

SOUTHWOLD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council of Southwold, held via Zoom at 6.30pm Tuesday 29th September 2020

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

Also present; 8 members of the public, the Town Clerk, and High Steward.

1. **Apologies:** *To receive apologies for absence.*
Apologies were received from Cllr Tobin.
2. **Declarations of interest:**
 - a) *To receive any declarations of Personal Interest regarding the agenda.*
There were no Declarations of Personal Interest.
 - 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.*
Nil.
 - d) *Councillors to be reminded of the requirement for them to individually update their Register of Interests as appropriate.*
The Town Mayor reminded members of their legal requirements to update the Register of Interest online.
3. **Minutes:** (i) To approve and sign the minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on Tuesday 25th August 2020 and Thursday 17th September 2020.
On the proposal of Cllr Jeans, seconded by Cllr Windell it was RESOLVED by all to approve the Minutes of the meetings held on Tuesday 25th August 2020 and Thursday 17th September 2020.
4. **Public Participation**
 - a) *To receive a report from East Suffolk Ward Councillor D Beavan.*
ESC Cllr Beavan will then take questions from Councillors and electors.
Potters bridge – beach = 2.1m above sea level but road is less than this thus flow has failed, and the Environment Agency are aware. Ward Cllr Beavan has been pushing for early warning signs.
At the ESC AGM the ESC members on Harbour Committee have been reappointed. The CPE arrangements will be considered by the scrutiny cttee before Christmas. The local authority Covid arrangements are also being considered by the scrutiny cttee to ensure that arrangements are ready for the winter months.

The ward Cllr advised that the proposed national changes in planning are worrying.

Questions from Councillors to Ward Cllr.

Cllr Jeans asked whether ESC would take a position on the planning changes and respond to the planning consultation?

ESC Cllr Beavan suggested that they probably could, and that ESC Cllr David Ritchie should be approached.

Cllr Flunder asked where ESC is with regards to the arrangements for the Harbour Management Committee?

ESC Cllr Beavan advised that he is awaiting a response from Kerry Blair as to an update and that he has also been requesting an update re the campsite.

Cllr Windell asked what discussions are taking place about unitary authorities.

ESC Cllr Beavan considered that this would not occur as ESC would need to join with Ipswich.

Questions from members of the public to Ward Cllr.

A resident asked about the offer from Mr Westlake to assist with the clearance of Potters Bridge as / when it occurs as he is on site.

ESC Cllr Beavan advised that a hired digger was available but is not now. The Environment Agency consider there are too many insurance liabilities to consider to enable a third party to assist. However without the outflow clear, the road will constantly flood.

A resident asked whether every effort will be made to keep the road open in the long term as the road is a vital route. The digger has been vandalised but might be available once mended so can this be taken forward again to the EA otherwise the area will go into a salt marsh and the road will be lost.

ESC Cllr Beavan responded that the Environment Agency advise that it is not a monetary issue, and that the Environment Agency are coming back with 2 options next week – to provide short term and long-term solutions.

b) To receive report from Suffolk County Councillor M Ladd

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

SCC Cllr Ladd advised that the MP will write to the Environment Agency re Potters bridge to put pressure on the EA to sort the matter out. SCC Cllr Ladd has stressed the importance of the road.

Recent SCC newsletter has been sent round – within which there is information relating to Plug in Suffolk, for which £300k has been made available. Cllr Tobin has the information and will update the sustainable transport cttee.

SCC Boundary Commission –the consultation runs to 23rd November. 75 councillors reduce to 70 councillors with a new ward for Southwold called the Blyth Estuary ward which will go from Wrentham to Dunwich. Due to Covid implications the new wards will not be implemented until 2025.

SCC Cabinet has not supported the EDF plan for Sizewell C in its present form.

SCC needs EDF to do much more before it could consider it acceptable.

SCC Cllr Ladd advised that the Cycle Bridge at Blackshore Sluice has been closed as some of the wooden panels are broken. Estimated time for the repair is awaited.

