

SOUTHWOLD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council of Southwold, held in the Council Chamber at 7.30pm on Tuesday 31st January 2023.

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

Also present, The Town Clerk, the High Steward and 1 member of the public

1. **Apologies:**

To note/approve apologies for absence. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Jeans, Cllr Rowan-Robinson and Cllr Temple which were noted. Agreed by all to approve these absences.

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:** (i) To approve and sign the minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on Tuesday 10th January 2023.

On the proposal of Cllr Jordan, seconded by Cllr Goldsmith it was RESOLVED by all to approve the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 10th January 2023. All agreed.

4. **Public Participation**

a) *To receive a report from East Suffolk Ward Councillor D Beavan including updates on; Rural Cost of Living/Ease the Squeeze.*

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

ESC Cllr Beavan spoke about the recent Rural Cost of Living Workshop which he had attended. Rural transport is problematic and at present not much has been done on this. With regards to insulation grant initiatives, it transpires that no one is applicable for the grant if they have got gas, which most have. There is legislation for landlords on heating efficiencies and EPC ratings, and to date, ESC have only carried out a few improvements and this needs to be sorted out.

ESC Cllr Beavan advised that he will resubmit a motion regarding the second homes premium requesting it to be ring-fenced for the local communities. North Norfolk have

agreed to ring-fence some of theirs. As some of the income generated will go to SCC, and the Police & Crime Commissioner, Cllr Beavan will ask ESC to work together with SCC and the Police & Crime Commissioner.

ESC Cllr Beavan advised that he will be asking ESC about a) residents parking and what is happening, b) Rural transport, c) what is happening to ESC housing strategy ambition to build. Moving into election phase mid-March.

ESC Council tax has been settled. ESC is well endowed financially from the government from business rates, but some monies will need to be refunded from previous over charging on rents. ESC will be utilising reserves this year, which cannot be done constantly.

Questions to ESC Cllr Beavan. Nil.

b) To receive report from Suffolk County Councillor M Ladd.

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

SCC Cllr Ladd had also attended the Cost of Living Workshops which had been very good. The communications about the various help available is too confusing for many people, as there is so much information. Rural Transport was discussed – and the potential need for smaller buses to get round rural communities to take people to larger public transport hubs.

SCC Budget is due to be considered and includes more money for Citizens Advice Bureau. SCC Cllr Ladd has asked the CEO of Citizens Advice Bureau to bring their outreach service to Southwold and Reydon and a response is awaited.

Suffolk Fire & Rescue has been rated 'good' for its effectiveness and how well it manages staff. The local on call fire fighters are not affected by any strike actions.

SCC Devolution deal was approved in principle on 24th January 2023 by the SCC Cabinet but on the basis that it goes out to consultation which is likely to be summer 2023. The Devolution Deal will bring much additional funding into the County if it goes ahead, and gives opportunity for SCC to be present in Westminster.

SCC Cllr Ladd attended Wangford Quarry liaison meeting last week – the plans for extension is not as controversial as original. There will be an exhibition at Wangford Village Hall 22nd February 2023 1.30pm – 7.30pm as a public consultation. There is also the potential for the area to be taken over by Suffolk Wildlife Trust in due course. SCC Cllr Ladd was asked about any additional costs of the devolution. What will the impact be? What is the consultation?

SCC Cllr Ladd advised that there is no appetite at SCC for an elected Mayor and SCC could well pull away from the deal if this is a requirement. SCC will do a consultation in the summer due to other local council purdah arrangements. It will be 2025 before anything changes if it does go ahead.

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).

There were no comments from members of the public.

5. To receive reports from Committees.

a) Planning and Development Committee - To receive the written report of the meeting of the Planning and Development Committee held on 3rd January 2023 and 24th January 2023.

To consider recommendations made at meeting of 3rd Jan 2023. All noted and agreed.

Cllr Flunder spoke re 17 Market Place planning application – there are some concerns from local residents regarding access and vehicles especially if it is due to become a restaurant. If so, extra double yellow lines will be requested for Mill Lane.

