

**SAHAM TONEY PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON 7th AUGUST 2023**

A meeting of the Parish Council was held on the 7th August 2023 at 7.30 p.m. at the Wells-Cole Community Centre, Saham Toney.

Present – Mr. J. Baldwin in the Chair supported by Messrs N. Creek, D. Freeman, R. Harrold, G. Morton, L. Rees-Murphy, S. Rees-Murphy, Ms. K Avery and Ms. M. Baldwin.

1. Apologies for Absence: Apologies received and accepted from Ms H. Crane and Mr. P. Bate (District Councillors)

2. To Receive declarations of Interest from Members on Items on the Agenda: There were no declarations of interest.

3. To Confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 3rd July 2023: The Minutes of the Meeting held on the 3rd July 2023 were proposed by Ms. K. Avery, seconded by Mr. D. Freeman and unanimously approved.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes and Action List:

- Repairs to the Council's shed at the Community Centre – Mr. G. Morton will repair the shed.
- Dog Signs for Community Centre land – permanent signs needed possibly from Breckland Council's supplier. Clerk to ask for the price of signs asking people to clear up after their dogs.
- Replacement doors and windows at the Community Centre – Work is complete but the thresholds do not comply with disability requirements as in their quote. Mr. N. Creek is meeting with Wymondham Windows on Tuesday to see what can be done to rectify the problem.
- Dog bin for Hills Road – The Clerk has queried this again with NCC and they have no objection but have sent it to Breckland Council and are waiting for their comments Still nothing heard from Breckland.
- Sanctuary Meadow road sign – Breckland Council will replace this within the next 6 weeks.
- Repairs to Playpark and Gym Equipment – ongoing.
- Footpath on Saham Road into Watton is overgrown and needs cutting back. Highways do not consider this needs attention.
- Unsafe garages at the Playing Field – Playing Field is on the Agenda.
- Defibrillator for Hills Road – The Clerk had expressed an interest in a Government Grant through Breckland Council. Nothing heard about possible grant.
- Road sign missing on Richmond Road. Clerk will contact Breckland Council. – it should be replaced within the next 6 weeks.
- Overhanging tree on the corner of Cressingham Road – Clerk has reported again.
- Shrubs /fence for the extension of the central bed at the WCCC Car Park – this will be done in the Autumn. Lamp post guards is on Agenda.
- Pot holes in Ploughboy Lane – will be repaired in the next 6 weeks.

5. Reports from District/County Councillors: Ms H. Crane had emailed to say there is nothing to report as at this time of year, the Council is quiet although of course it is business as usual.

Ms. H. Crane had visited Oxburgh Hall to see the site where Breckland are going to plant 2400 trees in partnership with the National Trust and had also visited the Saham Toney allotments to see how they were getting along with the IBC water containers that Breckland Council provided a grant for.

Mr. P. Bate had sent the following report: -

On 10th July I attended the veteran's workshop at Dereham memorial hall. Organisations present were SSAFA, Royal Marines Association, British Legion, On the wire, RAF benevolent fund, Breckland District Council, NHS, and the bridge from Kings Lynn. The Bridge is a drop-in centre for veterans where they can participate in arts and crafts and various other activities or if they want, just have a chat. They will also reach out to lonely veterans in old people's homes and then do visits do keep them company. They can be reached by emailing contact@thebridgeforheroes.org.

On the 17th of July I took part in a housing policy workshop. The main takeaway from this being that we have a huge number of people who need accommodation and very few spaces to put them. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss whether we used the best policies to ensure that housing goes to the most deserving.

There was a full council meeting this month the most contentious part being, Breckland Bridge and whether it is the best way to decide the use of council land. The governing party felt it was and the opposition felt that it did not consider value, other than monetary, enough. The governing party won the recorded vote.

6. Public Participation: A parishioner spoke about a possible Wildlife Group that his wife would like to start to increase awareness of wildlife and nature in the village.

A parishioner from living in Cley Lane, and backs onto the Bird Sanctuary, asked about any plans that the Parish Council has for the future of this area. Maybe it would be possible to include this in the Wildlife Group that has just been mentioned. Mr. R. Harrold said that the area had been surveyed by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust and was considered of considerable wildlife interest, meeting the criteria for County Wildlife Sites and has been added to the register. This recognised the area as being amongst the best remaining wildlife areas in Norfolk. The Trust does offer help on how the sites can be managed. A board walk to make the site more accessible has been considered and it may now be possible to fund this. Bird Sanctuary to be on the September Agenda.

The parishioner also raised the following: -

- Sanctuary Meadow sign – Clerk said Breckland are aware of this and will replace
- Capping stones on the bridge – Clerk will report again
- Weight limit on the bridge – Council has tried for a weight limit many times and have been unsuccessful
- Smell from Cranswick. - this is being investigated by the Environment Agency.

