

SOUTHWOLD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council of Southwold, held via Zoom at 6.30pm on Tuesday 26th January 2021

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

Also present; 10 members of the public, the Town Clerk, the High Steward.

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.*
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.*
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 24th November 2020.
ii) To approve and sign the minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on Tuesday 8th December 2020.
iii) To approve and sign the minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on Monday 21st December 2020.

On the proposal of Cllr Jeans, seconded by Cllr Betts it was RESOLVED by all to approve the Minutes of the Town Council meetings held above.
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 sluice for Salt Creek marshes is causing concern as it is creating issues for flooding on the caravan, camping field site.

Cllr Beavan advised that the ESC budget for 2021.22 is being presented at Scrutiny this week – there is a concern that unless there is an increase in the tax for ratepayers, ESC would need to utilise a significant amount of reserves. ESC Cllr Beavan advised that a £5 per year increase per household would be preferable.

ESC Cllr Beavan advised that he had asked a question at Council last night regarding holiday lets and avoidance of business rates/local taxes.

Questions from Councillors

A Councillor asked about resident/householder parking – Cllr Beavan advised that he is arranging a meeting next month with Kerry Blair to discuss this further. Cllr Beavan suggested that holiday lets should not be included within such a scheme in Southwold. Cllr Beavan advised that there are specific concerns in Southwold about the parking availability for carers, young families and residents.

Discussion about how such permit parking can get to the stage of being implemented and whether a majority of householders have to support a scheme including the support of second homeowners.

Thanks were extended to Cllr Beavan for his support with the vaccination volunteers at the surgery.

Questions from members of the public

A member of the public asked about the whereabouts of the water blockage at Salt Creek/Havenbeach Sluice. ESC Cllr Beavan advised that a camera will be needed to locate the blockage – if this is not sorted out there is the potential that this will cause flooding at the camping field.

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

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

SCC Ladd advised that as of 24th January the incidence of cases of Covid 19 in Suffolk was the lowest within the East of England.

The application relating to Wangford Quarry will be at SCC planning cttee in March. SCC budget for 2021.22 will include a 2% increase and a separate 2% increase for social care. This is going to full Council on 5th February 2021.

SCC Cllr Ladd advised that the debate about the holding of the May elections is ongoing – there is strong feeling that these should be deferred until the autumn.

Questions from Councillors

Cllr Ladd was asked if he could make contact with the relevant department about the blocked drain in Victoria Street by Bank Alley where it seems as if the main pipe is broken and large puddles are forming. Cllr Ladd advised that there are many issues this year about flooding and he would take this matter forward.

Questions from members of the public

A resident asked whether consideration could be given to the bollards by the Bailey Bridge when the repairs take place – as although they are designed to prevent vehicular traffic they are also preventing large mobility buggies from getting through. SCC Cllr Ladd confirmed that he would take this forward.

- 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 member of the public asked about the Station Road regeneration scheme and how much had been spent to date on this site – and was advised that this amounted to £130k as stated in the backing papers.

A member of the public asked about the date for the presentation of the business plan review – and was advised that this is yet to be confirmed.

A member of the public asked about the bid for the police station site – and whether a bid had been put in for the site and what the intended future use of the site might be.

A member of the public asked about the potential parking charges for the Godyll Road/Gardener Rd car park – and the potential displacements that this may cause.

Discussion took place about the charges and the potential for a period of free parking as well as alternative parking places for employees.

5. **To receive reports from Committees.**

- a) *To receive the written report of the meetings of the Planning and Development Committee held on Tuesday 1st December 2020, Tuesday 5th January, Tuesday 12th January and Tuesday 19th January 2021. No recommendations.*

All Planning Cttee minutes were received and noted.

- b) *To receive a verbal update from Planning and Development Committee on any further planning/development matters including the following consultations.
Draft Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document Consultation – 7th December 2020 to 1st February 2021.
Supporting Housing Delivery & Public Service Infrastructure Consultation - 3rd December 2020 – 28th January 2021.*

Cllr Jeans advised that the Supporting Housing Delivery consultation might encourage High Street landlords to convert their businesses to residential which would have a huge effect in the town and could damage jobs. It was suggested that a letter of objection be sent.

