

**SAHAM TONEY PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON 6TH NOVEMBER 2023**

A meeting of the Parish Council was held on the 6th November 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, Ms. K Avery and Ms. M. Baldwin. Ms H. Crane (District Councillor) was also present.

Eleven parishioners were present.

1. Apologies for Absence: Apologies received and accepted from Councillors L. ReesMurphy, S. Rees-Murphy and A. Wilson and Mr. E. Connolly (County Councillor). Mr. G. Morton was not in attendance.

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

3. To Confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 9th October 2023: An amendment had been proposed by Ms. M. Baldwin - to point out in the Minutes that the Bird Sanctuary is a public area and has been for many years. It was agreed that this could be minuted under “Bird Sanctuary”. The minutes of the meeting held on the 9th October 2023 were proposed by Mr. N. Creek, seconded by Mr. D. Freeman and unanimously agreed.

4. To report matters arising from the minutes:

- Repairs to the Council’s shed at the Community Centre – Mr. Morton will do this work.
- Dog Signs for the Playing Field and community Centre land – invoice has now been received and the signs should be despatched soon.
- Traffic Calming Measures for Saham – Mr. N. Creek said the speed limit in Swaffham is now 20 mph. It was unlikely the whole parish could become a 20-mph zone but more investigation is needed to try to reduce the speed of vehicles.
- Flashing light location for Chequers Lane – Mr. N. Creek will display this in Chequers Lane at the junction with Ploughboy Lane.
- Dog bin for Hills Road – now installed – thanks to councillors N. Creek, K. Avery and J. Baldwin
- Repairs to Play Park equipment – oak seat has been repaired – thanks to Mr. R. Harrold
- Playing Field AGM was held and attended by several councillors. Report under Reports from Outside Organisations.
- Defibrillator for Hills Road – application has been made but no confirmation as to whether we will get complete or part funding for this. A quote has been received from London Hearts but this is still expensive.
- Road sign missing on Richmond Road – Clerk has reported again.
- Quote for work for central reservation at the Community Centre – on Agenda.
- Pot holes in Ploughboy Lane – Clerk will report these again
- Capping Stones – reported and email acknowledged but no timescale for repair.

- Overgrown hedges – photos have been sent of the overgrown hedges on the bend opposite SuBridge but Highways still say this does not meet their criteria for intervention.

5. Reports from District/County Councillors: Ms H. Crane had submitted the following report: -

Waste reforms - Councils will retain local discretion on how to collect core recyclables, ours are co-mingled and sorted at the Mixed Recycling Facility. Items which will be required to be collected by 31.3.26 are glass bottles and jars, plastic pots and trays. Plastic tubes and tetra pak. This is already aligned with what we do at Breckland, which means there will not be the need for sorted kerbside collection and different bins. All councils will be required to provide weekly food waste collection to all types of property by 31.3.26.

Approval by full council has been given to the installation of solar panels at Dereham centre. The projected income over 25 years of 1 million£ and a CO2 reduction of almost 47,000 KG per annum.

Watton and Swaffham are to have 2 more electric vehicle charging points at Kittell Close in Watton and Theatre St in Swaffham.

Breckland Council has received £1,041,797 from the Rural England Prosperity fund to support businesses in rural areas. Four schemes are available under the titles-Rural fund, business growth fund, Local centre improvement fund and Community infrastructure fund.

Details can be found on the website.

The Breckland design Code for the Local plan is in its final stages, thank you to all stakeholders who have taken part in the consultation. It will go out for public consultation. Moving forward this document is going to be a strong tool to encourage building the type of homes that we want in Breckland.

Due to the rainfall, we have been having and the problems there are in Saham Toney and elsewhere it is a timely to remind all property owners of their riparian responsibilities to keep watercourses clear of debris.

6. Time allocated for members of the public to speak (maximum 20 minutes):

A parishioner spoke about the problems that flooding creates, not only financial damage but it inflicts long lasting emotional and mental harm. When heavy rain is expected, there are residents who don't sleep at night, frequently checking conditions outside. The factors that increase anxiety are loss of control, having no voice and no-one to engage with – little or no information feeds fear. The parishioner would like to propose that at least one public presentation forum is held each year – mid to end of April. Members of the flood committee and their advisors would present what was planned several years ago, what has been done and what has not been done and why and what else could be done, or is planned. Residents would hear facts not hearsay and it would give them the opportunity to table potentially helpful information or suggestions. Communication is key, even when it is not what you want to hear.

A parishioner asked if the Council would consider moving the “Public Participation” agenda item to the end of the meeting to give parishioners a chance to comment on what had been said at the meeting. The Clerk will look into this and it will be on the next Agenda. The parishioner also asked that printed Agendas be provided for the public who attend the meeting and the Clerk will do this in the future.

A parishioner suggested contacting the NRA about the missing capping stones on the bridge as these block the flow of the water when thrown into the brook. Clerk will contact the NRA.

