applications that raised concern and irrespective of (any) cost implication. DCllr Bovingdon responded and clarified that the District Planning Chairman's comment was

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<sup>1</sup> Cllr members requested confirmation of funeral details and that a wreath should be provided from the town council (Chairman's allowance)

highlighting those costs borne by Developer where the Planning Authority calls in the application for determination.

DCllr Jones confirmed that he was more than content to oblige where Soham Town Council or any resident had an issue with any particular planning application and wanted it to be 'called in' for committee determination and decision.

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#### COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

CCllr Goldsack was invited by the Chairman to present report on Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) matters affecting Soham or more generally namely:

- Soham Railway Station – currently plans include 50 car parking spaces but that it is likely far more will be needed and that this aspect, together with parking congestion in general is being looked into.
- Shade Common – CCllr Goldsack acknowledged that the matter is complex and there remains much to understand with a view to considering any/all possible outcomes.
- Reports of dangerous trees and litter – Tree reports made by residents/Office concerning Station Rd/West Drive Gardens and Julius Martins Lane/ Kingfisher have been resolved. CCllr Goldsack continued to encourage the public to report all highway issues such as traffic obstruction/congestion on roads, pathways via CCC website: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/roadworks-and-faults/> )
- CCllr Goldsack extended his congratulations to RBL Soham Branch on the Remembrance Parade (and service) held yesterday (Sunday 10<sup>th</sup>) and it was noted that this year, unlike previous years where the Police undertook traffic management duties, was the first time that Soham Town Council had funded this activity/function for the benefit of residents.
- CCllr Goldsack noted that he has taken up the appointment of Vice Chairman and in the capacity of White Ribbon Ambassador (Domestic Violence supporting Changing the Response: Supporting Victims & Tackling Perpetrators).
- A142 railway bridge & bypass near Ely. CCllr Goldsack acknowledged that combination of SAT NAV problems (lack of upgrades) together with driver unawareness/ignorance still currently is leading to the unfortunate situation that the railway bridge remains prone to being struck. There have however been positive comments also regarding the logistic and time savings since the bypass was opened to companies getting farm produce to markets.
- Tree planting programme (and Legacy works-delegated Cllr Leonard). Cllr Goldsack noted his support and advocacy to the tree planting programme to be undertaken in and around Soham noting that he had a planned meeting with CCC Highways tomorrow following a full county council resolution to specifically address this 'green' deficit in Soham which is one of the least tree populated areas in the County. CCllr Goldsack noted that he is also working collaboratively with other relevant Stakeholders such as The Woodland Trust to address this issue/deficit.

The Chairman acknowledged CCllr Goldsack's contribution and then invited DCllr Schuman to present report on East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC) matters affecting Soham or more generally namely:

- DCllr Schumann noted there had been a lot of revision and amendments to previous decisions at the recent full District Council (DC) meeting held on 17th October 2019 which included: The DC's recognition of need for Strategy for climate change given the anticipated expanding population growth in the District to 2050 with a corporate plan now being adopted, details of which can viewed on the DC's website.
  - Independent Review Panel for remuneration and allowances has recommended basic allowance for a DCllr to be £5406<sup>2</sup> per annum slightly higher for the Chairman, Vice Chairman, additional pay for membership on Committees etc but again these details are available on the website.
  - The local Plan 2015 – After debate the council agreed not to progress a new local plan as the 2015 plan remains current wrt to what the District Council wishes to achieve. CCllr Schumann noted there have been revisions to the way CIL payments are made which makes it easier to administer and from Sept next year there will be no limits/restriction placed on CIL and type of infrastructure improvements can be supported using this Funding.
    - Cllr Woricker asked if DCllr Schumann could explain the logic behind removing local recycling hubs and how this fits into the new climate (change & CO2 reduction) policies. DCllr Schumann advised that emphasis is now for residents to recycle primarily from their home base rather than in travelling to other central point's/sites. With the known continual misuse of these local facilities the consultation outcomes with residents indicated that combined courses of actions of providing new bins, encouraging a purge on plastics (use and disposal) as well as continuing to offer free use of current centralised recycling centres was the direction to travel in this matter.
    - Cllr Ross queried about recycling provision and collection policies on unadopted roads, for the elderly, on commons etc and Cllr Schumann responded that he did not retain specific information currently on these issues.
    - Cllr Woodbridge stated that he seen a press article in Ely Standard listing all the unadopted roads affected by the District's current recycling strategy whilst Cllr Warner questioned DCllr Schumann in relation to his knowledge of this and whether unadopted roads had been taken into consideration in the review and consultation taken on the matter of recycling provision. Cllr Warner requested DCllr Schumann to look into this aspect who agreed to do so but stressed that it may be something that the District had no knowledge of, undertaken any review or in light of outcome would be progressing.
- DCllr Jones indicated that at the District Councils recent full meeting a motion was raised to undertake a new Local Plan, but was not supported. On a personal note DCllr confirmed he had arranged this installation of community bin at Aspen Way (currently unadopted by ECDC).
- Cllr Warner raised the Environment Agency letter received in relation to planning application 19/128520 and pressed those DCllrs present for some answer as to what action has or is now being taken given that the letter was received at start of July 2019, the planning approval has

