

**MINUTES OF OLD SOMERBY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING     DRAFT**  
**HELD MONDAY 30 October, 2023 7pm AT THE FOX AND HOUNDS OLD SOMERBY**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs: Vicky Lowndes (Chairman) Nigel Percy (Vice-Chairman), Veronica Stephens, Peter Burrows, Betty North and Parish Clerk David Holmes.

Also present Cllr Charlotte Vernon LCC and 5 members of the public.

**PUBLIC FORUM:** Residents raised the following issues i) the footpath alongside the road leading to the Roundabout has not been repaired and is in an even worse state. LCC have assured the clerk that the project is in the current programme of works. ii) Parking by the Spinney – there is still rubbish being left at that point and elsewhere. (The area is subject to litter picking weekly); iii) The 6 Bungalow development on School Lane – The Give Way Sign is in the middle of the proposed footpath; the Salt Box is now not accessible; there are no drop-kerbs or gulleys in the new kerbing; **ACTION: The Clerk.**

**1. CHAIRMAN's REMARKS:** The Chairman welcomed everyone present.

**2. APOLOGIES:** Cllr Sarah Trotter SKDC was unable to attend.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS / APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATIONS: None**

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** i) The draft minutes of the meetings held on 7 August, 2023 and the 3 October, 2023 - unanimous vote to accept as correct records. **ACTION: The Clerk.**

**5. CLERK AND COUNCILLORS' ACTIONS AND UPDATES/LATEST:**

**a) Cold Harbour traffic etc issues:** Cllr Vernon said she had had a meeting on site with the LCC Area Manager, Rowan Smith very recently and had raised all the issues recently raised by Cllr Percy. Rowan Smith now has a copy. Awaiting a response. A question was raised concerning **the Traveller Site** and if there had ever been an Archaeological Survey at that point where 2 old Roman Roads met. Cllr Vernon offered to check. Cllr Percy enquired if consideration could be given to cutting the grass verges near to the 2 "Beware Deer" Road Signs to enable deer to be more visible when crossing the road. **Cllr Vernon to follow up.**

**b) Dog fouling – Well Field foot path:** The Clerk reported on correspondence with the local land owner who had provided him with a copy of the South Kesteven District Council (Dog Fouling) Public Spaces Protection Order, 2020 which indicated that the Order applies to all the land which is within the administrative area of SKDC which is open to the air...to which the public are entitled or permitted to have access...on which land dog walkers are thereby required to pick up their dogs fouling. It was noted Wardens are available to attend the parish. This information could be added to the next edition of the Parish Council Newsletter. The local landowner was not willing for further signs to be erected but offered to erect a camera if needed. **c) Footpath to the village from the Roundabout** – dealt with above: **d) Hedge cutting issues.** The Clerk had made enquiries and the issues are in hand by the owners:

**e) Parish Council Newsletter** – this issue is in hand - likely date March 2024.

**6. LCC LOCAL COUNCILLOR UPDATE:** Councillor Vernon informed the meeting of a **LCC Volunteer Scheme** which enabled LCC employees to be available to undertake appropriate

tasks of social and community value. Applications would be considered for inclusion in the scheme. **Highway Budget:** £10 million of government money had been made available to the budget. **The Call Connect Bus** provision now provided for a maximum fee of £2 anywhere in Lincs. Cllr Vernon was thanked for her report.

**7. Councillor Sarah Trotter** had sent her apologies- her report annexed to these minutes.

**8. FINANCE:** i) The clerk produced the up-to-date **Financial Report** showing funds held, all expenditure to-date this financial year and the bank reconciliation. The Report had been inspected and had been signed off by the Lead Councillor – Finance Cllr Peter Burrows and also by the Internal Auditor. Report accepted. **ACTION:** Clerk to publish the report;  
ii) **The Hosting service** price increase to £70 pa was agreed;  
iii) **Parish Council Fixed Assets:** The clerk reported on a recent inspection of the assets by Cllr Stephens and himself. **ACTION:** Clerk to publish the report with the minutes;  
iv) **Annual Audit 2022/2023** – the same resident as previously had again objected to the Audit to the External Auditors even though the 2 previous Objections had been unsuccessful. A decision was awaited. Once again the cost of the Objection will fall upon this parish council and could adversely affect the council tax paid by all residents;  
v) **Intermediate Internal Auditor's Report:** The Internal Auditor was present and presented his report. The report was accepted and to be published. **ACTION: The Clerk;**  
vi) **Budget 2023/2024 –Intermediate Check:** The clerk reported that he had undertaken a check upon the current expenditure under the Budget and spending was within budget;  
vii) **Budget 2024/2025** – a workshop will be held prior to the next parish council meeting at which the new budget would be published.

