

## SOUTHWOLD TOWN COUNCIL

### **Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council of Southwold, held at the Stella Peskett Millennium Hall at 6pm on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021.**

PRESENT:	Councillor	J Windell – Town Mayor
	“	D Beavan
	“	Miss A Betts
	“	I Bradbury
	“	S Flunder
	“	Mrs P Goldsmith
	“	Mrs J Jordan
	“	M Ladd
	“	M Rowan-Robinson
	“	J Sutton
	“	R Temple (arrived at 7pm)

Also present; 18 members of the public, the High Steward and the Town Clerk.

1. **Apologies:**

To receive apologies for absence. Apologies were received from Cllr Jeans.

2. **Declarations of interest:**

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

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.* Noted.

3. **Minutes:** *To approve and sign the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021.* Cllr Rowan-Robinson asked for one correction – page 6 insert 917 before the word “responses”.

**On the proposal of Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Jordan the Minutes were agreed by all with this one amendment.**

4. **Public Forum**

a) *To receive a report from East Suffolk Ward Councillor D Beavan.*

ESC Ward Cllr Beavan advised that the regular round robin newsletter had already been circulated.

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

There were no questions from Councillors.

A member of the public advised that there were many posts on Nextdoor about residential parking of which few seemed based on fact. Ward Cllr Beavan was asked when the residential parking proposals would come forward from ESC and when would such proposals be implemented. Ward Cllr Beavan advised that the

consultation should be taking place July/August 2021. The consultation is being run by ESC.

b) *To receive report from SCC Cllr M Ladd including update on Bailey Bridge.*

SCC Cllr Ladd updated members on the closure of the Bailey Bridge. The compound is now on site and the bridge will be closed on Friday for up to 12 weeks. There is a local fund of £20,000 available from SCC for people with real difficulties who need to get across the river. SCC will be forwarding funds to the Town Council to administer on their behalf, with monies being used to reimburse the ferry operator /taxi company etc – not individuals.

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

There were no questions from Councillors or electors.

c) *To receive comments on matters on the agenda (each will be allowed a maximum of 3 minutes).*

*(10 minutes will be allocated overall for this section- subject to Town Mayor discretion).*

Various questions had been submitted by members of the public prior to the Town Council meeting – principally on aspects of the Station Road Redevelopment Project. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor read the questions to those present together with the respective responses. Members were advised that a ‘frequently asked questions’ document was available on the website and that this would be updated with the questions/ responses.

One of the questions raised related to a ‘secret meeting’ between some members of the Southwold & Reydon Society and a few of the councillors. Cllr Sutton explained that he had arranged the meeting between the individuals in an attempt to improve dialogue between the individuals / organisations. A member of the public advised that this meeting could not be referred to as “a secret meeting”, as they themselves had been aware that it was taking place.

*Questions from public*

A member of the public queried the ‘design and build’ choice for the project and spoke about the sub structure/ Victorian slab and queried the lack of a recent soil investigation.

The Town Mayor advised that the advice received by the Town Council is that the tanks do need to be removed.

A member of the public queried whether members had sufficient information to enable them to make a decision about tenders, as detailed information did not appear to be available to the public. The Town Clerk explained the commercial confidentiality aspects of the tender process and the respective aspects of Parts 1 and II of the agenda.

*Questions were taken from fellow Councillors*

Included financial viability, budget, clarification of terminology of flexible workspace, clarification over the number of tanks.

A member advised those present of a recent article in The Times about demolition of buildings.

In response to a query about whether the CCF would support expenditure in relation to a refurbishment project, the Town Mayor advised that the grant provided is for a new capital build.

Re query about the financial viability of the project – The Town Mayor advised that the project managers are aware of the overall budget. Re query about tanks – The Town Mayor explained the advice received from the Environmental Officer.

