

## **SOUTHWOLD TOWN COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council of Southwold, held in the Council Chamber at 6.30pm on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2025.**

PRESENT:	Councillor	S Flunder – Town Mayor
	“	D Beavan
	“	P Davy
	“	P Goldsmith (arrived 7.30pm)
	“	C Hurr
	“	R Jarvis
	“	Mrs J Miller
	“	M Palmer
	“	Mrs V Redington
	“	R Temple

Also present: SCC Cllr M Ladd and the Town Clerk.

1. a) **Apologies:**  
*To note/approve apologies for absence.* Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Gladwell and Wells which were noted. Apologies were also received from the High Steward.
2. **Declarations of interest:**
  - a) *To receive any declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests regarding the agenda.* Nil. Cllr Redington re 1 Strickland Place.
  - b) *To receive Declarations of Other Registerable Interests / Non registrable interest regarding the agenda.* Cllr Flunder declared an interest re the Sailing Club donation request. Cllr Temple declared an interest re the insurance policy renewal.
  - c) *To note the decision of the Town Clerk regarding requests for dispensations relating to this agenda.* Nil.
  - d) *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:** To approve and sign the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2025.  
**Proposed by Cllr Beavan, seconded by Cllr Miller. All agreed.**
4. **Public Forum** (15 minutes will be allocated overall for this section- subject to Town Mayor discretion).
  - a) *To receive a report from East Suffolk Ward Councillor D Beavan including update on Coastal Management work on prom north of Pier and moving of Beach Huts.*  
*ESC Cllr Beavan will then take questions from Councillors and public.*  
ESC Beach Huts – see publications re the huts moving. It is hoped that they can go back before the school holidays.

ESC Council tax has been agreed. Budgets are tight and ESC will need to use £6m reserves.

ESC Cllr Beavan – locality has approx. £6,500 left and will allocate this for a partnership piece of work with the surgery for 2 days a week to link people with social prescribing etc to build care within the community being aimed at helping people with respiratory problems and to link to free insulation grants/ warmer homes/ less damp/mould etc.

Potters Bridge – breached again – so should be ok this winter and until the autumn. ESC Cllr Beavan is trying to push MP to push Environment Agency into action, but nothing happening at the moment.

Question was asked - as money is tight, how is ESC checking that holiday lets are paying for waste removal as well as business rates?

Cllr Beavan advised that people need to manually check if those paying business rates are putting bins out for normal collection or not.

ESC Cllr Beavan advised that there is information publicly available on business rates, so for example for people in Tibbys Triangle, but this does not help as people use other people's bin to put their refuse in and not necessarily their own.

Question was asked whether there is a full list of the holiday lets who are paying business rates? This information is available online under the relevant postcode for the property.

Question was asked - what about numbers 1 -33 beach huts who cannot use their huts due to the prom works - what about a rent reduction?

ESC Cllr Beavan explained that a rent reduction will be pro rata reduction only – not for the whole year.

- b) *To receive a report from SCC Ward Councillor M Ladd including update on proposals for a Norfolk/Suffolk Unitary Authority and Suffolk Energy projects. SCC Cllr Ladd will then take questions from Councillors and public.*

SCC Budget was approved on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2025. Balanced budget 2024-25 but 2025-26 will increase by 6.7% to £804million with an emphasis on children and adult care. Will need to be a £10.9m savings on services. The agreed SCC Budget will mean a 4.99% rise on council tax. For a Band D this will be £31.72 per week which is a £1.51 increase per week.

Fire Service – SCC will invest an extra £1.6m in Fire Service which presently operates 35 stations, with 43 vehicles. Suffolk Fire has been Rated Good at protecting the public but needs more work on equality and inclusion – diversity leadership culture.

SCC Libraries – 45 libraries will be brought back inhouse. Contract expired last year with Suffolk Library Services. Same opening hours. Investing in new mobile libraries. All information and the recommendation will go to Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

Local Government Reorganisation – SCC has agreed to propose a one Unitary as part of the fast-track programme. One unitary means 'One Suffolk' (not 2 i.e. East and West Suffolk) and is being proposed by SCC as Suffolk only has a population of 750k – 800k in the whole of Suffolk. Government wanted Unitary with a minimum 500k population. If an East /West scenario had been chosen, then both Ipswich and Lowestoft would have both been in East.