7. Correspondence:

- Email from Highways re adoption of the green at the bottom of Hills Road – Highways wished to retain ownership of this green so they can maintain it. Clerk has asked that they do maintain it as they are not doing so at the present.
- Email from Steven Halls with update on flood alleviation work – work has been delayed by one landowner and Anglian Water funding which will not be available until April 2024. Money for maintenance has been offered to the other landowners and for fairness they were going to offer the same to the Parish Council for the Clay Pit. An amount needs to be agreed with Highways. Mr. N. Creek will ask Steven Halls about this.

- Email from a parishioner re new gate to land off Coburg Lane – the Clerk reported this to Planning Enforcement who have replied that as it is a private road, planning permission is not required. However, they advised that it should be reported to NCC Highways and the Clerk has done this and a reply is awaited. The Clerk will inform the landowner.
- Email from Auditors – Conclusion of Audit – no points raised.
- Quotation for replacing the front door at the Community Centre had been received from Wymondham Windows in the sum of £5080 including VAT. It was suggested that if the door was to be replaced, it should be an automatic opening and closing door suitable for the disabled. Mr. L. Rees-Murphy said there seemed no point in installing an automatic front door as none of the internal doors are automatic. This point was agreed but it was considered more quotes are needed if the front door is replaced.
- Email re a proposed Village Event requesting some of the Fete monies to organise. Clerk has asked the Chair of the last Fete Committee for permission to use this money and he has no objection but would hope that another Fete can be organised at some stage but this is all dependant on volunteers to form a committee. After discussion, it was agreed that if the Village Event was named as an Autumn Fete, then they could use the Fete money.
- Email from a parishioner informing the Council about the possible formation of a Wildlife Group in the village. This was raised under Public Participation.

8. To Approve Accounts for Payment: The following account was paid between meetings: -

- EFire - £202.08 – Fire Service at the Community Centre (to be repaid by the Community Centre when their bank account is open)

The following accounts are due for payment: -

- PKF Littlejohn LLP - £378 – External Audit Fee
- Wymondham Windows - £10,570– part payment for the new windows/doors at the Community Centre. Payment of the balance of £7950 will be withheld until the error with the thresholds is rectified.
- Mr. J. Baldwin - £50 - maintenance work in the parish
- Mrs. J.S. Glenn - £544.93 - Salary

The payment of these accounts was proposed by Mr. L. Rees-Murphy, seconded by Mr. D. Freeman and unanimously agreed.

The balances on the Accounts as at 28th July were –

Current Account - £44,618.87 – this includes a transfer from the Wells-Cole Trust Fund of £14,113.33 for the windows/door at the Community Centre which has not yet been paid out.

Business Account - £22,935.95

9. To Consider any Planning Matters: Refusal of Planning Permission to Plan 3AG/2023/0011/AG – a balanced cut and fill earth moving operation to create an irrigation reservoir at field 1km south of Saham Grove. There were no plans to discuss.

10. To Agree the Co-option of Mr. Alistair Wilson to fill one of the vacancies on the Parish Council: Mr. A. Wilson introduced himself saying he has lived in the parish for 20 years and is willing to help and interested in environmental matters. He has a background in the construction industry and may be able to help with planning matters. It was unanimously agreed to co-opt Mr. Wilson to the Council.

11. To Discuss and Agree to Purchase Lamppost Guards for the Community Centre Car Park:

Two designs had been forwarded for consideration. Mr. A. Wilson will get some prices and send to the Clerk for agreement at the September meeting.

12. To Discuss Maintenance of the Grass Verge at the Front of the Community Centre:

The cost to cut the verge is £15 per visit and the Clerk has confirmed with Groundscape that the Council agrees to this. It was agreed that it will look tidier if the front verge is cut at the same time as the Community Centre grounds.

13. To Discuss a Project for the Parish Partnership Grant for 2024/25:

The Clerk had forwarded two examples of gates. Mr. D Freeman suggested that if two gates were put on the Ashill Road at the top of Pages Lane this would cover the entrance to the village from that direction. Two would then be needed at the start of Richmond Road, Saham Road, Ovington Road and Hills Road making a total of ten. It was uncertain as to what permission was needed to instal village gates and the Clerk will contact Highways to ascertain this. A trod on Cley Lane was also suggested but again it was uncertain as to what permission was needed so the Clerk will check.

14. To Discuss Maximising Storage at the Community Centre:

In his capacity as Chair of the Wells-Cole Trust Fund, Mr. R. Harrold has received a request from a parishioner concerning lack of space for storage of paperwork at the Hall. The parishioner mentions the upper floor above parts of the building which have not been maintained and are therefore unsafe to use. It was agreed a joint meeting was needed with the Community Centre. Mr. L. Rees-Murphy to check if councillors could attend at the start of the Management Meeting on the 22nd August and inform the Clerk.

