

## SOUTHWOLD TOWN COUNCIL

### **Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council of Southwold, held in the Council Chamber at 7.30pm on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024.**

PRESENT:	Councillor	S Flunder – Town Mayor
	“	Mrs V Gladwell
	“	Mrs P Goldsmith
	“	R Jarvis
	“	M Palmer
	“	Mrs V Redington
	“	J Sutton
	“	R Temple

Also present: The High Steward, The Town Clerk and 3 members of the public.

1. a) **Apologies:**

*To note/approve apologies for absence.* Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Beavan, Davy and Wells. All apologies were noted. The council presently has one councillor vacancy.

2. **Declarations of interest:**

a) *To receive any declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests regarding the agenda.*

Cllr Gladwell declared a pecuniary interest re Agenda item 5 Planning.

b) *To receive Declarations of Other Registerable Interests regarding the agenda.*

Cllr Flunder declared an interest re the Millennium Foundation as a Trustee.

c) *To receive Declarations of Non-Registerable Interests regarding the agenda.* Nil.

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

e) *To note that the Register of Interests of all Members is to be completed within 28 days of the election and updated thereafter with changes as they occur.* Noted.

3. **Minutes:** (i) *To approve and sign the minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023. On the proposal of Cllr Goldsmith, seconded by Cllr Jarvis it was RESOLVED by all to approve the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023. All agreed.*

4. **Public Participation**

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

Mr Sharp spoke about the options for comms for the Business group which he has recently chaired (re Agenda No. 14).

Businesses would like a Southwold website in order to promote the town as a premier destination, promote businesses, and to promote and signpost events. It could also be an opportunity for individual businesses to link to their own websites. 3 quotes are now available to consider. Could have an apprentice to keep website up to date alongside an

Adnams mentor. The expectation would be for businesses to contribute to the admin (as per DMO fees). There would be a need to buy the domain for the website. Discussion took place about how the website would work. The meeting was advised that social media can be run off the back of the website. The Town Council website will not be changed. It was noted that other towns have greatly upped their game on marketing their area and what they have to offer. Voluntary organisations could be added to the website at a later date.

A member of the public spoke about their concerns re Potters Bridge. They have written to Therese Coffey MP and the Environment Agency and Suffolk County Council and ESC Cllr Beavan. They have liaised with Reydon PC and Wangford PC. A group has been formed who have concerns re the use of the Wangford Road. Environment Agency and Suffolk County Council will meet on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024 to discuss Potters Bridge. Concerns were expressed about reporting matters to the Environment Agency and the delay in the Environment Agency doing the work. The road is subsiding. The member of the public advised that they would hope that local communities come together to get their voices heard and would encourage STC to write to Matthew Hicks at SCC.

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

a) *To note planning cttee recommendations for planning applications considered 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024;*

Cllr Temple advised the meeting that the committee was not quorate so could not consider the planning applications.

Cllr Gladwell declared an interest in application i). It was agreed by all that Cllr Gladwell could remain in the room but not speak or vote.

*Cllr Gladwell did not take part in the discussion or vote re;*

i) DC/23/4356/FUL 55 High Street – It was noted this is a retrospective application. After full discussion it was agreed to approve this application.

*Cllr Gladwell took part in the rest of the meeting.*

ii) DC/23/4513/FUL 23 Park Lane – There is an objection to the planning application from a local resident who would be impacted by the application. The street scene changes as the front wall is being taken down – although this does increase on site parking. The Conservation Officer seems to be supportive on this aspect. It is understood that this will be let as a holiday home.

Full discussion took place - there are 2 parking spaces on site already. The provision of an extra space seems to be to cater for holiday let – the property has enough spaces on site. Will alter street scene adversely. Setting a precedent. Propose refuse –Unanimous.

iii) DC/23/4725/TCA Woodleys, The Common – Noted.

iv) DC/23/4599/FUL 20 Hotson Road – previous application refused 2023 on the basis of overdevelopment. This is a smaller and modified application. Agreed by all.

- v) DC/23/4684/FUL 62 Victoria Street –All agreed.
- vi) DC/23/4620/FUL Old Water Tower – belongs to Town Council – no comment.
- vii) 1 Barnaby Green/21 High Street has been looked at before. Applicants have modified the application. Agreed by all.

b) *To receive a verbal update from Planning and Development Committee on any further planning matters considered at meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024 including; new Conservation Area considered by ESC, decision on 17 Market Place.*  
 New Conservation Area being considered by ESC.  
 17 Market Place – residential change of use has been agreed subject to it being for a full time residence as per Neighbourhood Plan.

6. **National Energy Projects** – Sizewell/**Anglia One/Eurolink/Sealink** – *To receive updates.*

*Note – Sizewell C will attend the February Town Council meeting to give presentation to councillors at 7pm.*

Sealink response has been submitted by the Town Council. Members are not sure where SCC is on this one, so it was felt that there is a need to put pressure on SCC and ESC along with Reydon/Wangford/Walberswick to pressure to protect the coast.

There is a petition available to which people are asked to sign. Cllr Davy will keep members updated.

Sizewell C – judicial review is not proceeding. Construction is starting and proceeding but still need more funding. Sizewell reps are coming along at 7pm on the February Council night.

Cllr Jarvis advised that there is a group from SALC being formed to give an overview on NSIPS to all councils if they need help.

7. **Roads Consultation** – *to note consultation expiry date 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024.*

*To note recent issues on local highway network in connection with highways works and recent storms.*

Cllr Jarvis advised that the consultation is out. Reydon residents appear to be upset that they have not been directly consulted. There are spare consultations available at the Town Hall. Members were advised that it had been understood that copies were going to be distributed in Reydon to every door, but Reydon PC now have some hard copies and the Reydon clerk does have an electronic copy available to circulate.