Note: To consider, and if agreed, approve Cllr Goldsmith as a member of the Planning Committee. It WAS AGREED BY ALL that Cllr Goldsmith join the Planning Cttee.

- c) *Leisure and Environment Cttee – To receive the written report and recommendations of the meeting of the L and E Committee held on Friday 15th January 2021. No recommendations.*

It was proposed by Cllr Rowan-Robinson, seconded by Cllr Goldsmith to receive and note the report of the L and E cttee dated 15th January 2021.

- d) *Landlords Cttee – To receive the written report of the meeting held on Tuesday 8th December 2020. No recommendations.*

It was proposed by Cllr Windell, seconded by Cllr Jordan to receive and note the report of the Landlords Cttee dated 8th December 2020.

- e) Sustainable Travel Cttee– to receive the minutes of the Sustainable Travel meeting held on 30th November 2020.

Strategy - Recommendation – To consider and if agreed, approve that a one-year pilot for charging on the Godyll Road car park area and Church Green area be implemented with effect from Easter 2021, using the ESC mobile Ringo app system.

On the proposal of Cllr Bradbury, seconded by Cllr Jeans it was agreed to consider a one-year pilot for charging on the Godyll Road car park area and Church Green area be implemented with effect from Easter 2021, using the ESC mobile Ringo app system.

Discussion took place about the Gardner Road/Godyll Road car park. Members were advised that Easter would be ambitious.

Cllr Flunder asked about a business plan and whether this was available.

Cllr Jeans advised that the discussions about charging or parking had been ongoing for many years – with a public presentation having been held in 2019 at the Arts Centre. Members were advised that in order to complete a business plan the principle of using Ringo would need to be established otherwise there would need to be an investment in capital costs.

Members were reminded that the car park is probably the only free car park in East Suffolk. The location of the car park makes it ideal for a short stay shoppers car park, being the nearest one to the town. However it is very much used by holiday lets during the summer.

Cllr Ladd suggested that fees should have been introduced when the car park was set up, as it is always more difficult to charge for something retrospectively.

Cllr Beavan suggested that Church Green should not be incorporated into the pilot.

An amendment was proposed by Cllr Ladd, seconded by Cllr Bradbury as follows; **To consider a one-year pilot for charging on the Godyll Road car park area, to be developed using the ESC mobile Ringo app system. To come back to full Council for further consideration.**

It was AGREED by all to approve the recommendation.

SCC consultation open to all - The Suffolk Design; Streets Guide – consultation to 10th February 2021 – www.suffolk.gov.uk/suffolkstreets. Noted.

6. To receive report 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 new and revised Reg14 policies for the emerging Southwold N Plan. To receive feedback from Zoom stakeholder dates on 26th and 27th November 2020. To note stakeholder zoom meeting – Wednesday 27th January 2021 at 5pm.

Members were reminded of the consultation via zoom being held tomorrow.

- b) **Communication strategy** (*Project = as per Town Council priorities 2019- 2022 g)*
Create and implement an improved STC communications strategy within and outside the Town).

To receive report of Comms working group meeting of 10th December 2020. *No recommendations.*

It was proposed by Cllr Goldsmith, seconded by Cllr Jordan to receive and note the report of the Comms working group dated 10th December 2020.

7. **Bailey Bridge** – to receive update on repair programme from SCC Cllr Ladd.
To consider and approve the selection of 2 members of the Town Council to represent STC on stakeholder group.

Cllr Ladd reminded members that the Bailey Bridge had been closed in autumn 2018 for repairs at which stage it was noted that further repairs would be required. SCC Cllr Ladd and SCC Cllr R Smith have been reminding SCC of the need for these further repairs and the costs have been allocated to the SCC 2021 budget. However, in view of the work involved, the timing of the repairs will be difficult – as calm waters will be needed the repairs will need to commence April/May and will take approx. 3 months – which will take the repairs into the peak tourist season. SCC is very conscious of the disruption this might cause and there needs to be much organisation and planning before the repairs commence.

A stakeholder group is therefore being established and 2 members of STC are invited to attend, along with 2 from Reydon and 2 from Walberswick. Those interested to advise the Town Clerk. First meeting will be held in February.

