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# GREAT SOMERFORD (INCORPORATING STARTLEY) PARISH COUNCIL

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## Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting - DRAFT 8 May 2024 Community Room @ 7.30 pm

### Present

Cllr T Barker	Cllr J Harper
Cllr H Evans	Cllr T Harrison
Cllr H Gravell	Cllr T Sturgis
Cllr M Griffiths	Cllr D Todd

### In attendance

Cllr E Threlfall, Wiltshire 15 members of the public  
Clerk, H Wallace

### Intro

Cllr Griffiths welcomed everyone and introduced that the Chair's Report would be read out loud and that various Cllrs and village groups would be invited to present during the meeting.

### Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received. Cllr Gravell arrived at 7.34pm

### Declaration(s) of Interest

None declared

### Minutes

#### Minutes and Matters Arising from the 2023 APM

To **approve** the Minutes of the 4 May 2022 Annual Parish meeting & consider Matters Arising.

*Note: These minutes will not be read out – copies have been on the PC website for 12 months or can be obtained from the Clerk.*

The Minutes were signed as a true and accurate record. **Proposed** Cllr Barker, **Seconded** Cllr Griffiths.

### Chair's Report

#### The Chair's report # – Cllr Meriel Griffiths

This report includes resumes by each of the Councillors on the responsibilities they have undertaken during the year.

The Chair commenced with reading of her written report a copy of which is an Appendix to these Minutes.

It was highlighted that there is a vacancy on the Parish Council and parishioners are welcome to apply via the Clerk or Chair.

At point 6 of the Chair's report, Cllr Harper reported that the main income streams have recently continued to be the Precept and CIL monies. Further CIL income is expected and is estimated to be an additional approximately £20,000 related to the 20 houses currently under construction at Broadfield Farm. It was discussed that efforts have been made to spend CIL monies, and over £50,000 has been spent to date, but there are legal restrictions on

eligibility which make it more complex. Parishioners are invited to offer ideas or proposals for CIL capital expenditure. Some income and expenditure for 2023/24 was a matter of timing which will even out early in the new financial year and it was noted that savings had generated a good level of interest in year.

Disposing of autumn leaves from the chestnut tree on the unadopted land at the end of Manor Park was raised. Cllr Sturgis explained that he had tried to contact Burgess Salmon legal firm, who are responsible for Crown Land, to engage them with this issue. Also reports of restriction by landowners of access to public footpaths in Startley and this winter's flooding issues in West St and Frog Lane were all discussed, as well as the flooding in the neighbouring parish of Upper Startley which affects travel from Great Somerford, and Cllrs will continue to look into solutions, to represent the parish to the local authority, make good use of the Parish Steward and seek improvements in these areas.

**Please see The Chair's Report for further details.**

#### Village reports **Village Matters**

i School Report # –

A report was read out on behalf of the Chair of Governors of Somerfords Walter Powell School by Cath Rambridge from SHASA (the parent, teacher association of the school). The school was recently judged Good by Ofsted and is moving forward with some changes to leadership and to identifying a new Trust. Echoed by Katy Hayhoe those present heard that SHASA is very active and part of the life of the school fundraising, supporting the school with things like coach costs for trips to enhance the learning experience of pupils. SHASA thanked the PC for its support and for the CIL-funded noticeboard and Pre-School garden refurbishment, and raised a few areas which will be considered in future meetings for further CIL funding. Great Somerford Events and Great Somerford Community Events each presented information about the work they do to provide activities in the village and raise funds for charities.

Further information can be found in the Chair's Report.

ii Report from the Trustees of the Free Gardens # – Trustee T Barker

The Free Gardens report was given in accordance with the written report. Parishioners were asked to contact Tracy Barker if they would like a plot and equally urged to let Tracy Barker know if they no longer wanted their plot and therefore wished to relinquish their current tenancy.