**9. PLANNING:** i) **6 Bungalow Development** – variation of conditions. This related to a variation of the foul water drainage etc and was still pending a decision by the Planners;  
ii) **S23/1097** Proposed 2 storey development cul de sac School Lane –still pending.

**10. CORRESPONDENCE ETC:** i) **Police and Crime Commissioner** – Engagement Session – noted. ii) **SKDC Review of Polling Stations:** Noted – no change for Old Somerby; iii) **LIVES** – Request for funding – noted. iv) **LCC Household support-** noted ; v) **LALC Community Engagement:** Noted - there were some suggestions worth considering to enhance our community - to be discussed further for possible inclusion in the next Parish Newsletter; vi) **Emergency Planning: - Lincolnshire Resilience Forum:** The Forum was a valuable resource and had recently by updated with local contacts by the clerk – currently himself and the chairman Vicky Lowndes; vii) The local Land Owner had reported to the clerk finding 2 sandbags thrown into the ditch at the bottom of Church Lane over the culvert which could have adversely affected flooding. Noted.

**11. REVIEW OF POLICIES:** An annual review of the Old Somerby Neighbourhood Plan was required. Councillors considered no change was necessary. The SKDC'S requirement to review their Local Plan had been delayed pending a national planning review. The Review of the NP and other policies to be considered at a future meeting.

**12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING:** Monday 29 January 2024. Meeting closed 8.50pm

## **District Councillor Sarah Trotter Update**

Firstly, may I apologise for not able to attend tonight, I have both my Grandchildren staying for half term from Noth Yorkshire, so have my hands full tonight!

I continue to request updates in relation to the parcel of land in Old Somerby that the Parish Council wishes to acquire, and again speaking personally to the Leader Cllr Richard Cleaver, but to date I have not received any updates, I have made my frustrations clear and wait to hear if David has heard anything further?

I have corresponded with Inspector Hillson today, in the hope of receiving an update in relation to the serious assault to David, I understand the suspect is still on bail with conditions. As I mentioned previously medical evidence as always takes some time for the police to receive for a charging decision to be made. Please can Councillors who were witnesses feel free to contact me if there are frustrations for witness/victim updates and I will endeavour obtain more information,

Following Storm Babet - In Lincolnshire, emergency planning and response is co-ordinated through the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum (LRF) which brings together lots of key organisations including the seven District Councils across the County, the County Council, NHS Lincolnshire, the Police, Met Office, Ambulance service, Anglian Water, the British Red Cross, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue, and the Environment Agency.

Its work covers a multitude of areas including coastal flooding, river and surface water flooding, emerging infectious diseases, pandemic flu, loss of gas or electricity, heatwaves, extreme cold weather, terror attacks, and cyber attacks. It is activated to assist in responding to large-scale emergencies when required, and its partners work together to ensure that the necessary plans are in place and regularly test and prove these plans to ensure that every organisation can respond as quickly and effectively as possible.

At SKDC, we take our partnership with the LRF extremely seriously indeed.

Since Friday morning last week, our own dedicated emergency response team was activated, supported by representatives from every service area, due to the potential impact of Storm Babet.

But there's more we can do to enhance our County's resilience – our Town and Parish Councils should all be active partners too. If you are not involved already involved in partnership with the LRF, then please encourage that to happen.

Individuals can also volunteer - the forum has a Ready for Anything volunteers scheme through which individuals can support emergency responders and communities during and after crises. This support can include good neighbour support, logistical support, transport provision, missing person support, rest centre support, warning and informing, and clean-up duties.

Greater Lincolnshire Devolution

This is continuing to gain more momentum.

#### Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill

This was given Royal Assent this week. You can read details here and in various other articles on the LGA website.

#### Future High Streets Fund - Grantham

A key meeting took place last week with LCC representatives, and I'm pleased to tell you that we reached an agreed approach to take this forward.

#### Community Awards!

It was a privilege to be invited to last Friday's SK Community Awards presentation event at the Corn Exchange in Bourne.

We all know there are lots of incredibly generous and selfless people in our District and these awards shine a light on just some of them.

Amongst one of the finalists for Young Inspirational Persons was Little Humby's Nathan Coyle, duly nominated by myself, supported by Ropsley & District Parish Council. Nathan is severely autistic and as a result of his volunteering led to achieving the Duke of Edinburgh Awards, Bronze, Silver and was presented his Gold at Buckingham Palace, he works tirelessly litter picking come rain or shine across the Parish of Ropsley & Humby.

Winners in each category can be found on SKDC's website.

I am pleased to report that many months of hard work to improve our social housing service has paid off and we are now judged as compliant with standards set by the Regulator for Social Housing.

It has been a long journey, but a new approach and improved ways of working means the Regulatory Notice imposed in February 2021 has been lifted.

