

SOUTHWOLD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council of Southwold, held in the Council Chamber at 6pm on Tuesday 27th July 2021.

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

Also present; 3 members of the public, and the Town Clerk. 7 people watched the meeting via Zoom.

Welcomes from the Town Mayor.

The Town Mayor advised of the protocol for members of the public who are attending in person.

1. **Apologies:**
To receive apologies for absence. Apologies were received from Cllr Beavan, Cllr Ladd and the High Steward.
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.* Not applicable.
 - 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 29th June 2021. On the proposal of Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Bradbury it was RESOLVED by all to approve the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 29th June 2021.*
4. **Public Forum**
 - a) *To receive a report from East Suffolk Ward Councillor D Beavan.*
ESC Cllr Beavan will then take questions from Councillors and electors.
Not applicable.
 - b) *To receive report from Suffolk County Councillor M Ladd including update on Bailey Bridge.*
SCC Cllr Ladd will then take questions from Councillors and electors.

Not applicable.

Cllr Bradbury advised that re Bailey Bridge, the works are going well. Funds have been received from SCC to assist people in need.

- 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*).

A member of the public advised that she would have asked Cllr Beavan about the press reports of Southwold Denes being classified as a dirty beach – as the water readings seem to indicate that raw sewerage is going into the sea. Question was raised as to how the town could get the blue flag back.

Cllr Windell advised that there are 2 issues a) Sewage and b) the River Blyth. Could ESC tell us of the problems/potential solutions. Ask ESC what research they can do.

Cllr Rowan-Robinson advised that the recent press coverage says we are one of the dirtiest, but in 2019 the same report declared that the quality was “satisfactory” at the denes so therefore is not one of the worst in the country. Cllr Rowan-Robinson advised that the Blue Flag was lost due to a spike in one of the readings. However, the awards for the Blue Flag are taken over a 3/4 year average so it could be hoped that we will get it back in 2/3 years.

Cllr Flunder advised that he was involved with Cllr Rowan-Robinson with the Environment Agency and Anglian Water re the sewage smells/discharge from the Sewage works - which has now improved the systems it uses. This has also been improved with disinfectant.

There have also been recent improvements to sewage going into River Blyth. Pier and Denes beaches were being tested regularly. Level of results recently have been very good and consistent. Hopefully this has improved the situation.

Cllr Flunder suggested that the reports have been exaggerated and that Southwold is “satisfactory” not “red”.

It was suggested that a discussion with ESC is required.

A member of the public asked whether an article/answer could be sent to EDP in response to their initial report.

The Town Clerk to talk to ESC and the Environment Agency about doing a factual report back to the EDP.

5. To receive reports from Committees:

- a) *To receive the report of the meeting of the Planning and Development Committee meeting held on 6th and 20th July 2021. No recommendations. Minutes of the meetings of 6th and 20th July 2021 were 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.*

i) There is an enforcement problem at White Point - LPA do not seem to be doing their job on this. STC to write to the LPA to see what is going on.

ii) Training from Suffolk Preservation Society – they are now doing work with SALC and SPS will discuss with SALC how to deliver this training.

iii) Gun Hill Café has applied for a liquor licence. The Town Clerk will keep STC updated on the situation and residents/public etc can then respond when the consultation takes place.

- c) *To receive the report of the Landlords Committee meeting held on 7th July 2021. Recommendations in relation to 1 Strickland Place, Water Tower and Putting Green.*
1 Strickland Place – Committee felt that the Town Council should retain the asset and that the most suitable way forward would be to convert it into 2 flats.

Proposal by Cllr Jordan seconded by Cllr Jeans

1 Strickland Place - that Council secure the appointment of an architect to complete the designs and submit a planning application to the LPA on the basis of the floor plans provided within the feasibility study provided by NPS.

Discussion took place about the costs as detailed in the Landlords Cttee report. The rate of return would be in the region of 2.5%.

It was RESOLVED with a majority of 9 in favour and 1 abstain that council secure the appointment of an architect to complete the designs and submit a planning application to the LPA on the basis of the floor plans provided within the feasibility study provided by NPS.

Water Tower -

Proposal by Cllr Jordan seconded by Cllr Temple

Interest has already been shown in renting the 2 floors within the Water Tower. It is recommended that these 2 floors (first and second floors) be advertised as available to rent as individual offices as soon as the dilapidations have been resolved.

It was unanimously agreed to Approve the proposal.

Putting Green Fencing - It is recommended that Council approve a contribution of £2080 towards the fencing at the Putting Green.

On the proposal of Cllr Jeans, seconded by Cllr Jordan it was unanimously agreed to APPROVE the recommendation.

- d) *Sustainable Transport cttee – to receive report from meeting held on 12th July 2021.*

Cllr Bradbury provided the Committee report.

Ringo pilot will start mid – late September. East Street parking – 3 spaces in the middle of the 3 existing parking bays will be opened up.

Cllr Jeans explained that with regards to workers in the town, work is taking place with the Millennium car park as there is a seasonal problem with shift workers and seasonal workers who find car parks/side streets full by the time that they get into town. Cllr Jeans referred to the Town Manager data collected from employers. Cllr Jeans suggested that the Council could write to the Millennium Foundation to put the request forward for the car park to be made available for the summer for such workers.

Cllr Flunder advised that as a Trustee of the Millennium Foundation he would have a Conflict of interest but felt sure that the Trustees will give due regard to such a matter.

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*).

Regulation 16 consultation finished July 9th. ESC Inspector appointment going ahead. The Town Clerk was asked to enquire where STC is in the queue for the Examination, and what weight the N Plan policies now have.

7. **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 – DCO process finished. Further investigation on coast is going ahead. Will go to the Secretary of State in the next 3 months. A lot of objections to various matters.

