

SOUTHWOLD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council of Southwold, held in the Council Chamber at 7.30pm on Tuesday 28th June 2022.

PRESENT:	Councillor	J Windell – Town Mayor
	“	Miss A Betts
	“	I Bradbury
	“	S Flunder
	“	Mrs P Goldsmith
	“	Mrs J Jeans
	“	Mrs J Jordan
	“	M Rowan-Robinson

Also present; The Town Clerk.

Prior to the meeting the Town Mayor welcomed the Police & Crime Commissioner, Tim Passmore to the meeting. The Police and Crime Commissioner spoke on many matters including the following;

Budget for Police = £161m. £196 per person in Suffolk. Norfolk Police get £5 per person more in funding assistance. It was acknowledged that with the Met going into special measures policing reputation needs to improve. Financial resources for rural areas is very low. Suffolk has recruited 107 extra staff and another 72 this year. By this time next year there will be 1430 full time officers. More resources have also been put in for detecting crime. More recently, police have looked at the “Kestrel Team”. Crime hotspots are now being looked into by undercover surveillance teams. If the sector had more money, they could prevent more crime. Work on County lines is very good. The Government has put forward a 10 year strategy for drug addition which is very good. A lot will be done on education of drugs – those in their last year of primary school will be the starting age for education, and followed up by vigorous enforcement. It was acknowledged that crime/vandalism is not a huge problem around here but there is still a need to be vigilant. Extra funding has been made available to help charities who do work on crime including women’s’ safety. Engagement with Community Partnership is key. Will be appointing someone within mid-Suffolk using CIL monies from the area. £1.4m in total over 5 years will be put into investment in 101 service to include 27/28 extra operatives. 97% of crime in Suffolk now has a digital footprint. Digital forensic staff are employed to look at this kind of issue. Collaborating across the public sector will be a major issue going forward. Some youngsters abscond 15-20 times/year -and this is creating extra police demand. No support from National Highways on traffic issues. Rural crime team has been increased. 12 convictions for “modern slavery” in Suffolk in 2021.

Questions to Mr Passmore:

Cllr Windell asked re Police Station site. Mr Passmore advised that any sale needs to meet Red Book Value. Site was put up for sale but no acceptable offers were received.

Re Sizewell – will need more police locally. EDF will pay for more policing to assist things like traffic management on the A12 and the police will therefore use the Southwold base to assist this initiative, and this will help the residents locally and mean that the police can get onto the A12 quicker than from Halesworth.

Cllr Rowan-Robinson – IT and online fraud – in the past there have been help/information resources on crime prevention made available via house drops. Could one be done on phone scams/etc – can this be done for Southwold?

Mr Passmore advised that yes that was a good idea and could be provided in conjunction be Trading Standards.

£20m = cost of fraud in Suffolk.

Cllr Flunder asked re Sizewell C – is it just resources needed? Will it not be other things as well?

Mr Passmore advised that much had been learnt from Hinckley Point and the required extra policing budget will have been covered by EDF and will cover Sizewell and Wind Farm and the Free Port Enterprise Zone etc. Will need sufficient resources to cover the increase in population whilst these amenities are built.

Tim Passmore advised that Peter Aldous MP has been very supportive of the Suffolk Police. Tim Passmore advised that the backlog of court cases is an issue. Crown Court in Ipswich has some of the worst delays in Suffolk as only 2 judges are left there operating in 2 court houses. Witnesses are suffering particularly and there does need to be a recovery plan for this.

Mr Passmore left at 8pm.

1. **Apologies:**

To receive apologies for absence. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Ladd, Cllr Sutton and the High Steward - Noted. Cllr Temple and Cllr Beavan were not in attendance.

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.

3. **Minutes:** (i) To approve and sign the Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on Tuesday 31st May 2022, and Wednesday 22nd June 2022.

On the proposal of Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Goldsmith it was RESOLVED by all to approve the Minutes of the Town Council meetings held on Tuesday 31st May 2022 and Wednesday 22nd June 2022. All agreed.

4. **Public Participation**

Southwold Summer Theatre — Marianne Fellowes spoke about the Summer Theatre. Delighted to be invited back to St Edmund's Hall this year. Marianne felt that there were similar concerns and similar things of interest in both Southwold and Aldeburgh and

would look forward to building the relationship further. They are working with Snape and Minsmere on environmental issues (see brochure).

Also working with Rosie Humphries with events on the Common. All Councillors plus guest invited to the opening night of the Theatre on 18th July or to Aldeburgh on 25th July 2022. They have permission to do a window display in Gun Hill Shop and colourful road boards on the way into town. Looking into flags in town but will not be able to do banner across street due to costs etc. In window display there will be a “you are here map” showing the Arts Centre .

