

SOUTHWOLD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council of Southwold, held in the Council Chamber at 6.30pm on Tuesday 25th November 2025.

PRESENT: Councillor

“	D Beavan
“	P Davy
“	S Flunder
“	P Goldsmith (Mayor)
“	C Hurr
“	R Jarvis
“	M Palmer
“	V Redington

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

1. **Apologies:**

To receive and approve apologies for absence. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Gladwell, Cllr Miller, Cllr Temple, Cllr Wells and SCC Cllr Ladd. Noted.

2. **Declarations of interest:**

- a) *To receive any declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests regarding the agenda.*
Cllr Flunder re Harbour, as per declaration at the HMC.
- b) *To receive Declarations of Other Registerable Interests / Non registrable interest regarding the agenda.* Nil.
- c) *To note the decision of the Town Clerk regarding requests for dispensations relating to this agenda.* Nil.

3 **Minutes:** To approve and sign the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 28th October 2025.

Proposed by Cllr Flunder, seconded by Cllr Davy. Agreed by all to approve the minutes of Tuesday 28th October 2025.

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*
ESC Cllr Beavan will then take questions from Councillors and electors.

Ref. Potters Bridge – Natural England created an outfall at Benacre which is working well. 3 large pipes have been placed across the beach to the broad. NE state that this is an emergency outfall, but it is doing the job and is slowly draining. Therefore it is hoped that this is a workable solution for the present time .

Rats/rabbits – ESC are carrying on with the work on this.

The HMC has met. Each Lease is going to be looked at individually. If there are disagreements, then arbitration will take place. Leases over 6 years will need to be registered at HM Land Registry. Approved long leases will have a premium included the monies from which will go to maintain the harbour.

The ESC 2026 – 2027 Budget will be tight. The new funding formula comes into effect. There is a £5m reserve held at ESC but shortfall will be about £3m this year. ESC is likely to raise maximum precept i.e. 5%.

Questions to ESC Cllr Beavan

Cllr Flunder asked re rats coming out of sewers. Personally has had to put valve in. Could Anglian Water do a survey/investigation to see what the condition of the sewers is? ESC Cllr Beavan advised that he could ask them to do this and will co-ordinate with Anglian Water and ESC.

Cllr Redington advised that there has been a problem with rats in sewers of Strickland Place properties.

ESC Cllr Beavan – has arranged an E coli monitor for the harbour for monitoring the Anglian Water outfall in the harbour.

b) To receive a report from Suffolk CC Ward Councillor M Ladd.

Cllr Ladd will then take questions from Councillors and electors. SCC Cllr Ladd had provided apologies.

c) To receive comments from Southwold electors on matters on the agenda.

Members of the public asked about the consultation taking place in respect of the leases at the harbour. ESC Cllr Beavan advised that each leaseholder/licence holder will be contacted individually, and ESC will negotiate lease by lease individually.

Members of the public asked about the additional premium on longer leases, advising that private stage owners have invested at private cost, and are concerned that individuals are now being asked to pay more when they have already invested heavily individually into the harbour. ESC Cllr Beavan advised that this was appreciated, but that £100m still needs to be invested in the harbour. The Caravan site investment will be going ahead soon. Cllr Beavan advised that all is negotiable, and that the size of the premium will be negotiable - each individual should negotiate individually.

Members of the public advised that there has been no overall consultation – ESC Ward Cllr Beavan advised them that ESC do not have to consult with everyone individually.

The members of the public asked for the town council to support their concerns.

9a) SAG/HMC – Cllr Flunder – latest SAG was a good meeting. But on this issue many people have been very upset and HMC must take account of SAG views. Clear to Cllr Flunder that the value of the harbour will be affected. The tenancies do have protected status as far as Cllr Flunder is aware.

ESC Cllr Beavan – has acknowledged that there has been bad communication.

Cllr Flunder – whole process has not been well communicated. HMC were making up a resolution during the HMC meeting – how could SAG participate in this? Public just want to be involved.

ESC Cllr Beavan – sorry that he couldn't be at SAG.

Motion was re-drafted in the meeting because HMC has been listening.

