

SOHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Soham Town Council held at the Pavilion, Soham, on Monday
13 July 2020.

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

In Attendance District Cllrs I Bovingdon & A Jones

47/20 PUBLIC COMMENT TIME

A resident made representation regarding ECDC as the Planning Authority continuing to process planning applications during the COVID crisis particularly those of a contentious nature which he felt excluded residents from the democratic process being unable to comment, make representation and to make objections. Noting specifically those matters related to the Eastern Gateway and the railway station area developments he considered those 'on'line' virtual consultations currently being undertaken 'due to COVID and social distancing' were totally inadequate disenfranchising residents particularly those that did not have internet/computer access.

District Cllr Bovingdon noted that there would be further more standard types of consultations planned in Soham on these important matters.

48/20 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS WITH specific reference to:

a) Coronavirus – COVID

During the current crisis the Chairman and STC office staff had worked closely with the volunteer community co-ordinator of Soham Handy Helpers (SHH) to set up a very effective system of help to those vulnerable and shielding residents within Soham & Barway. The system had complied with with full GDPR regulations, track & trace and requisite insurances for volunteers. The Chairman reported that there were 400 residents who had registered with the service with more than 200 of them shielding as a consequence of being medically clinically vulnerable. Now that the emergency situation is considered by Central Government to coming to an end (shielding to discontinue currently from 31st July 2020) STC & SHH are struggling to get the necessary support and Authority from Higher Tier Authorities (ECDC and CCC whose statutory responsibilities and duties are to provide such services and for which they received ratepayers monies) to enable this service to continue in the community.

NOTED Cllr Johnson thanks to all town council staff who had continued to work throughout the lockdown period but noting her disappointment that only 2 councillors had checked on the welfare of the staff during this time.

APPROVED vote of thanks (proposed Cllr Aitchison) for both the Chairman and Soham Council staff who have unstintingly and unassumingly and without complaint supported residents of Soham.

b) Market Town Plan for Soham (ref: Agenda item 11 Soham market Town Masterplan as approved by ECDC Finance & Assets Committee on Thursday 18 June 2020) & Town Cllr Updates

The Chairman noted his severe disappointment not only to the manner in which this report was commissioned but also provided to members of ECDC's Finance and Asset Committee (18th June 2020) without any consultation with the town council. Noting that not only Soham Town Council had as a most relevant Stakeholders been denied any input this omission, unlike the Conservative County and District representatives, extended Liberal Democrat District Cllrs who were similarly left in the dark. Noting the amount of rate payers money that had been used for what amounted to a 'desk top' analysis

of publicly available data and statistics it nevertheless retained glaring mistakes and unrealistic aspirations (marina Soham Lode). Noting that such a report does 'nothing for democracy' the Chairman indicated that it was his and the executive officers intention to provide a constructive and open response to the 'implementation phase' and draw down of the £1m to the town to ensure that not only provide fiscal returns (GVA'S gross value added related to High St regeneration, factory and industrial sites, the reintroduction of rail station) but social returns and value on investments are also provided to Soham residents consistent with the Local Plan 2015, the emergent Neighbourhood Plan for Soham as well as the proposed Strategic Infrastructure and Amenity Improvement programmes approved by the town council (more green open space provision, better road management and accessibility).

Cllr Warner was similarly disaffected by what appears to becoming the standard norm of 'finding out' matters by reading local papers rather than from elected County and District Cllr whose reports [sometimes] and attendance on a monthly basis proved sporadic.

Cllr Woodbridge commented that the station remained an ideal site to encourage industry rather than the distant 'eco-centre' on the other side of town's boundary.

Cllr Pallet noted she was content to act in the capacity of delegated Cllr assist in the 'summertime scheme' being proposed by Cambridgeshire County Council/Cambridgeshire Police to engage with young people.

The Chairman noted that the IIA (min 56.20A below) had on previous occasions indicated that once in session members of the public which included District and County Cllrs were there to observe and not entitled to join in debate. Accordingly the Chairman indicated that after 49/20 and only at his discretion would he countenance this interruption of proceedings (formal records would indicate time of commencement of suspension and time of reinstatement only).

49/20

COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

CCllrs Hunt and Goldsack reports were circulated for Councillors to review at their leisure.