8. **Southwold Harbour** – Joint meeting of STC and ESC Cabinet to consider, and approve setting up of HMC - to note provisional date 2nd March 2021.

Noted by all.

9. **Southwold Camping field** (adjacent to caravan park) - to consider, and if agreed approve, to register a first registration of title on this piece of land.

It was proposed by Cllr Beavan, seconded by Cllr Flunder to register a first registration of title on Southwold Camping field (adjacent to caravan park).

Cllr Beavan explained that STC should attempt to register first title. Query was asked as to what practical result this might have – members were advised that ESC believe that they own the site – but that STC has a Caution registered on it.

The Town Clerk advised that STC wishes to ensure that all title that it believes it has ownership of is registered at HMLR.

Cllr Windell suggested that the land registration on this particular site might not be successful as STC would need to validate its claim by confirming how it has looked after the land in recent years.

It was RESOLVED with 6 in favour, 2 against and 1 abstain to register a first registration of title on Southwold Camping field (adjacent to caravan park).

Cllrs Beavan and Bradbury to work with the Town Clerk on this matter.

10. **Property Land Registrations** - To consider, and if agreed approve, that the Town Council undertake the land registration of all its properties and land (priority to be given to the marsh areas, including the area incorporating Ferry Road Garden, potential site of additional camping field, and Salt Creek).

It was proposed by Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Windell that the Town Council undertake the land registration of all its properties and land (priority to be given to the marsh areas, including the area incorporating Ferry Road Garden, potential site of additional camping field, and Salt Creek).

Discussion. Members advised that they would want this to be comprehensive and include any parcels of land that STC believes that it owns, including Buss Creek and North Road allotments. Members noted that there would be significant time implications required on researching the areas of land that might need to be registered and that extra help might be required.

Cllr Ladd suggested that a cost be ascertained for the hours of work that this would require – which could then be considered at a future meeting. **Agreed by all.**

Cllr Beavan suggested that the work start with the registration of the camping field next to the Caravan site (as agreed in 9 above), and then the registration of the additional field next to the camping site.

On the proposal of Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Windell it was RESOLVED by all that the Town Council undertake the land registration of all its properties and land (priority to be given to the marsh areas, including the area incorporating Ferry Road Garden, potential site of additional camping field, and Salt Creek).

11. **Asset of Community Value Police Station Site** - (*ACV = as per Town Council priorities 2019- 2022 c) work with organisations to enhance community assets*)
To receive update on the bid process, and to consider and if agreed approve, that David Lock Assoc be asked to assist the Town Council with negotiations, as required, with Suffolk Police Authority and the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner.

Cllr Jeans advised that a pre discussion has been held with the Estates Dept of Suffolk Police Authority regarding a bid for the site – and a bid has now been submitted. No response has yet been received. Use will be determined if the Town Council is successful.

Members were advised that if the N Plan Reg 14 policies are agreed there might be able to be affordable and market housing on the site if either/both are required to make the community facility project viable.

Cllr Ladd explained that the Police Authority could leave the site empty for 5 years and do nothing with it. If they do decide to engage in negotiations this is likely to be a very slow process.

On the proposal of Cllr Jeans, seconded by Cllr Ladd it was RESOLVED BY ALL that David Lock Assoc be asked to assist the Town Council with negotiations, as required, with Suffolk Police Authority and the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner. Budget of maximum £3000 to be allocated.

12. **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*).

Cllr Bradbury advised that the Project Board would hope to receive the Business Case review next week. Once this has been received, a public presentation will be arranged. Cllr Beavan asked whether the Project Board would be discussing the review at their next meeting on 25th February – Cllr Bradbury understood that they would, but that this is flexible at the moment as there may be the need to hold an earlier Project Board meeting.

13. **Financial Matters**

a) *Accounts for Payment* - To receive and confirm the Accounts for Payment for January 2021 (*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 January 2021. All agreed.

Query was raised with regards to the Elf on Shelf leaflets (Town Manager budget) and the website accessibility check (legal compliance) – to which the Town Clerk provided the answers.