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<sup>2</sup> Previous reviews 2017 (£5300 rep. 2% increase current) 2007, £4261, 24%)

been given and yet little by way of tangible action appeared to have been taken in regards to the serious implications cited and ramifications to residents. CCllr Goldsack responded in his capacity as DCllr indicating that he has already escalated this correspondence (from Barbara Greengrass) to Rebecca Saunt. Cllr Pallett indicated that in her capacity as Chairman of Soham Town Council's Planning Committee she had also raised this letter and content in a timely fashion requesting some response but had received no reply. DCllr Bovingdon confirmed that he had been in discussion with Anglian Water who had assured him that with the introduction of a new pumping station at Cherry Tree development/area there would be sufficient in capacity and that Soham Town Council and its membership should be confident that both ECDC and Anglian Water will ensure resolution on this matter. Cllr Warner noted that the proposed new pumping station was to service/serve new developments in Fordham Blackberry Lane and possibly the Eastern Gateway Development in total approx. 800 houses which would only increase the pressure on the existing water recycling (sewage) works and well beyond the permitted 400 as cited in the Environment Agency letter. In addition Cllr Warner stated that he had attended a meeting this summer with these Stakeholders (ECDC, Anglian Water) which was prior to receipt of the correspondence from Environment Agency concerning these issues including the matter of replacement of surface water pipes under the road at the Regal Lane/Cherrytree junction which remain in breach of the planning conditions applied to this development. The Chairman complained that once again the town councils comments in light of its expert knowledge and that of residents experiences had been ignored or neglected by Planning Officers at ECDC. As consequence Cllr Warner expressed his severe reservations to DCllr Bovingdon's assertions and pressed that in the absence of any tangible work to improve the capacity of sewage and waste foul water drainage in Soham some form of ECDC enforcement should now be in place including where necessary a (temporary) moratorium on house building. CCllr Goldsack acting in capacity of DCllr stated that he believed the District Council as the Planning Authority has held Anglian Water to account but stressed that progress is not always immediate or visible when dealing with multi agencies/stakeholders. Cllr Warner stated he remains not confident or convinced on what and how these serious omissions are being handled, addressed or indeed resolved but irrespective it remains at the very least for the District Council as the responsible Planning Authority to keep the town council membership fully informed of progress on what is a fundamental and extremely serious issue that continues to detrimentally affect the town and its residents. Cllr Woodbridge stated that surface flooding particularly at the Cherrytree end of town and flooding in general was occurring more frequently despite less and those assertions made by CCllr Goldsack. Cllr Curtis stated that where any planning approval was contingent on strict pre-planning or planning conditions such as larger drainage pipes, diversion of water course routes, not obstructing existing head walls additional amenity introductions etc then District Councils Planning Enforcement team(s) should be ensuring this these are discharged (enacted) and where not there can be no excuse and a official formal complaint should be raised against the Planning Authority.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Leonard and duly authorised by the membership.

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CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS & TOWN CLLR UPDATES

Noting that Cllr Chapman had offered his resignation earlier in the day the Chairman (and membership) wished him well and Cllr Warner went on to confirm that this vacancy would be advertised in the normal way and filled either by co-option or where requested by 10 or more electors within a specified timeframe, by bye-election (current vacancies 1 North 1 South Ward). Cllr Woodbridge raised a personal complaint noting that the playing of the Last Post and the Act of Remembrance (2 min silence) was not held at the War Memorial this year. Cllr Aitchison informed the councillors that the Last Post and 2mins silence were undertaken at the service of commemoration held afterwards at St Andrews Church. She also stated that these acts had never previously been undertaken at the War Memorial not even last year to commemorate 100 years after end of WWI. She also noted that current arrangements were done as some residents are unable or unwilling to march in the Parade and irrespective any changes to current remain a matter for consideration by RBL Soham Branch. It was noted that Soham Town Forum's PA system which is loaned without charge for use by other community groups' for their public events could be made available to RBL Soham Branch if needed. Cllr Aitchison was pleased to report that this year there was a good number of people and school children who were at the War Memorial at 11 am on 11<sup>th</sup> November, observing the Nation's 2 minutes silence.