Re query about definition of terminology of flexible workspace and what this could mean in practical terms. Cllr Ladd explained that the approved planning application refers to a mixed-use site – and that the project could therefore include the use of retail/ offices / flexible workspaces – with flexibility relating to the ability to move walls etc. Further discussion regarding the KPIs relating to the grant provision and clarification was provided that these relate to the creation of employment. Mention was made that the properties sold to provide funds towards this capital project had been providing rent to the Town Council of £20,000 p.a. and therefore any income generated at the Station Road site over and above this figure could be regarded as increased capital income. Further discussion regarding the terms of the grant and consideration of when any “tweaks” were significantly important enough to trigger a new business plan being required by the CCF.

Ward Cllr Beavan advised that he had written to the CCF and had received a response relating to potential changes that could be made to the original criteria. Cllr Beavan advised that the CCF had not stated that a refurb could not be considered.

The Deputy Mayor advised that the project has evolved over time and is still evolving – and that there is a specific budget to enable it to get to completion. Cllr Flunder advised that there is work to be done to enable the project to be delivered within the budget and that potential operators will need a 500 sq. ft min footprint for the project to be viable for them.

*Public session closed at 6.54pm*

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

The Town Mayor introduced this Agenda item and advised that he had spoken with the existing Town Council tenants in this area to ensure they were aware of the progress being made with the project.

The Town Mayor requested a recorded vote on the decisions to be made under this Agenda item.

And.

(i) *To approve the appointment of the demolition and site clearance team.*

Re demolition team appointment - Cllr Beavan suggested that as at present there is no design within budget, lack of an appropriate business plan and construction costs seeming to be over budget, it would seem appropriate to retain some of the existing structure. Cllr Beavan asked that consideration be given to any of the structure being used in the new build as there will be a need to consider this on a cost basis. Cllr Beavan suggested that as there is no sign yet of contamination from the reports that have been received, and that as only Chicks are saying that there is contamination at the site, it would be useful to find out what is actually underneath the slabs as there would be the potential to cause unnecessary contamination by carrying out the demolition. It was

suggested that such a survey could be carried out within the time scheduled before demolition contractors are ready to start on the site, with contamination also being checked.

The Town Mayor advised the meeting of the recent response from the ESC economic development officer in relation to the Project. CCF reiterated that ESC is the accountable body.

*Cllr Temple arrived 7pm.*

Cllr Rowan-Robinson proposed that the demolition team be appointed as per the recommendation received. Cllr Rowan-Robinson advised members that demolition is required before the rebuild can commence, and that regardless of whether Council eventually proceeds with an Enterprise Hub within the budget available, the site would still need to be decontaminated. This would still need to occur even if any alternatives such as sale need to be considered at a future date.

Proposal seconded by Cllr Goldsmith.

Cllr Ladd advised that he would agree with the proposal.

Cllr Ladd suggested that by requesting a survey as suggested by Cllr Beavan, with regards to the existing structure, this would prevent queries being raised in the future. Cllr Ladd advised that he would not wish for the project to be delayed and would need to be reassured that any reuse of materials could be for a minimum of 50 years and that this can be done within existing project timescales. Cllr Flunder suggested that the structural engineer within the design team could be asked to carry out such a check within the project timeframe scheduled before demolition, and that this could consider the ground slabs potentially being used.

The discussion then reverted to the consideration of the proposal as per the agenda.

**On the proposal of Cllr Rowan-Robinson, seconded by Cllr Goldsmith it was agreed with 7 in favour (Councillors Betts, Bradbury, Goldsmith, Jordan, Ladd, Rowan-Robinson, Windell) and 4 against (Councillors Beavan, Flunder, Temple, Sutton) to approve the appointment of the demolition and site clearance team as per the recommendation from RUA as to the appointment of the recommended preferred bidder.**

*Cllr Temple left the meeting at 7.15pm*

*(ii) To approve the appointment of the design team – including Architectural and Principal Designer, QS/Employers Agent, Structural and Civil Engineering, Mechanical and Electrical Engineering.*

**On the proposal of Cllr Rowan-Robinson, seconded by Cllr Betts it was Unanimously Agreed to approve the appointment of the design team including Architectural and Principal Designer, QS/Employers Agent, Structural and Civil Engineering, Mechanical and Electrical Engineering as per the recommendations provided.**

