

SOUTHWOLD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council of Southwold, held in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Southwold, at 7.30pm on Tuesday 29th November 2016

PRESENT:	Councillor	Mrs M C Tucker (Town Mayor) (Chairman)
	“	Mrs S Allen
	“	I R Bradbury
	“	Mrs S M Doy
	“	M G C Horwood
	“	Mrs J Jeans
	“	M Ladd
	“	D J Palmer
	“	M Rowan Robinson
	“	R D Temple
	“	J A Windell

Also attending: The High Steward, the Town Clerk and 1 member of the media and approximately 20 members of the public.

BUSINESS

1. **Apologies:** Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Betts.
2. **Declarations of interest:**
 - a) *To receive any declarations of Personal Interest regarding the agenda.*

Cllr Allen declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 (a) and (b) as a member of the WDC Planning Committee.

Cllr Doy declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 (a) and (b) as a member of the Southwold & Reydon Society.

Cllr Rowan Robinson declared a personal interest item 5 (a) and (b) as President of the Southwold & Reydon Society and item 8(b).

Cllr Windell declared a personal interest in agenda item 14(a) in relation to the Landlords Confidential Report.
 - b) *To receive any declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests regarding the agenda.*

Nil.
 - c) *To note the decision of the Town Clerk regarding requests for dispensations relating to this agenda.*

No dispensations requested.
 - d) *Councillors to be reminded of the requirement for them to individually update their Register of Interests as appropriate.*

Noted
3. **Minutes:** *To approve and sign the Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on Tuesday 25th October 2016.* One amendment was proposed on page 3 item 9 Town Mayor's events. The event entitled Induction of Bishop of Dunwich should read Induction of Vicar of Reydon. With this one amendment, the Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on Tuesday 25th October 2016 were confirmed and signed.

4. **Standing Orders:** *to suspend standing orders for consideration of the following:*

- a) *To receive a report from Waveney District Councillors M Ladd, and S Allen. Cllr Allen and Cllr Ladd will then take questions from councillors and electors (maximum 5 minutes).* WDC Cllr Allen advised that the perishing of Lowestoft and Oulton Broad were both going ahead. The meeting of the East Suffolk Partnership had been well attended. The WDC/Suffolk Coastal merger papers had been forwarded to all members by the Town Clerk.

WDC Cllr Ladd advised that as Cabinet Member for Tourism he had spoken to both the MP Peter Aldous and the MP Therese Coffey regarding the business rates revaluation and the percentage rises that businesses in Southwold were facing. Both MPs have taken on board the comments and WDC Cllr Ladd advised that there is significant lobbying to Central Government taking place on this issue. WDC Cllr Ladd advised that other market towns in the county are also struggling with the revaluations and he has spoken to the Economic Development Team at WDC who will be contacting all town and parish councils and ultimately businesses and shop owners, concerning this matter. WDC Cllr Ladd suggested that the Town Council's lobbies Central Government on this matter as the effect on independent traders in Southwold could be devastating.

- b) *To receive a report from Suffolk County Councillor Ladd. Cllr Ladd will then take questions from councillors and electors (maximum 5 minutes).* SCC Cllr Ladd advised that in view of the budget deficit, SCC are looking to create more savings to close the budget deficit. There is a proposal to use some of the reserves to prop up some of the services being provided. Health and Social Care have huge pressures and SCC will probably increase their Social Care precept to cover some of the funding required in this area. The budget will be going to SCC Scrutiny Panel for further consideration.

- c) *To receive comments from Southwold electors on matters on the agenda (each elector will be allowed a maximum of 3 minutes. 10 minutes will be allocated overall for this section*

Mr Flunder spoke in connection with Agenda item 10(c). Mr Flunder expressed his concern at the delay in setting up the trust for the harbour. Mr Flunder referred to the timeline that had been provided by Winkworth Sherwood Solicitors and the fact that this had not been adhered to. Mr Flunder asked specific questions regarding (a) confirmation that a trust will be set up, (b) why has communication to third parties been limited, (c) what are the Joint Committee going to do to progress the project.