Southwold Conservation Area Appraisal Draft Document and Amalgamation – consultation to 15th March 2023.

The Planning Committee will consider this next week. The Planning Committee will look at the documents and come back to Council. The local architect who helped to scope the historic information within the consultation will come to the next planning cttee meeting to go through specific queries.

b) *Leisure and Environment Cttee –Next meeting February 2023.*

To note Coronation Weekend national plans – see attached.

c) *Landlords Cttee – No formal meeting held (not quorate) – see Finance cttee for Capital Budget recommendation.*

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

Sustainable Travel Group – Verbal update from meeting held with SCC Highways.

A meeting was held with SCC Highways held this afternoon. SCC officers have been asked to come up with a traffic flow scheme to help the flow of traffic around Southwold. The SCC officers will go away and bring back a scheme in due course.

Cllr Bradbury noted that this might be compounded by any residents parking scheme that ESC is doing, and that all need to understand where that scheme is.

SCC Cllr Ladd advised that any scheme will cost money. A new contractor will be in place for SCC later in the year as Kier finishes in autumn.

Cllr Jordan asked about the grant which ESC received for parking efficiencies along North Parade what has happened to the grant? Cllr Jordan asked ESC ward Cllr Beavan to ask ESC about this.

7. **National Energy Projects – Sizewell/Anglia One/Eurolink/Sealink, and Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm Project Update Briefing Invitation.** *To receive updates Cllr Flunder/Cllr Bradbury.*

Cllr Flunder advised that;

On Sizewell – the DCO has approved the project, but needs to get funds to go ahead.

Eurolink/Sealink project has gone quiet.

There is an update on Five Estuaries Windfarm proposals tomorrow.

Cllr Beavan suggested that an offshore grid needed to be considered and that there is a possibility that National Grid is reconsidering their proposals due to the objections about Easton Bavents/Walberswick sites.

8. **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) *Southwold and Walberswick Flood Board – Feedback from recent meetings - Cllr Beavan/Cllr Windell – No meeting. Project launch is 24th February.*

b) *Resilient Coasts Project Board – Cllr Beavan – No meeting.*

c) *HMC Meeting/SAG meeting updates– Cllr Flunder/Cllr Bradbury – last meeting the new harbour manager gave update on his proposals. Cllr Flunder – although there were*

some consultations, it has now been noted that it has gone out to tender to come up with some proposals for the upgrade of the caravan site. There are some 25 plots at the site which are not being used. HMC will then need to come up with a proposal on how to implement the proposals for the site.

d) *Christmas lights – feedback from community meeting 26th Jan – Cllr Goldsmith – 10 people attended the meeting and came up with ideas for this year’s lights. First fundraising event will be a quiz night on 17th March 2023 at Stella Peskett Millennium Hall. 7th February 2023 is the next open meeting – and the group is asking for people who have views about the previous lights in the town to come and join the group for 2023 so that their ideas can be heard. Looks as if there will be a committee to take it forward.*

e) *Station Road redevelopment – see attached Cllr Windell.*

Including – i) To consider and if agreed approve the quote for the comms around Station Yard project, including the highlighting of opportunities for business networking etc - Quote as attached. To be reclaimed from CCT marketing revenue grant.

**Some aspects might need to be discussed in agenda item 13 if the need arises.*

General update - Members had been provided with a list of work being carried out at present. The Building Inspector has regularly been to site and checked the work taking place. Communication around the construction has been very good. The wooden hoarding has been taken down and these panels are available for any community group to utilise.

Question was raised about the BT pole and what the implications were for the project. In view of the potential contractual discussions, this item was taken into section 13 as below.

Comms quote - The Town Clerk advised that the work on comms/website can be claimed from CCF grant funding. And see section 13 below.

ii) Contractual payments – see information attached. Cllr Flunder advised the meeting that the process is clear and in place. Members were advised of the reviews that take place before payments are made, and it is hoped that this will be a good system to go forward. Cllr Bradbury confirmed that documents are being looked at on a regular basis by Cllr Flunder/Cllr Bradbury and the Town Clerk, and that when a payment is being requested a meeting will be held with the project agent to confirm the appropriateness of the payment. Finance Committee will be involved in bringing in an audit trail for Council purposes.

f) Police Locality Meeting – 20th Jan – see attached Cllr Bradbury –written report provided by Cllr Bradbury.