Devolution - Mayoral election will take place May 2026 over Combined authority of Norfolk & Suffolk (no more Police & Crime Commissioner).

SCC Cllr Ladd – Lionlink announcement is good news for Southwold but not for Walberswick.

Mill Lane resurfacing is taking place in March.

Question regarding LGR - Has there been any discussion with Norfolk over Unitary position. SCC Cllr Ladd advised that yes there had been close discussions. Norfolk have not yet had their council meeting to confirm the proposals which they will be submitting. There have also been discussions with all of the district councils.

Cllr Flunder extended thanks to Cllr Ladd for contacting Richard Rout and advised that STC will be suggesting a Southwold meeting with SEAS and that it would be good if Richard could come along. SCC Cllr Ladd advised that he would also be willing to attend and advised that SCC do not approve of the piecemeal effect of all of the energy projects. All need co-ordinating.

c) *To receive comments from the public on matters on the agenda.* Nil

5. **To receive reports from Committees and Working Groups:**

To receive the report of the meeting of;

a) **Planning and Development Committee;**

o To receive the minutes of the meetings held on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2025 and 18<sup>th</sup> February 2025

o To note the decision of the ESC planning cttee re Coach House, Park Lane.

Cllr Flunder – re The Coach House – Cllr Beavan and Cllr Flunder spoke at the ESC Planning Committee (after a site meeting had taken place). ESC planning Committee refused the Coach House planning application. The Chair of the Committee did state that N Plans had to be taken into account, as a priority, in planning considerations.

Cllr Flunder spoke at the ESC Planning Committee today re the Pier Paybooth. ESC planning Committee approved the application.

b) **Landlords Cttee** – no meeting held. *See updates as attached.*

c) **Leisure and Environment Cttee** – No meeting held.

*To consider update re V E Day anniversary events and to consider and if agreed approve budget for the event. See attached recommendations.*

It was agreed by all to await Cllr Goldsmith to arrive. – see further in minutes.

d) **Roads Cttee** – *to receive minutes, and to consider and if agreed approve recommendations from meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025.*

See recommendations;

1 **As a temporary fix, a solar light be placed on the Barclays wall or URC Wall (with relevant owner's permission). Budget £100 to be allocated for 2 solar lights for this location.**

2 **That 2 donation boxes be purchased for this car park – Budget £1900.**

**3 Fast chargers to be increased to 65p per unit to help shorten length of capital investment return.**

**Recommendations 1.2.3 Proposed by Cllr Beavan, seconded by Cllr Davy. All agreed.**

- e) **NSIPS working group** – to receive update on;
- Sealink – *DCO process and timescales as publicised*
  - Sizewell – *see newsletter updates.*
  - Anglia One/Eurolink and North Falls Offshore Wind Farm, Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm Project. *No update*
  - Lionlink – Cllr Davy advised that the announcement had now come through that Walberswick has been chosen. Need to support them as much as possible. Meeting at Reydon last week – 70 people attended. Fiona Gilmore spoke re Sealink. Taking connection from Friston to Southeast. Residents will be encouraged to register to respond to the DCO. It was suggested that STC make a donation to SEAS to help costs of their assistance/legal work. Cllr Davy is a member of the working group of EAPA for which there will be a meeting at Snape soon to which all will be invited. The Project is already having a bearing on people in Friston/local area causing stress/mental health issues.
  - Sizewell Community Fund – Cllr Flunder advised that final grants have been given out again and the determination of who has got money is very disappointing against Southwold organisations. Cllr Davy advised that Southwold Tennis Club will have discussion with Sizewell Foundation. Cllr Jarvis advised that council knows that Sizewell grant funders believe both STC and Southwold are affluent. Cllr Flunder advised that information had been available showing that Southwold and Great Yarmouth are the most deprived areas as per other studies too.
  - STC meeting with SEAS as guest speaker - Cllr Flunder explained that he is asking Fiona Gilmore for dates when she could speak to council/ members of the public.
- f) **Southwold Harbour**  
Harbour Revision Order working group – *No meeting held.*

To receive update about STC member application for HMC vacancy.  
Appointment of Cllr Jarvis to the HMC is going to the Leader for ESC consideration.  
Cllr Beavan advised that there is not a vacancy for STC but there is one vacancy – ESC is just checking due diligence as to how this must be allocated.

