

Semer Annual Council Meeting

Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held at Semer Village Hall on Thursday 9th May 2024 commencing at 7pm

In attendance: Councillors Richard Keens (Chair), Jackie Barraclough, John Lawrence, Steve Nuttall; Victoria Waples (Clerk) and one member of the public (latterly).

1. Election of Chair – following acceptance of his nomination, **Council resolved that Councillor Keens be elected Chair for the year 2024-2025.** In accordance with legislation, Councillor Keens signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
Election of Vice – Chair – following acceptance of his nomination, **Council resolved that Councillor Nuttall be elected Vice-Chair for the year 2024-25.** In accordance with legislation, Councillor Nuttall signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
2. 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 read.
3. Apologies for absence – verified apologies of absence were received from Cllr. James Pitcher. The meeting agreed to approved the apologies submitted.
4. 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.
5. Minutes of previous meetings:
 - i. To approve the minutes of the meeting of 28th March 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.**
6. Public Forum:
 - i. To receive comments from the public on the agenda as published or concerning Semer – the following matters were raised in the public forum –
 - the minutes have inaccuracies as the County Councillor is incorrect in his understanding on how speed limits should be assessed. Will the council write to the County Councillor and so inform him. *Council agreed that they would not be pursuing this course of action.*
 - Have the matters raised at the last meeting relating to hedgerows been submitted for further investigation. *It was confirmed that this had been actioned.*
7. 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. It was noted that the funds had been sourced and that the statutory consultation was now closed. Once it was confirmed that there were no further issues on this matter, Councillor Keens indicated that he would start to collate the monies.

8. Statutory Business:

- i. Financial Regulations – all noted that revised financial regulations are in the process of being issued by NALC and will be presented for adoption at a later meeting.
- ii. To agree to the annual subscriptions for the year ending 31st March 2025: County Association membership fee; data protection fee and Microsoft Office 365 subscription – **all agreed to the payment of the subscriptions as mentioned at renewal.**

9. Planning Matters:

- i. To consider the following planning applications: none had been received.
- ii. To note the following planning applications as determined by Babergh District Council:
 - DC/23/03522 – Planning Permission granted for the following: bungalow roof to be raised for accommodation within roof space, alterations, external insulation and cladding to existing, erection of rear extension linking to garage. (Alternative scheme to DC/22/04503) @ Hollies, Ash Street, Semer. The Clerk made the meeting aware of the conditions that had been attached to the planning permission.

10. Financial Report:

- i. To consider and approve the following items for payment: **all agreed for the following payments to be so approved**
 - V Waples – Clerk's Hours to date - £381.65
 - SALC – Subscription Fee - £108.99

Council noted the following payment would be settled by direct debit in April 2024

 - HMRC – PAYE due to date – £221.20
- ii. To note the receipt of the following items: Council noted receipt of the following items:
 - Babergh District Council – 1st tranche of the precept - £1,750.00.
- iii. To note the bank balances to date and consider the financial position as at 2nd May 2024 – the bank balances, following a review of the statement versus the cashbook, were confirmed at £10,072.24.
- iv. Barclays Bank – to receive an update on the setting up of a Community Bank Account – the Clerk confirmed that the information had been forwarded to Barclays bank but to date there had been no further communication in relation to the community bank account.

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

- i. To receive and adopt the Annual Internal Audit Report for the year ending 31st March 2024 – **all agreed to accept the narrative report as written and submitted.**
- ii. To consider and decide the actions to be taken following the recommendations arising from the Internal Annual Report – it was agreed that the clerk will draw up a plan to enable council to respond to the recommendations raised within the report to include a timetable for action as well as those responsible for the actions. This would be submitted at the next meeting for approval.
- iii. To receive and approve the Payments and Receipts Accounts for the year to 31st March 2024 – **all approved the accounts for the year ending 31st March 2024** which were summarised as follows:

Brought forward balance 01.04.23	£6,507.99
Receipts for 2023-2024	£4,292.72
Expenditure for 2023-2024	£2,478.17
Carried forward balance 31.03.24	£8,322.24

Breakdown of reserves was given and it was agreed that this would be discussed further at the next meeting as an **agenda item**.