ESC Cllr Beavan – not supportive of 1 year lease/licence and totally understands what people have been saying.

ESC Cllr Beavan – everyone will be negotiated out individually. Need to move forward otherwise there will be no harbour at all. Could suggest a Trust be set up to take over the harbour if people want to.

Question from Cllr Goldsmith – has the information given this evening been communicated to all leaseholders?

ESC Cllr Beavan – A = was minuted at HMC.

ESC Cllr Beavan will arrange for each leaseholder to be written to by ESC about the HMC decision.

Cllr Jarvis – to public – harbour is a municipal harbour run by ESC. But all councils are going through devolution. Could go to a Mayoral body who has responsibility for transport, but this is yet to be made clear.

ESC Cllr Beavan – it will go to the unitary if not Mayor.

Brought forward in agenda

9a) SAG/HMC – Cllr Flunder reported that SAG had held a good meeting and that minutes of the SAG meetings are now taken. The information about the leases was not known when SAG met. SAG would like HMC Minutes to be available more promptly as they seem to take a while to come through. There had been good results at the caravan site regarding the filling of empty pitches in the site.

Cllr Flunder mentioned that there was though a feeling that there will be a cost of the lease/licence amendments and questions are being raised as to whether the process being undertaken is legal. A invitation has been sent to ESC Cllr Beavan in relation to meeting with the new Pontoon Association. ESC Cllr Beavan advised that the ESC legal team will reply regarding the leases as above.

5. To receive reports from Committees and Working Groups:

a) *To receive the reports of the meetings of the Planning and Development Committee meeting – to receive report from meetings held 4th and 18th November 2025, including representation at ESC Planning Cttee. Cllr Temple. No recommendations.* Cllr Flunder advised that he attended the ESC Planning Committee regarding 17 Market Place on behalf of STC. The ESC Planning Committee voted to refuse the application.

*b) Landlords Cttee – To receive the report of the meeting of the Landlords Committee held 13th November 2025. Cllr Miller. ***

Recommendation.

Casino windows – Revised Quote has been received following the survey of the walls/ windows.

C and D advise that revised spec for the work is £11,858.70 plus vat.

This will provide thermally broken powder coated aluminium windows as per planning application.

Other quotes for windows alone were £9597 and £11207.

Query raised as to whether quote from C and D will include making good the interior paintwork etc. This has been confirmed. Lead time is 6 – 8 weeks.

Recommend approve revised quote of £11,858.70 plus Vat for replacement and fitting as per planning application.

Proposed by Cllr Goldsmith, seconded by Cllr Hurr. All agreed.

c) Leisure and Environment Cttee – No meeting held.

d) Roads Cttee – No meeting held.

e) Employment working group – No meeting held

f) NSIP working Group – To receive update on National Energy Projects – Lionlink/Sizewell/Anglia One/Eurolink/ and North Falls Offshore Wind Farm, Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm Project - Sealink DCO - Cllr Davy

Sizewell C is going ahead and traffic etc is being monitored against the Deed of Obligation. Roads will get worse before getting better. Sizewell C Community Fund is still not looking at Southwold. Tourist Fund is available for requests.

Scottish Power Renewables – wind farm will be at Thorpeness. Substation at Friston. Work has commenced but there is minimal liaison with Sizewell re roads etc.

Sealink – DCO process – if approved it will be a connection hub for more NSIPS. Ofgem has agreed to give the green light for 48% of the costs to be given the go ahead to obtain parts/place orders, without prejudice, to the DCO outcome. All documents for Sealink are on NSIP sites. Been very strong representations against Sealink in Suffolk and Kent. Over 100 people attended recent local floor hearings, and some town and parish councils spoke. Meeting of East Suffolk Project Group will take place this week and will guide town and parish councils how to respond. STC will need to decide how to respond and would like a working group to have delegated power to respond by 9th December as STC do not meet again by then. Cllr Davy will draft and will circulate to all once working group has met and approved. Delegated authority has already been given to the working group to respond on behalf of STC.

SEAS have had great representation and are represented by a KC at the hearing. Prelim meeting has been held. Hearings will be in London and online. 9th December 2025 is the next deadline for representations.

