

SOHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Soham Town Council held at the Pavilion, Soham, on Monday 9 March 2020.

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

In Attendance County Cllr M Goldsack & District Cllr A Jones

15/20 PUBLIC COMMENT TIME

Ms Wendy Landsdown, made representation to the membership and those public in attendance to explain her new role as a Think Community Coordinator one of six newly created posts by Cambridgeshire County Council in the District. The role of these co-coordinators is to support partnerships between Agencies, the public and voluntary sectors to build cohesion integration and to encourage community strength and its resilience.

16/20 COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

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

- Following the public meeting held at the Pavilion regarding anti-social behaviour(s) in the town CCllr Goldsack informed those present that the 3 main perpetrators had been arrested and were currently under youth care & supervision orders. Whilst he noted this was a positive step for residents it highlighted the lack of youth services and activities for young people and following his Facebook campaign 17 residents had volunteered to get more involved in this area. CCllr Goldsack noted that he had met with a number of County Officers and Ms Lizzie Wales Youth Services worker for East Cambridgeshire on this subject who all hoped that a multiagency approach could be adopted in (re)solving youth antisocial behaviours in the town. CCllr Goldsack noted some surprise however to the lack of local knowledge by these Stakeholders what was needed/wanted by the community and an apparent disjoin/connectivity between them.
- CCllr Goldsack noted his extreme concern regarding the recent successful planning appeal in Fordham where the Planning Inspector found in favour of the applicant due to East Cambridgeshire District Council's (ECDC's) lack of the necessary 5 year land supply (currently assessed at around 2.1 years). The appeal was successful and planning permission granted despite a neighbourhood plan for Fordham being in place. The District Planning Authority remains able to appeal the Inspector's decision by Judicial Review but should this stand then it means that should this decision stand on the basis of the low level of housing supply all Neighbourhood Plans where those communities as well as Parish and Town Councils have worked so hard on to produce will carry little if any weight against Developers who may opportunistically capitalise on. CCllr Goldsack informed the membership that he is awaiting an official response from ECDC on this crucial matter.

-DCllr Jones responded indicating that Richard Kay, who was spearheading ECDC emergent 2017 Local Plan (currently designated as being withdrawn) with a 6.6 year land supply listing but the introduction, addition or amendment of this into the current Local Plan 2015 will be a matter for legal interpretation/consideration under current Planning Legislation.

- Cllr Warner suggested that the 6.6 year supply being suggested remained at best a 'wish list' for the District adjunct to the 2015 Local Plan and that DCllr Jones should confirm at a subsequent meeting the validity/legality of such a course of action by the Planning Authority
- Coronavirus (COVID-19)-County Council Health Teams are issuing weekly updates suggested action plans on the emerging crisis. The Clerk confirmed that the Office receives these via email and has in addition guidance to Parish and Town Councils from its National Association. As a Good Employer Soham Town Council retains its own Health and Safety Adviser and has Policies and public notices already in place with emerging/new ones being produced and issued as and when Central Government advises.
- CCllr Goldsack noted that there is a new county council community fund available of £5m for projects that act to improve social welfare in towns which demonstrate reductions in overall social care costs and expenditure. CCllr Goldsack considered this to be a great opportunity and noted he will share all information with STC Office when this initiative is launched. He noted that currently the High St, lack and repurposing of shops and provision of more social areas could provide opportunities and potential projects for this type of funding.
- Despite the relative wealth of the County, Cambridgeshire remains one of the poorest funded Authorities in the UK. Whilst Cllr Goldsack noted it was encouraging that Central Government appears to be promising fairer and more level funding, particularly in relation to the North/South divide the delivery of this fairer funding could be a huge positive boost for County Council's current underfunded and reduced service provisions.

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

- ECDC has made the decision to remove its significant funding to Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and bring those services and functions in-house where it will be looking at providing 'service type hubs' in Soham for residents to access. Cllr Aitchison raised doubt that outside of housing and (debt related to) domestic rates fiscal problems ECDC would not be able to provide the breadth, scope and impartiality to those social and welfare functions and services that CAB currently provides to those in need.
- Non-adopted roads (standards in planning applications/Refuse collections – following last months meeting DCllr Jones noted he had followed up the town councils request and had provided an update regarding refuse collection on non-adopted roads in Soham. DCllr Jones confirmed that adoption of roads in planning terms remained at the discretion of County Highways and there was no mandatory obligations for them to adopt irrespective of whether or not roads were constructed to/met adoptable standards. Moreover County Highways had 2 years post site completion to make its decision/determination which the membership expressed was not satisfactory or reassuring for home owners on these developments.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received by Cllr Gipp, Woodbridge & A Woricker and duly authorised by the membership. The Clerk noted that apologies were also received from DCllr I Bovingdon & V Charlesworth.