Cllr Jarvis will update ‘Nextdoor’ to reply to criticism. Date is being arranged for the next meeting.

Potters Bridge – the Chair advised that this comes up each STC meeting. So many agencies are involved. Everyone needs to get together to come to an agreed plan. Reydon PC is meeting about it, and it was suggested that STC take part in a future meeting as well.

Cllr Jarvis advised that the wider issue is flooding across the country. Fear is that Southwold will be an island if the A12 is cut off and Potters Bridge is cut off.

There is a need to engage with resilience committees at ESC and SCC as well, and this must be high on the council risk review to ensure the higher LA tiers concentrate funds on this.

East Street – letter from SCC is out with all local residents/businesses.

East Street, and York Road outside doctors are initial outcomes from previous STC consultations.

8. **Station Yard redevelopment** – *update as of December 2023*. Members were advised that the Station Yard development construction is coming on well and the windows are going in. Agreement to lease of buildings should be completed by the end of this month.
9. **Town Hall alterations** – *to receive initial sketch of proposals for future consideration*. Received and noted.
10. **Anti-social behaviour** and *criminal damage in Southwold on New Years Eve – update*. As per STC newsletter and Town Clerk report.

11. **Finances including Revenue Budget and Precept 2024.25**

*a) To consider, and if agreed, approve the Town Council Revenue Budget 2024.2025 – see papers attached.*

Revenue budget had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Discussion took place regarding the various expenditure items.

Despite inflationary pressures, income and expenditure can balance by virtue of the interest being earned on present balances and with no raising of the precept. Members noted that this is unlikely to be a long-term solution to retaining a balanced budget in future years and that there might be need to raise precept in future years.

**On the proposal of Cllr Temple, seconded by Cllr Palmer the revenue budget was agreed by all. Budgeted income 2024.2025 £215, 551. Budgeted expenditure 2024.2025 £215,531.**

*b) Precept 2024.25 – To consider and approve a precept for 2024.25 – see ESC papers. attached and Budget above.*

Cllr Jarvis spoke regarding the revenue budget and precept. ESC precept information had been circulated. The ESC information advises that a precept of £118551.17 appear as a 0% change in precept on the tax bills of each household. This would be sufficient for the budget for 2024.2025 due to other factors as mentioned above.

**Cllr Jarvis proposed that STC keeps the precept rise to 0% for this year (i.e. to not follow other councils in putting it up). Seconded by Cllr Temple. It was unanimously agreed to claim a precept of £118,551.17 for the reasons as above.**

12. **Finances including Capital Budget 2024.2025.**

*a) To consider, and if agreed, approve the Town Council Capital Budget 2024.2025 – see papers attached.*

The capital budget had been circulated in advance of the meeting. It was confirmed that the Town Hall project has not been costed nor included within the budget.

Members were advised that the Landlords cttee has gone into significant detail within their own analysis to determine the budget required for 2024.2025 for the property portfolio.

The Capital budget details anticipated income at £271,300 against expenditure of £298,000 with reserves to cover the shortfall. **It was unanimously agreed to approve the capital budget for 2024.2025.**

*To consider and if agreed approve the purchase of E V Chargers for Gardner Road car park – see attached.*

Cllr Jarvis explained that the original proposed supplier has reduced costs and that the alternative quotes exceed the process of the original proposal. **It was recommended by Cllr Jarvis that STC purchase a fast E V Charger from the original supplier as per the quotes provided. Proposed by Cllr Palmer, seconded by Cllr Redington. All agreed.**

*To consider and if agreed approve Klondye skate park contractor and budget – see attached.*

Cllr Jarvis provided a summary of the original supplier and the issues on this supplier. The second bidder has come in and requoted at £160k and can install in March 2024. It is anticipated that with monies already spent on design the group would need further support with £3k additional funding. **On the proposal of Cllr Jarvis, seconded by Cllr Gladwell it was agreed by all to provide a contract to the new supplier and to provide the group with the additional £3k of funding.**

*Budget 2023.2024*

*To note revised budget for 2 Strickland Place works for 2023.2024. Noted.*

Thanks were expressed to the Town Clerk and the Committees for the work carried out to collate and prepare the budget for 2024.2025.

13. **Councillor Vacancy Election February** 2024 – *to note the deadline for applications to ESC is 12<sup>th</sup> January 2024.*  
Deadline for applications is 12<sup>th</sup> January 2024.
14. **Business Meeting** – *To note that next Business community meeting will be held on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at the Swan Hotel Reading Room at 5.30pm.*  
See flyer publicising next meeting on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024.
15. **Date of next Town Council Meeting:** *Tuesday 30th January 2024 at 7.30pm.*
16. **Exclusion of Public and Press if required during discussions:** *Pursuant to section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it will 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.*

*Proposed Property Purchase – update* – Cllr Flunder provided an update. An offer has been accepted and a property survey has taken place. All members had been provided with a copy of the survey. Members confirmed that they were comfortable with the survey conclusions.

*To consider quotes for 2 Strickland Place works – **Quotes received were considered and it was agreed by all to accept the tender from Lexden for the works.***

*Millenium Car Park – proposed legal agreement – **In the absence of Cllr Davy, the Town Clerk explained the background to the licence proposal. Agreed by all.***

Discussion re business community website quotes received. Several members felt that other quotes should also be obtained. **It was agreed by all that other quotes would be obtained and that the matter would be brought back to the next meeting.**  
**The principle of budgeting for a business/ community website was agreed by all.**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.10pm

Signed .....

Dated .....