**In addition, on the proposal of Cllr Goldsmith, seconded by Cllr Beavan it was agreed with 8 in favour (Cllrs Beavan, Betts, Flunder, Goldsmith, Jordan, Ladd, Sutton, Windell) and 2 abstentions (Cllrs Bradbury and Rowan-Robinson) to**

**request that the structural engineer, engaged within the design team, carry out an independent survey, at a cost of up to £5,000, to establish whether any of the structure and base can be reused as part of the build. (Cllr Bradbury explained that he abstained on this matter as he felt that such a request would not be able to be carried out within the CCF timescales).**

*(iii) To approve the appointment of the communications team. Discussion took place as to why the communications team was required.*

Cllr Flunder questioned the need for a separate communication team. The Town Mayor advised that it is extremely time consuming to respond to the number of public comments and that it would be appropriate now to have an independent person/team carrying out this role. Cllr Ladd advised that as a member of the communications working group consideration had been given to public complaints received about the need for better communications in relation to the project, and that this would therefore involve the need to engage additional resources/professionals.

**On the proposal of Cllr Goldsmith, seconded by Cllr Ladd it was agreed with 7 in favour (Cllrs Betts, Bradbury, Goldsmith, Jordan, Ladd, Rowan-Robinson, Windell) and 3 against (Cllrs Flunder, Beavan and Sutton) to approve the appointment of the communications team as per the supporting paper.**

**6. To receive reports from Committees:**

a) *To receive the report of the meeting of the Planning and Development Committee meeting held on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021. No recommendations. Minutes of Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021 noted.*

Cllr Bradbury advised that he withdraw from the Planning & Development Committee and would suggest that Cllr Sutton be selected in his place. Agreed by all.

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. Nil.*

c) *To receive the report of the meeting of the Leisure and Environment Committee meeting held on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021 including consideration of clearance of Ferry Road Garden. Recommendations in relation to; RPA grant.*

**On the proposal of Cllr Rowan-Robinson, seconded by Cllr Goldsmith it was unanimously agreed to accept the RPA Grant of £42,230.**

Cllr Goldsmith spoke about the Ferry Road Garden advising that all stakeholders appear to be very enthusiastic about the project and that a tree has been requested by a member of the public which the group have been keen to accept. Cllr Goldsmith explained to members that the request is to have an exception to the policy on using weed killers as there is a need to get the site clear as soon as possible. 2 or 3 applications would be required, and members would be reassured that this would not go into the watercourse. Cllr Goldsmith explained that to dig out by hand would add over £1,000 to the costs of the project and that the results would not be as effective and would in turn increase maintenance cost. The spray being suggested is not residual and it is as eco friendly as possible. Cllr Beavan advised that he would not be concerned with a limited use of spray for both this site and for the hemlock and would suggest 'Roundup' be used. Cllr Bradbury advised that he would wish to understand the effect of such spraying on tree stems and on wildlife. Cllr Flunder advised that

spray had previously been used on the Gardner Road triangle which is now looking lovely. Cllr Rowan-Robinson explained that in relation to hemlock, a professional company has been contacted and they may need to spray in various patches of the marshes and common to destroy the hemlock. Cllr Windell advised that hemlock is poisonous, and he could therefore support the spraying of this. However, he would find it difficult to support the use of spraying for the Ferry Road garden as the Council has been adamant about the use of weed killers within the town. Cllr Goldsmith advised that she had received assurance that the spray would be safe for animals and butterflies and would not affect woody stems. Cllr Jordan advised that she support the request in view of the time element required on this project. A member of the public advised that the best spray to use is a non-glyphosate spray is “Neudorff” which is organic, non-intrusive and animal friendly and would suggest that this be used at this site. **On the proposal of Cllr Goldsmith, seconded by Cllr Jordan it was agreed with 7 in favour, 2 against and 1 abstain to support 2 or 3 light applications of ‘Neudorff’ on the Ferry Road garden site.**

d) *To receive the report of the Landlords Committee meeting held on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021. Recommendations in relation to 11 Station Road.* Cllr Jordan as new Chair of Landlords Committee provided the report. **On the proposal of Cllr Jordan, seconded by Cllr Sutton it was unanimously agreed to proceed with bath/tiles for 11 Station Road – cost £1840 plus vat.**

