

Minutes of the Southwold Town Council Roads Committee meeting held at the Town Hall, Southwold on Friday 21st July 2023 at 10am

PRESENT: Councillor
“ D Beavan
“ P Davy
“ R Jarvis
“ M Palmer

S Flunder (ex officio)

Also present: the Town Clerk

Cllr Flunder provided an introduction.

1. *To appoint a Chair of the Cttee for 2023 – 2024.* On the proposal of Cllr Jarvis, seconded by Cllr Palmer it was agreed to elect Cllr Beavan as the Chair for 2023-24. All agreed.
2. *To receive apologies for absence.* Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Sutton. Noted
3. *Declarations of interest:*
 - a. *To receive any declarations of Non-Registrable Interest regarding the agenda.* Nil
 - b. *To receive any declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest/ Other Registrable Interest regarding the agenda.* Nil

4. **Public section relating to the following:**

Every week someone asks “When are you going to sort out parking” or says “Someone is going to be killed in the High Street”.

Please help us.

Aims

- a) *Not driving - Adequate parking provision, accessibility, encourage walking/bikes,*
- b) *Driving - Safe roads, reduced pollution, better environment for pedestrians and local economy.*

Research

SCC will supply traffic counts. STC will collect footfall data. ESC can supply occupancy rates on their car parks. Have you got any other data?

Stakeholders

This is where you come in!

We want to know what you want. Please comment on the two aims above. What do you want to keep? What do you want to improve?

Residents, employees, shoppers, visitors, Reydon residents, Second homeowners, holiday lets, care workers, tradesmen, deliveries, events. Buses, coaches, shops businesses, hotels, school, taxis. Everyone will be listened to but not everyone will get all they want. There will have to be compromise.

Cllr Beavan advised that this is a very tricky discussion. Will keep asking for opinions and views on Facebook for another month. Trying to do the best for everyone but the subject matter will be emotive. Will try and assess needs first, then look at possible solutions. Cllr Beavan advised that all submissions to date have been logged. He has contacted Cathy Ryan regarding the views of care workers.

Reydon resident spoke – and asked to hear responses received to date, and in relation to what? Cllr Beavan explained that the responses were as per the text on the agenda, which is also on the website and Nextdoor, and that the debate is about what can be done about traffic and parking in the town.

The resident above advised that they had got 81 responses to their social media posts - 78 positive, 3 negative for the proposal to “keep the system the same”. It’s not ideal but it works. Pinch points = Christmas, Latitude etc. Cllr Beavan – had 6 comments on Nextdoor with 2 likes.

Cllr Beavan advised that there were several landowners of the parking systems in town. Gardner Road = STC. York Road = Common Trust. Pier/Harbour = ESC. Millennium = Millennium Trust. ESC charge, whilst other = donations or free.

Cllr Beavan explained the need to consider how employees can park in the town and advised that the committee is not too keen on the ESC off street parking proposals.

Reydon PC Highways Group advised that they have got a wealth of data. SCC survey had been done on one 24 hour period in August re traffic management – 6550 vehicles headed through Reydon to Southwold. Capacity = key. Need to be very cautious that traffic inconvenience is not transferred from one parish to another. The Reydon PC group advised they have a wealth of data and can pass this on.

Cllr Beavan – advised that SCC traffic counts are taking place at the moment and that the ESC data on car parking capacities has been received.

Another resident advised that this has been a topic for over a decade. They voiced concern about the stated declaration of “making a difference” from STC Councillors, when there is already a wealth of throughs/information available. The resident asked whether STC was asking people to submit ideas again. A = yes – as council won’t trawl through previous information again.

Mentioned was made of the need for charging points for electric vehicles.

Pier Avenue resident advised 1) parking on pavements in Salisbury Road is a problem, 2) lack of kerb drops for an elderly community, 3) cycle ways being enforced, as was aware vehicles can park on them and this will not be enforced. Cllr Beavan advised these can go onto a future agenda.

Query was raised with regards to the ESC parking scheme that had been proposed – Cllr Beavan advised that a scheme is still being considered by ESC but if the town does not want it when it goes out to consultation then this will be the conclusion.

Discussion about the Adnams lorries going to / from East Green/Victoria Street

- The meeting was advised that Adnams should only bring one in at a time as they can control this from Reydon.

A resident spoke about the general safety of High Street and Market Square – increasing concern re safety. Pavements can't take the volume on some days. Consideration would need to be given to drivers/parking/care workers/blue badge holders etc – pedestrians as well.

