

SOUTHWOLD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council of Southwold, held in the Council Chamber at 7.30pm on Tuesday 26th November 2019

PRESENT:	Councillor	I Bradbury – Town Mayor
	“	Ms E A Betts
	“	D Beavan
	“	S Flunder
	“	Mrs P Goldsmith
	“	Mrs J Jeans
	“	Ms J Jordan
	“	M Ladd
	“	M Rowan -Robinson
	“	S Tobin
	“	J A Windell

Also present; 40 members of the public, and the Town Clerk, and High Steward.

Agenda

Following the recent change to policy regarding the use of laptops in Town Council Meetings, the Town Mayor asked all councillors to confirm that they had received the agenda and supporting papers in the manner that they had requested for them to be sent, and in the required timescales. Confirmed, with no objections being received to the meeting taking place.

1. **Apologies:** *To receive apologies for absence.*
Apologies for absence were received from Cllr M Tucker.
2. **Declarations of interest:**
 - a) *To receive any declarations of Personal Interest regarding the agenda.*
There were no Declarations of Personal Interest.
 - 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.*
Nil.
 - d) *Councillors to be reminded of the requirement for them to individually update their Register of Interests as appropriate.*
The Town Mayor reminded members of their legal requirements to update the Register of Interest online.
3. **Minutes:** (i) To approve and sign the minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 14th November 2019.
On the proposal of Cllr Tobin, seconded by Cllr Windell it was RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of Tuesday 14th November 2019. There was one abstention.
4. **Public Forum**
 - a) *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).

A member of the public presented the Town Council with the petition that had been drawn up in regard to the Station Yard redevelopment proposals.

A member of the public asked for details of the name of the surveyor who had been mentioned in the latest Council communication briefing as stating that the garage building was unsound.

A member of the public advised that they had a copy of an asbestos survey for the garage that they would forward to the Town Clerk, which stated that the asbestos is a low risk matter.

Public participation closed.

5. To receive reports from Committees:

a) *To receive the written report of the meeting of the Planning and Development Committee meetings held on 5th November 2019 (see yellow papers attached). No recommendations*

Cllr Jeans advised of the recent successes that the Planning cttee had had, as the ESC officers have declined some applications in line with Town Council recommendations.

Cllr Jeans advised that the planning application for 35-37 Ferry Road had been taken to appeal but had been refused by the Planning Inspector.

Cllr Jeans advised that the cttee are trying to ensure that good design is promoted.

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

Cllr Jeans advised that the ESC Planning Officer Philip Ridley had met with members of the planning cttee and had gone on a walk around the town to look at some of the properties for which planning applications had recently been agreed. Cllr Jeans advised that at national planning policy level a new National Design Guide had been adopted – the planning cttee will try to encourage ESC to work within the principles of this document.

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

d) *To receive the written report of the Landlords Committee meeting. No meeting held.*

Cllr Windell advised that the decorating/ maintenance had been completed at 1 Hurren Terrace and it is hoped that this will soon be relet.

With regards to contamination on the site at Station Yard, Cllr Windell advised that the landlords cttee had undertaken some research of the old files and had found correspondence from Richard Jellico (previous surveyor) dating from circa 2002, advising of the location of tanks and the remediation works that has been carried out to some of these.

Within the planning application statutory consultee responses, the Environmental Protection Officer had reported on the presence of contamination and the need for further assessments. The meeting was advised that in view of the information from the EPO, from EPS, and from the previous surveyor, further surveys would now need

to be undertaken to assess the degree of contamination and to receive recommendations about remediation.

- e) *To receive the written report of the Highways and Footpaths cttee meeting held on 31st October 2019. See H and F Report 2/2019 (see grey papers attached). no recommendations.*

Cllr Ladd advised that SCC Highways officers are seeking to cost the option of having a raised area at the entrance to the High Street. Such an area will provide a visual impression of an entrance to a busy High Street area, the need to reduce speed, and potentially provide a safer crossing area. However there now appears to be challenges in relation to drainage/ dropped kerb in the preferred area, and the costing will therefore not be available until January 2020.