LionLink – is still to come.

Saxmundham – proposal for 800 homes has been submitted.

AW/Essex & Suffolk Water – is running a pipeline from Beccles to Saxmundham.

National Grid has announced ½ year accounts profit of £810m, a rise of 20%.

g) *LGR working group – see Finance cttee minutes for update.*

To note meeting to be requested with each Mayoral candidate.

Cllr Jarvis – LGR consultation is to 11th January 2026. SALC will be impartial – but will emphasise getting maximum benefit for town and parish councils. Members were advised that they can respond individually, and that if agreed, STC can also respond to the 2 submissions. ESC ward Cllr Beavan advised that STC might wish to consider the assets it wants back from ESC and to start discussions.

Devolution – unitary will sit with Mayoral Board. Last week the Government enabled the shadow board to be set up. Shadow board will be supporting the Mayoral election to enable it to go ahead. There are 4 board members at the moment (2 from NCC and 2 from SCC). Will need the shadow board to run for 2 – 3 years.

SALC meeting is on 2nd December 2025, and Cllr Jarvis will Chair.

LGR working group – will be inviting all Mayor candidates to meet with them.

6. **Wi Fi Provision – letter to ESC** – *To receive update from last meeting.* Await meeting date with Economic Development.
7. **Fire Station Site** – to receive update – *ESC Ward Cllr Beavan/ SCC Ward Cllr Ladd *** Cllr Beavan advised that ESC has no update but are chasing Hastoe. It was suggested that the town council might need to take action itself.
8. **Financial Matters - Audit and Governance**
 - a) *Accounts for Payment* - To receive and confirm the Accounts for Payment for November 2025 (*circulated to members*).
On the proposal of Cllr Jarvis, seconded by Cllr Davy, it was agreed by all to approve the payments.

b) *To receive and consider* management accounts/ budget/ and balance sheet for month end October 2025. Cllr Jarvis advised that all expenditure is as detailed in budget. Income is also fine. The balance sheet is looking around £1.1m at 31st March 2026 year end which will be close to reserve figure of £1m.
 - c) *To receive report and recommendations of Finance and Governance Cttee meeting held on 19th November 2025 – Cllr Jarvis –***Members considered the updated Planning Cttee, and L and E cttee Terms of Reference. Proposed by Cllr Jarvis, seconded by Cllr Flunder. All agreed to approve.**
 - d) *To receive precept details 2026.2027 together with timescales* – see letter from ESC. As mentioned last year, as a principle, a precept increase of 3% has already been mentioned to the electors.

e) *To note timescales for setting of budget 2026.2027 budget setting 2026-27 – see precept timeline. Noted.*

9. **To receive reports from the Town Council representatives on other bodies/organisations, of meetings attended:**

- a) SAG / HMC – *Cllr Flunder* – re caravan site. Council has committed £250k for a consultant. No consultant has yet been appointed. It was requested that STC be a consultee on the final decisions.
- b) Southwold Arts Centre – Tribute bands are having great reviews, and the jazz club is popular. Cllr Flunder advised that he will no longer be able to be the STC representative on the Centre – and would suggest that someone else takes on that role. Cllr Flunder advised that the commitment is to monthly meetings and to be an active volunteer.

10. **Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor updates including;**

Remembrance Parade – Town Hall – 9th November 2025
Armistice Day – Laying of Crosses – 11th November 2025
Southwold & Reydon Society Lunch – 13th November 2025
St Edmunds Day – St Edmunds Church – 20th November 2025
Bungay Town Trust Town Dinner – 28th November 2025

11. **Forthcoming Events for councillors**

Light Up Southwold – 29th November 2025.
Christmas Reception for businesses and local organisations – Town Hall – 11th December 2025
Christmas Carol Service at St Edmund's Church 21st December 2025 at 6pm

12. **Date of next Town Council Meeting:** Tuesday 16 December 2025.

Tuesday 13th January 2026 for consideration of budget 2026.2027.
Tuesday 27th January 2026.

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

13. **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.*

Any matters, including those above as required**

NIL