

SOUTHWOLD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council of Southwold, held at the Methodist Church Hall at 7.00pm on Tuesday 10th March 2020

PRESENT:	Councillor	I Bradbury – Town Mayor
	“	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; 22 members of the public, the Town Clerk, High Steward and Mrs Moss King

1. **Apologies:** *To receive apologies for absence.*
Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Tucker.
2. **Declarations of interest:**
 - a) *To receive any declarations of Personal Interest regarding the agenda.*
Nil.
 - 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 complete a Register of Interest online.
3. **Minutes:** (i) To approve and sign the minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on Tuesday 25th February 2020.
On the proposal of Cllr Windell, seconded by Cllr Betts it was unanimously RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of 25th February 2020.
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).*
Members of the public asked the following;
Why is council proceeding with Enterprise Hub when it does not have the support of many. Why is the future of garage being jeopardised? Why are 2 houses in Strickland Place still empty?

Public participation closed.

5. **Planning** –

To consider and if agreed approve a budget of £500 for planning consultant advice re appeal of 37 Pier Avenue.

Cllr Jeans advised the meeting that this property has been the subject of 3 planning applications which the Town Council has refused, and which ESC has also refused. An appeal has now been lodged by the applicant and Cllr Jeans requested that a sum of £500 be provided to enlist the assistance of Carter Jonas to help prepare a response for the planning inspectorate.

It was proposed by Cllr Jeans, seconded by Cllr Windell that a sum of £500 be allocated for professional fees of Carter Jonas as above. Agreed by all.

Neighbourhood Plan – Policy Development – To consider and if agreed approve a budget of £500 for research/ practical work for garden policy.

Cllr Jeans advised that professional assistance was required from Place Services (who had completed the CAA, for the garden policy for the Neighbourhood Plan. Budget £500 requested.

Cllr Rowan- Robinson advised that he would be concerned if this would cause a delay to the Neighbourhood Plan but would support it so long as it could be carried out quickly. Cllr Jeans advised that there was other work still outstanding before the Plan could go to the next stage of consultation and that this piece of work would therefore not hold any thing up.

On the proposal of Cllr Jeans, seconded by Cllr Rowan Robinson it was agreed by all to approve £500 for professional fees for this purpose.

6. **To confirm appointment of Town Development manager** – start date 1st April 2020.

Cllr Ladd had provided members with a briefing note.

This role has been funded by the CCF grant – but in view of the delays in drawing funds the cost of the post has been budgeted for by the Town Council for 20-21, in view of its importance for the town.

Cllr Ladd advised that the selection process had been vigorous – including a stakeholder panel made up of local businesses as well as a member of the ESC Economic Development Team. The decision on selection had been unanimous and the candidate had accepted the role. Cllr Ladd thanked those involved in the process.

Cllr Flunder asked how the performance of the role will be monitored. Cllr Ladd advised that there was a clear job description for the role and there will be a 3 month and 6-month probation with direct reporting to the Town Clerk. Reports from the town manager will come to the Town Council providing updates of the work being carried out.

7. **To receive update on East Anglia One and Two.**

Cllr Flunder advised members that the draft letter had been developed with Reydon PC and the Southwold and Reydon Society. There are to be various hearings over the next 6 months and Cllr Flunder offered to attend the first on behalf of the Town Council.

Cllr Ladd thanked Cllr Flunder for the draft letter and asked that SCC also be added, and that ‘visitor economy’ should be inserted together with ‘future economic development of East Suffolk.’

Cllr Rowan Robinson advised that personally he supports both onshore and offshore windfarms but would be content for the letter to be sent as it does now state that the

Town Council is supportive of green energy.

On the proposal of Cllr Jordan, seconded by Cllr Windell it was agreed by all to send the letter as circulated, with the amendments as above.

8. To confirm application for police station premises as an asset of community value and to receive update on application process.

Cllr Jeans briefed members on the potential to apply for the police station site to be listed as an asset of community value. The site is presently used for community use (as a police station) and a planning application has been received to convert the site into market housing. The planning authority are considering whether the provision of a police station in Halesworth is an acceptable alternative community site in terms of planning requirements.

Discussion took place regarding applying for the site to be listed as an asset of community value. Cllr Rowan Robinson advised that he support the suggestion in view of the planning application being for market housing.

Cllr Jeans explained that a community use for the site would need to be suggested within the application and it was suggested an educational base would be of use such as an 'environmental learning centre' as the need for this had been highlighted from the feasibility research on the boating lake and surrounds, and council is aware that the geography field trip academy are in need of a centre to use.

Cllr Ladd advised that the Town Council had tried to work with the Police Authority for a number of years to ensure that the site was retained for community use. Cllr Beavan thanked Cllr Jeans for all of her work on this matter and asked that the site of the scout hut also be considered for a future application.

On the proposal of Cllr Jeans, seconded by Cllr Windell it was agreed by all that an application would be submitted to East Suffolk Council to nominate the police station site as an asset of community value.

9. To follow up on Resolution made in respect of consideration of 'aspects' of Station Yard alternative proposal.

Sheila Moss King provided a presentation.

Part 1 of the presentation set out all of the aspects of the alternative proposal that had been researched. Mrs Moss King provided details of the uses that could be incorporated into the 2 alternative design proposals, the respective build costs and potential income receivable from the schemes.

Cllr Flunder provided thanks for the presentation and for the opportunity to consider the benefits of the alternatives. Cllr Flunder advised that he could provide Mrs Moss King and the council with a drawing and costs for composite scheme 1.