- f) *Southwold Harbour Lands Joint cttee – verbal update re consultation.*
Consultation extended to 4th December 2019.
Next Jt cttee meeting – Monday 3rd February 2019 at 2pm at Stella Peskett Millennium Hall.

6. **To receive verbal update re Ferry Road campsite**

Cllr Bradbury advised that there has been no update from ESC. The Town Clerk was asked to contact ESC for an update.

7. **Town Council Strategy/Priorities Document - 2019 -2023 (draft)**
To consider, and if agreed, approve, the Town Council Strategy/ Priorities document 2019 -2023.

It was proposed by Cllr Windell, seconded by Cllr Jeans that the document be adopted.

Discussion took place regarding the document. Congratulations were passed onto all of those involved in its preparation.

Query was raised as to the timeframe for making the document public. It was agreed that if approved at this meeting, the document would then be made available publicly.

Resolved; on the proposal of Cllr Windell, seconded by Cllr Jeans, it was unanimously resolved to approve the Town Council Strategy/ Priorities document 2019 -2022 as presented.

8. **Task and Finish Groups**

- a) *To receive the written report of the Parking Management Task and Finish group. See action timescale as on spreadsheet attached. (Green paper)*

It was requested that consideration also be given to displacement of residents / employees as part of an holistic vision for parking management and that more public engagement be taken in this respect.

ESC ward Cllr Beavan advised that CPE will commence in January 2020 at which stage ESC will be responsible for all on street parking. Cllr Beavan has requested that some residents parking be considered by ESC within the CPE process.

SCC ward Cllr Ladd advised that SCC are working with ESC to design/ install a new sign for the front of town to provide directional signage to the various car parks.

Cycle racks at rear of Town Hall – it was suggested that directional signage is required to promote the location of the new cycle racks. It was also suggested that directional signs to the cycle racks be placed on notices on the railings in the Market Place as cycles are often locked up on the railings.

Cllr Ladd updated the meeting with regards to the Leader funding that the Millennium Trustees had received for Visitor Information area/ car park. It is hoped that there may be provision for a park and ride facility too.

b) To receive the verbal report of the Neighbourhood Plan Task and Finish group – no meeting held.

Regulation 14 consultation - 1st November 2019 to 30th December 2019.

To note the consultation, drop in days are 5th December and 19th December 2019 at the Town Hall.

Members encouraged those present to read and comment on the N Plan.

c) To consider, and if agreed, approve the written report and recommendations of the Climate Emergency Task and Finish Group meetings for adoption by Town Council and committees.

The task and finish group recommendations are to come forward to full council on 10th December 2019.

SCC ward Cllr Ladd advised that in view of the general election on 12th December the SCC task and finish group will not now have a final report available until April/ May 2020.

d) To receive a verbal report from the Southwold and Reydon Community Emergency Group meeting held November 2019.

It was agreed by all that standing orders be suspended to allow Martin Nicholls, member of the Community Emergency Group, to provide a report to council.

Mr Nicholls provided an update on the Plan and the insurance implications relating to the use of heavy machinery by volunteers as well as the use of private cars etc.

Clarity is being sought by the group on the role of ESC/ SCC in relation to the Plan, and any given incident that occurs.

Public participation closed.

9. Station Yard redevelopment

To receive verbal report and update on the following matters (forming part of the project stages);

A) *Project Manager brief* - Cllr Ladd advised that a brief is being drawn up. This has not yet been completed.

B) *Southwold Enterprise Development role.* Cllr Ladd advised that the advert is still presently open for this role.

C) *Contamination issues at site.* Cllr Tobin advised that 3 quotes will be obtained for further research on the contamination within the site.

Members noted that the Environmental Protection officers report is available on the ESC website in conjunction with the 2018 planning application and that this sets out some of the additional requirements.

