

Semer Annual Council Meeting

Minutes of the Council Meeting held at Semer Village Hall on Thursday 18th July 2024 commencing at 7pm

In attendance: Councillors Richard Keens (Chair), Jackie Barraclough, John Lawrence, Steve Nuttall; Victoria Waples (Clerk) and District Councillor Leigh Jamieson (in part).

1. Chair's welcome including the statement for the reporting at meetings of the council – the Chair opened the meeting and thanked all for attending. The statement on reporting at meetings of the parish council was taken as read.
2. Apologies for absence – verified apologies of absence were received from Cllr. James Pitcher. The meeting agreed to approved the apologies submitted.
3. Code of Conduct and Declaration of member's interests:
 - i. To receive declarations of registrable interests, other and non-registerable interests as detailed in Appendix B of the Local Code of Conduct – there were no such interests declared.
 - ii. To receive notification of gifts or hospitality exceeding £50 – there were none declared.
4. Minutes of previous meetings:
 - i. To approve the minutes of the meeting of 9th May 2024 and to give authority to the Chair to sign the minutes in accordance with legislation - **Council resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting and gave approval for the Chair to sign the minutes in accordance with legislation.**
5. Public Forum:
 - i. To receive comments from the public on the agenda as published or concerning Semer – there were no members of the public present
 - ii. To receive a report from the County Councillor – the meeting noted that County Cllr. Lindsay had previously submitted his apologies and no report was available at this time.
 - iii. To receive a report from the District Councillor – the meeting received the report from District Cllr. Jamieson (*as viewed at Appendix A*).
When questioned, he confirmed that car park charges will come to cabinet the following month.
When questioned as to whether the change of government would result in support for environmental proposals – he stated that he thought there would be a big push on solar farms approval and potential impacts on housing and social housing.
6. Parish Matters: to receive an update on items raised at previous meetings:
 - i. A1141 speed limit change – to receive information relating to the initial consultation for the proposed speed limit changes – Stone Street, Hadleigh and Union Hill, Semer – the updated position was covered under Cllr. Jamieson's report. It was considered that the process was progressing and further updates would be circulated once received. Council was made aware of the pledges for the council's contribution £1,800 from Semer PC and Kersey £1,800 and £2,400 from residents. It was debated whether residents should be asked to contribute to the costs and whether the council could bear all of the costs. Following further consideration, it was agreed that £1,400.00 should be sought from businesses, Semer PC should fund £2,800 with Kersey funding £1,800. This would bring the contribution required from the local community to £6,000.
 - ii. Semer Meadow Bridge Repair Works – it was confirmed that the required works has been priced by the Chair but formal quotations were awaited prior to the specification being drawn

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up. It was agreed that the Chair would erect fencing to protect both sides to ensure that there was no formal liability on the council.

The Clerk agreed, once the quotations had been received, to contact the grants team at BDC to ascertain whether any such grants would be available for the works being proposed.

7. Statutory Business:

- i. Financial Regulations – to review and adopt the new model financial regulations as adapted to Semer Parish Council – *paper entitled Financial Regulations* - all noted the revised financial regulations as adapted to Semer and **agreed to adopt them thereby confirming that they were fit for purpose and council would agree to abide by them.** The Clerk would arrange for them to be uploaded to the website.

8. Planning Matters:

- i. To consider a response to the submission of the following planning application:
 - DC/24/02634 – Application for listed building consent – remove existing single glazed windows in kitchen, (front, side and back window), with same design, slimline, double glazed windows @ Foxglove Cottage, Ash Street – on the grounds that the works would not be detrimental to the host dwelling, **all agreed that the application should be supported.**
- ii. BMSDC – Call for sites 2024 – to note the publication of the sites for Semer as submitted during the call for sites – councillors were aware of the land that had been submitted under the first round of calls for residential sites. The Clerk confirmed that she would ensure that the progress of the Joint Local Plan Part 2 was brought back to the council once further updates were released from the District Council.

9. Financial Report:

- i. To consider and approve the following items for payment: **all agreed for the following payments to be so approved and paid:**
 - V Waples – Clerk's Hours to date including reimbursement of insurance premium - £507.64
 - Trevor Brown - Internal Audit Fee - £157.00

All noted that the sum of £92.60 as PAYE due to 5th June 2024 would be collected by
- ii. Council retrospectively approved the following payment settled by direct debit on 22nd April 2024 – **all retrospectively approved the following payment:**
 - HMRC – PAYE due to 05.04.2024 – £221.20
- iii. To note the bank balances to date and consider the financial position as at 14th July 2024 – the bank balances, following a review of the statement versus the cashbook, were confirmed at £9,360.40.
- iv. To consider and review the actual versus budget for the period to date – following a review of the finances incurred to date, council noted the small overspend of £67.28 as the overall position as at the end of July 2024. Having reviewed the figures and acknowledging that the council would need to fund the changes to the speed limit on the A1141; tree works and works to the church meadow entrance, council agreed to allocate as earmarked reserves the overall sum of £8,250 which will be firmed up once works to Semer Meadow Bridge were known.
- v. Barclays Bank – to receive an update on the setting up of a Community Bank Account – the Clerk confirmed that she had been unable to obtain an up-to-date position concerning the new account.