Cllr Rowan-Robinson confirmed that a footpath fingerpost is being organised to show direction to the Arts Centre, Southwold Hospital, Tibbys Green etc.

- a) To receive a report from East Suffolk Ward Councillor D Beavan.
ESC Cllr Beavan will then take questions from Councillors and electors. Nil.
- b) To receive report from Suffolk County Councillor M Ladd. Nil.
SCC Cllr Ladd will then take questions from Councillors and electors. Nil
- 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- subject to Town Mayor discretion*).

There were no members of the public present.

5. To receive reports from Committees.

- a) To receive the written report of the meetings of the Planning and Development Committee held on 7th June 2022 and 21st June 2022. *No recommendations.* Noted.
- b) To receive a verbal update from Planning and Development Committee on any further planning/development matters.
Cllr Jeans advised that enforcement is being taken on the Blyth Hotel on an aspect of the frontage. This will be looked at again by Planning.
- c) Landlords Cttee – *Next meeting July.*
- d) Leisure and Environment Cttee –*Next meeting July.*
To provide feedback from Jubilee events organised by Council.
Cllr Rowan Robinson advised that the Jubilee event on Gun Hill was amazing and very successful – with approx. 2000 people attending. Cannons and fireworks were very good. New sky watch seats look good and many compliments have been received about them. Ferry Road grass to be tidied up around the seats as seats look fantastic there.
To receive update on the Klondyke community group new skatepark project. Town Clerk advised that the Community Group are moving ahead with collecting pledges and donations and will attend the next meeting of the L and E cttee so that the whole project can be discussed in detail.

6. To receive reports from working groups;

- a) Sustainable Travel - *next meeting July.*
- b) PROW Task and Finish Group – meeting held 20th June. Proposal: That Southwold Town Council and Reydon Parish Council provide £500 each to the joint PROW Task

& Finish Group in order to facilitate improvements in maintaining, securing and sustaining access to strategic local paths. It is a proposal that if agreed Suffolk County Councillor M. Ladd will match fund, pound for pound, from his current locality budget.

Proposal – That £500 from STC, and Reydon PC be provided to help the group and if agreed SCC Cllr Ladd will match this. The group will take a pragmatic approach and try and get footpaths repaired. A Councillor from Reydon has offered to take on some of the admin work that might be required.

It was Proposed by Cllr Bradbury, and seconded by Cllr Goldsmith, to take the request to Finance Committee to sign off the budget under delegated powers. Agreed by all.

7. **Havenbeach Marsh – To consider statutory declaration for Havenbeach Marsh, and to agree next steps.**

Cllr Bradbury asked about ESC negotiations re the third field. Cllr Windell advised that ESC will offer rent for the use of the third field. ESC will send a report with proposals for the land. Discussion about who will pay for the infrastructure that is needed on the extra field, and what the rent might be. Cllr Flunder advised that he had been involved for a long time and that the current camping field should be paying rent of some £40k a year to the Council and that an offer of £10k per annum would be derisory. There is a valuation of the camping field and the figure of £40k seemed appropriate.

Cllr Jeans queried how the Town Council can get £40k if they do not own the existing camping field. The information within the Statutory Declaration is the only evidence that can be found and there is probably not enough to register a successful case at HMLR who have an 18 months backlog. Town Council would probably need to go to a London barrister. Cllr Bradbury advised that in 1996 the district auditor suggested £28k per annum for the site and that figure has been updated with inflation to over £40k. Cllr Bradbury suggested that Council is probably 15 years too late to get actual possession, but could use the Statutory Declaration to get ESC round the table re second field i.e. original camping field before offering the opportunity of using the extra field without wasting money on court fees. Cllr Flunder suggested that if Council could get a caution on the land ESC own, and then submit a land registration for that area, that would be a strong position and that Council could then negotiate from a position of strength on the second field. Cllr Rowan-Robinson reminded members that the Council had much evidence for harbour lands but got nowhere with ESC on that, and that ESC will challenge a registration and we have no evidence to overturn it. As ESC has been running the campsite for a long time, ESC will win any dispute.

Lengthy discussion took place about land rights, and costs of any potential dispute, and what this might do to the costs of being able to camp in Southwold.

Cllr Jordan suggested that the Town Council should ask for some control on the prices on the camping site. Presently the cost to stay is £50 - £70 per night and therefore this must be part of the discussion as the costs are pricing people out of camping in Southwold.

It was proposed by Cllr Jeans, seconded by Cllr Jordan, that the Town Council does not attempt to register the existing camp site land, but instead STC negotiate the best possible deal with ESC, to get what Town Council is entitled to, for the adjoining land that the Town Council owns.