The ESC Task & Finish Group is still considering how to cover the costs needed for the harbour.  
Discussion about the position for STC in MOU/ HRO.

Cllr Flunder advised that the HMC wants a strategic plan going forward.  
Query was raised as to what the impact on the HRO will be from Devolution?  
Cllr Beavan advised that ESC need to get on with doing the job, and that the Harbour is critical and needs to be done now. HRO is going through – but will not happen anytime soon.

Cllr Flunder advised that STC do not know what the harbour plans are and that STC need a clear plan.

Cllr Beavan advised that ESC is on version 3 of the plan now and is trying to get the best solution for the harbour/town and noted that people should work together. Cllr Beavan advised that STC do not need to sign MOU at present, as this is not a critical driver.

*Cllr Beavan left the meeting at 7.20pm.*

Cllr Jarvis advised members that the MOU is not critical to get a plan in place for the harbour. ESC needs £12 – 13m to do all the work for the harbour for which it could raise £6m but would need another £6m.

Cllr Flunder advised members that the comms has not been good. The Caravan owners have written their own summary which has been sent round.

**g) Town Awards working group.**

To receive recommendation – *see paper attached.*

Award will take place at Charter Lunch on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2025. Application form to be back by 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2025 for STC to consider at the April meeting. The working group are doing more research on what to recommend for the actual “award” itself i.e. a crystal lighthouse.

**It was agreed by all to approve the recommendation for the wording for the nomination.**

**h) Devolution / Local Government reorganisation working group – *no meeting held.* To consider and if agreed, to add Cllr P Davy to the membership of the working group. Proposed by Cllr Jarvis, seconded by Cllr Miller. All agreed.**

To Consider Town Council response to consultation – it was agreed for the working group to meet and draft a response to the Consultation re Devolution.

**6. Meeting with MP – *Feedback from online meeting held 17<sup>th</sup> February 2025.***

Members felt that Jenny had been open and was very involved in local issues. The next meeting will be held in person in 6 months.

*SCC Cllr Ladd left the meeting at 7.30pm.*

**7. Business network group / website/ apprentice – *updates***

The apprentice started yesterday, and the website will be updated by the apprentice.

With respect to the business meetings, only 1 person and Cllr Flunder had attended the meeting prior to Christmas. STC to meet Menta and James Milnes about how to invigorate the group. It was noted that the businesses still do not want a formal structure/business association etc.

8. **Financial Matters**

**Audit and Governance**

- a) Accounts for Payment - To receive the management accounts, balance sheet and bank reconciliation to January 2025 and confirm the Accounts for Payment for February 2025 (*circulated to members*)

**On the proposal of Cllr Jarvis, seconded by Cllr Miller it was agreed by all to approve the Accounts for Payment for February 2025. All agreed.**

- b) To receive report of Finance and Governance Cttee Meeting held on 17th February 2025.

*To consider and if agreed approve recommendations including policy. See attached.*  
Cllr Jarvis explained the £75k difference between budgeted income and expenditure on the revenue account within the budget for 2025.2026.

See recommendations:

**That the Gardner Road fast charges be increased to 65p per unit. Agreed by all.**

**That CCLA is still an appropriate investment for the majority of funds. They are still AAA rated, the risk has been considered and negated as far as possible. The CCLA rating to be regularly considered as part of the risk review/analysis. Agreed by all.**

**The insurance policy is with Aviva, and this is the last year of the 3-year agreement. The premium for 2024 – 2025 was £33,135.20 and the renewal premium is £40,002.26. All assets have been considered and adjustments made as required. Aviva will wish to site visit some of the properties and STC is considering quotes for any re valuations required. February renewal price considered and Agreed by all.**

**SALC are the internal auditor for 2024.25, as per Council approval June 2024 who approved that their internal audit programme of work has regard to the town council identified risks. SALC Terms and Conditions (letter of engagement) approved in June 2024. Terms and Conditions letter will therefore be completed and returned as per this approval. AGREED by All.**

**The IT / phone/ e mails, Microsoft licences, monthly system and support costs are renewable at £399.96 per month under the ongoing agreement. Agreed by all to continue.**

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) HMC/ SAG – as above.