10. Year-End Processes: to consider the following as part of the year-end process:

- i. That the council has received an automated response confirming receipt of the exemption certificate – council noted receipt of the response.

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- ii. To note that there have been no requests to view the council's accounting records during the period of the exercise of public rights – council noted that no such requests had been submitted.
- iii. To consider the Clerk's paper on the audit plan in relation to recommendations made within the internal audit report (narrative) for the year ending 31st March 2024 – the Clerk ran through the action plan and provided an update on the items that had been identified and the actions being taken to address the outstanding points. An update would be submitted at each meeting to ensure that the council was compliant with legislation and procedures were tightened.

11. Councillor Reports:

- i. To receive urgent matters of concern – overgrown verges – right turn into Church Lane.

12. Correspondence: to receive matters of interest not requiring a direct response –

- i. BMSDC – [Summer Holiday Activity Programme](#) – to note the activities and the manner in which they should be booked.
- ii. BMSDC – [Norwich to Tilbury NSIP statutory consultation deadline extended](#) – to note the district council's response to date.
- iii. BMSDC – Town and Parish Updates – [to receive the monthly report of July 2024.](#)
- iv. To receive matters of interest not requiring a direct response – there was no further correspondence raised.

13. Date of next meeting: Council noted the following:

- i. Meetings for the year 2024-25: 21st November 2024; 16th January 2025 and 20th March 2025.

14. There being no further business to transact, the Chair closed the meeting at 20.15pm.

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Appendix A – Report from District Councillor Leigh Jamieson

Green Party take over Leadership - Green Party Councillor, Deborah Saw, who represents the North Cosford Ward, has started her tenure as Leader of the Council. Under the original coalition agreement, drawn up last year, the Green Party as the largest group are to lead the Council in years two and four. Deborah, who has been a deputy leader during year one, takes over with a number of ambitions.

Continuing to improve Babergh's council housing for tenants remains an urgent priority. Babergh have invested c£1m already to clear a repairs backlog, with new systems planned and improved communication with tenants pledged.

The council also wants to encourage more community-led housing and stimulate the formation of Community Land Trusts.

More parishes will be supported to complete Neighbourhood Plans or People and Place Plans to help shape future development, with a renewed emphasis on good design in residential and commercial buildings.

Deborah also outlined further action to combat climate change, including a desire to explore how communities can create local renewable energy plans.

Work will also continue to remove red tape around making listed buildings more energy efficient will continue, while Babergh also hopes to become the first council to allow property owners to put solar panels on outbuildings without planning permission. A report on this is due to come to full council next week.

Cabinet restructure - The Council have restructured and renamed the cabinet portfolios to bring them in line with the Council's action plan. Renaming the portfolios also brings them in line with Mid Suffolk to prevent confusion for the officers. In addition to this Councillor Busby, who was leader of the council last year, has taken a step backwards due to his ongoing health issues and Cllr Helen Davies (Pinewood & Sproughton) has taken on an official role.

40mph Speed Limit - SCC are currently awaiting the approval of their proposals for Union Hill from Suffolk Police. Once received, they will continue drafting drawings, preparing legal documents, and formally advertising the scheme, all of which should be finished by mid-August. They will then collate any responses from members of the public, before preparing a Speed Limit Order Report, which they hope will be signed off by mid-September. Once these mandatory legal proceedings have been completed, they will be in a position to raise a construction order with our contractor, who will have a 14-week window within which to carry out their work.

47 new electric charge points in council car parks thanks to £300k grant - An additional forty-seven new electric vehicle (EV) charge points are now available in Babergh and Mid Suffolk councils' car parks, to help more people transition to EV cars and reduce emissions. The 22kW fast charge points can charge two cars at the same time, resulting in ninety-four new EV parking bays spread across a number of council car parks in the districts. Funded by a £300k grant from the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV), their aim is to help more people transition to EV cars over the coming years – in turn helping to cut carbon emissions and reduce air pollution.

However, although this is good, residents have commented that these chargers are always empty. While we do need the infrastructure first to encourage people to transfer to electric I, and other members of our group, understand people's frustrations and we have asked the council if some spaces can be freed up for normal cars e.g. placing a hood over the charger, until the demand increases.

Community Fun Days - Community Fun Days are coming to Babergh and Mid Suffolk this summer, giving people the opportunity to come together and have fun during the school holidays. The fun days will be slightly different, but there will be lots of free activities available to all members of the public. Activities will vary on each day, but activities may include a climbing wall, facepainting, a multitude of sports, and circus workshops.

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In addition to the activities, there will be the chance for members of the public to get advice on Anti-Social Behaviour, fitness and health opportunities, mental health support, support with benefits, debts, housing, and recycling, to name a few.

Funding for these days comes from the Holiday Activity and Food Programme, and therefore, lunches and a select few activities can be pre-booked by children eligible for free school meals. Anyone not eligible can turn up on the day and are encouraged to bring a picnic.

Events are happening in at the locations locally, below, and will be open to the public from 10-2pm:

- Stowmarket Recreation Ground, Recreation Road, Stowmarket, IP14 1JT – Monday, 29 July
- Stevenson Centre, Stevenson Approach, Great Cornard, Sudbury, CO10 0WD – Friday, 2 August
- Hadleigh Pool and Leisure, Stonehouse Road, Hadleigh, Ipswich IP7 5BH – Friday, 9 August

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