The Chairman invited DCllr sBovingdon and Jones to present report on East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC) matters affecting Soham or more generally namely:

The inaugural meeting of the cross party COVID 19 working Group occurred on 9th July 2020 with an aim of assisting business and residents with relevant support as they come out of lockdown and face those challenges.

DCllr Bovingdon noted that in the Local Plan 2015 there remained opportunity and scope for mixed use development site of circa 27 acres (formerly Scotsdales)

Cllr Woodbridge confirmed with DCllr Bovingdon that to realistically deliver this proposal the roundabout for the proposed Eastern Gateway development would need to be first delivered.

DCllr Jones made apology for DCllr Charleworth's understandable absence due to her recently giving birth and the membership sent their hearty congratulations to her and her son.

50/20

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received by Cllr A Woricker and duly authorised by the membership. Cllr Gipp & Ross were recorded as absent. The Clerk noted that apologies were also received from CCllr B Hunt, M Goldsack & DCllr V Charlesworth.

51/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
There were no declarations of interest recorded for those members present.

52/20 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 11 MAY 2020
NOTED Cllr Pallett's request for minor corrigenda regarding initials which did not materially alter the veracity or content of the minutes.
RESOLVED and APPROVED that the minutes of the meeting on the 11 May 2020 as printed and attached herein as being a true record of proceedings which were duly signed as such by the Chairman.

53/20 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 Cllr Aitchison (lead Cllr in matter) her comments that unsurprisingly and due to COVID all face to face meetings regarding this matter had been suspended.

NOTED Cllr Aitchison had in the interim attended a Zoom training meeting on Neighbourhood planning which had highlighted how engage with and involve the community.

NOTED an online competition is currently running for Soham & Barway residents on the Neighbourhood Planning website (no entrants presently).

B) Chapel – Update & Insurance Claim (Subsidence)

NOTED Insurers Zurich plc have agreed to insurance claim of £43,350 which with this years external works budget from precept (£25K) provides sufficient capital to complete chapel repairs (expected completion date end of Q4 2020 by or before December)

APPROVED matters delegated to Clerk and Chairman

C) CCTV upgrade

NOTED over half of existing CCTV cameras in the High Street are extremely old (15-20yrs) and precept monies available this year to completely renew system

APPROVED matters delegated to Clerk and Chairman

D) Existing back hall (Condition)

NOTED the back hall is in significant need of

APPROVED Clerk over summer recess to undertake financial feasibility studies regarding condition of back hall, level of repairs needed and potential costs which will enable council to consider the merits of undertaking repairs, in upgrading and/or demolishing (new hall provision) at its September 2020 meeting (matter to be relisted then or at a subsequent full council meeting).

With the permission of membership, the Chairman varied the Order of the Agenda so that 53/20 (E) Land (and building) Acquisition could be considered at end of meeting.

54/20 PREVIOUS MONTHS STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

a) Finance & Policy - None

b) Planning - None

c) RESOLVED that the comments made by the Chairman and Chairman of Planning Committee under delegation in respect of those planning applications received in months of i) May 2020 ii) June 2020 be approved.

Meeting suspended at 8:17pm to enable Mr Pistol, of FJ Pistol Holdings Ltd representing

the Developer to approach the membership to answer any questions posed.

d) Public consultation land at Station Road GL Hearn (www.stationroaddevelopment.co.uk)

NOTED that matter had been listed at current meeting due to Public Interest and that the town council had not been invited to provide response at the recent virtual consultation held by the Developers

NOTED questions from Cllrs included green space provision, drainage and flooding, the intensity of proposed housing, traffic management, noise and vibration levels (bunds), newts (endangered species mitigation), proposed 'green walkway'.

NOTED matter would be listed under normal procedures for the Planning Committee's meeting consideration when a full application is received by the Planning Authority.

55/20 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES FROM LAST MONTHS' AND PREVIOUS STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES (to be specified at time of meeting) – to include:

No matters were identified by membership for further consideration

56/20 RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS OF ACCOUNTS MADE & STATEMENT OF BALANCES AS AT 30 MAY & 30 JUNE 2020 RESPECTIVELY, QUARTER 1 2020-21 ACTUAL NET INCOME & EXPENSE ACCOUNTS INCLUDING PROJECTED OUTTURN TO 31 MARCH 2020

NOTED income & RESOLVED approval of those payments made to 30 May & 30 June 2020 totalling £ (inc vat) and as attached to the council minutes as appendices.