Cllr Bradbury reminded all present that the project was a strategic plan to assist the regeneration of the town at this site, and was not about individuals.

Members were provided the opportunity to ask questions about the presentation and seek further clarity as required.

Questions to Mrs Moss King included; definition of NPV, rental rates, occupancy rates, acceptability of the alternative schemes to the CCF grant funders, acceptability of the alternatives scheme to ESC planning authority, creation of amenity space for

residents, flexibility of the schemes, life span of the schemes, structural capability of alternative schemes.

Cllr Bradbury advised that the Town Council is still looking to find an alternative site for the garage.

Cllr Ladd advised that flexibility of any scheme will be key in order to future proof a development, and that retention of the CCF grant was crucial as this had been part of the original resolution when agreeing to look into an alternative.

Cllr Flunder advised that the effect of contamination at the site still needs to be understood together with the appropriate remediation strategy.

Discussion then took place regarding ‘aspects’ of the scheme that might be able to be incorporated such as ‘light industrial use’. Mrs Moss King confirmed that the Enterprise Hub does already incorporate the B use class.

Part 2 of the presentation was then given by Mrs Moss King providing a comparison of the financial data for the alternative schemes against the financial data for the Enterprise Hub.

Discussion took place regarding the comparison data.

Cllr Flunder advised that the income shown as being possible from the alternative scheme was closing the gap with that of the original business plan.

Cllr Ladd thanked Mrs Moss King for all of her work with the consideration of an alternative scheme, as much time had been spent on providing information to ensure that a presentation could be made for the alternative schemes and that a comparison could be made with the original business plan.

It was agreed by all to suspend standing orders to enable the public to comment on the presentation.

Questions from the public included; whether the Council had yet approached CCF about the possibility of using the grant for the alternative schemes, whether CCF had been asked for a grant extension, whether the original timescales were realistic, whether decontamination remediation works would delay the project.

Meeting closed to public participation

On the proposal of Cllr Jeans, seconded by Cllr Windell it was proposed that ‘having carefully considered ‘aspects’ of the alternative proposal relating to use, council agrees to include B1 work units into the Enterprise Hub Scheme but not B3 garage space.’

Discussion took place on this proposal.

Cllr Jeans advised that an ‘aspect’ of the alternative scheme that could be included might be works units as this might retain the requirements of the grant. Discussion as to whether a garage would be classed as a work unit. Members were advised that a garage would not be a work unit as this would come under its own planning use class B3 in view of the industrial nature of garage work, and the effect on residents of such

a use. Work units are 'B1 use' and would include occupations that do not generate noise.

Cllr Rowan Robinson advised that the scheme to re-clad did not have sufficient attributes to support, and that whilst composite scheme 2 had advantages, there was concern about the loss of the CCF grant and the extra funding that the council would have to invest. Cllr Rowan Robinson advised that he would, however, wish for work to continue on finding an alternative site for a garage.

Cllr Beavan advised that much work has been carried out to retain a garage at the site as that is a facility that the town wishes to retain. Cllr Beavan asked members to reflect on the Enterprise Hub project as the council is not a property developer and suggested that the Hub scheme will not work. Cllr Flunder advised that he would like the opportunity to consider the presentation/ information further as he had not seen the presentation in advance of the meeting.

9pm - It was agreed by all to suspend standing orders to allow the meeting to continue.

Cllr Ladd advised members that the site has occupied the minds of the town council for many years and that over this time a variety of options had been considered. After all of the discussions the outstanding issue seems to be the provision of a garage facility for the town. It was not clear that the CCF would support a garage being included.

Cllr Bradbury advised that the provision for an alternative site for the garage has not been closed off and that enquiries are still taking place.

Cllr Beavan was asked whether he would be able to support the Enterprise Hub project if a suitable location could be found for the garage. Cllr Beavan advised that other site options for a garage should continue to be investigated, and the people of the town could be asked for their views.

Amended motion - On the proposal of Cllr Beavan and seconded by Cllr Flunder it was proposed that; 'having carefully considered 'aspects' of the alternative proposal relating to use, council agrees to include B1 work units into the Enterprise Hub Scheme but not B3 garage space, subject to a referendum'.

On a vote of - 2 in favour, 8 against and 1 abstain, this proposal was not carried.

Substantive motion - On the proposal of Cllr Jeans, seconded by Cllr Windell it was proposed that 'having carefully considered 'aspects' of the alternative proposal relating to use, council agrees to include B1 work units into the Enterprise Hub Scheme but not B3 garage space.

On a vote of 7 in favour, 2 against and 2 abstain this motion was carried.

10. **Enterprise Hub Project Plan – to receive update, and to consider, and if agreed approve, removal of residential and café use (C3/A3/A5/) from planning application and to amend such use to B1/D1 in line with business plan.**

On the proposal of Cllr Windell, seconded by Cllr Betts, it was proposed for 'removal of residential and café use (C3/A3/A5/) from planning application for the Enterprise Hub and to amend such use to B1/D1 in line with business plan,

and to ask Ingelton Wood to amend their plans accordingly and to submit the planning application’.

On a vote of 9 in favour and 2 abstain the proposal was approved.

11 **Date of next council meeting** – Tuesday 31st March 2020 at 7pm at the Town Hall.

12. **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;

Legal matters: To consider professional legal advice and the requirements for the process involved with Station Yard redevelopment.

It was RESOLVED with 9 in favour and 2 abstain to approve the request made by the tenant of 1 Station Road as per confidential notes of 10th March 2020 which detail the legal advice/ position.

Meeting closed 9.45pm.