135/19

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declaration of Interests (DPI's) to items on the agenda declared to the Proper Officer by members prior to or at the time of the meeting.

136/19

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 14 OCTOBER 2019

RESOLVED and APPROVED that the minutes of the meeting on the 14 October 2019 as printed and attached were a true record of proceedings and duly signed as such by the Chairman.

137/19

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CURRENT & WHERE NECESSARY PREVIOUS FULL COUCIL MINUTES (matters not listed on the agenda specifically below to include):

**A) Neighbourhood Plan(ning) – Working Group Updates**

NOTED WITH A VOTE OF THANKS to all who assisted with the delivery and distribution of the neighbourhood plan questionnaire/ leaflet.

NOTED DCllr Jones has yet to complete distribution in Aspen Way whilst Cllrs Aitchison, Warner and Johnston confirmed they would undertake this additional leaflet drop to Bushel Lane and Qua Fen area residents.

NOTED closing date for return of completed forms is 18<sup>th</sup> November 2019 after which members of the working group will collate the data/information to progress matters/next steps in the New Year.

NOTED the next Neighbourhood Planning meeting is Wednesday 20 November 2019, 7.30pm at Pavilion.

**B) Community Safety Accreditation Scheme for East Cambs (Town Ranger)**

NOTED planned meeting (7<sup>th</sup> December) at ECDC with Police cancelled.

NOTED Police & Crime Commissioner, Jason Ablewhite, resigned with effect today.

NOTED that residents pay a so called 'police precept' (currently £12 year) in addition to the normal rate demanded for Police Fire and Rescue

NOTED concerns and complaints raised by some Cllrs given this additional taxation and now a proposition by same to employ town (resident)-funded 'Town Ranger'.

NOTED Cllr Woodbridge's suggestion of contacting Kings Lynn Town Council and who have already employed someone in the role of Town Ranger for further information.

NOTED Chairman's advice to wait for New Year and after any planned meetings at ECDC.

**C) Letter Lucy Frazer – Strategic bus review online survey [www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/FutureBus/](http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/FutureBus/) from 4 November to 13 December 2019**

NOTED Cllrs and residents wishing to make representation/log their views are at liberty and encouraged to do so before deadline.

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#### MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

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

- a) Finance & Policy - 14 October 2019
- b) Planning - 28 October 2019
- c) Community Amenities - 24 October 2019
- d) Cemetery & Allotments - 24 October 2019

139 /19

#### MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES FROM LAST MONTHS' AND PREVIOUS STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES –

##### **A) Cemetery Fees 2020 (COM 13/19A Cllr Dyer)**

NOTED matter deferred to December 9<sup>th</sup> 2019 full council meeting so that all information may be presented all approvals effective April 2020.

##### **B) Dogs on recreation ground (COM12/19A)**

ACKNOWLEDGED Cllr Warner's comment that byelaws are there to protect the recreation ground for all and that in the instance of dogs on the recreation ground there is no latitude for their suspension or waiver.

NOTED that only option in case of dogs on recreation ground whether in general (private owners) or at public open events is to enforce the byelaw and for those found in breach they (as individuals or groups) would be subject to the penalty of up to £500.

NOTED Cllr Ross's enquiry as to how this can be effectively enforced.

NOTED Cllr Curtis's comments to effectiveness of current signage being of sufficient clarity and number to indicate 'no dogs on recreation ground'.

NOTED that signs are in words and picture format, located at every entrance/exit, outside play area, provided on the lamp posts and around the car park areas.

NOTED Cllr Gipp's concern that the byelaws state 'dogs for the blind' and not 'assistance dogs' in general<sup>3</sup> and whether the byelaws themselves should be reviewed and updated (current 1992).