*Cllr Goldsmith arrived at 7.30pm and it was agreed to revert back to committee reports.*

**5.c) Leisure & Environment** report and recommendations;

V E Day celebrations – members were updated on the proposals for VE Day – Budget for all matters presently being discussed is £3020. Grant application has been submitted to ESC but in view of the short timescale to make arrangements, it is proposed that £3020 come out of L&E budget if application is not successful at ESC. Discussion re Tea Dance costs and whether volunteers could do cakes/ sandwiches.

**V E Day arrangements - Set aside £3020 from Land E Budget – Proposed by Cllr Goldsmith, seconded by Cllr Jarvis. All agreed.** It was suggested that a request could also be made to Cllr Beavan ESC locality grant.

**Ferry Road garden maintenance and Might's Road/Electricity Green – Moore's Maintenance had provided some costs, and these were provided to members. All Agreed to go ahead with the one off and monthly costs as quoted in the e mail. Total = £85 per month/ongoing.**

**10. Town Mayor updates including.**

Service of Farewell to Bishop Seeley at St Edmundsbury Cathedral

*Future Mayor events*

SCC Chairman's Civic Reception – 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Southwold Lions Charter Lunch – 27<sup>th</sup> April 2025

Southwold Town Mayors Charity Concert. 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2025

Cllr Flunder spoke re the events as detailed on the agenda.

**11. Councillor events**

SCC Community self-help – brush cutter training – *Cllr Hurr attended.* Cllr Hurr passed the brush cutter training. Congratulations were extended.

ESC planning forum – Town Clerk attended – *slides distributed.* Town Clerk gave feedback and the key figures on the ESC build quota.

ESC town marketing event - *town clerk and Cllr Flunder attended.* = re the footfall data and the trends and the initiatives ESC is helping with to try and attract footfall.

Cllr Davy advised that SEAS have done some research into the drop of footfall across ESC. It was suggested that prices are too high across the country and people can go abroad for the same money.

*Future events;*

ESC town conference 27<sup>th</sup> Feb 2025– *Cllrs Flunder, Jarvis and Goldsmith attending.*

Commonwealth Day – Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025 10am at Gun Hill

Southwold Town Mayors Charity Concert – 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2025 - councillor invitation

**12. Consultations**

Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England - – **Deadline 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025.** Cllr Jarvis spoke re standards being lower than they need to be. Clerk to check SALC response and confirm as STC.

- Planning Reform Working Paper: Streamlining Infrastructure Planning - GOV.UK inviting views on how the Government could reform the process for consenting Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP). The Planning Reform Working Paper “proposes a number of measures that could be taken to streamline the consenting process for national infrastructure and to enable faster decision-making, whilst ensuring the process is fair and certain”. **There is no formal deadline. Noted**
- Consultation on Reforms to the Energy Performance of Buildings Regime - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government - Citizen Space consulting on proposals to reform the Energy Performance of Buildings Regime in five critical areas: updating EPC metrics, refining requirements for Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) and Display Energy Certificates (DECs), improving data management protocols, strengthening quality control, and revising Air Conditioning Inspection Reports (ACIRs). **Deadline: 26 February 2025. Noted**
- Improving the energy performance of privately rented homes: 2025 update - GOV.UK consulting on proposals to raise the minimum energy efficiency standard required of privately rented homes in England and Wales to the equivalent of Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) C by 2030. **Deadline 2 May 2025. Noted**

13. **Date of next Town Council Meeting:** Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 6.30pm

*\* Some items from this agenda might need to be considered within a confidential session as below.*

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.*

Legal/ Staffing/ Tenders. – see report attached re 1 Strickland Place.

Fire Station = for information only.

*Cllr Redington left before Strickland Place discussion.*

See Savills update. After discussion it was Agreed by all to accept the update and approve that the sale price be amended to £895k. All agreed.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.05pm.

Signed .....

Dated .....