Devolution White Paper is due at the end of October. SCC want to see what is in the White Paper before making comment.

Questions from Councillors to ward Cllr Ladd.

Cllr Windell advised that with regards to the cycle bridge, the multi use on the riverbank is a concern as the sheet fencing is becoming ripped. SCC Cllr Ladd advised that he had seen cycles going over the footpath and removing the fencing and that more substantial barriers may be needed.

Cllr Windell asked whether any discussions were being held by SCC regarding unitary authority. SCC Cllr Ladd advised that SCC is waiting to see the White Paper before any discussions take place.

Questions from members of the public to ward Cllr.

A member of the public thanked the ward Cllr regarding Potters bridge.

- 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).*

A resident asked whether an independent Chair had been appointed on the Station Road Project Board and for an update on the decontamination.

A resident advised that in view of the history of the business plan for Station Road. they were surprised to see that Moss King Associates were being considered for scoping report as per agenda item

A resident asked whether new members were needed for the Leisure & Environment Committee – this was confirmed.

Public participation closed.

5. To receive reports from Committees.

- a) *To receive the written report of the meetings of the Planning and Development Committees meeting held on Tuesday 8th September 2020 and Tuesday 22nd September 2020. Noted.*
- b) *To receive a verbal update from Planning and Development Committee on any further planning/development matters to be brought to the attention of the Council including; providing a response from Southwold Town Council to the Government white paper on 'Changes to the Current Planning System' by 1st October 2020, and providing a response from Southwold Town Council to the Government white paper on 'Planning for the future' by 29th October 2020.*

The Town Mayor updated the meeting on the planning consultation deadline dates.

Cllr Jeans advised that the consultation proposed radical proposals.

It was suggested that Cllr Jeans be asked to respond on part 1 of the consultation on behalf of the Town Council by 1st October 2020 and draft a response to the second part by 29th October 2020. Cllr Windell advised that he would assist as a member of the planning cttee.

Discussion took place. Cllr Ladd suggested that the Town Council should resist the proposals at all cost as democracy is vital within the planning process.

Re police station site - Cllr Jeans advised that Hastoe do not want to put affordable housing on the site.

- c) *To receive verbal report and recommendations from the Leisure and Environment Committee meeting held on 23rd September 2020 including; consideration for new members to be appointed to the cttee, draft response from Southwold Town Council to the Coastal Adaption Supplementary Planning Document covering the coast from Holkham to Felixstowe – required by 16th October 2020.*

The Town Mayor advised that there are 2 vacancies on the Leisure & Environment Committee and would encourage new members as soon as possible.

Cllr Rowan-Robinson advised that the meeting held on 23rd September 2020 was a discussion only, as the meeting was not quorate as Cllr Tobin has had to withdraw from the cttee.

Cllr Rowan-Robinson asked whether the Town Council would agree to send a response to the Coastal Adoption Consultation and felt that the Town Council should make a submission. Present policy “to hold the line” but the Town Council needs to make sure that measures are taken as 100 houses would be affected.

It was agreed that the Town Mayor and Cllr Rowan-Robinson would draft a response to be sent to all Councillors for comment.

Cllr Beavan agreed that the Town Council should send a response and advised that the new multi-agency team will also be reinforcing this. Cllr Ladd advised that himself and Cllr Beavan will encourage this though multi-agency.

Cllr Ladd offered to re-join the Leisure & Environment Committee until May 2021.

- d) *To receive the written report and recommendations of the Landlords Committee Rep LL 4.2020 meeting held on Friday 4th September 2020. Recommendation re professional fees for 1 Strickland Place.*

Cllr Windell provided an overview of the written report. The Landlords Cttee has considered the options of converting No 1 Strickland Place into 2 or 3 flats.