Members were reminded that the council is aware of contamination on this site – some tanks were filled with foam as part of the works to the shops on Station Road circa 2004 – and that it is the extent of the contamination that now needs to be established. It was suggested that as much research/ investigation as possible be undertaken to determine the extent of the contamination prior to the demolition of any buildings. The research/ surveys should help to assess the condition of the tanks and the potential for any leakage having occurred from them, together with providing potential remediation solutions. It was suggested that research be undertaken to also assess the ability of those on, and near to, the site to continue to operate, and the potential impact of possible remediation works on the properties surrounding the site.

On the proposal of Cllr Windell, seconded by Cllr Ladd it was RESOLVED by all that the landlords cttee should seek to obtain 3 quotes for the additional contamination surveys/ research required. Quotes to be requested in order to be available for the Town Council meeting on 10th December 2019.

D) *Pre application stage for change of use for sites on Blyth Road.*

Cllr Jeans, as chair of the planning cttee, reminded members that the ESC planners had confirmed that the previous Duncans yard on the Blyth Road marsh, and the previous Household waste site, are not in a designated employment area and therefore a request for change of use for either of these sites would fall outside present ESC policy. A specific case would need to be made for this, and Carter Jonas have been asked to provide a quote to assist the council in this respect. Quote awaited.

Cllr Ladd advised that potential economic development and employment opportunities would also be considered by ESC when they consider an application, and that the SCC condition relating to use of the Household waste site would need to be removed.

Queries were raised with regards to the suitability of the actual surface/ potholes along Blyth Road, and the cost of relocating a garage.

E) *Comms*

The Town Mayor advised that the Town Council is working hard to improve comms and that this will continue.

It was suggested that it may be appropriate for the Town Council to consider recruiting extra help to engage more regularly on social media and to increase social media followers.

To receive the following proposals;

Proposal 1) - That the Town Council considers the wording of the Station Yard development petition.

'We the undersigned call on Southwold Town Council to pause its current plans for the Station Yard development to allow time for the concerns of the local community to be addressed and to enable alternative options to be considered that would safeguard the existing businesses on the site.'

The above proposal was put forward by Cllr Flunder, seconded by Cllr Beavan.

Discussion took place on the proposal with clarity being requested on the meaning of the proposal. It was noted that ‘alternative options’ were mentioned in the wording of the petition and a query was raised as to what the options might be and whether a business plan had been compiled. Query was also raised as to what ‘the concerns’ are as reflected in the wording of the petition.

It was suggested that a new option might be the sale of the site. Cllr Ladd advised that this had been considered in 2002 when other options for the site were being considered, and that the petition was welcomed if it helps to scope a way forward.

Cllr Rowan-Robinson advised that there had been much consultation on the project whilst he was Town Mayor in 2018-19 and that many options had been assessed for economic viability as detailed in the business plan and that others, such as live work units were not likely to be viable, with the Enterprise Hub, or the sale of the site, to be the likely options that would work financially. With reference to ‘safeguarding jobs’ as defined by the funders, Cllr Rowan Robinson read out the wording of the funders criteria.

Cllr Funder advised that 5 options had been explored within the business plan and that the petition was requesting consideration of others. Cllr Jeans suggested that a community team could perhaps be set up to bring forward a suitable alternative.

Proposal 1

On the proposal of Cllr Flunder, seconded by Cllr Beavan, it was RESOLVED unanimously that; The Town Council considers the wording of the Station Yard development petition.

Proposal 2) - That the Town Council commits to considering concerns, in a public meeting with an independent chair, before Christmas.

The above proposal was put forward by Cllr Flunder, seconded by Cllr Beavan. Cllr Flunder advised that risk and reward needs to be considered, and that the present option does not safeguard existing jobs, and that the stated occupancy rates and rent rates detailed in the business plan were unrealistic. Cllr Flunder advised that the formation of a community team/group might be a way forward to draw up a viable alternative option. Cllr Flunder advised that there are still many loose ends for the Town Council to consider with regards to the Southwold Enterprise Hub scheme and that the enormity of the project is apparent. Cllr Flunder made reference to a letter that had been sent to the Town Mayor detailing a range of queries with regards to the funded project – the Town Mayor advised that he had responded to the letter the previous day.