- iv. To consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2023-2024 as per Section 1 of the AGAR – **the meeting agreed that having reviewed the statements, all bar statement four could be answered in the affirmative.** Statement 4 covered the period set for the public rights to inspection of the council's accounts and as there had been no document uploaded to the website detailing this period, it was assumed that the relevant notice and accompanying material had not been published on a publicly accessible website. The clerk would provide a written report to accompany the Annual Governance Statements and ensure all relevant documentation for the year ending 31st March 2024 was uploaded to the website in accordance with the dates set in legislation. The Chair was given approval to sign Section 1 of the AGAR.
- v. To consider and approve the Accounting Statement for 2023-2024 as per Section 2 of the AGAR – **the accounting statements were received and approved and accepted as reflecting the council's overall financial position.** The Chair was given approval to sign Section 2 of the AGAR.
- vi. To consider and approve the recommendation from the RFO that having fulfilled the criteria required, Council considers itself exempt from a Limited Assurance Review – as the Council was a smaller authority where the higher of all gross annual income or gross annual expenditure did not exceed £25,000, and that it met the qualifying criteria as set out in the Certificate of Exemption, it was able to declare itself exempt from sending the completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return to the external auditor for a limited assurance review. **Council approved the exemption confirming that it met the requirements.**
- vii. Should Agenda Item 11vii be so approved, to delegate authority to the Chair to sign the Certificate of Exemption for 2023-2022 – **the Chair was given permission to sign the Certificate of Exemption and the Clerk was instructed to ensure that the relevant paperwork was submitted to the external auditors by the due date of 1st July.**
- viii. To receive the dates from the RFO of the period for the exercise of public rights and the publication requirements of the AGAR for the year ending 31st March 2024 – the meeting noted the dates set by the RFO which were confirmed as Monday 5th June until Friday 14th July 2024.

12. Councillor Reports:

- i. To receive urgent matters of concern – there were no matters raised.

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

- i. Cycle Club Sunday – to consider the request from the cycle club to allow parking off the track leading across the meadow to the parish church for the Open Hill Climb competition on Sunday 29th September 2024 – all agreed that subject to weather conditions, this request should be supported.
- ii. SCC –to receive an update on the [Bus Service Improvement Plan 2 Stakeholder Led Schemes](#) –council noted the updates and in particular the Brett Valley Villages DRT which was still at the initial stage of exploring DRT solutions. Whilst the route was still to be confirmed it was hoped to include parishes within Lavenham, Box Vale, North West Cosford, SE Cosford and Hadleigh North.
- iii. BMSDC – Town and Parish Updates – [to receive the monthly report of May 2024](#)
- iv. BMSDC – to note that the District CIL Funding Bid Round 13 will be open to new applications from 1st May and will close at 12.00pm on 31st May 2024 – council noted the given dates.
- v. Suffolk Country Council Report 437636 – the meeting was informed that a new ford warning sign on Rectory Road, Whatfield had been ordered and should be installed by 9th July 2024.
- vi. Suffolk County Council Report 462724 – an order had been raised to replace the Milestone on the 1758 Cherry Hill Bridge following the reinstatement of the flood signs. In addition,

the structures team will be undertaking a design for repairs to the footbridge and approach embankments.

- vii. Fungi Visit – the Clerk informed the meeting that she had put James Cartlidge, MP in touch with Dairy Farm Office at Semer as he was keen to visit and chat about the process involved in the rare fungi translocation site in Semer.
- viii. To receive matters of interest not requiring a direct response – there were no further matters raised.

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

- i. Meetings for the year 2024-25: 18th July 2024; 21st November 2024; 16th January 2025 and 20th March 2025.

15. There being no further business to transact, the Chair closed the meeting at 20.38pm.