The cttee has been advised that the total budget required for professional fees to get the proposal to convert into 3 flats to planning application stage will be in the region of £20k. Discussion as to whether to take this course of action – all agreed that this is a suitable next step. The town clerk was asked to confirm that an open tender process would not be required, and this was confirmed. Discussion took place regarding whether the property would lend itself to 2 or 3 residential flats and it was agreed that this should be considered further. **On the proposal of Cllr Windell, seconded by Cllr Jeans it was unanimously agreed that Paul Bradley Architects be asked to undertake this work on behalf of the Town Council.**

- e) *To receive the written report and recommendations of the Sustainable Travel cttee meeting held on 8th September 2020.*

Parking presentation slides have been circulated to all and will be discussed further at the next meeting of the cttee.

Cllr Ladd advised that the large new sign for the entrance of town will cost approximately £3,500 and this will be paid for out of his SCC ward councillor budget.

Cllr Beavan advised that in relation to vehicle charging units a 75% grant is available for Plug in Suffolk installations.

Cllr Windell mentioned that as a cyclist he has noticed that more white lines/signage are required for the cycle path and that the flooding by the Stella Peskett is becoming dangerous.

6. **To receive reports from N Plan Task and Finish Group.**

Neighbourhood Plan Task and Finish Group – to receive written update from meeting of 18th September 2020 and verbal update from Chairman. To consider, and if agreed, approve budget of £2000 to facilitate consultant aid to enable completion of N Plan. Cllr Rowan-Robinson advised that comments on the revised policies have been received and this means that Reg 14 will need to be re-done to ensure that the policies are included within the emerging N Plan as otherwise Southwold will not get appropriate protection as it is not designated as a DPA. A budget of £2k will be required to enable these policies to be completed.

On the proposal of Cllr Jeans seconded by Cllr Windell it was agreed by all to provide a budget of £2000 to facilitate consultant aid to enable completion of the N Plan.

Discussion took place about the new policies. Cllr Jeans advised that the policies are forward thinking. The Policies are being adopted for other Neighbourhood Plans and ESC is supportive of the policies. Cllr Jeans advised that it is important to Southwold to have these policies in place, and that the N plan consultant advises that if ESC and the town are supportive then the inspectors will be supportive. Cllr Jeans advised that the town council had asked again for Southwold to become a DPA but that this had not been accepted and hence the need for new policies. Reference was made to Tibbys Triangle and the effect of not being a DPA when these properties were bought and sold. Cllr Ladd mentioned that this was prior to himself becoming a district councillor. The Town Mayor gave thanks to Cllr Rowan-Robinson and Cllr Jeans.

7. **To receive verbal update from Station Yard regeneration Project Board**

The Town Mayor provided a verbal report. The Town Clerk advised the meeting that an action list arising from the meeting has been provided to all Councillors.

The Town Mayor advised that he had had 2 people in mind to be an independent Chairman of the Board but neither felt impartial and neither felt they would want to do it for no fee. The Town Mayor advised that the Board were still prepared to look at this but that it looks a remote possibility. The Town Mayor advised that Andy Jarvis had chaired the meeting well last week. Cllr Windell advised members that the meeting went well. and that the Chairman had been fair and had given everyone an opportunity to speak. Cllr Ladd agreed. Uttings are obtaining updates from Chicks/EPO on the contamination surveys / proposed remediation strategies.

The Town Mayor advised that any matter relating to individual tenants would be dealt with in the confidential section.

8. **Asset of Community Value nomination of Police Station Site.** *Further to decision at previous Council meeting to allocate funding, now to consider, and if agreed, approve that Moss King Associates be appointed to scope the residual land value of the site as per the nomination.*

Cllr Jeans advised that a residual land value needs to be calculated and that the budget to establish this had been agreed at the previous meeting. Re alternative uses – it was imperative to buy the land but need to know the residual land value first.

The Town Mayor clarified to members that whether an educational learning centre or a swimming pool etc be placed on the land the residual land value would not alter much.

Cllr Jeans said that it was imperative to establish a residual land value and that a consultant would need to do it and that Moss King Associates would be appropriate. The determination of the residual land value will be commercially confidential.

Cllr Beavan asked Cllr Jeans to explain the rationale for requiring a consultant and Cllr Jeans explained that there would be a need to prepare a mini business plan and then to use a standard formula to determine residual land value.