Rebecca Bishop proprietor of Two Magpies Bakery spoke with regards to Agenda item 8(b) – Southwold business rates. Ms Bishop has made contact with MP Therese Coffey and expressed the concerns of herself as an independent retailer whose business rates are set to rise from £9,200 to £31,700 per annum. Ms Bishop asked that both WDC and STC take action including; contacting the local MPs, engaging with the Local Economic Development Team, working with the Chamber of Trade and Durrants on the overall effect on Southwold traders with a view to challenging the rates, look favourably on a forthcoming request to assist with funding to assist this course of action.

Mr Perkins – Secretary of the Southwold & Reydon Society spoke with regards to Agenda item 8(b) – Southwold business rates and advised of the potential damage to the High Street and its independent traders and requested STC to lobby Central Government to reduce the rates.

Ms Julie Carpenter – Craftco – spoke with regards to the effect on her business that the business rate revaluation would have and advised that Craftco had survived for 30 years but would be vulnerable should the rate increases be enforced.

Mr C Mills – Mills & Sons Butcher – Mr Mills advised that as an independent retailer he had been operating in Southwold for 3 years and was concerned about the impact of the business rates on his business and their ability to continue.

Meeting reopened

5. **To receive reports from Committees:**

a) *To receive the written reports of the meetings of the Planning and Development Committee held on Tuesday 1st November 2016 and on Tuesday 15th November 2016 (see attached yellow papers).*

Cllr Windell presented these reports which were noted.

b) *To receive a verbal update from Planning and Development Committee on any further planning/ development matters to be brought to the attention of the council.*

Cllr Windell advised that the Adnams application for entrance/exit onto Victoria Street was being considered by the WDC Planning Committee this evening and that the officer had recommended approval subject to conditions with which the Town Council had assisted in negotiating. WDC Cllr Allen advised that she had written to the individual members of the WDC Planning Committee to offer her support to approving the application with the conditions as stated in the officer's report to the Committee.

c) *To receive the written report of the Leisure and Environment Committee -no meeting held.*

6. **To receive reports from Working Groups/Task and Finish Groups and Southwold Neighbourhood Plan Team**

a) *Highways and Footpaths working group and the Parking review task and finish group – no meeting held.*

b) *Neighbourhood Plan – To receive the written report of the N Plan meeting of 21st November 2016. (see attached lilac papers – no recommendations).*

Cllr Bradbury asked for the written report to be noted and advised that an action plan had been prepared and circulated to the group.

7. **Mayors Organisation/ Charity Update** - the Town Mayor advised that Council would hope to organise a Celebration of Spring Weekend for April 2017 to help lift the spirits of everyone in the town and that a Spring Ball on Saturday 8th April 2017 would be part of these celebrations.

8. **Financial Matters**

a) *Accounts for Payment - To receive the accounts for payment for November 2016 (circulated to members).*

It was RESOLVED by all to approve the November 2016 Accounts for payment. Unanimous.

- b) *Finance and Governance working group – to receive the written report of the meeting held on Tuesday 22nd November 2016 REP 6/2016 (see attached cream papers).*

To receive recommendations regarding policies. Cllr Horwood presented the report and recommendation with regards to policies. On the proposal of Cllr Horwood and seconded by Cllr Allen **it was RESOLVED to approve the policies as recommended.**

To receive correspondence regarding Southwold Business Rates. Cllr Horwood presented the correspondence that had been received from the Chamber of Trade and the Southwold & Reydon Society.

The Town Mayor acknowledged the concerns of those who had spoken in the public section and confirmed that the business rate revaluation was a huge threat to the town. The Town Mayor had spoken to MP Therese Coffey on the matter, and had also spoken to the MP's data analyst who is reviewing every business in the town and the rates that they are potentially having to pay. This data should be available by the end of the week. The Town Mayor advised that MP Therese Coffey will then be meeting the Treasury Minister Jane Ellison to discuss the matter further. It would appear that the average increase of the business rates in Southwold is 160% whereas corresponding data for Aldeburgh shows an average increase of 77% whilst the average increase for Woodbridge is 5%. The Town Mayor suggested that STC should support the traders with regards to this matter in line with the STC Strategy number 5 "to promote and maintain the independent character of the High Street". The Town Mayor suggested that the Town Council should write to Therese Coffey MP and Peter Aldous MP as well as to the Treasury Minister Jane Ellison, to Suffolk County Council and to Waveney District Council and to lobby in the strongest terms possible with reference to the data above. Cllr Jeans suggested that the letter should note the number of employees that the independent retailers employ in the town and it was suggested that the Chamber be asked to produce this information. Cllr Rowan Robinson suggested that the Town Council might also request a meeting with the Treasury Minister direct and it was agreed to ask MP Therese Coffey to facilitate such a meeting occurring.