This was agreed by a majority of 5 in favour and 2 against with one abstain.

8. **To receive update on Station Yard Regeneration Project (*Project = as per Town Council priorities 2019 – 2022 b) Diversify and enhance the local economy*).**

Design review and test bore holes starting on 8th July and construction documents will be signed on 8th July. Project Board will need to discuss value engineering opportunities.

9. **To receive 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.

a. *Harbour Users* – Cllr Bradbury –reported that parking is an issue and it is hoped that the Harbour Management Committee will take this forward as it is a major health and safety concern. Survey of caravan drainage has shown defects and that repairs are necessary. 10th August 2022 next meeting. Trinity House inspection this week. Cllr Jeans asked whether Cllr Flunder could take up the issue of jet skiing which is taking place, whilst it says on signage that this is not allowed.

Cllr Bradbury replied that the water skiing club will be asked to act under the Sailing Club to bring it into the realms of the harbour. Cllr Bradbury will come back after August meeting with an update as the present signage restrictions cannot be enforced.

b. *Allotment Association* – *Cllr Bradbury* advised that there is asbestos on allotment site. Clarke Demolition is pricing for the removal of this.

Town Clerk to look at the lease for who is responsible for the costs of removal which could be in the region of £1k - £1,500 to remove. Cllr Goldsmith asked whether anyone knew who had dumped the asbestos and could they be asked to pay. Cllr Bradbury advised that time has been lost to pursue and would not be traceable now. Cllr Windell – likely to be “asbestolux” which is not dangerous in air.

c. *Community Emergency Group* – *Cllr Ladd* – n/a

d. *Sizewell and Anglia One* – *Cllr Flunder*. *To consider whether STC would wish to prepare a council position statement on either or both, of these projects.*

Cllr Flunder spoke regarding the wind farms and that the location of substation is a problem. Would like STC to support the judicial review and opposition group to get the substation moved. Cllr Flunder acknowledged that Southwold is not as close to the project as others and that this would just be non-financial support. **On the proposal of Cllr Jordan, seconded by Cllr Jeans it was agreed that the Town Council will support a letter being sent. Cllr Rowan-Robinson asked that the Council says that it does support wind farms but just has concerns as to where they are coming ashore referencing the substation. All agreed. Draft to circulate.**

Cllr Flunder spoke regarding Sizewell and acknowledged that some people are in support of Sizewell C and some are not, hence it is more difficult to get an agreed overview on Sizewell C, which is likely to go ahead regardless and therefore STC should be saying what it would like the protection of - for example the AONB, travel, and traffic distribution. Discussion about the effects on Southwold.

It was proposed by Cllr Flunder, seconded by Cllr Jeans to agree the Council position as **“STC recognises the importance of Sizewell C to the UK’s path to zero carbon energy production which in turn is the key requisite for the survival of coastal communities like Southwold. We do have some remaining concerns about the Sizewell C project despite the commitment of EDF to bring 60% of construction materials by sea or rail and to transport most staff to the site by bus and by park and rides we remain concerned about decade long disruption to the A12 with consequent severe implications for the Southwold tourist industry. We continue to press for the full four villages bypass on the A12. We endorse the**

government's request to EDF for a desalination plant operating throughout the lifetime of Sizewell C to ensure potable water supplies. We request that Southwold and Reydon are added to the emergency evacuation zone.'

It was Agreed on a majority to approve the wording above. One abstain.

- e. *SALC area rep* – North Area Forum 16th June 2022 – Cllr Bradbury advised the meeting that he came away in the knowledge that the Town Council is in a very advantageous position not other Councils. This was especially noted as Walberswick is trying to resolve many issues on planning. Cllr Bradbury noted that Walberswick P C have no clerk or RFO who attend their Council meetings in person, only attending remotely. Cllr Jeans advised that she did meet the Chair of Walberswick PC and noted to them the need for creating relationships, and the importance of this in being able to achieve anything.

10. **Financial Matters**

- a) *Accounts for Payment* - To receive and confirm the Accounts for Payment for June 2022 (*circulated to members*).

On the proposal of Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Jordan it was agreed by all to approve the Accounts for payment for June 2022. All agreed.

- b) *To receive report and recommendations of Finance and Governance Meeting REP 6.22 held on 16th June 2022.*

Recommendations in relation to; Finance - internal audit action plan regarding approving councillor absence, Governance - succession planning for Mayor and amendment to voting procedures in standing orders, communicating decision from council meeting 22nd June 2022.