#### Wiltshire report

**Wiltshire Council Report** – Cllr Elizabeth Threlfall

The financial situation at Wiltshire Council is much healthier than some other councils, and potholes are still very high on the agenda due to the weather causing damage to so many roads. The "MyWilts" APP has been updated and is much more user friendly so parishioners were urged to report issues. Cllr Threlfall reported that Wiltshire Council does not decide planning applications

for power stations in excess of 50 MW, but will consider and give the Government their opinion on the proposed 500 MW Lime Down solar PV project. Parishioners were reminded of Cartmell Minibus, which serves Malmesbury and the surrounding villages by offering minibus hire at cost ([www.cartmellminibus.org.uk](http://www.cartmellminibus.org.uk)). Work to repair the subsidence of the B4059 at Lyneham Banks is expected to be underway soon and completed during 2025.

Public  
Questions and  
AOB

A chance for the public to raise any questions or queries on issues relating to the parish. The subjects of a plan for the disposal of autumn leaves from the chestnut tree on the unadopted land at Manor Park, lack of a footpath along the length of West Street for and West St flooding were again raised and continue to be areas where solutions will be sought.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm

**Approved** ..... **Chair** **Date** .....

Appendix 1: The Chair's Report (including Village Reports)

**Chair's Report to the 2024 Annual Parish Meeting**

**Wednesday 8th May 2024**

**Part I**

**Great Somerford Parish Council Report**

**1. Introduction – Cllr Griffiths**

The Parish Council has met every month this year, apart from August and December.

Parish Council Meetings continue to be held at 7.30 pm on the first Wednesday of each month with the exception of the January meeting, which remains as the second Wednesday. There will be no meetings in August or December unless otherwise notified. All members of the public and press are welcome, and the first 10 minutes of each meeting is scheduled for any questions or issues to be raised by members of the public.

We are once again fortunate to have almost a “full house” of nine parish councillors, having welcomed Cllr Gravell, Cllr Harrison and Cllr Evans. We offer a big thank you to former Cllrs A Lennox, H Lennox, Cllr Miles and Cllr Vout for their efforts over the last few years.

We still have one vacancy, so if anyone is interested in becoming a parish councillor, please contact myself or the Parish Clerk and we will give you more details.

**2. Best Kept Village Competition – Cllrs Evans and Harrison**

Great Somerford entered the Best Kept Village Competition in 2023 and was delighted to come third in the local North Wiltshire category.

Cllrs Evans and Harrison are coordinating our entry for 2024, and we would be grateful for any help that you can all give them to ensure our continued success. The village seems permanently clear from litter so residents must be kind enough to pick up what they can see, and a special thanks to Dave, Dave and Mike for repainting the old telephone box, which now houses the defibrillator and book share, and also the villager and his family who regularly clear the road between Great Somerford and Startley of all litter.

### **3. Communications – The Parish Information Email (PIE) System – Cllr Griffiths**

The Parish Information email system is used to convey any generally useful information to those that have signed up – this includes local road closures and community events. It is very easy to sign up – just click on the “Sign Up to the Parish Information Email” link on the Parish Council website. <https://www.greatsomerfordparishcouncil.co.uk/parish-information-e-mail/>

No personal details that you enter will be shared with any third party.

We are grateful to former Cllr Stephen Mansfield who has continued to maintain the PIE system for us, as well as the Parish Council website.

### **4. Defibrillators – Cllr Todd**

We have two Defibrillators: The first is located in the former public phone box outside the Volunteer Inn in Great Somerford, and the second at The Grove house by the T-Junction in Startley, with the kind permission of the owners. Should you need to use a defibrillator during an emergency, the instructions are spoken automatically, as soon as you open up the defibrillator case. Note: Both Defibrillator storage box ‘Access Codes’ are now on display at each location, and/or available when you call 999.

A First Aid and defibrillator course will held in October 2024. Details of time and venue will be publicised nearer the time.