It was RESOLVED unanimously that the Town Council send the letters as referred to above and requests the meeting with the Treasury Minister.

Cllr Windell asked whether the Town Council would be able to assist with the funding for the research. The Town Clerk advised that the Chamber of Trade had been provided with the appropriate application form but that this had not yet been returned. SCC Cllr M Ladd advised that he would be pleased to support through his locality budget.

- c) *Precept 2017/18 – see correspondence from WDC. Noted.*

- d) *Local Government Finance Consultation – 2017/18 – SALC response to consultation attached. Noted.*

9. **To receive update from Town Mayor of events/ meetings attended including:**

- 3rd November – National Heritage Centre for Horseracing Opening
- 11th November 2016 – Armistice Day Service and Planting of Crosses
- 13th November – Remembrance Sunday Parade and Church Service
- 17th November – Southwold & Reydon Society Annual Luncheon
- 26th November – Christmas Lights Switch On
- 27th November – Christmas Drinks Reception at Town Hall

Future Events

- 18th December – Christmas Carol Concert at St Edmund’s Church

Noted.

10. **To receive reports from the Town Council representatives on other bodies/organisations, of meetings attended:**

- a) *Southwold Hospital – representative to provide verbal report.* Cllr Jeans advised that the Hospital project had moved from being “improbable” to “possible”. A public meeting will be held in early January at which the Feasibility Plan will be presented. SOS would prefer not to have to take up the donation pledge made by the Town Council and has instead placed some charity boxes within the town which they would like people to use to donate to the cause.
- b) *Christmas Lights – representative to provide verbal report* – Cllr Allen thanked the Christmas Lights Committee and Adnams for their hard work in organising the Switch On. It was agreed by all that the Town Council should write to the Committee, Adnams and other key workers who assisted the Committee to thank them for their hard work.
- c) *Jt Harbour Committee – representative to provide verbal report.* Cllr Windell advised that the Project Manager has been asked to undertake a harbour review and that includes key financial information held at WDC. It is hoped that WDC will respond by January 2017. The WDC Project Manager has also met with the Caravan Site Manager and has created an overall summary of the works requiring attention. The Town Mayor acknowledged the queries made by residents in the public section and advised that she would request responses.

Cllr Bradbury expressed concern that the last informal meeting of the Joint Harbour Committee was on 24th October, and that although monthly meeting dates were set for the next 6 months, the November meeting was cancelled. It was felt that the first priority seems to have been the Caravan Site and the modifications required, and that this caused some people concerns as it was the Caravan Site proposals that had started the discussions of the Joint Committee several years ago. Cllr Bradbury expressed his frustration at the process. Cllr Allen advised that she was very frustrated at the lack of communication which was evidenced by the lack of formal Minutes on the WDC websites. Cllr Allen felt that information should be in the public domain so that the public can understand what is happening. Cllr Allen advised that the Letter of Intent that had previously been signed by both WDC and STC should still be valid and asked whether this was being moved forward. Cllr Allen advised that she had met with Kerry Blair – WDC Head of Operations and he has advised that information will be provided by the end of year. Cllr Jeans noted that the Strategic Director, Arthur Charvonia had been a key driver in this project and that his departure could cause the process to slow down. Cllr Ladd advised that

as both a Waveney District Councillor and Southwold Town Councillor, he was surprised to hear the frustrations above.

The Town Mayor suggested that the way ahead for the Joint Committee could be to ask for a review of progress meeting to try and get answers to the queries raised this evening, and to obtain an action plan for the next few months. On the proposal of Cllr Tucker and seconded by Cllr Windell, this course of action was approved by all.