7. **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 receive update on the Reg 16 Consultation.* Cllr Rowan-Robinson advised that the consultation was open until 9<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

b) **Sustainable Transport cttee** – *to receive verbal update.* Cllr Bradbury provided a verbal report. Responses are awaited from the Godell Road legal order. ESC will be consulting about residents permit parking during July and August.

8. **Financial Matters**

a) *Accounts for Payment - To receive and confirm the Accounts for Payment for June 2021 (circulated to members).* **On the proposal of Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Goldsmith it was agreed by all to confirm the Accounts for Payment for June 2021.**

b) *To receive report and recommendations of Finance and Governance Meeting Rep 06.21 held on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021.*

*Recommendations in relation to; fidelity insurance, CCLA investment, Property governance, RPA grant, donations and virements.*

***Recommendations from Finance cttee.***

Recommendation that Fidelity Insurance remains at the present level of £2m and that council seek to reduce ‘risk’ further by also looking at transferring additional funds into CCLA.

Recommendation that an additional transfer of £500k would be recommended from the bank balances into the CCLA.

Recommendation that the Town Council engage Price Bailey at a cost of £6500 to provide an initial options appraisal for a new property governance structure that would assist with the requirements of; safeguarding continual ownership, ability to undertake purchases and sales whilst safeguarding the funds for capital use and providing appropriate tax solutions.

Rural Payments Agency Grant - refer also to L and E minutes- that the grant should be accepted prior to the deadline as being recommended by L and E cttee.

Donation request from Southgen for £2000. recommend approving the request subject to Southgen advising details of an asset that needs to be purchased for this sum – with a preferred option being to assist with something for the library part of the building.

Donation request from Sole Bay Arts CIO for £5000 for audio equipment. recommend approving the request. Contact will be made to see if the system would be portable and be able to be used by members of the community in other buildings.

Donation's budget.

With the recommendations above – the donations budget for 2021.22 has been exceeded. Recommend that a virement of £10k takes place from the PCSO funding to the donations budget so that there is a budget for the remainder of the year.

**On the proposal of Cllr Flunder, seconded by Cllr Betts it was unanimously agreed to approve the recommendations above en bloc.**

c) *Design review works - To ratify fee for design review work presently being undertaken.* See supporting paper. Comment was made that as a matter of process this should have been ratified previously, but in view of the urgency of this work requiring commencement, there had been a need for the works to start. **On the proposal of Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Ladd it was resolved by all to approve the fee for the design review work presently being undertaken at Station Yard Redevelopment Programme at a cost of £9350.75 plus vat.**

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) *East Anglia One and Two/ Sizewell* – Cllr Flunder provided a verbal report and advised that the DCO is coming to an end. From discussions it would appear that the offshore site will be accepted but there is hope that onshore will be rejected. The Sizewell hearing is about to start, and anyone can put in comments on this. Thanks were extended to Cllr Flunder for his work in this respect.

b) *Allotment Association* – Cllr Bradbury advised that the Allotment Association met at an outside venue.

10. **To receive update on membership of Harbour Management Committee.** See supporting papers for full details.

11. **Southwold and Reydon Emergency Plan** – volunteers to work with Reydon PC in updating this plan.

Volunteers to advise the Town Hall. Mr Martin Nicholls has offered to help. Cllr Ladd advised that he had tried to get this group reformed some 2 years ago but the group will now link with the work of the Southwold & Reydon Flood Group and other such organisations.

12. **Date of next Town Council Meeting:** Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021 TBC.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8pm.

**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.

Nil.

Signed .....

Dated.....