Cllr Windell advised that vandalism has increased over the past few weekends at Tibbys Green, the Common and the High Street. This has been reported to the police who have been asked to include Southwold in their weekend drive by.

9. **Finances including Capital Budget 2023.24**

a) *Accounts for Payment - To receive and confirm the Accounts for Payment for January 2023 (circulated to members).*

On the proposal of Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Jordan it was agreed by all to approve the Accounts for payment for January 2023. All agreed.

b) *To receive report and recommendations of Finance and Governance Meeting held on 25th January 2023. Fin Rep 01.2023.*

See recommendations in relation to Capital Budget 2023/204 To consider, and if agreed, approve the Town Council Capital Budget 2023.2024 – see papers attached.

**Some aspects might need to be discussed in agenda item 13 if the need arises.*

On the proposal of Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Jordan it was agreed to recommend that **Capital Budget - for the year 2023/2024 - Income is anticipated at £274,000 and expenditure at £391,500. This will leave a deficit of £117,500 to be funded from income generated from the sale of the Red Cross site. These figures will be regularly updated by the Finance cttee and opportunities to reduce the deficit will be highlighted to council.**

On the proposal of Cllr Jordan, seconded by Cllr Betts and on the basis of the above it was agreed by a majority with 2 abstain to approve this capital budget for 2023/2024.

Discussion followed about the use of which funds to balance the budget.

Cllr Jordan, as chair of Landlords cttee explained the need to fund the budget deficit, but that there were various opportunities to do this. It was noted that the proceeds from sale of Red Cross site were originally to be spent on improvements to the Town Hall.

10. **Election timetable including Voter ID requirements.** Noted.
11. **Annual Parish Meeting** – Thursday 2nd March 2023 – suggestions for guest speaker to go to Town Clerk.
12. **Date of next Town Council Meeting: Tuesday 28th February 2023 at 7.30pm.**

Members of the public left the meeting at 8.20pm

13. **Exclusion of Public and Press if required during discussions:** *Pursuant to section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it was resolved, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, for the public and press to leave the meeting during consideration of the following.*

Station Road regeneration project

Conf Fin Rep 01/2023 including update on individual land/properties *see attached recommendations including marshes/ top floor Town Hall.*

Cllr Ladd registered a personal interest in the discussions about the rent of the top floor of the Town Hall.

Contractual updates – see confid. paper Jan 2023 for recommendations.

Top Floor Town Hall – On the proposal of Cllr Bradbury seconded by Cllr Jordan the proposal was agreed by all.

Lease - Heads of Term Marsh

On the proposal of Cllr Goldsmith, seconded by Cllr Ladd the proposal was agreed by all.

Heads of Terms Station Road – ESC funding. On the proposal of Cllr Ladd, seconded by Cllr Goldsmith it was agreed by a majority of 6 in favour and 3 against to confirm the H of T.

To consider and if agreed approve the quote for the comms around Station Yard project, including the highlighting of opportunities for business networking etc – monthly cost as attached. To be reclaimed from CCF revenue grant.

Discussion took place regarding the monthly set fee cost provided for this specific piece of work – as provided by the previously tendered and selected comms partner.

Counter proposal - It was proposed by Cllr Sutton, seconded by Cllr Flunder, that a new tender for this work be undertaken.

A recorded vote was requested for the counter proposal.

In favour of the counter proposal - Cllr Sutton, Cllr Beavan, Cllr Jordan, Cllr Flunder.

Abstain – Cllr Bradbury.

Against – Cllr Goldsmith, Cllr Ladd, Cllr Betts, Cllr Windell

Cllr Windell took the casting vote and voted against the counter proposal. Counter proposal defeated.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.50pm.