### **5. Emergency Plan – Cllr Gravell**

The Emergency Plan has been updated. It provides a framework for the basic outlines of parish response and following consultation with the relevant bodies. A confidential version is held by the Parish Council and by Wiltshire Council. A non-confidential version (omitting certain personal contact details) is available on the Parish Council website. We are also preparing a Flood Plan.

### **6. Financial Update for 2023/24 – Cllr Harper**

Great Somerford Parish Council finances continue to be robust. Total income during the financial year was £46,692, of which £16,400 was the annual precept from Wiltshire Council and £22,333 from the latest tranche of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The Parish Council’s main operating expenses include paying the Parish Clerk, running the Community Room, cutting the grass in the parish’s public spaces and Startley cemetery, maintaining the Winkins Lane Play Area and emptying the dog waste bins. The Parish Council also makes grants to various community causes, such as the “Signpost” newsletter, the Church, the Free Gardens and Somerfords Walter Powell School. For the full year the Parish Council made a small operating surplus, in line with expectations.

CIL money is provided to help to fund community capital projects when new houses are built in the parish, as they have been recently at Somerbrook, Broadfield Farm and Demainbray Close. Total CIL receipts over the past three years total £106,000. Total CIL money spent to date amounts to over £50,000, with further projects in the pipeline. The levy has funded two Speed Indication Devices (SIDs), several public footpath gates and stiles, noticeboards outside the School and at the Startley Cemetery, new picket fencing around the Winkins Lane Playground and the replacement post and chain fencing around the wedding tree in Winkins Lane and a new slide in the Winkins Lane Play Area. A new toddler climbing frame is also planned for the Play Area.

However, this will leave over £100,000 that needs to be invested over the next 3-4 years, after which time any unspent funds will be returned to Wiltshire Council. Further receipts are to be expected in a couple of years' time post-completion of the 21-house extension to Broadfield Farm. The Parish Council is currently exploring various options and would welcome more ideas from villagers, with the caveat that any proposals have to comply with the CIL money regulations. Parish Councils must use the CIL receipts passed to it to support the development of a Parish Council's area by funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on the area. Details are available on the Government website at the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/community-infrastructure-levy#spending-the-levy>

One positive development is the prevailing interest rates, which should enable the Parish Council to earn a meaningful return on its cash balances. This should increase income by several thousand pounds over the next couple of years, at least whilst CIL balances remain elevated.

## **7. Footpaths – Cllrs Barker and Gravell**

The footpaths have benefitted from the new stiles and kissing gates that have been installed with the CIL money, and the Parish Council is grateful to the landowners that have installed these to improve access to public rights of way.

The 2024-2026 inspection of all footpaths in the parish will be taking place later this year.

## **8. Highways – Cllr Evans**

Flooding – particularly in West Street and Frog Lane – has been a major issue during this wet winter. Cllr Sturgis has spent a considerable amount of time in identifying the root causes of the flooding, encouraging landowners to make preventative measures and working with Cllr Threlfall and Wiltshire Council to identify the remedial and preventative measures to be taken by the Highways Department.

Potholes also continue to be a problem across the parish as well as the wider county. We would encourage everyone to report potholes, and any other local hazard on the My Wiltshire app (see link below):

<https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/mywilts-online-reporting>

### **9. Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr Sturgis**

The Neighbourhood Plan is being reworked and submitted, ahead of the next planned review date of 2026. The Parish Council is starting that consultation process, with a working group comprising both parish councillors and volunteers, in order to create the next Neighbourhood Plan out to 2033. We have secured a grant to pay for a specialist consultant to assist us with this.