15. To Receive Reports from Outside Organisations:

15.1 Wayland Partnership –Minutes of the meeting on the 17th July have been circulated to all councillors. There are real issues with access to cash in the town, especially out of hours. Many older people struggle with electronic/online and mobile banking. The project to set up a Banking Hub is progressing. The Partnership have resolved the issues with Barclays Bank and have now switched their banking to NatWest. The new Dragonfly Gallery manager is doing well and footfall has increased greatly and they are getting new volunteers and running workshops. The Partnership aim to get feedback from parishes about issues as a project for Wayland as a whole would have a stronger case for funding. Mr. R. Harrold said that the Partnership had been contacted to ask if they could site the Banking Hub at Wayland House and this had been agreed. Mr. N. Creek asked if the Sanctuary Garden is open and Mr. R. Harrold replied that it is open when the Dragonfly Gallery is open.

15.2 Wells-Cole Community Centre – Messrs. L. and S. Rees-Murphy reported that a committee meeting was held on 18th July. Installation of the new windows/doors has started but concern was expressed that the front door was not included. This was mostly from an aesthetic point of view, as apart from the bar windows, it's the key focus of the hall. The only other concern is the window bar bench/seating area has not been 100% replaced - was this not part of the quote? If so, should it have been covered. A review is required on the intruder alarm and possible research into changing top lock to a smart lock to reduce the need for committee members to lock/unlock in person within booking times but maintaining standard management checks. Otherwise, we are waiting on NatWest/accountants to complete process relating to the trust account (Treasurer chased 31.7.23) no update received from accountant. User groups continue apart from Brownies who are summer holidays.

15.3 Playing Field – The Rugby Club will be holding a “Presidents Day” on the 12th August. There will be a Rugby Game, marquee, bouncy castle, other inflatables, face painting, disco, fish and chip van, BBQ, ice cream van. Parishioners are welcome to attend. The Playing Field account is still not set up. The grant of £3000 per year is normally paid in two instalments of £1500 in April and October but this cannot be paid until the Playing Field bank account is open and Mr. L. Rees-Murphy will inform the Committee of this. They also wish to build a building to house all the equipment which is presently in the garages and containers with additional changing rooms with disability facilities. The cost would be materials only and the work to build would be done voluntarily. It was not known if any grants are available. The PF Committee had commented on the Walk Round Schedule. In particular they asked why the containers needed painting. This request was so the containers blended in with the scenery. They also asked for an update on the timeframe as to when the bench would be replaced by the Council – no decision was made on this apart from the fact that if the building project goes ahead, the bench would need to be relocated.

15.4 Play Park Inspector – No major concerns at present. There is a crossed wooden apparatus which is very rotted and unstable and it is suggested that this is removed as it is not used. There is some rabbit activity around play areas but nothing of concern.

15.5 Any Other Reports –

- **Wells-Cole Trust Fund** – The current balance on the Account as at 4th August 2023 is £22,969.94. A credit of £3054.00 has been received from Spire solicitors against their invoice of £9028.80. The final payment of £14,113.33 for the windows and doors at the Community Centre has been paid. Novia is now paying an income of £2,500 per month.
- **Community Orchard** - Newsletter received from the Orchard Group. Most of the trees are looking good and there are lots of apples, but no pears and a few cherries left as the pigeons have eaten most of them. There are some trees that need a bit of attention and advice is being sought to make sure they are not going to affect the other trees. They have asked if, once the containers have been removed, the space could be used to move the trees that were planted too close to the chestnut tree although they are well established and it might not be possible. The new notice board from the Council has been refurbished and will be put near the concrete base that was laid for the proposed gazebo.

16 Items for the next Agenda: The following items to be on the September Agenda: -

- Lamppost guards
- Bird Sanctuary
- Front door of the Community Centre
- Project for the Parish Partnership Grant

18. To Confirm the Date and Time of the Next Parish Council Meeting: Monday the 4th September 2023 at 7.30 p.m. at the Wells-Cole Community Centre, Bell Lane.

The Meeting closed at 9.00 p.m.

Parish Matters

Ms. M. Baldwin said a parishioner has asked her if the Council could impose a 30 mph speed limit throughout the whole of the parish. The Clerk replied that it was not up to the Parish Council to set speed limits and if the area did not meet the criteria for a 30 mph limit, then Highways would not impose one.

Overgrown hedges in Pages Lane, Mill Corner, on the bend in Richmond Road opposite the church were a concern – the Clerk will report all these again and contact householders where necessary.