Sizewell C – DCO has started. Major queries still to be considered including environmental, and involvement from China.

b) *Southwold and Walberswick Flood and Coast Board* –

Cllr Flunder advised that he was on the Board and that the cost of any improvement would be high. Effect of coastal erosion/coastline etc. has major costs.

Cllr Flunder advised that his position was as a representative for Southwold & Reydon Society.

The Town Clerk advised members that the Deputy Mayor or Mayor are the representatives for the Town Council.

Cllr Rowan-Robinson advised that the Environment Agency are doing flood defence works on the River Blyth starting in September. These are fairly minor, but it is good that the Environment Agency is undertaking this.

The Town Clerk/Cllr Flunder to request a schedule of meetings for the Board.

8. **To receive update on the design review in relation to the Station Yard Regeneration Project** (*Project = as per Town Council priorities 2019 – 2022 b) Diversify and enhance the local economy*).

Cllr Jeans provided an update - all Councillors had been provided with a preferred design option.

There were 3 options originally – these then expanded to 8 options. There were a number of criteria that had to be approved, prior to any consideration of any of the 8 designs. Only 2 were conceivably viable. A 9th proposal had to be established and this now incorporates a residential flat above the shop which will also satisfy CCF. This will not need full planning. It will create sufficient space. A key alternative for the design is that the rear building will be 1 floor only.

Cllr Flunder advised members that the process has been very good. Cllr Flunder advised that he was not as optimistic about viability of cost as others, as inflation and construction costs will need to be controlled. However, the design is clearer – and has to have a flat in there.

A brief to the operators and procurement is the next priority to see if any of them will take it on. Cllr Flunder advised that a brief should be ready in a few weeks to take this

forward but that there is a need to understand more detail of the fitting costs etc. Extra funds would assist the project. Work on existing structural survey is still in hand. Cllr Jeans advised that it would seem that the project might need more money and that the Government has several funding pots. Cllr Jeans advised that the revised design would provide a building that is more akin to what was originally envisaged.

Cllr Bradbury advised that 3 local operators have been giving advice/support on the design aspects free of charge. The Council will go to open market when procuring an operator. Cllr Sutton suggested that the operator must be able to provide a benefit for Southwold and that Council would need to control that element - would suggest no operator.

Cllr Rowan-Robinson advised that he was not on Project Board but was pleased that a design has been found that is more in keeping with the original and that a residential flat is back in the scheme.

9. **Southwold Police Station Site** – letter attached dated 9th July 2021 from Suffolk Constabulary. Cllr Jeans suggested that the letter seems to suggest that the Police & Crime Commissioner feels that interest of Hastoe will be beneficial. Police Authority are talking to the LPA and this ought to be regarded as a good sign. Under Neighbourhood Plan the site would need to create permanently affordable homes.

10. **Southwold Harbour Management cttee** – update from meeting held at Stella Peskett Hall 8th July 2021 – see presentation attached.

Cllr Bradbury advised that he was made aware of the meeting at 24 hours' notice before the meeting. At the meeting the ESC lawyer said that ESC was in agreement that the caravan and camp site could not be accounted for separately. Cllr Bradbury suggested therefore that the muddle continues.

Cllr Flunder confirmed that the camping field is trying to be registered. The Town Clerk advised that a statutory declaration would need to be signed by Council as to the evidence it has for ownership and that to date there is no evidence after 1996. Members were asked to supply any other information that they might have in order to strengthen the case.

To appoint a Town Council representative to the Stakeholder Group. Discussion as to who might wish to be the volunteer - Town Mayor? Or Cllr Temple as someone with knowledge on the harbour. Cllr Temple advised that he would not be able to attend due to personal issues. Cllr Goldsmith asked whether Cllr Beavan would be a stakeholder for ESC or any of the other organisations?

After further discussion it was RESOLVED with 9 in favour and 1 against that the Mayor ought to attend the first meeting and then report back to see if it is worth going to.

To note slide 9 of presentation, para 2, referencing Caravan site income.

Discussed above. Cllr Goldsmith queried the business tenancies listed and asked why Sole Bay Fish was not listed. It was suggested that ESC be asked to explain this omission.

11. **Financial Matters**

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

b) *To receive report and recommendations of Finance and Governance Meeting Rep 07.21 held on Monday 19th July 2021.*

Recommendations in relation to; credit card terminals, and employee's holiday.

Accepting credit card payments - It is recommended that the Town Council purchase 2 handheld devices to enable credit card transactions to be accepted – card machines to be purchased within a budget of £200.

On the Proposal of Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Bradbury it was unanimously agreed to Approve this recommendation.

Admin asst holiday 2020.2021 - It is recommended that as a one off for 2020.2021 – payment be made for the 3 holiday days accrued over and above the statutory min in lieu of accumulating them as further holiday entitlement. On the proposal of Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Jordan it was unanimously agreed to approve this recommendation.

12. **Civic Sunday** – *to note that Civic Sunday will be held alongside the Harvest Festival celebrations at St Edmunds Church on Sunday 12th September 2021. Met with Rev Pitcher regarding this event which will not be a grand civic service but will be a community event. STC will provide the wine and soft drinks.*

Interruption by member of the public - a member of the public asked if they could ask about structural survey and about public questions being listed – the member of public was advised that all public comments had been taken under agenda item 4 above.

13. **Date of next Town Council Meeting:** Tuesday 31st August 2021.

14. **It was RESOLVED RE 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.*

To receive confidential Finance Cttee report – dated 19th July 2021 relating to tenant rent arrears.

Cllr Bradbury left the meeting and gave apologies for the next part of the agenda.

Members received the confidential Finance Cttee report dated 19th July 2021 relating to tenant rent arrears and noted the comments/actions.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.40pm.

Signed

Dated.....