NOTED & APPROVED budgetary balances as stated at 30 May & 30 June 2020.

A) IIA Auditors report (attached) & in light of comments reconsideration: i) Relate Cambridge (43/20C 6 month rule)

NOTED IIA statement under 'grants and donations' that the town council should carefully consider monies under 'social care' provision as this is a Duty and responsibility of Higher Tier Authorities and that provision of moneys by the town (and parish) council is subject to challenge under complaint of double taxation on residents

APPROVED to rescind previous approval of making grant but to inform Relate of the reasons for such.

Meeting suspended at 8:42pm to enable DCllr Jones to make representation on behalf of DCllr Charlesworth's MHI bid (Clay St pedestrian crossing)

At 8:48pm in session:

57/20 REQUEST FOR COMMUNITY FUNDING/FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

a) APPROVED (proposed Cllr Aitchison seconded Cllr Pallett Cllrs Johnston and Woodbridge recorded as voting against) by majority. Cllr Johnston & Woodbridge objected a sum of up to £1362.00 towards Clay St traffic reduction measures as proposed by DCllr Charlesworth subject to any improvements agreed under the implementation phase the Soham Market Town Plan.

58/20 CORRESPONDENCE –NOTED ONLY UNLESS OTHERWISE RECORDED IN THE MINUTES-any notes/approvals appear *italicised* and in **BOLD**.
 -CCC IHMC April 2020 Incident Report Roadworks & events bulletin 16th - 31st May 2020; Roadworks & events bulletin 1st - 15th July 2020
 -TTRO 20/500 - East Fen Drove, Soham TTRO 20/544 - The Cotes, Soham 20/610 Millcroft, Soham
 -Updates from DCs for Wicken Parish Council and Soham Town Council (received May 2020 too late to add to May 2020 agenda)
 - Notification Cancellation of 2020 April -June Micro Asphalt Program
 - CCC HGV Assessment Process
 -3000 Trees Cambridge & Ely - Parish planting
 -Benefit from government funding on renewable energy projects
 - ECDC Innovate & Cultivate Fund - new funding round and advice session
 -COVID-19 Measures on one network (formally roadworks.org)
 -Update from the Acting Police and Crime Commissioner: Parish, Town and City Council briefings (East Cambs meeting scheduled for 11th Jan 2021)
 -A10 Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) Junctions and Dualling (a virtual presentation)
 -Licensing: East Cambs District Council Licensing Act 2003 policy review

59/20 MONTHLY PAPERS/BIBIOGRAPHY/PERIODICALS/BULLETINS (LIST TO APPEAR IN MINUTES ONLY)
 Andrezieux-Boutheon Magazine No 237 & 238 Spring:July/August 2020

60/20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING
 14TH SEPTEMBER 2020 (date and venue tbc) With the exception of a matter requiring the convening of an extraordinary meeting (EOM) the town council does not meet in August (summer recess)
 -Next planning committee meeting OR meeting of Chairman & Chairman of Planning under this Standing Committee's Terms of Reference
 -27th July 2020
 -24th August 2020 (one week earlier due to August Bank Holiday)

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9:10pm and under Exclusion of Public and Press:

53.20 E) Land (And Building) Acquisition – Community Assets – update Cllr Johnston to include revision to Land Agent appointments
 NOTED Soham Town Council's previous agreement/relationship with Weldon Beesly has been terminated by mutual consent.
 APPROVED matter of engaging a suitably qualified and experienced Land Agent to assist in land management negotiations and purchasing matters to Cllrs Johnston and Warner at a rate of no more than £100 per hour, £500 per day (capped at £500 per month)
 APPROVED A VOTE OF THANKS to Cllr Leonard and Cambridgeshire County Council's Officer Jonathan Clarke who has confirmed CCC will be providing suitable legacy trees throughout and to line the High St
 APPROVED ACCEPTANCE subject to confirmation that trees will be planted with root guards to preserve integrity of the pavements, not interfere with the sight lines of the new CCTV installations (Clerk to provide schematics)

and that CCC will be liable for costs and insurances regarding these trees' upkeep and management.