

# MONK SOHAM PARISH COUNCIL

## (Draft) Minutes of a meeting of Monk Soham Parish Council Parish Council held on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> September at the Bedfield Community HUB

The meeting commenced at 1903

### **09/22 - 01 Present**

- Graham Wigley (GW - Chairman), David Entwisle (DE - Vice-Chairman), Julian Sayer (JS), Cliff Arndt-Snelling (CAS) and Caroline Berkley (CJB)
- Geoff Robinson (GR), as Parish Clerk.
- Matthew Hicks for Item 09/22 – 12 below.

### **09/22 - 02 Apologies for Absence**

- Charles Bagnall (CRB) and Julie Giles (JG) (Both approved absences)

### **09/22 - 03 Declaration of Members Interests.**

- The New Code of Conduct for Councillors had been circulated by GR, together with several explanatory circulars from SALC. After a brief discussion, it was unanimously agreed to immediately adopt the Code. The required additional personal interest documentation had been completed by GW, DE, JS and CLS. GR to remind CRB, CJB and JG to review their position and advise him accordingly.
- Councillors were also reminded of the need to notify any changes to their circumstances which may affect their Declaration of Members Interests. GR had requested two councillors to submit amended declarations regarding their property ownership in the village – these had been received and loaded onto the MSDC Portal. No other changes were notified during the meeting.

### **09/22 - 04 Public Open Session**

- There were no members of the public present.

### **09/22 - 05 Minutes of the AGM (3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022)**

- These were agreed and were signed as an accurate record by GW.

### **09/22 - 06 Action Points from the meeting**

- It was generally felt that the incidences of dog fouling had reduced and whilst there would always be the occasional discovery, the situation was generally satisfactory.

### **09/22 - 07 Minutes of the Annual Village Meeting (3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022)**

- These were agreed and were signed as an accurate record by GW.

### **09/22 - 08 Action Points from the Meeting**

- None.

### **09/22 - 09 Minutes of and Extraordinary Meeting Held on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

- These were agreed and were signed as an accurate record by GW.

### **09/22 - 10 Action Points from the Meeting**

- None.

### **09/22 - 11 Police Report**

- GR stated that for the period March to June 2022, the Police crime website showed one recorded crime in April 2022 on Kenton Low Road of “other theft”, but no other details were

available.

### **09/22 - 12 Report of District & County Councillor (MH)**

MH attended and stated that his next newsletter would be available in the next couple of days, the salient points being:

- A solar panel initiative would again be running to obtain the panels and associated batteries at reduced process for residents, including those currently with panels. Residents must register an interest on the website.
- A cost-of-living review and potential payments was under consideration, especially for residents very near the poverty line.
- A publicity campaign is to be launched to point out the dangers of putting used batteries in recycling bins, following a serious fire at the recycling plant.
- Budgets were under threat as cuts had been made in expenditure already, with little more to spare. The cost of oil was of particular concern as, unlike gas and electricity, it was not part of any subsidy scheme, despite much of Suffolk having no other choice but to use it. MH said that whereas in the past SCC had taken risks with a good chance of receiving the money back in due course from central government, this is unlikely to be the case in future. GW stated energy efficiency in some of our Victorian school buildings was a problem with energy costs set to soar.
- CJB raised problems with free school transport, which were still occurring. MH acknowledged it was sometimes not good and would encourage any disadvantaged parents to appeal. He also said buses were a problem in general, with usage down on pre-COVID rates. This caused problems with SCC, who are unable to continue or improve some subsidies. He also acknowledged that the recently announced £2,00 fare will also be trialed as part of a government initiative.

### **09/22 - 13 Financial Update**

- Payments since the last meeting in May 2022 have been the 2020/21 & 2021/22 Internal audit fee (Paul Burrows) £100.00, and bank charges of £2.45.
- Income for 2022/23 so far has been a VAT refund (HMRC) of £26.26 in respect of the 2021/22 financial year.
- A payment received in error in respect of Bedfield Post Office rent was transferred to Bedfield and Monk Soham Community Club.
- GR produced a summary of estimated spending for the rest of the 2022/23 financial year which showed a figure of £873 anticipated for the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2023. This is considerably lower than the start of the year and entirely due to the unexpected additional costs associated with Hungers Green. He advised the councillors that they may need to consider an increase in the 2023/24 financial year precept at the November 2022 meeting.
- Payments were authorised as £785.28 as the Clerk's first half year salary and PAYE, plus £113.59 in respect of the Clerk's first half year expenses.
- The 2021/22 Accounts had been accepted under the Exemption status of AGA2 by the national auditors, PKF Littlejohn.
- The new bank account was finally open in full, with the NatWest account working well. The HSBC account had finally been closed and the funds transferred.
- GR stated that the SALC membership fee, unlike for most parish councils, will not be reappraised vis a vis the number of village residents.

### **09/22 - 14 Planning Applications**

- DC/21/03467 (self-build House on Long Green) – Appeal decision awaited from the Inspector.
- DC/22/01111 (Oak Cottage – demotion of current building & Replacement with new House) Approved by MSDC.
- DC/22/02046 (Abbey House – Alterations to Listed Building) – Approved by MSDC.
- DC/22/03748 (Electricity Sub-station at Abbey House) – Approved by MSDC.

**09/22 - 15 Countryside Group and Environmental Issues**

JG could not be present but had sent a written report, the salient points being:

- John Dickson has cut the grass and done an excellent job. He has now submitted his invoice and also an estimate for further suggested work. It was not obvious to the councillors how his invoice in respect of the work done (or still to be done) addresses his estimate and/or the specification he had accepted. GR to contact JG for clarification from John.
- The new trees planted under the recent MSDC initiative were watered until June and then intermittently. The weather this year has meant that they some have shown little signs of life and its hoped they will soon recover when wet weather returns. Others have shown limited growth.
- The Roadside Nature Reserve is being badly worn by passing traffic.
- We still have no replacement tree warden and JS will speak to a village family for a potential replacement.
- Concerns exist about a shortage of volunteers to join the Countryside Group as the current members are mainly over eighty years old.
- GR and JS to attempt to discover the details of the new land manager for the former Bouverie estate. GR will then send him a welcoming letter.
- GR had reported several footpath deficiencies using the SCC reporting tool and also taken the matter up with Debbie Adams. Reponses were awaited, but some of the items appeared to have been improved since harvesting has taken place. He will continue to report defects and liaise with Debbie Adams.

**09/22 - 16 Other Correspondence and Any Other Business**

- SCC Highways has responded to requests for repairs and surface dressing by the marking of Bedfield Road (and Monk Soham Road Bedfield!), Upper School Road, The Green and Bedingfield Road. The Councillors are waiting with interest to see when the work will commence.
- The Suffolk Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) had been circulated.
- The MSDC Overhead Power Lines Strategy document had been circulated.
- It was agreed that an article regarding the taking of ownership of un-owned Common Land, published in the latest edition of "Clerks and Councillors Direct", will be debated at the next meeting in November. In the meantime, GR to research the advantages and disadvantages of any such action.

**09/22 - 17 Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting, which will be on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022, commencing at 19:00 in the Bedfield Community Pavilion.

The meeting closed at 20:22.

Signed..... (Chairman)