From Finance cttee report;

1) Action Plan – Internal Audit Report

Approval of absences – the legislation was noted regarding the approval of Councillor absences. It is recommended that absences be considered for approval in the following instances;

- a) Work commitments
b) Ill Health

All other apologies for absence to be 'noted' in the usual way.

Discussion as to situation when members do not attend and do not give apologies. Agreed that this will be noted in minutes.

On the proposal of Cllr Bradbury, seconded by Cllr Jeans it was agreed by all to consider approval of absence due to work commitments or ill health. Other apologies to be noted.

2) Succession planning for Mayor, and b) amendment to the respective voting procedure in standing orders.

Following various debates on this topic, it was agreed to recommend that the succession planning for the role of Town Mayor be reviewed and brought into line with the majority of other councils whereby the tradition becomes that the person putting themselves forward as Deputy Mayor does so with the intention of subsequently standing for the office of Mayor in the following year.

It was felt that this would give the Deputy Mayor the opportunity to ‘learn the ropes’ and, if required, take on some of the civic invites received. It would also provide an opportunity for that person to consider whether they would want to take on the role of Town Mayor together with the commitment that that entails, as well as providing members the opportunity to consider whether the person would be their preferred choice for election to Town Mayor.

In any event, there is no automatic right to become Mayor, from being Deputy Mayor, - the election would be held in the legal manner at the Annual Council Meeting in May annually.

On the proposal of Cllr Flunder, seconded by Cllr Goldsmith it was agreed to approve the recommendation that the tradition becomes that the person putting themselves forward as Deputy Mayor does so with the intention of subsequently standing for the office of Mayor in the following year.

It was felt that this would give the Deputy Mayor the opportunity to ‘learn the ropes’ and, if required, take on some of the civic invites received. It would also provide an opportunity for that person to consider whether they would want to take on the role of Town Mayor together with the commitment that that entails, as well as providing members the opportunity to consider whether the person would be their preferred choice for election to Town Mayor. It was noted that there is no automatic right to become Mayor, from being Deputy Mayor, - the election would be held in the legal manner at the Annual Council Meeting in May annually. Agreed with one abstain.

3) Voting for nomination of Chairman – (known as Town Mayor), and Vice Chairman (known as Deputy Mayor).

Standing Orders presently advise that nominations are cast by a show of hands as with all voting in Council. It was considered that for the annual election of Chairman and Deputy Chairman a system of voting by written ballot might be appropriate. After reference to SALC, it has been confirmed that the Standing Orders could be amended to permit this. However, NALC has previously advised that a request for a recorded vote would supersede the policy written in the standing orders, and in that instance a written ballot could not be taken.

Schedule 12 para 13 (1) and 13(2) refers.

Discussion regarding the above and whether a written ballot would be appropriate in this instance, noting that Standing Orders would need to be amended to enable a written ballot.

It was mentioned that a secret ballot is not transparent, and goes against what the Town Council is trying to achieve. It was mentioned that if a recorded vote was requested then this would negate the situation anyway and hence there is no point in altering the present system.

On the proposal of Cllr Bradbury, seconded by Cllr Jeans it was agreed by a majority, with 7 in favour and 1 against, that there would be no amendment to Standing Orders and that the election of Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson continues to be by show of hands of elected members.

4) Communicating Decision from Council Meeting 22nd June 2022.

Recommendation and discussion around the form of public communication that should occur whatever the Council decision on the Station Yard regeneration project on 22nd June 2022. It was suggested that a form of public communication take place. The project team confirmed that comms. was within the role required from the contractor too, essentially to include neighbouring properties etc. Recommendation that comms be considered.

Cllr Windell advised that a detailed comms proposal will be put forward by contractor as part of a “disruption register”. It was suggested that the tracker could be put on the website and that a press release be made to launch project, and also have drop in event at the Stella Peskett. Cllr Windell confirmed that this will start being discussed in July with all the various parties involved.

11. Town Mayor updates/correspondence including.

Formal events for Queens Platinum Jubilee – throughout Thursday 2nd June 2022. Cllr Windell advised that Stocks Fair was busy at the end of the Gun Hill event. Children at the Primary School were given a voucher for the fair. Crown competition judged. St Edmundsbury County Service of Celebration – 12th June 2022 (Cllr Flunder)
Suffolk Day – 21st June 2022 – Flags flying
Arts Festival Opening – 25th June 2022 – went very well.

12. Dates for Diary

Southwold Arts Centre Open Evening – Monday 18th July 2022 7.30pm. Noted.

13. Date of next Town Council Meeting: Tuesday 26th July 2022 at 7.30pm. Noted.

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

If required for legal, staff or tender discussions. Nil

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.35pm.

Signed

Dated