18/20

CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS & TOWN CLLR UPDATES

Cllr Warner noted that he had had attended a number of events/meetings in the month including:

- Anglian Water - The Chairman expressed some optimism that progress appeared to be being made in regards to the town's sewage/drainage issues. Noting there are five other Authorities/Agencies/Relevant Stakeholders are involved in these and surface water drainage issues he was not surprised that there was disjoin and confusion not only between them but by residents in general. Cllr Warner confirmed that he had spoken with Rebecca Saunt, ECDC Planning Manager who has offered to arrange a meeting with all Parties.
- Recent Parish Conference – Cllr Warner noted that the meeting format had been changed from 'presentation to open 'drop by' stand and display format. The Chiarmen noted that he had been able to speak directly to Officers regarding relining of the High St, with Richard Kay Strategic Planning Manager ECDC who continues to encourage the working group to forge ahead with the Neighbourhood Plan for Soham with the Police Authority who the town council is working collaboratively with provide a reporting opportunity outside of telephoning 111 and website for residents to log incidents.
-Cllr Pallett added that she had also attended the Parish Conference and provided details to the membership of recycling initiatives, Cambridgeshire on-line directory which lists local services and activities <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/directory/?f.Classification%7Cclassification=Community+Listings> and protecting the public against on-line scams- should anyone be interested in completing a 20 minute on-line training session should contact her directly.

19/20

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Aitchison and Lane declared DPI's to agenda item 23/20 ii Ambulance Station.

Having declared a DPI and where no dispensations had been applied for or agreed with the Proper Officer¹ prior to a meeting it remained the responsibility of those Cllrs making DPI declarations² to take the necessary actions to recuse themselves from the meeting and prior to debate and or council decisions to those items and matters.

20/20

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 9 FEBRUARY 2020

RESOLVED and APPROVED that the minutes of the meeting on the 9 February 2020 as printed and attached herein as being a true record of proceedings which were duly signed as such by the Chairman.

21/20

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

A) Neighbourhood Plan(ning) – Working Group Updates

NOTED progress continues to be made with Soham's NP and that currently effective communication with residents remains an issue. Cllr Curtis considered the comment unacceptable given her recognised skills and

¹ Delegated to Clerk Soham Town Council

² Failure to comply with the rules is a criminal offence and may be punished by a *fine* of up to £5,000 and/or disqualification for up to 5 years.

expertise in this particular area and by demonstration of her work being currently performed on this and other community engagement subjects in the community. All agreed that there would need to be additional resources including engagement of Consultant to progress the project from current. Cllr Aitchison noted she had spoken with Richard Kay who continues to encourage the group with its Plan noting that once implemented, it would need to be reviewed (every 3 years) to fulfil housing requirements in Soham which would need to increase annually by 185-190 over the next 10 year (around 2000 extra homes) to comply with current demand.

Cllr Curtis noted the state of public pathway (Kents Lane) and was advised that she needed to report this matter on-line to Cambridgeshire County Council.

22/20

PREVIOUS MONTHS STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

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 - 24 February 2020
- b) Planning - 24 February 2020

23/20

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES FROM LAST MONTHS' AND PREVIOUS STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES (to be specified at time of meeting) – to include:

Town Signs & Street light Audit, repairs and removal (10/20 iii FP 15/20)

Cllr D Woricker confirmed that the both projects were nearing completion (town signs at both ends of town being installed this and next week) with those street lighting repairs including changing all bulbs to LED to reduce light pollution and ongoing electricity consumption/costs will be completed in March (invoice for works to be remitted in April, at start of financial year).

Request for community funding/support (12/20)

NOTED meeting of Chairman and Clerk with church representatives regarding both VE75 and matter of high sensitivity discussed.

Soham Men's shed (refurbishment of cemetery bench)

Noted more volunteers and all new members welcome by this group, for more information contact CCllr Goldsack.

Gas cooker (electrical compliance back hall) 15/20

Noted the non-compliance issues is related to the room and not the actual appliance

APPROVED quote for £1045.00 from CPS Building Services to undertake necessary safety valve works and introduction of a fan-type ventilation system into glass window (costs of fan to be determined). Matter delegated to Office.

NOTED Clerks comments regarding the statutory periodic electrical testing required, the state of disrepair (leaks in) the roof (containing asbestos) associated with the back hall and tractor shed which needs to be addressed as these areas are fast becoming not fit for employee and public access and use.

APPROVED quotes for a full building audit survey of the back hall to be performed.

Planning -general consideration

NOTED February 2020 planning committee meeting was only just quorate being poorly attended by members.

Planning Application (PL 14/20 C- 20/00074/FUL)

NOTED Cllr Lane's comment regarding loss of another commercial building in High St (former Lloyds Bank) to residential use

Planning application (PL 14/20 D- 19/01413OUM)

NOTED Chairman's comment that in addition to committees previous comments in objection to this windfall development that conditions should restrict right hand turn into this proposed development from the A142.

