

SOUTHWOLD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council of Southwold, held in the Council Chamber at 7.30pm on Tuesday 25th January 2022.

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

Also present; The Town Clerk and the High Steward and 4 members of the public via Zoom.

1. **Apologies:**

To receive apologies for absence. There were no apologies for absence.

2. **Declarations of interest:**

a) *To receive any declarations of Personal Interest regarding the agenda.*

Cllr Sutton declared a Personal Interest as Treasurer of the Tennis Club.

Cllr Rowan-Robinson declared a Personal Interest as Trustee of The Arts Centre.

Cllr Flunder declared a Personal Interest as Trustee of The Arts Centre.

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.* Not applicable.

d) *Councillors to be reminded of the requirement for them to individually update their Register of Interests as appropriate.* Noted.

3. **Minutes:** (i) To approve and sign the minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on Tuesday 30th November 2021 and Tuesday 11th January 2022. **On the proposal of Cllr Jordan, seconded by Cllr Bradbury it was RESOLVED by all to approve the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 30th November 2021 and Minutes of Tuesday 11th January 2022.**

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.

ESC Ward Cllr Beavan advised that the council tax increase will be 2% in order to enable services to be retained. Second home tax loophole has been closed. Blue Flag should be back this summer by the Pier (not to be considered for North Denes - see agenda item below). There is a need to try and get some organisations involved as beach wardens in accordance with requirements for the Blue Flag.

Electric Vehicle Charger on Church Green – a new one is being installed on Friday which will allow faster charging.

Planning objections did not succeed on Whitepoint although LPA seemed to realise that the whole scenario was disappointing. ESC Ward Cllr Beavan advised that he is taking a matter to a first-tier tribunal on 1st March 2022 to try and enable access to information about property owners receiving Covid grants. This is following a FOI refusal.

Estuary/harbour repairs will be very expensive, and the harbour will need to have massive investment. EA are maintaining outfall on Potters Bridge with permission of the landowners. R and S Emergency Planning Group is meeting this week. ESC Ward Cllr Beavan advised that social housing is still an issue – 20 are being built but should require in region of 400.

Questions from Councillors

Query was raised about the investment in caravan site and whether this was within the £10m. Cllr Beavan advised that it is not in that sum, but it is being planned, and is in the forward budget.

Question was asked about the information being sought regarding the Covid Grant and what was the information required for. Cllr Beavan advised that it would be to ensure that the proprietors are a business.

ESC Ward Cllr Beavan was congratulated on the work regarding Blue Flag status.

Query was asked about the camper vans residing along North Parade and the fact that it seems to be an oddity that they are allowed to park there. Cllr Beavan was asked to chase for an explanation, and if necessary to seek to install a new byelaw or other law that could prevent the parking from occurring.

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 he had attended SCC Scrutiny. More money is required for Childrens' Services i.e., SEND, and extra resources for adults in need of care within social care, and prevention of flooding and improvement of pavements.

Potters Bridge – SCC Highways did check the road and the bridge in case integrity of both had been undermined. But bridge and road were made safe by SCC Highways have carried out repairs and the road was then opened.

For 2022-2033 SCC is proposing a 4.5 % increase from £598.2m to £625.4m. The rise includes a 2.99% inc. in council tax and increase in grants received from Government. £20m investment in drainage will be undertaken as a result of flooding becoming more widespread. Approximately a quarter of streetlights are LED now. Next phase will be in the east within the next 12 – 18 months.

Questions from Councillors

Cllr Jeans thanked SCC Cllr Ladd for assisting on the negotiation of the library lease at the new site. Building is nearly complete, but SCC have requested to have a break clause after 3 years instead of 15 years.

SCC Cllr Ladd advised that the officers do not have the power to make a decision about the break clause and that this will go to Corporate Properties Board tomorrow

for decision. But SCC has stated that they do that they wish to keep a library in Southwold.

- c) 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*).

Query was raised from a resident in advance of the meeting asking about the notes from project board meetings and about the operator. The Mayor advised that the meeting summary notes will go on web tomorrow and that they include an update regarding the provision of an operator.

5. To receive reports from Committees.

- a) *Planning and Development Committee - To receive the written report of the meetings of the Planning and Development Committee held on 6th December 2021 and 18th January 2022. No recommendations.*

To receive a verbal update from Planning and Development Committee on any further planning/development matters.

No update.

- b) *Leisure and Environment Cttee – To receive the written report and recommendations of the meeting of the L and E Committee meeting held on 9th December 2021. No recommendations.*

Cllr Rowan-Robinson advised that one of the items on the report includes the future management of the marshes (which is in the confidential section). There will need to be a change to arrangements as the present funding scheme ends and this will have implications for the future.

Re the RPA Scheme the footpaths/boards etc work is ongoing - the text is being completed with those who have the information.

There will continue to be work to improve drainage of marshes and retention of water in the Splash.

