

SOUTHWOLD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council of Southwold, held in the Council Chamber at 7.30pm on Tuesday 11th January 2022.

PRESENT:	Councillor	J Windell – Town Mayor
	“	Miss A Betts
	“	I Bradbury
	“	S Flunder
	“	Mrs P Goldsmith
	“	Mrs J Jeans
	“	Mrs J Jordan
	“	M Ladd
	“	J Sutton
	“	R Temple

Also present; The Town Clerk and the High Steward and 3 members of the public via Zoom.

The Town Mayor introduced the meeting and wished everyone a good New Year.

1. **Apologies:**

To receive apologies for absence. There were no apologies for absence.

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.* Not applicable.

d) *Councillors to be reminded of the requirement for them to individually update their Register of Interests as appropriate.* Noted.

Public participation – To receive comments on matters on the agenda (each will be allowed a maximum of 3 minutes). (10 minutes will be allocated overall for this section- subject to Town Mayor discretion).

Nil.

3. **To consider and respond to the following planning applications;**

DC/21/5290/FUL – construction of 13 dwellings and associated works at Fire Station Site, Mights Road.

Cllr Jeans explained the Fire Station Site application and explained about the principal residence clause applying to properties on the site. Clarity was requested as to whether this would apply also to the two market housing.

Discussion took place.

It was mentioned that the Design & Access Statement states 12 houses rather than 13 and that this seems to be an inconsistency within the application. Parking standards seem to suggest that there should be 23 spaces whilst the applicant is providing 21. Concern was expressed about the seeming lack of access for emergency vehicles, and that there appears to be no vehicular access onto the site.

On the proposal of Cllr Jeans seconded by Cllr Goldsmith it was unanimously agreed not to object to the application but to detail the concerns as below and ask that these be considered.

Insufficient parking spaces as in Suffolk Parking Strategy.

Design & Access Statement refers to 12 properties which is inconsistent with the site plan.

Appears to be no vehicular access onto the site – how will access be provided for emergency vehicles etc?

Principle residence policy to apply to all properties.

DC/21/5390/ADI – illuminated advertisement consent – proposal to install 2 x fascia and 2 x vinyl, Tesco Express, 2 Queen Street.

Cllr Jeans advised members that Tesco originally wanted illuminated signs but the Town Council objected, and this was therefore not included in the build. Illumination is now being requested.

However this is in a Conservation Area. No pre-app advice has been requested. There is a Heritage Statement in the documents but it does not appear to adequately document the situation.

Discussion

There is a need to be consistent – there are no illuminated signs in Southwold and this is part of character of the High Street.

It was proposed by Cllr Jeans, seconded by Cllr Temple, that the application be refused on the basis of the factors stated below. Unanimous.

Conservation Area. No pre-app advice. Inadequate Heritage Statement. No illuminations permitted in Southwold as a policy decision. Cannot set a precedent by permitting this one. Previous application withdrew such a request. Character of Southwold is not to have these illuminations. Environmental impact of lighting – will affect dark sky character of the town. Energy inefficiencies. Light pollution. Residents live opposite and this would cause harm to their amenity.

DC/21/5235/FUL – single storey rear extension (replacing previous extensions) at 4 Pier Avenue.

Discussion about application. Members were advised that there is potentially a swifts nest there. **On the proposal of Cllr Jeans, seconded by Cllr Temple it was unanimously agreed that there was no objection to the application, but to advise the LPA of the information regarding swifts nest.**

4. **To consider, and if agreed, approve to adopt the Emergency Scheme of delegation (revised 2022).**

Clerk advised members for the reasoning for the Scheme being in place in case of need. Particularly to cover those instances when members might be self isolating and not be able to attend a meeting in person, and hence cause the meeting to have to be cancelled due to a lack of available quorum. This Scheme would enable ordinary Council business to continue despite these issues. Discussion took place as to whether the Scheme should be in place for a set period or to continue indefinitely.

On the proposal of Cllr Goldsmith, seconded by Cllr Bradbury, it was unanimously agreed to adopt the Emergency Scheme of Delegation (revised 2022) and to keep this in place until Council otherwise revokes.

5. **Revenue Budget and Precept 2022.23**

a) *To consider, and if agreed, approve the Town Council Revenue Budget 2022.2023 – see papers attached.*

Cllr Bradbury, presenting on behalf of the Finance Cttee, explained that the ability of the budget is to enable Council to carry out projects as set out from the Town Strategy. Cllr Bradbury explained that this is Revenue Budget only, not Capital, as the Revenue Budget is required to decide the annual precept. Cllr Bradbury noted that community support services had been included at £50k. Budgeted expenditure would total £203k and that if a precept with a 0% increase was being considered this would create a net deficit of £73k for 2022-2023 – which would need to be covered by Revenue Reserves. Members were advised that grant income had helped the Town Council Revenue Budget during 2021.2022 but this might not be available in 2022-2023. Budget is a working document. Cllr Bradbury proposed that Council accept the budget as presented.

Cllr Temple advised members that this is the second year of fairly significant net deficit which is not sustainable in the longer term.

A question was raised about the CIL allocation for signage for Potters Bridge. The Clerk explained the matter had been discussed in principle at a previous meeting, but that no specific allocation had been agreed. A question was asked about the anticipated parking income and why this had reduced from the previous year. The Clerk explained that the charges have not yet come into effect to support the budget, and that these may not come in for the complete financial year.

Discussion about the budget deficit and how this could be covered. It was noted that reserves cover budget deficit this year.

On the proposal of Cllr Bradbury, seconded by Cllr Temple, it was agreed by all to approve the Revenue Budget for 2022.2023.

b) *Precept 2022.23 – To consider, and if agreed, approve the precept for 2022.23 – see ESC papers attached.*

Precept of £118,610.35 would provide a 0% change for parishioners. Members felt that a precept at £118,610.35 provided a 0% rise and would be appropriate despite the net deficit in the budget. On the proposal of Cllr Ladd, seconded by Cllr Jeans it was unanimously agreed to approve a precept of £118,610.35 for 2022.2023.

6. **N Plan** – *to note Referendum date of 3rd February 2022.*

Members were advised that signs and posters have been prepared to remind electors of the date of the N Plan referendum. Discussion about what could be done by way of publicity. Councillors to let the Clerk know if they can assist with posters. Applications for postal votes need to be in by 5pm on 19th January 2022.

7. **Date of next Town Council Meeting: Tuesday 25th January 2022.**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Signed

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