A parishioner spoke about the heavy rain on the 20th October which had caused her garden to flood pointing out that the culverts under Hills Road at the Ploughboy Lane junction needed cleaning out. The Clerk will approach the landowner (through a third party as no direct contact details are held) of the land at the back of the properties asking him to clean the ditch and also contact Highways about the culverts.

A parishioner said it was not easy for riparian owners on Chequers Lane to keep their ditches clear due to the speed of traffic making this a dangerous operation. Speeding traffic causes waves into people's houses during heavy rain.

Mr. R. Harrold said that the Watton and Saham Flood Group would like photos of any flooding and urged parishioners to submit their photos – contact details will be on the Group's website.

Mr. N. Creek said that Steve Halls is looking at putting a pipe under the road to the Bird Sanctuary to drain water from Cley Lane but the cost and position of the gas pipe is delaying this.

A member of the Heritage Group asked if the Council will continue to pay for the Neighbourhood Plan website. The Clerk confirmed that as the Council has always paid for this, it will continue to do so.

7. Correspondence:

- Email from Breckland about review of polling places which is done every 5 years – any comments to be submitted by the 17th November. The Council is satisfied with the present arrangements at the Community Centre.
- Letter from WHP Telecoms about proposed communications installation for Arqiva's Smart Meter Network for Anglian Water at Swaffham Road, Ashill and Watton Road, Saham Toney – advance notice of this work. This does not really affect Saham as it is on the road between Saham and Ashill. (Mr. N. Creek confirmed after the meeting that this is located opposite Lodge Farm, Watton Road, Ashill.)
- Letter from parishioners about the recent flooding in Saham – The letter asks the Council to consider many points when discussing flooding.
- Letter from George Freeman about the Mid Norfolk Flood Partnership – agreed to advertise the Teams meeting on the 10th November on Facebook and Nextdoor.
- Email about D-Day 80 - 6th June 2024 – Saham Toney doesn't have a beacon so we will not be able to participate in this event
- Emails re speeding vehicles in Saham Toney- as parishioner contacted Matt Lines but the reply received said that Highways were working with the Parish Council to reduce speeding.
- Information from NALC about complying with The Biodiversity Duty – draft checklist and Policy will be available soon. Ms. K. Avery said she would like to go on the NALC Course on Biodiversity – cost £30 – and the Clerk will look into this and book.
- Email from a parishioner re Planning Committee 31st October 2023 – At the Committee meeting it was stated that planning is looking to take a paper to cabinet at the end of November to seek agreement for the next formal round of Reg 18 Consultation. The Referendum for the Watton Neighbourhood Plan will be held on the 18th January 2024.

8. To Approve Accounts for Payment: A replacement cheque has been issued for Mr. T. Bunce as the original cheque has not been found. The following cheque has been paid between meetings: -

- Saham Toney Sports & Social Club - £3000 – grant for maintenance of the Playing Field

The following accounts are due for payment:

- Breckland Council - £75 – Uncontested Election on the 8th May
- Breckland Council £49.80 – dog signs for Playing Field and Community Centre
- Mrs. J. S. Glenn - £544.93 – salary

The payment of these accounts was proposed by Mr. N. Creek, seconded by Mr. D. Freeman and unanimously agreed.

The balances on the accounts as at the 31st October 2023 are: -

Community Account - £36,550.38

Business Savings Account £22,997.41

9. To consider planning matters: - Planning Permission to Plan3PL/2023/0846/HOU – erection of conservatory on front elevation and dormer window extended on rear elevation to accommodate solar panels at 56 Hills Road.

- Plan 3PL/2023/0953/F – 1 Hunts Farm Close – to reconsider the Council’s comments on this plan. It was agreed that there were no objections to this plan but it should be pointed out that the plan is incorrect in that it does not show an existing building in the garden.

10. To discuss recent flooding in the Parish: - A long discussion took place on flooding. How to let people know about what to do when flooding occurs is a problem. Ms. H, Crane will send a leaflet about flooding to the Clerk and this will be put on the Council’s website. Mr. D. Freeman said once the Emergency Plan is published, there will be information about flooding in this. Mr. Freeman also said that none of the authorities do anything like cleaning the drains and ditches, to prevent flooding. When if full flood, the ditch in Cley Lane is full but the smaller bore pipe struggles to accommodate the large volume of water. The ditch in Cley Lane is frequently full of debris which causes an obstruction to the flow of water. It was disconcerting to residents during the recent flood, that heavy excavation was carried out by third parties to widen and deepen the Cley Lane ditch. It was agreed to hold a walk around meeting on Sunday the 19th November meeting at 10.00 at the Community Centre to research the drain structure, particularly in the Cley/Chequers Lane area. Following this a public meeting will be arranged and Mr. N. Creek will ask Steve Halls and Liz Witcher to attend.

11. To discuss repairs to some damaged brickwork and outside tap at the Community Centre: The Chairman will ask his contact to re-point the bricks in this section. Mr. A. Wilson will look at the outside tap.