Cllr Ladd advised that he understood the need to establish a land value but would like more information about what exactly is required within the scoping. Cllr Ladd reminded all present that any community group can put in a bid.

Cllr Ladd proposed, seconded by Cllr Windell, that on the condition that the council is provided with more information on the work required, that Moss King Associates be appointed to scope the residual land value of the site as per the nomination. Agreed - 9 in favour – 1 abstain.

9. **Financial Matters**

a) *Accounts for Payment - To receive and confirm the Accounts for Payment for September 2020 (circulated to members).*

On the proposal of Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Jordan it was RESOLVED by all to approve the Accounts for Payment for September 2020.

b) *To receive written report and recommendations of Finance and Governance Meeting held Thursday 17th September 2020 Fin REP 09.20. Recommendation re virement of £5k for Covid works.*

On the proposal of Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Goldsmith it was agreed that £5,000 of the Covid Budget be transferred to town works. All agreed.

10. **Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day** – *potential COVID arrangements for Sunday 8th November 2020 and Wednesday 11th November 2020.*

The arrangements for Remembrance Sunday are changing as government guidelines on Covid outside events change. The clerk is working with the Church/ESC and other Councils to see what can might be able to be done for Remembrance Sunday.

11. **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) *Christmas Lights – Cllr Goldsmith – no meeting held. There will be some lights but no “Switch-on” event. Cllr Ladd is currently working on a press release to go out within the next fortnight.*

b) *East Anglia One and Two – Cllr Flunder reported that there is going to be an open floor meeting in October that people can attend in person. Cllr Flunder will continue to be the representative for the Town Council although individual Councillors will be able to send in their own views. Cllr Ladd asked whether the Town Council has taken a position on the matter. Cllr Flunder confirmed that it had not taken a view - but had put in an initial letter to Scottish Renewables. Individuals are encouraged to submit their own views.*

c) *Southwold Arts Centre – Cllr Goldsmith/ Cllr Rowan Robinson. Cllr Rowan-Robinson speaking as Chair of the Trustees advised that the Arts Centre is now the focus for arts in the town and advised that a management team is now in place. Many events have been lost during the summer due to Covid, but donations/grants*

have been received from supporters to help to support the centre. The hall can seat 96 in line with Covid regulations instead of the normal 250. Cllr Rowan-Robinson advised that he would like to apply to the Town Council for a donation towards emergency lighting, a pc for the box office, and a dishwasher and the Town Mayor advised that the Arts Centre will need to put in a donation request to the Town Council in the normal way.

12. **Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) electoral review of Suffolk County Council boundaries – consultation to 23rd November 2020.**
See above. Comment was made that the ward including Southwold will be a large rural area in 2025 once the changes have been implemented
13. **Date of next Town Council Meeting:** Tuesday 27th October 2020 at 6.30pm by Zoom.
14. **Exclusion of Public and Press:** Pursuant to section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it is resolved, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during consideration of the following.
Property matters - Confidential Landlords Legal sub cttee report and recommendations from meeting of 24th September 2020.

Tenders

13 Station Road – On the condition that added value would be gained from a start and completion date being ahead of other tenderers it was agreed by all to appoint the tenderer who had submitted the second lowest tender. Subsequent to meeting it was established that this would not be the case and it was therefore subsequently agreed by all that the lowest tender would be accepted.

21 Market Place / 2 Strickland Place/ 25 Market Place – Tenders - It was agreed by all to approve the recommendations of the landlords legal sub cttee report of September 2020.

Recommendations relating to leases/rents/rent reviews

It was RESOLVED by all to approve all the recommendations of the landlords legal sub cttee report of September 2020.

To receive update on sale of 3 Strickland Place and to consider offers made. Proposed by Cllr Jeans, seconded by Cllr Windell for agent to obtain the full and final offers for the date to be decided by the agent. Agreed 9 in favour, 1 against.

Tenancy at Will – Extension of one month agreed by all – see confidential report dated 29th September 2020.

Signed

Dated.....