Discussion about pavements - Person advised that people park across dropped kerbs.

Wheelchair access = problematic on pavements. Resident advised that pavements = narrowed by businesses putting out A frames and “stuff”.

The meeting was advised that Hitchin Council ran a pilot pedestrianisation scheme and have now made it permanent. STC could talk to Hitchin. Halesworth/Felixstowe are local towns with pedestrianised zones.

Businesses feel they will lose business – although very few businesses have been responders to date. No proper consultation has been done with the businesses- there is a suspicion amongst businesses – they have concerns. High Street big businesses will not respond.

It was suggested that there is a need to survey everyone by more formal survey. Need to explain the case and then get detailed responses. ESC might help to do survey but would need to know questions to ask.

It was mentioned that the data reveals that this is a seasonal problem and only during daytime - not all year and not evening. Ex resident of Halesworth advised that the system works in Halesworth because of parking solutions available which aren't available here. Hitchin do 10am – 4pm

Halesworth built a bypass. Southwold can't do that. Seasonality now = weekends too as well as summer. Resident – a small number of people park in/outside/just off/within houses High Street – Market Place so would need access.

Vehicle electrification needs to be considered. Need to consider this for the terraced housing and its impact on parking/pedestrians. How to intercept cars not coming through the High Street. Could put charging points in outer car parks to send people to those.

Signage = issue of where car parks are. Millennium car park needs to be used more and Millennium Foundation need to put a big sign up advertising their parking.

Millennium car park operates by donations for £3 each. It was noted that the white bar and circle hoops = off putting and a lot of the Millennium car park sit is not being used.

Question from Reydon resident re consultation – will this go to Reydon residents?
Could Reydon views be taken into account? ESC/STC could segway with the Reydon Robin for hard copies of questionnaires to go to Reydon and Southwold residents.
Might get more response if face to face representation is requested too.

Public session closed at 10.56am

Public section closed.

5. *Receive a report of submitted statements received to date.* Submitted statements were circulated with the agenda. Need to highlight the main issues. Discussion re vehicles going down Pier Avenue – new SCC sign has been installed. Any new sign will need to go through SCC.
Q re live update – signage – is it feasible? Need a controlled entry car park to do it. But a parking App could be an option.

It was noted that there is a need to improve the use of the Millennium car park.

Discussion about enlarging resident parking on the common – is this an option?
risk = key factor. It is posted to prevent travellers. Would need Common Charity approval. There is a need to move camper vans etc to Pier car park and Ferry Road caravan site.

6. *To receive data re ESC car park usage.* Received by all.
7. *To consider next steps in relation to the aims of;*
 - a) *Not driving - Adequate parking provision, accessibility, encourage walking/bikes,*
 - b) *Driving - Safe roads, reduced pollution, better environment for pedestrians and local economy.**Including further research and forward planning.*
See public session.

It was noted that it is complicated to understand who is responsible for what. When we do the survey, we need to make clear the responsibilities and where funding should come from.

Cllr Flunder suggested that short term actions could be;
dropped kerbs
signage/Millennium car park more user friendly
potholes by the Kings Head.
Medium/long term = SCC Highways etc. How can we influence SCC to do things in a timely manner.

STC can liaise with SCC re dropped kerbs/with yellow lines over them.

Cllr Beavan – would hope for a whole town survey in September/October and get results in consider and to action by next year.

Cllr Flunder – parking on York Road i.e., getting the car parking by the doctors surgery deleted and SCC need to respond as soon as possible i.e. to STC 1) York Road parking by doctors surgery, 2) dropped kerbs and 3) more permanent solution to pot holes by the Kings Head.

Reduced pollution – not really covered this but do need to consider.

Cllr Beavan advised that the previous councillor David Palmer did a survey which reflects the same responses as above re the parking spaces available.

8. *To receive update on new Electric vehicle charger installations.* Town Clerk to send Cllr Beavan the spec for the Plug In Suffolk electric charging points.

Q re what is the ESC/SCC committee actions on electric chargers? Cllr Beavan – will chase ESC.

Any other business:

potholes. Need more permanent solution for Kings Head area for potholes.

Ask to see SCC again.

Meeting again in 4 weeks.

Reydon PC asked about consensus of the views received to date.

Cllr Beavan – need to manage expectations and stop people becoming in entrenched positions.

9. Date of next meeting – Wednesday 23rd August 2023 at 10am.