NOTED that preparative works had been ongoing on this site and that this had made no provision (devastated) local Great Crested Newts which is a criminal offence. Cllr Curtis has already contacted the Police and Enforcement Officer ECDC on this matter

Matter arising from previous planning committee minutes (Broad Piece 19/01413/OUM)

NOTED current potential ownership dispute between Persimmon Homes PLC and verge land outside existing properties to enable widening of the splay and entrance to this development from Broad Piece (Cllr Pallet to report further developments).

i.) Chapel – update & likely projection of unexpected expenditure/costs in year (FP 70/19C, CA 13/19B, 153/19ii, 10/20)

NOTED foot note in Finance & Policy February 2020 post meeting minutes relating to current progress on insurance claim

NOTED works required to finish reroof element (at cost of town council) cannot proceed until structural reinstatement of corners and gable ends (insurable losses) is undertaken. This means that the hire costs related to the heras fencing and scaffolding will continue and must form part of the negotiations between Parties.

ii) Expressions of Interest for projects for inclusion on the ECDC CIL Infrastructure List correspondence list January 2020 meeting under 13/20)

NOTED CCllr Goldsacks comments relating to land/building opposite Comrades Club (Olympic Tyres) is currently for sale (planning approval for development) and would make an ideal central town car park.

NOTED Cllr Lane's comments relating the need to repair/reroof Peers Ross Sports centre.

NOTED Cllr Aitchison's comments that all bus stops should have electric information boards fitted

APPROVED matter be deferred and relisted at next scheduled full council meeting.

At 8:45pm The Chairman under a Notice of Exclusion instructed the Public and Press, Cllrs Aitchison and Lane to withdraw to consider and make decision (Approvals) regarding 23/20 iii) Ambulance Station

iii) Ambulance Station (matter deferred previous meeting, 10/20 iv)

APPROVED an offer of £15 000 (fifteen thousand pounds) be made to Soham United Charities for the purchase of the Ambulance Station and land thereon - Subject to Contract, Seller and Buyer to pay all own conveyance/transaction legal fees disbursements and costs

APPROVED that contingent of acceptance by Soham United Charities of Soham Town Council's offer leading to purchase the Ambulance Station Fountain Lane Soham its reasonable assistance where requested regarding outstanding matters between this Charity and HM Charity Commission.

At 8:52pm The Public, Press and Cllrs Aitchison and Lane returned to the meeting, thereafter:

NOTED income & RESOLVED approval of those payments made to 29 February 2020 totalling £35 450.11 (inc vat) and as attached to the council minutes as appendices.

NOTED & APPROVED budgetary balances as stated at 29 February 2020.

- 25/20 REQUEST FOR COMMUNITY FUNDING/SUPPORT.
a) APPROVED increase to previous approval in contribution from £1000 to £1250 for LHI 2019 -20 (Kingfisher Crossing).
NOTED Cllr Aitchison's complaint that this issue/problem should have been proactively addressed by the Planning Authority as a (one of) condition in its planning approval for the school in the first place.
- 26/20 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING (ATM) 2020 (MEETING OF ELECTORATE / RESIDENTS.
APPROVED meeting date of Monday 18 May 2020 commencing at 7pm at the Pavilion
- 27/20 CORRESPONDENCE –NOTED ONLY UNLESS OTHERWISE RECORDED IN THE MINUTES-any notes/approvals appear *italicised* and in **BOLD**.
-Request Fordham Parish Council-consideration of Town Council support for District wide PSPO dogs on leads.
APPROVED that as there is both national legislation for dog control and a District wide (specific) PSPO regarding dog fouling the town council is unable to support Fordham Parish Council additional restrictive request.
-Roadworks & events report 16th - 29th February 2020
-East Cambs District Council Parish Newsletter Feb 2020
-Consultation on the Draft Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) - Natural Environment and Custom and Self-Build Housing
NOTED IMPORTANT INFORMATION IN RELATION TO 2021/22 LOCAL HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT (LHI) APPLICATIONS) change of timings
-Soham Footpath 93, extension of closure (TTRO19/941) affects Land East of Regal Lane, Soham CB7 5BA closed 1/2/2020-1/5/2023 Work associated with development
-TTRO 20/270 - East Fen Common, Soham 08:00hrs 17 February and 18:00hrs 21 February 2020.
-Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CCG BIG conversation feedback results (consultation ran 27 September and ran until 20 December 2019)
-CAMBRIDGESHIRE CONSTABULARY SERVICE CHANGE CONSULTATION - CLOSES SATURDAY 29 FEBRUARY 2020
-Public Toilet Tax Survey
-Consultation Review County Planning, Minerals and Waste Enforcement Plan 26 February 2020 - 8 April 2020
-Soham Touchpoint 4th March Soham Library 10am-12noon + Touchpoint Newsletter Feb 2020
- 28/20 MONTHLY PAPERS/BIBIOGRAPHY/PERIODICALS/BULLETINS (LIST TO APPEAR IN MINUTES ONLY)
Clerks and Councils direct March 2020 issue 128
- 29/20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING
Next full council meeting scheduled Monday 20 April 2020 (1 week later due to Easter Monday) commencing at 7:15pm.
Finance & Policy Committee meeting scheduled Monday 30 March 2020, 10am