For context, in 2020 under our then new Chief Executive Karen Bradford, SKDC commissioned an audit that identified key areas of work required to meet the Regulator's Home Standard.

Based on the audit findings the Council referred itself to the Regulator and the notice was issued in February 2021.

In support of the improvement process a comprehensive action plan was implemented to tackle areas of concern, which related mainly to inspection processes and awareness of the overall condition of its housing stock.

The senior housing team has been strengthened and reformed the process for compliancy with the Home Standard to ensure important safety checks are carried out.

The wellbeing and safety of our tenants is one of our fundamental priorities and it is certainly welcome news that the Regulator has confirmed we are now meeting the needs of those who rely on our help and support.

The areas that were highlighted for improvement were outlined in the audit included:

- Inspection process for gas and electrical certificates
- Record keeping, servicing, and processes relating to fire safety
- Record keeping and tracking of water inspections
- Management of the recording of asbestos
- Insufficient data recorded to demonstrate how standards set out by the Regulator were being met

We have come a long way but, while the decision to remove the Regulations there is still much improvement to be made.

As always can I please ask that if there are any issues, concerns, requests please do not hesitate to contact me via my details on the SKDC website.

Thank you.

Sarah

# **OLD SOMERBY PARISH COUNCIL**

## **INTERMEDIATE INTERNAL AUDIT INSPECTION**

### **BY NICK CRAFT INTERNAL AUDITOR.**

On the 23 October, 2023 I undertook a review of the accounting systems, controls, risk management, governance processes and financial practices of Old Somerby Parish Council. I found them to be sound, safe and reliable.

I noted that the transfer of the bank account from HSBC to Lloyds had been undertaken and was operational. This process was undertaken to save on bank charges.

I noted that the practice continued for the Lead Councillor Finance, Councillor Peter Burrows, to visit the clerk before every Parish Council Meeting to also undertake a check of the accounts and associated files before counter-signing the Financial Statement presented at each Parish Council Meeting. I was informed that Cllr Burrows would be attending the clerk's office for that purpose the next day -Tuesday 24 October 2023. I noted that the Draft Financial Statement had been prepared for that meeting and I was able to confirm the accuracy of the income and payments made since the start of the current financial year as shown therein. I also noted there had been a recent inspection of the parish councils fixed assets by Cllr Stephens and the Clerk. I noted the clerk's report which I gather will be presented at the forthcoming meeting.

I also had access to the Budget for 2023/2024 which was approved by the Councillors at their meeting on 31 January 2023. The Clerk had reviewed the budget income and expenditure on 17 October 2023 which I checked and had no issues. I gather the clerk will report to the Council at the forthcoming Meeting on 30 October, 2023.

I also noted that a resident had objected, once again, to the External Auditors concerning the parish council's Audit 2022/2023. I noted the Objections were similar to previous objections. I understand a final response from the External Auditor was expected by the end of October, 2023. Once again the costs of the External Auditors fees will fall upon the Parish Council and no doubt have an adverse effect upon the level of the Precept and thereby affect local residents. This seems an unfair process.

I propose to be present at the forthcoming Parish Council Meeting on 30 October, 2023 and will be available to answer any questions from the Parish Councillors.

I understand the Internal Auditor Scope of Work document may be reviewed at the forthcoming Parish Council Meeting. I have seen the draft and have no issues with it.

Signed.....Nick Craft Internal Auditor – 23 October, 2023

Signed.....David J Holmes Parish Clerk and RFO – 23 October, 2023.

## **OLD SOMERBY PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Financial Statement for Parish Council Meeting 30 October 2023**

#### **BANK RECONCILIATION:**

Balance as 18 Sept 2023	<b>12,069.37</b>
Unpresented cheques	NIL
 Net Balance	 <b>12,069.37</b>

<b>Income since 1 April 2023</b>	<b>4,855.32</b>
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#### **Payments since 1 April 2023**

PFK Littlejohn External Auditor	1278.00
Grass Cutting by the Contractor	90.00
Bank Charges to 4 April 2023	6.60
Zurich insurance	273.86
D Warden – grass cutting x 2	190.00
Bank Charges to 4 May 2023	5.80
Bank Charges to 21 June 2023 (HSBC)	5.80
D Warden – grass cutting	100.00
Krystal Hostings	47.99
SKDC Election costs	72.95
D. Warden - Grass Cutting	110.00
Community Heart – Defibrillator new electrodes	106.74
D. Warden – Grass Cutting	110.00
D. Warden – Grass Cutting	110.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>2507.79</b>

David J Holmes  
Parish Clerk and RFO  
24 October 2023

Cllr Peter Burrows  
Lead Councillor Finance  
24 October 2023