### **10. Planning and Housing Developments Report – Cllr Sturgis**

Great Somerford & Startley Parish Council acts as a statutory consultee for any application for planning permission that is made to Wiltshire Council in respect of properties located within the parish. The Parish Council is able to comment on those applications and take into account the known views of any residents of the parish. Comments are restricted to commenting on whether the Parish Council feels the application will meet the various national and Wiltshire Council planning standards. The Parish Council does not make a decision on whether an application for planning permission should be granted or refused, this is undertaken by Wiltshire Council. Residents are encouraged to seek the advice of the Parish Council if they are considering undertaking any work that may need planning permission to be sought. For properties that are located within the Great Somerford conservation area, this includes work to trees and some hedgerows. Properties that are located within the Great Somerford conservation area also do not have the benefit of the “permissive rights” that other properties have, which allows certain types of works to be completed without planning permission e.g., the construction of small extensions, erection of temporary structures such as garages and large sheds etc

### **Road Safety & Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) – Cllr Harrison**

A second SID has been purchased and installed in Dauntsey Road. This is in addition to the existing SID in Startley. We are hoping that these will continue to encourage people to reduce their speed, especially when coming into the village.

### **11. Startley Cemetery – Cllr Harrison**

The Startley Cemetery is in good order. Maintenance has been upheld and trees, grass and hedges are neat and tidy, the hedges having been reduced in height to allow the neighbours greater light ingress. A replacement noticeboard has been installed. Ground heave has resulted in a few of the gravestones collapsing and

breaking, but they do not pose a danger to the public and it has not been possible to trace the relevant family members. Overall, the Startley Cemetery remains a peaceful and pleasant space for reflection.

### **12. Telephone Box Library – Cllr Todd**

As ever, the Telephone Box Library is well used as a village library/book swap, and the Parish Council would like to thank the volunteers who help look after it and update the library shelves from time to time. Cllr Todd and two volunteers have recently refurbished and repainting the telephone box, which is very kind of them.

### **13. Winkins Lane Play Area – Cllr Evans**

The Winkins Lane playground continues to be a much loved and well-used amenity in the village. So this year, with the help of the CIL money, we have replaced the slide, bringing it up to current safety standards, renewing the hill on which it sits, adding in grass-lock matting to protect it from further erosion, installing steps for easy access and improving the functionality of the slide itself. We have also replaced the old safety fence, which had become rotten, with a smart new wooden picket fence. We are currently planning to replace the old toddler climbing frame, which is also becoming rotten.

Cllr Meriel Griffiths

Chair of Great Somerford inc Startley Parish Council

May 2024

## **Part II**

### **Village Matters - Great Somerford Community Groups' Reports**

#### **Free Gardens Charity – Tracy Barker**

The Great Somerford Free Gardens were established in 1809 by the Reverend Steven Demainbray and are the oldest allotments in England. The Parish Councillors of Great Somerford are Trustees of the Free Gardens unincorporated charity which is run independently and separately from the Parish Council. The Trustees of the Free Gardens are in the process of transforming the Free Gardens unincorporated charity into a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), in order to bring it into line with modern legislation and regulation, and to preserve this important historic space for future generations. A Public Consultation has been held and the transformation is ongoing, with the land transfer in the hands of the relevant departments.



Trustees have been appointed and as soon as all the paperwork has been completed then these new trustees will be announced to the village.

In terms of operations, the Free Gardens have 70 allotment holders. We are most grateful to the Allotment Holders Association for their continued support, and for the extremely useful volunteer working parties that they have organised to help keep maintenance costs as low as possible.

There are 5 plots that are too dry for successful vegetable cultivation and have been put aside for a community fruit tree project. There have been some bids for money but as yet the suggestions still need some work to be successful and a lead individual to come forward and take on the responsibility for the plots.

There is still discussion about CIL money for projects and along with the new CIO there hopes to be some successful collaborations.

There are currently five vacant plots. Please contact us if you are interested in taking one on.

The contract for the maintenance of the gardens has been won for the next two years by Lee Butcher.

Toby Sturgis, a Trustee of the Free Gardens, kindly cut back the hedge on the Dauntsey Road, allowing a considerable amount of money to be saved. We are investigating the feasibility of replacing the current hedge, much of which has died back, and planting sapling to create a new multi-species hedge.

There is still discussion about CIL money for projects and along with the new CIO there hopes to be some successful collaborations.

