

MINUTES of the Extraordinary Meeting of Ashby, Herringfleet & Somerleyton Parish Council held on Thursday 21st January 2016 from 7:15 p.m. in Somerleyton Village Hall

Present: Mr M Wright (Chairman), Mrs G Gibbs (Vice-Chair), Mr N Favell, Mrs M Gibbs, Mr P Johnson, Mr N Livingstone, Mr C Reynolds, Mr R Wild; Mr P Douch (Clerk to the Council)

In attendance: Mr P Ashdown (District Councillor), Mrs J Wild (Lowestoft Journal)

13 members of the public were present. The Chairman welcomed them, explaining that there would be no public forum but that they would have the opportunity to speak during the meeting. [PC refers to the Parish Council.]

- 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Mr T Pace, Mr S Phillips, Ms K Foster.
Absent: Ms J Alderton.
- 2.1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST. P Johnson declared his pecuniary interest (Somerleyton Estate).
- 2.2 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION. P Johnson had submitted a request for dispensation to take part in discussion and voting on item 3. C Reynolds seconded his request. A vote was taken and, by majority, his request was turned down. The Chairman gave Mr Johnson the option of leaving the hall or joining the members of the public, and he did the latter.
- 3 The Chairman explained that the meeting had been called to discuss Lord Somerleyton's email of January 7th, which had been circulated to councillors in confidence. It was agreed to consider each of the items in Lord Somerleyton's email of January 7th in turn.
 - 3.1 Public footpaths.
J Livingstone for the Environment & Green parish plan group said that a number of volunteers were ready to walk footpaths in the three parishes. It was resolved that this group should assess the condition of the public rights of way (including stiles, etc) and report back to the Parish Council. [Prop. N Livingstone; Sec. R Wild]
 - 3.2 Litter.
The Chairman said that the PC recognised the problem of litter, acknowledged the work of the Estate to clear litter from roads and verges, and would again organise a litter-pick in the spring. Cllr Ashdown said that the cleansing department of Waveney District Council could be contacted, especially for cases of fly-tipping. The work of the Estate in dealing with fly-tipping was acknowledged.
 - 3.3 Leaf-litter, The Street.
Cllr Ashdown said that Waveney DC will respond to requests to clear leaves from pavements, but that hedges which overgrow onto pavements or footpaths are the responsibility of the landowner. The Chairman said that the PC will take more account of this issue and will contact Waveney DC.
 - 3.4 Village green and school cars.
R Wild said that County Councillor B Poole had been asked to report back on when Suffolk County Council was going to pay a share of the upkeep of the road round the green.
 - 3.5 Traffic speed on B1074 outside school.
The Chairman referred to measures taken in 2011 to create an extended 30mph zone and to the existing advisory 20 mph sign on the approach from the Herringfleet direction. Two members of the public spoke about fear of parking on the B1074, and one suggested flashing warning signs. C Reynolds said that options could be discussed at the next school governors' meeting. The Chairman said that the PC shares the concerns of the community and Lord Somerleyton, and that the PC is prepared to support any initiatives by the school to improve safety. Cllr Ashdown spoke about his wish for a 40mph zone from Somerleyton to Flixton, and signs to alert drivers to cyclists.
 - 3.6 Noticeboards.
The Chairman referred to Lord Somerleyton's liking of the three new noticeboards, and encouraged members of the community to submit suitable notices of local events.
 - 3.7 Personal comments.
It was resolved that the Parish Council totally rejects the personal comments made by Lord Somerleyton. [Prop. N Livingstone; Sec. R Wild]

- 3.8 Herringfleet Mill.
The Chairman said that the PC would encourage members of the community to get involved in the management and restoration of the mill under the Heritage Lottery Fund project.
- 3.9 Herringfleet Hills.
R Wild said that the Broads Authority was due to meet shortly about the closed car park, and that it was aware of the dog-fouling issue. The Chairman said that the PC remained concerned about cars parking on the road outside the car park. Noting the possibility of a warden resident at school-house, he added that the PC was prepared to work with the Estate and the community to enable access to Herringfleet Hills.
- 3.10 Estate Christmas card: development in Somerleyton.
The Chairman explained that the Community Facilities Group (CFG) is convened by Somerleyton Community Association and is not part of the Parish Council, and that it continues to work towards a new village hall. He added that Lord Somerleyton's Christmas card had raised the broader issue of development in Somerleyton, linking it to provision of a new village hall, but on a different site to that envisaged by the CFG. He said that the PC had not deliberately blocked Somerleyton's bid as a key service area in 2006.
G Gibbs and J Livingstone spoke about the first meeting of the Neighbourhood Planning group, the aim of which is to find out what the community wants for the future of the parishes. They had agreed to work with members of Lound Parish Council on creating a joint Neighbourhood Plan, which would have statutory status when planning decisions were made.
A member of the public questioned the amount of use made of the recreation field by local residents. R Wild spoke about use and maintenance by Blundeston & Somerleyton Cricket Club and by people taking other forms of exercise. The Chairman said that by helping to maintain the field, the cricket club cuts the grass and thereby saves hundreds of pounds. N Livingstone referred to the Community Association's remaining lease on the field.
It was resolved that the Parish Council is not against development; that it supports the Neighbourhood Planning group in providing an opportunity for the community to influence future development; that the PC as a statutory consultee will consider any planning applications as and when they are submitted; and that it wishes to retain the recreation field as a public, open space.
[Prop. M Wright; Sec. R Wild]
- 3.11 Communication with Somerleyton Estate.
The Chairman referred to misunderstandings and said that he hoped the PC would move towards more and better dialogue with Lord Somerleyton and the Estate. It was resolved that representatives of the PC should attend Estate managers' meetings and that Estate representatives might attend PC meetings, either in the Public Forum or – if specific issues were notified in sufficient time – in the PC meeting proper; and that this arrangement would be firmed up at the next PC meeting on March 3rd. [Prop. G Gibbs; Sec. N Favell]
- 3.12 The Chairman said that Lord Somerleyton's statement that his offer "to come and be part of your meetings (not the public part...) ... was rejected by the Clerk" was incorrect.
- 3.13 Estate people on Parish Council.
The Chairman and C Reynolds said that vacancies on the PC are advertised when they arise and that, with elections every four years, any member of the community can apply to join the Parish Council.
- 3.14 Miscellaneous points by members of the public.
Concern at the language used by Lord Somerleyton about an individual and at the general tone of the email. Concern at leaking of content of email and transparency of PC. Concern at insufficient publicity of meeting and what it was about. The Chairman pointed out that the statutory notice had been given and the agenda was on noticeboards and website. Concern at potential balance of relations and undue influence between Estate and PC.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9:38 p.m.