##### **C) Land Acquisition update (COM 12/19iv Cllr Johnston)**

NOTED Cllr Johnston as delegated Cllr in matter will pursue matter with appointed Land Agents with a view to locating land suitable for public open

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<sup>3</sup> 'Dog for the blind' is dated and limiting terminology defining one 'type' of 'assistance (or service) animals that are recognised under DDA legislation. The term and definition for assistance animal is not limited but primarily associated with dogs.

space and cemetery provision. Matter to be deferred to next full council meeting.

**D) Festive Lights High Street 2019 (COM 13/19 & CA14/19 Cllr Johnston)**

NOTED Cllrs have been kept aware/informed of progress and instalment of our Christmas Lights and costs (three year LTA which will be included in budget considerations by Finance & Policy Committee).

APPROVED a letter confirming volunteers' are indemnified under the town council Public liability insurances be issued to the Priest in Charge St Andrews Church for install of lights in churchyard.

NOTED VOTE OF THANKS (proposed Cllr Woodbridge) in recognition of the community volunteers for their efforts over the years in regards to provision of festive lights in Soham.

NOTED resident request that the information should be displayed in town council (public) notice boards informing residents of the issues and all the work of the town council, its staff Cllrs and volunteers have all done to ensure that there would be festive lighting in Soham this (and future) years<sup>4</sup>.

**E) Regeneration & Legacy planting schedule for financial year commencing April 1 2020 (COM 12/19 iii Cllr Leonard)**

NOTED Cllr Leonard's absence from meeting and approved matter to be relisted at next full council meeting and as part of those budgetary considerations and precept (rate demand) made by Soham Town Council for 2020-21.

**Planning (PL 87/19 E The Soham Lodge Nursing Home Soham Bypass Soham)**

NOTED by Planning Committee Chairman the significant concerns and complaints regarding PA 19/01413/OUM which amongst other material planning considerations was outside the development envelope of the Local Plan 2015 and considered unsustainable.

NOTED general consensus that the Planning Authority (ECDC) should be consistent in its refusal to applications for developments that fall outside the development zone as defined by the Local Plan 2015. Council members requested that DCllr Jones not only take note of the town council's planning committee's comments in regards to developments that fall outside the development zone but in that be consistent in enforcing (refusing) such. The membership also wanted where this was not case and permission approval was granted the rational and reasons for such to be issued along with the approval (decision notice).

APOLOGIES were noted from the DCllrs present in regards to the recent IT issues resulting in poor, intermittent or non-existent ability to access the Planning Portal on ECDC's website which has detrimentally affected/disrupted recent planning committee meetings.

NOTED AND APPROVED that the alarming information provided in the correspondence issued by Environment Agency regarding the imminent sewage and foul water capacity permits breaches (only a maximum of another 400 houses could be accommodated -this housing figure being cumulative and inclusive of any upstream housing developments such as currently occurring in Fordham that feed directly into Soham's existing network) above which significant upgrades to these amenity provisions will be required must be followed up closely and addressed by DCllr Goldsack, ECDC Planning and Anglian Water and without further prevarication (feedback to town council as

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<sup>4</sup> The public council notice boards are for legal, electoral or official town council notices required to be advertised by this and/or other Local Government Authorities.

a matter of priority-further discussions held with DCllr under DCllr report min 132/19 above).

140/19

RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS OF ACCOUNTS MADE IN OCTOBER 2019 & 6 MONTH (OUT-TURN) BUDGET 2020-21 CONSIDERATIONS

NOTED income & RESOLVED to recommend to Council approval of those payments made to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019 totalling £ 42654.41 (inc vat) respectively and as attached to the council minutes as appendices.

NOTED & APPROVED budgetary balances as stated at 31 October 2019 respectively.

NOTED & APPROVED monthly statement of balances and where appropriate those financial adjustments (virement) to the council's budgets, to its reserves and provisions and to ring fenced monies as held by and approved by full council.

*(For more detailed information please refer to minutes of Finance & Policy committee meeting held earlier in the evening)*

NOTED majority of allotment rents for growing season 2019-20 have been collected.

NOTED Chairman's comments regarding those financial considerations currently being undertaken by Finance & Policy Committee in light of those requests, recommendations and approvals made by the Standing Committees (Cemetery & Allotments, Community Amenities) in October 2019 (min 138/19 c and d above) and the likely increases above current rate demand for Soham Town Council for 202-21.