### **Somerfords Walter Powell School – SHASA Report – Cath Rambridge**

The Somerfords' Home and School Association (SHASA) is the fundraising organisation for Somerfords' Walter Powell Primary School and Pre School. We support our school by fundraising to enhance, enrich and improve learning experiences for the children. This includes learning resources in the classroom, school trips and events. SHASA continues to be very well supported by families at the school and the local community.

We are delighted with the news that Ofsted has just awarded Somerfords Walter Powell School a "Good" rating, following the recent inspection.

Our fundraising efforts have recently focused on raising funds for coach travel for school trips to the Aerospace Museum, The Farm Kitchen, the Christmas Pantomime, the Trowbridge Toy Museum and Sevington Victorian School. The children have all really enjoyed the trips and SHASA funding the coach travel has enabled the trips to remain affordable for parents. Also this year SHASA has funded outdoor play equipment, another interactive whiteboard and preschool equipment.

Our funding largely comes from events (which have included our cake sales and a table top sale) and generous donations from local businesses. We also run a lottery and have received a grant from the Malmesbury Carnival, as well as donations from local events including quiz night at The Volunteer. We are delighted that the Parish Council has funded a new community noticeboard for outside of the school, where we can post SHASA notices of events and fundraising opportunities.

### **Great Somerford Events – Deborah Loader**

Great Somerford Events, is the umbrella name for the following:

- Parsloe Pantry - Deborah Loader
- Jake's Bakes - Jake Vale
- Sarah's Fairies - Sarah Law
- Delicious Dauntsey - Claire Mellor-Hill

These individuals got together and started to raise funds for local causes and charities in 2019, we try and help others when and where we are able and some of this is done anonymously.

All are involved other things however, when we get together we come under the umbrella title of "Great Somerford Events", which saves confusion and gives continuity.

Recent and Upcoming events include:

- The Plant Sale - May 2024
- Charity Concert in the Church - October 2024

We shall endeavour to carry on with these two events and are looking at adding a third, a smaller more intimate event in the church or at The Old Rectory, Dauntsey, in the summer of 2025.

We are considering doing a monthly lunch in the Community Room, Dauntsey Road, and to be able to give a warm space through the winter.

Our long term goal is to create a community orchard and or outside area for mental well-being.

### **Great Somerford Community Events (GSCE) – Deborah FitzCharles**

The purpose of GSCE is to organise village events and fundraise for local charities or causes. It was formerly known as the Great Somerford Community Fund (GSCF). The old GSCF held £5000 in its accounts from Stonewood (the developers of Somerbrook) which is specifically for the purpose of developing a recreation area in the village. This is an ongoing matter for the Parish Council. This money has now been ring-fenced by transferring it to separate savings account so it can be available when required.

GSCE have organised the following events in the last year:

- **Monthly Coffee Mornings in the church:** £1090 gifted to Dorothy House through cash donations on the morning. Everybody is welcome and they are proving extremely popular!
- **King Charles III Coronation Party:** A great fun afternoon in the showground for all villagers. This was jointly organised with Somerford Show committee and £1543 was raised for Doorway (a local homelessness charity) and Wiltshire Air Ambulance
- **King Charles III Coronation Concert:** A Welsh Choir came to sing in the church and ticket sales and private donations raised £2,000 for Alzheimer's Support Wiltshire
- **Christmas Market:** Festive shopping in the church with a café at The Mount. As a result, £250 was donated to the church and £100 donated to Signpost.
- **Festive Lunch – December 2023:** In February, approximately 30 villagers joined us for Christmas Lunch raising £150 which was donated to Dorothy House.
- **Church Fete 15th June 2024:** This also falls under the umbrella of GSCE and this year will be held in the church field on and The Mount. Planning is well underway with lots of support from villagers who attended a recent meeting at the church appealing for help. All monies raised will be donated to the church funds.

GSCE is committed to continuing its good work in the community and raising funds via inclusive village events.