- d) *Allotment Holders – representative to provide verbal report.* Cllr Doy advised that the Allotment Holders AGM had been held at the Town Hall. The 2015/16 Committee had been re-elected en bloc. The Allotment Holders now document 127 plots. Cllr Doy advised that she had gladly presented one of the prizes at the AGM.
- e) *Sizewell Stakeholder Group - representative to provide verbal report and note the Sizewell C stage 2 Public consultation – St Edmunds Hall – Wed 4th Dec 4pm – 8pm.* Cllr Palmer advised that Hinckley should be going ahead and that Suffolk County Council are leading a conference on 3rd December about Sizewell. On 4th December there was a local exhibition at St Edmund's Hall displaying the contents of the next Sizewell consultation. Cllr Rowan Robinson advised that this was a Stage 2 consultation on Sizewell C which EDF have launched. The consultation runs until 7th February 2017 and it was suggested that this matter be placed on a future Town Council agenda for further discussion. It was suggested that the Town Council may wish to press for a bypass of the four villages on the A12 rather than the proposals presently being made. Cllr Ladd advised that as an SCC Councillor he sits on the Energy Gateway Board and has already made representations regarding the bypass of the four villages and would encourage the Town Council to write to MP Therese Coffey and lobby for this action. MP Therese Coffey also sits on the Energy Gateway Board. It was suggested that the Town Council could work with other towns and parishes who would also be affected. On the proposal of Cllr Rowan Robinson and seconded by Cllr Ladd it was unanimously agreed that the Town Council would lobby for the four village bypass as part of the major improvement works on the A12 prior to the commencement of this project, and works with the other towns and parishes who would be affected.

WDC Cllr Allen advised that the AONB have also suggested that organisations should work together to make this possible.

- f) *Informal meeting with Reydon P C - representative to provide verbal report* Cllr Bradbury provided a written report which was circulated to all Members. The next meeting is to take place on 25th January 2017. Cllr Bradbury advised that Reydon P C were concerned at the potential level of grant support from SCC for Southwold Library. SCC Cllr Ladd advised that any lobbying on this matter should be addressed to Suffolk County Council Member Richard Smith. On the proposal of Cllr Bradbury, seconded by Cllr Ladd it was agreed that a letter of support for the library service in Southwold be sent to Suffolk County Council with liaison with Reydon P C to ensure that the contents recognise a joint response.
- g) *Blyth Estuary Group - representative to provide verbal report – Cllr Allen* advised that there was no further update.

11. **Correspondence**: to note the items as detailed in the general correspondence file

together with;

- a) SALC Area meeting – 30th November 2016 at Wrentham Village Hall.
- b) SALC – letter re Newsletter of the Year competition winners 2016.
- c) Letter from Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner regarding Suffolk Local Policing Review.
- d) Creating an East Suffolk Council – documents attached.
- e) Sizewell C stage 2 Public consultation – St Edmunds Hall – Wed 4th Dec 4pm 8pm.
- f) Southwold Beach – Water Quality data results – news article.

12. **Council Events Nov/ Dec 2016**

Friday 11th November – 11am Laying of Crosses

Sunday 13th November – 10.50am Remembrance Day Parade

Friday 18th November – 2.30pm – St Edmunds Day Service

Sunday 27th November 2016 – midday – Town Hall Drinks reception.

Saturday 3rd December 2016 – Arbor Day – Cllr Allen advised that no volunteers had come forward to assist and that this date will therefore be rearranged.

Sunday 18th December – Xmas Carol Concert

13. **Urgent Business:** to act upon any matter of a non-financial urgency, within the meaning of the Standing Orders, which may be brought to the attention of the Town Council with the consent of the Town Mayor previously obtained.

14. **Exclusion of Public and Press:** *Pursuant to section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it is resolved, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during consideration of the following;*

- a) To receive the confidential written report LL10/2016 of the meeting of the Landlords working group held on Wednesday 9th November 2016 (*see attached pink paper*). *No recommendations regarding Town Council properties.*
- b) Art Works – *no recommendation.*

15. **Date of next Town Council Meeting:**

Tuesday 13th December 2016 at 7.30 pm at the Town Hall.

_____ TOWN MAYOR 13th December 2016