NOTED significant discussions and broad agreement from Cllrs in regards to the need to not only assess merit(s) to any proposed infrastructure and amenity improvements that have been highlighted by current and past councils administrations but to their need within the community (by consultation) as well as priority given, and sufficiency of finances being available, for their successful delivery.

NOTED significant discussions and broad agreement from Cllrs that it is vital to ensure that the reasons for any (significant) increases to precept (rate demand) are clearly and well advertisement to the community (TBA).

141/19

REQUEST FOR COMMUNITY FUNDING SUPPORT

*please note that due to GDPR regulations certain information provided in the town council's Grant Application form may, due to personal information, be exempt under FOIA. In addition matters may, at the discretion of the Chairman and with the approval of members be declared exempt under relevant categories of Part 1 Schedule 1972 (AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (EXEMPT INFORMATION) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2006) and where considered to be such be determined under an exclusion of the Public and Press (all determinations and approvals will be recorded in the minutes)*

**A) MAGPAS (LGA 1972 s137 previous year £1500)**

APPROVED BY MAJORITY grant of £1500, subject to clarification that monies are for operation of air ambulance (helicopter) and not for general MAGPAS running costs/overheads.

**B) Churches Together Carols 2019 outdoor carols (LGA 1972 s137 previous year £42)**

APPROVED NOT TO APPROVE BY MAJORITY donation for £42

**C) Relate Cambridge (LGA 1972 s137, previous year £1000)**

APPROVED BY MAJORITY (equality of votes, casting vote in favour taken by Chairman) grant of £1000

**D) Citizen Advice (LGA 1972 s142 (2A) – new request (all attached)**



APPROVED matter deferred for relisting when CAB completes and provides the necessary information under town council's Grant Awarding Application form.

**E) Hustings-request to use Pavilion-*gratis* (re General Election 12<sup>th</sup> December 2019)**

After extensive debate and argument concerning the relative shortness to time and logistic difficulties related to contacting all Political Parties and for them to be in general agreement for a single time and date for such an activity to take place.

APPROVED NOT TO ALLOW a hustings/Political debate at the Pavilion (FOC, gratis) for general election 2019.

142/19

CORRESPONDENCE –NOTED ONLY UNLESS OTHERWISE RECORDED IN THE MINUTES-any notes/approvals appear *italicised* and in **BOLD**.

-Community Safety Accreditation Scheme for East Cambs 7th November 2019  
The Grange-cancelled (see 137/19B above)

***NOTED approvals made under 137/19 B***

- Cambridgeshire Highways Open Days - October 2019 (various dates)
- ECDC Community Fund Grant (applications until Dec. 2nd 2019 - maximum award £1,000 per grant.
- CCC Highways Roadworks & events report 16th - 31st October 2019
- East Cambridgeshire Parish Conference (Date to be confirmed in New Year)
- FREE workshop on running a funding event in Soham on 11th Nov 2019 CVS Cambridge

***NOTED Cllr Aitchison to attend where she will bring up the issue of CIL payments to Planning Authority and transparency by them to expenditure.***

- Time-4-Soham event is 13 November, 7 – 8.30pm, Soham Library
- National Allotment Cambridgeshire representation Eastern Region Panel Meeting -proposed meeting 13th Nov Stretham Bowls Club, Short Road, Stretham, Ely

***NOTED Clerk has sent this information to the Chairman of Soham Gardening Club (copied in to Chairman of Cemetery & Allotments)***

-CAPALC AGM – Dec 4<sup>th</sup> The Millennium Pavilion The Trundle Somersham PE28 3JS

-Full Closure - Mill Drove LC - 01.12.2019 - overnight to 02.12.2019 Planned electrical works road closure O/S 42 Paddock St 02/12/2019-06/12/2019-diversions in place for Paddock Street, Brook Dam Lane, High Street, Sand Street, Fordham Road, A142, East Fen Common, Paddock Street and VICE VERSA

-NALC Chief Executive's Bulletin

-TTRO Proposed road closure - Mill Drove, Soham 01/12 - 02/12/19

143/19

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

Clerks & Councils Direct  
Bulletin War Memorial Trust  
The Clerks magazine

November 2019 Issue 126  
November 2019 Number 83  
November 2019 Vol 50 No 6

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DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Soham Town Council will be held on 9 December 2019 commencing at 7:15pm (Finance and Policy Committee meeting prior to evening's full council meeting in council offices from 6:30pm).