Cllr Beavan thanked members for the actions being taken in regard to contamination and the overall project plan process and advised that ESC planners consider that the change of use planning request is a material alteration and will require a full planning application.

Discussion took place about proposal 2).

Queries were raised as to the meaning of the proposal and the intended aim of a meeting, and whether a meeting ‘before Christmas’ would be feasible. It was suggested that a meeting might be appropriate if there was alternative option put forward, as a meeting

could then focus on the economic benefit/ regeneration opportunities of the alternative option versus that of the Southwold Enterprise Hub.

9.30pm – It was agreed by all to suspend Standing orders to allow the discussion to continue for a further 20 minutes.

Cllr Beavan agreed that the focus of a meeting could be for comparison of a viable alternative option to be considered alongside the existing project, advising that whilst liking the ambition of the Enterprise Hub there were concerns about relying on wholly business use.

Cllr Tobin suggested that in view of the present situation it might be appropriate for a working group to be formed, with some of the petitioners, to bring forward a viable alternative option.

Cllr Rowan Robinson suggested that having an independent chair at a meeting would be good, but that a meeting ‘before Christmas’ is not appropriate suggesting that there is still much more information to come forward on contamination, garage sites, and alternatives.

It was proposed by Cllr Rowan Robinson, seconded by Cllr Goldsmith that ‘before Christmas’ be deleted from the proposal.

It was proposed by Cllr Rowan Robinson, seconded by Cllr Ladd to amend proposal 2 to read as follows;

Amended Proposal 2

That the Town Council agrees to set up a working group with Cllrs Beavan and Flunder and other interested parties, to investigate an alternative proposal by the mid-January 2020 Council meeting.

On the proposed of Cllr Rowan Robinson, seconded by Cllr Ladd it was RESOLVED unanimously to approve the Amended Proposal 2 as above.

10. Financial Matters (see cream papers attached)

a) To receive and approve the Accounts for Payment for November 2019.

On the proposal of Cllr Jordan, seconded by Cllr Betts, it was RESOLVED unanimously to approve the Accounts or Payment for November 2019.

b) To receive, and approve, if confirmed, that the Town Council insurance be renewed for a 3-year term, through WPS Insurance Brokers, with Royal Sun Alliance as per papers attached.

On the proposal of Cllr Windell, seconded by Cllr Jordan, it was RESOLVED unanimously to renew the Town Council insurance through WPS Insurance Brokers for a 3-year term with Royal Sun Alliance as per papers attached.

11. Correspondence:

a) AONB update October 2019

12. To receive update from Town Mayor of events attended/ matters to report including:

Events attended.

Remembrance Sunday – 10th November 2019

Armistice Day – 11th November 2019
Southwold Allotment Holders AGM – 13th November 2019
East Suffolk Partnership – Shaping Our Future – 15th November 2019
St Edmunds Day – 20th November 2019

Forthcoming Events

Bungay Town Dinner – 29th November 2019
Christmas Lights Switch on – 30th November 2019
Christmas Drinks Reception – 15th December 2019
Scouts Christmas Draw – 20th December 2019
Christmas Drinks Reception & Carol Service – 22nd December 2019

13. **Town Mayor organisations – 2019/20.**

To receive updates regarding events to be held in support of the Town Mayor's organisations for 2019/20.

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

Reports to be provided in written format and circulated to members prior to the meeting unless time allows for a verbal report to be given, subject to the Chairs discretion.

Verbal report re Bathing Quality – no report.

Verbal report re East Suffolk Community Partnerships – no report.

15. **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.

Nil

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

Tuesday 10th December 2019.

PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND PRESS. THE TOWN COUNCIL ABIDES BY THE PARISH AND TOWN COUNCIL CODE OF CONDUCT 2012.