12. To discuss work to the ditch and trees at the back of the Community Centre land:

Following on from the October meeting and the email from the resident of the bungalow in Ladybird Lane. Mr. D. Freeman took some photos of the trees behind the property and couldn't see a problem with them. The one in the corner has been removed previously and there doesn't appear to be much overhanging or blocking light. The ditch running along the length of the border with Ladybird Lane and Honeybee Close does need some maintenance work as there is debris and brambles that need removing. The Chairman will look at this and assess if we need to employ someone to do the work.

13. To discuss quote for work to the central reservation at the back of the Community Centre land: It was agreed to have a hawthorn hedge – quote for the work will be available between meetings.

14. To discuss a grant for Village Gateways from the Parish Partnership grant for 2024/25: The Clerk said Matt Lines had sent through the approximate costs for 10 village gateways and this is £20,000. There would also be the installation costs and materials required. The Clerk said the Council does not have the money to spend on the gateways unless it is put on the Precept. After discussion it was agreed to ask for a quote from Matt Lines for smaller gateways with village name plate and speed roundel – 960mm wide at a cost of £1300 each plus installation.

15. To discuss the Bird Sanctuary: Report is under Agenda item 16

16. To receive Reports from: -

16.1 Wayland Partnership – The next meeting will be held on Monday the 13th November.

16.2 Wells-Cole Community Centre - The committee has held a meeting, where they reviewed the drag quiz and talked about future events. Issue with heating, RS is looking into this (has been fixed since meeting). Plans for NYE party, LRM to sort out poster & banner. Bookings continue as normal, new meditation class is due to start on Sunday 29th Oct and will run on the last Sunday of every month. Royal British Legion Watton Poppy dance on Saturday 4th November. Possible Panto group, visit to be planned for them to tour the hall. The bank account is now open and when funds build up, the money owing to the Parish Council will be repaid. Councillors were concerned as to the current financial position of the Community Centre and it was agreed that the Clerk write to the Chair asking for up to date information and why there is a problem with transferring the money from the old Barclays account to the new account. It was also agreed to request that the amount of

£3948.15, which has been owed to the Council for three years, be repaid by the 29th February 2024.

16.3 Playing Field – The AGM was held on the 16th October with several councillors in attendance.

The delay in the drafting of a Constitution is due to illness and this will be discussed by the Committee in January 2024. The bank account is still not open. It was confirmed that the Health & Safety Walk Around will be annually. Plans for the replacement storage units and an extension to the changing rooms and toilet facilities will be provided to the Council. **16.4 Wells-Cole Trust Fund** – The balance on the account is £30608,68

16.5 Play Park Inspector – The Play Park Inspector had been asked by a parishioner if a swing with a disabled cushion could be provided at the Play Park. This would be expensive

with a frame and cushion support needed but may be worth considering by the WC Trust Fund.

16.6 Bird Sanctuary - The pathway around the site is clear, and beneath all the brambles we unearthed the storm drain!

Mr. J. Baldwin had walked around and marked out trees which he suggests may require work.

The cut brambles and branches need raking and hopefully if we can hire a mulcher this would enable us to reuse the cuttings. There is quite a bit of Himalayan balsam which will need to be removed - hopefully we can advertise for balsam bashing volunteers in the spring

We have suggested a new entrance to the site which we hope the Fuel Trust will allow. This entrance will be in front of the Allotment Site and the Clerk will write to the Fuel Trust about the changes to the entrance suggesting an on-site meeting.

The site is very wet at present, so work is on hold.

The Bird Sanctuary is a public area which has been open to the public for many years, but because of safety issues, access has not been possible in recent years.

16.7 Any Other Reports – Saham Saga – The Saga Editor has submitted the 2022 Accounts pointing out that the Saga is running at a loss. Over the next 2/3 years, the viability of a free village magazine may need to be considered. The bank account is still not open and so the grant of £1200 will be transferred to the Saga column in the accounts as the Council are holding the Saga account at present.

17. Items for the next agenda (not for discussion): The following items are to be on the December Agenda – To Set a Budget and Precept for 2024/25; To Consider the Council’s Biodiversity Duty and To consider moving the Public Participation Agenda item.

18. To arrange a Budget Meeting – Wednesday the 22nd November 2023 at 7.30 p.m. at the WellsCole Community Centre.

19. To confirm the date and time of the next Parish Council Meeting –Monday the 4th December 2023 at 7.30 at Wells-Cole Community Centre, Bell Lane.

20. To pass a resolution to exclude the Public and Press from the meeting in order to discuss a sensitive matter: The Chairman proposed that the meeting be closed to the Public and Press and the matter was discussed and the way forward was agreed by all councillors.

The Meeting closed at 9.40 p.m.

Parish Matters

The Chair said he had looked at the drains at the front of the Community Centre car park and cleared the leaves. There are bungs in the pipes where the water goes and the drain goes right but not left. Further investigation is needed.

The Clerk said the Wildlife Group’s report in the Saga did not correctly represent the work the Parish Council is doing in the Bird Sanctuary. The Council is reporting what they are doing at the Sanctuary on a regular basis.

The Clerk said that Office 2016 which is on the Council's laptop, is not supported by Microsoft anymore and it was agreed that Microsoft 365 can be purchased.