A Blue Flag status will settle the issue of “dirty beach” remarks that were in the media.

Skatepark – Klondyke – informal meeting held yesterday with ESC officers and community members to ensure that community interest in the scheme was being gathered so that there is data to support the request for a newly designed facility. A request for funding will be sent to the Community Partnership Team.

Platinum Jubilee community zoom – to receive update from meeting as attached. Next Jubilee community zoom meeting 4th February 2022.

Community organisations attended the zoom and ideas were gathered. In 1953 Coronation the town had great celebrations which made it onto front page of National press. Would hope that some events can be held this year.

Funding to assist event – the Arts Centre are facilitating a bid from the Art Centre/ community groups to the Arts Council for £10k and now wait response. Michael Ladd has offered £1k towards the events and STC has allocated funds too. Next zoom meeting will progress the arrangements.

Cllr Rowan-Robinson was advised that the Museum would like to get involved. A Flotilla will be coming up from Harwich and it was suggested that this be followed up. Museum to be invited to attend next zoom meeting on 4th February.

- c) *Landlords Cttee – To receive the written report of the meeting held on 9th December 2021. No recommendations.*

To receive verbal update from meeting held on 25th January 2022.

Verbal update from the meeting earlier today was provided by Cllr Jordan.

Maintenance work update given. 7 Hurren Terrace additional plastering has been suggested which will cost in region of £10k This will finish the property off and avoid the need for further works in a few years' time. Discussion took place regarding the proposal. It was noted that the properties have not been repaired for many years. And that the contractors are making good progress and the cttee is very pleased it is being done so quickly.

Cllr Ladd asked if a summary of cost of repairs compared to the rent lost during the vacant period could be provided.

On the proposal of Cllr Jordan, seconded by Cllr Flunder it was agreed with 11 in support and 1 against to approve the extra plastering works at 7 Hurren Terrace at a cost of £10k.

- d) *Sustainable Travel cttee– no meeting has been held as the group are awaiting advice from ESC re Godyll Road and the on-street parking study/consultation and are awaiting a quote from SCC for the cost of the feasibility study for the town.*

6. **To receive reports from working groups:**

a) **N Plan Task and Finish Group.** (*N Plan = as per Town Council priorities 2019 – 2022 c) encourage full time residency within the Town d) Preserve and enhance the natural and built environment*).

To note N Plan Referendum will be held on Thursday 3rd February 2022.

It was noted that if we do not have a Southwold Neighbourhood Plan then the planning regulations will revert to those of the Local Plan which in turn could mean that Police Station could, in 5 years, become second home/holiday lets.

7. **Town Mayor updates including:**

- Arbor Day – 1st December 2021 – excellent event. Thanks were extended to the school for assisting.
- Planted a tree with Dr Hopkins to support his Charity.
- Following the Arbor Day tree planting packets of seeds were presented to the school for all of the children who also received their sticky buns despite the fact that this could not be done in the normal manner due to Covid.
- Cllr Windell had been asked to appear on ITV to discuss the second home tax.

8. **To receive progress report from Station Yard Regeneration Project Board** (*Project = as per Town Council priorities 2019 – 2022 b) Diversify and enhance the local economy*).

Station Road Project Board report was received by all. A query was raised regarding the potential LEP topping up funding and whether this affects the existing grant.

The meeting was advised that the existing funding is still in place and that the LEP application was for top up funding.

Report noted by all.

9. **Financial Matters**

a) *Accounts for Payment* - To receive and confirm the Accounts for Payment for January 2022 (*circulated to members*).

On the proposal of Cllr Temple, seconded by Cllr Betts it was agreed by all to confirm the Accounts for Payment for January 2022. It was noted that the council tax for the garage should be cancelled.

b) *To receive report and recommendations of Finance and Governance Meeting Rep 12.21 held on 13th December 2021, and REP 1.22 held on 19th January 2022. Recommendations in relation to; CIL, Budget 2022 -2023 Donations and Community Support Services.*

Cllr Betts presented reports and recommendations from meetings of 13th December 2021 and 19th January 2022.

Recommendations:

1) On the proposal of Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Flunder it is proposed that STC sets aside a maximum of £5k of its present CIL funding to the provision of such signage, on the basis that this expenditure will be ratified once costs have been confirmed, and other stakeholders/interested parties have confirmed their ‘in principle’ approval of a sum to contribute to the costs..

Discussion - some concerns were raised about the potential flooding signage at Potters Bridge in regard to the additional value that will be added. It was suggested that residents in town are concerned about signage in town and about parking and therefore why would Council prioritise the allocation of money to an initiative which is outside town which is not a priority to residents.

On the proposal of Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Flunder IT WAS AGREED with 10 in favour and 1 refusal to set aside a maximum of £5k of its present CIL funding to the provision of such signage, on the basis that this expenditure will be ratified once costs have been confirmed, and other stakeholders/interested parties have confirmed their ‘in principle’ approval of a sum to contribute to the costs..

2) On the proposal of Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Ladd it was proposed that Council write to the police asking for a report/update on local issues to be provided to a future Council meeting – including a request for the police to provide crime prevention information to the community. Council to also ask whether additional support will be provided locally through the introduction of the extra 100 police in Suffolk, and whether the Blue Light collaboration is happening locally.

Discussion - Cllr Beavan advised that he has been in touch with PCSO Simon Green for some community clinics which could include safety aspects

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- 3) **On the proposal of Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Goldsmith, Council to request that the Police and Crime Commissioner comes along to speak at the Annual Parish Meeting together with the new Halesworth Inspector.**

On the proposal of Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Goldsmith, it was AGREED BY ALL that Council request that the Police and Crime Commissioner comes along to speak at the Annual Parish Meeting together with the new Halesworth Inspector.

- 4) **On the proposal of Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Jordan It is recommended that an ‘in principle’ agreement be provided for a donation of £5000 for a solar roof for the tennis clubhouse. Such a system would meet the Town Council climate emergency and environmental policies.**

Discussion - The Club has raised approximately £100k already and this is a good initiative to receive the Town Council support. SCC Cllr Ladd has offered some of his SCC funding. The Club is hoping to raise £200k.

It was mentioned that solar panels reflect the Council values. The allocation is to be “in principle” as it is in next year’s budget and the building would need to be built first before solar panel was required.

Discussion about having a specific policy for such large projects – it was suggested that it would be worth reviewing the donations policy at the next Finance Committee meeting. There is a need to keep in mind other requests as they come in, in view of the budget implications.

On the proposal of Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Jordan It is recommended that an ‘in principle’ agreement be provided for a donation of £5000 for a solar roof for the tennis clubhouse. Such a system would meet the Town Council climate emergency and environmental policies. AGREED WITH 10 in favour and 1 abstain.

- 5) **It was proposed by Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Ladd that an ‘in principle’ agreement for a donation of £2500 be provided for the fire safety improvements required at the Arts Centre.**

Discussion – Noted that this is for fire safety and therefore it is needed.

Cllr Rowan-Robinson advised that the Arts Centre inspection made clear that the system needs improving but lockdown caused financial issues, but grants have assisted including support by the Town Council and many others. This is an important need.

Cllrs Rowan-Robinson, and Flunder did not vote.

It was RESOLVED to approve, with 9 in favour, 1 abstain, that an ‘in principle’ agreement for a donation of £2500 be provided for the fire safety improvements required at the Arts Centre.

10. **Annual Town Meeting – 27th April 2022 – to consider guest speaker.** See above – it was agreed by all that the police would be invited to be the guest speaker at the event.

11. **Climate initiatives**

To receive update on initiatives including next forum date - 26th March 2022. Cllr Windell is planning the guest speakers for the next initiative. Ideas welcomed.

12. **To consider request** *for applying for Blue Flag for Denes beach area. ESC Cllr Beavan advised that there has been confusion and that this is not a suggestion that is being made. It was noted that ESC usually applies every year for the Blue Flag Scheme – but that there is a cost which is in region of £300.*

13. **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) *East Anglia One and Two – Cllr Flunder. See written report circulated. It was noted that there is still time to influence final decision. (Note final changes to the written report).*
- b) *Southwold to Walberswick Flood and Coast Board – Cllr Bradbury. Written report received and noted.*

14. **Southwold Sewer Initiative** – See written report from Cllr Flunder.

It was noted that this is another aspect of the work being carried out by Cllr Rowan-Robinson and Cllr Beavan and was a very significant project for Anglian Water to take on board.

Cllr Ladd advised that he was pleased this has been completed. Anglian Water got special funding from the Government to do work in 2 pilot towns and Southwold was put forward in view of the town issues that had been regularly reported. AW will be keen to keep going forward to ensure that it doesn't happen again, and they are liaising with SCC Highways about continuing maintenance works.

Discussion about the Report –

It was suggested that this go on website/newsletter/media and that Town Manager be asked to talk to hospitality outlets about the findings. It was noted that Anglian Water should be included in any acknowledgement.

Cllr Ladd advised that the marketing person at Anglian Water should be contacted too and that we ought to work with them about informing and educating public.

Cllr Rowan-Robinson advised that all local councils have been badgering Anglian Water for 10 years about the problems locally and that this is a great achievement for them to have listened and taken the issues on board.

15. **Date of next Town Council Meeting:** Tuesday 22nd February 2022 at 7.30pm.

16. **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.*

Leisure and Environment – see conf. report re marshes lease.

It was RESOLVED BY ALL that Southwold Town Council provides an ‘in principle agreement’ for the Town marshes and Buss Creek marshes to be leased to Suffolk Wildlife Trust for a min. of 25 years. This ‘in principle agreement’ to form the basis for the management of the marshes in the funding application to the Agri Environmental Funding Scheme.