Cllr Beavan suggested that the Town Council had not got value from the business plan for the Police Station site.

b) *To receive report and recommendations of Finance and Governance Meeting held 2nd December 2020 and 17th December 2020 and 15th January 2021 FIN Rep 01.21 Recommendations in relation to; feasibility report 1 Strickland Place and valuation of property portfolio.*

Recommendations

Feasibility Cost Plan 1 Strickland Place - See previous Council minutes re dividing the property into 2 smaller units.

NPS advise that the cost of a feasibility study on the cost of conversion, versus the potential income from rent for will be £2175 plus vat.

On the proposal of Cllr Windell, seconded by Cllr Betts it was RESOLVED with 8 in favour, 1 against and 1 abstain that the Town Council proceed with the feasibility study in order to consider the appropriate way forward on this property.

Property portfolio

It was suggested that as it is many years since a full valuation has been carried out on the property portfolio other than for insurance purposes, a market valuation be undertaken of the Council property portfolio.

On the proposal of Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Windell, it was RESOLVED BY ALL that a market valuation be undertaken of the Council property portfolio.

Cllr Goldsmith suggested that 2 valuations be obtained as agents differ in their analysis of property value.

- c) *Budget and Precept 2021.22* - To receive and agree the Town Council Budget and Precept for 2021/22 – see papers attached and Confidential Employment working group report below.

Cllr Bradbury presented the capital and revenue budget for 2021/2022. The Revenue budget and Capital budget, detailing on a line by line basis the proposed income and expenditure for 2021/2022 including reserves, had been provided to members. The budget is a live document and will be updated regularly.

The Town Clerk explained that the budgeted Revenue expenditure of £247,747 would need to be funded by Revenue Income (which is subject to precept funding approval below, and potential use of reserves). Budgeted Capital expenditure of £489,700 and capital income of £ 257,883 was noted and approved. Shortfall to be covered by funds in the reserves. **Cllr Betts proposed and Cllr Ladd seconded approval of the budget for 2021/2022 as in the supporting papers.**

Discussion regarding the budget.

Cllr Beavan noted the receipt of written confirmation that the Station Yard redevelopment funding had been extended.

Cllr Beavan suggested that some of the budget is aspirational and that the use of reserves to balance the expenditure could only be a short term policy. It was suggested that a full 3 year plan should be drawn up to ensure that the reserves are not continually drawn upon.

Discussion took place regarding reserves and the Town Clerk explained the auditors view of level of reserves.

Cllr Ladd advised that the Town Council had always been asset rich and cash poor – although the finances had improved over recent years – and suggested that an aspirational budget hopefully was an indication that things would be achieved.

Members were reminded that the budget is a working budget and that the finance committee will regularly review it. The Town Clerk advised that the 3 year budget is virtually complete.

After full discussion it was unanimously RESOLVED to approve the budget for 2021/22.

- d) *Precept 2021.22* – To agree precept for 2021.22 – see ESC papers attached and Finance Committee Minutes Rep 1/21, Confidential Employment working group notes and accompanying explanation.

It is suggested that the Town Council sets a 0% change in householder precept for 2021.22 and request from ESC a precept of £117,962.68. This is a reduction

in the sum received by Council due to the tax base having reduced. However, it will show as a 0% increase for residents on their tax notification.

Deficit in funding to be covered by reserves. (However, with interest rates presently low – the Finance Cttee will also consider other funding opportunities including loans for capital repairs).

On the proposal of Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Windell it was unanimously RESOLVED to request a precept of £117,962.68.

14. **PCSO** - To consider and if agreed approve the specific draft priorities for the PCSO for 2021.22 - see attached.

Draft priorities had been circulated.

It was proposed by Cllr Bradbury, seconded by Cllr Ladd that they be approved.

The contract will be for 12 months as approved in the budget – with key priorities around the needs of the Town Council including liaising with the ESC traffic enforcers on matter relating to the highway.

Members acknowledged that it is difficult to monitor performance of the police/PCSO and therefore the information provided in the monthly report will be important.

On the proposal of Cllr Bradbury, seconded by Cllr Ladd it was RESOLVED unanimously to approve the priorities for the PCSO for 2021/22.

It was agreed by all to suspend standing orders to enable the meeting to continue for a further 10 minutes.

15. **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) *COVID Community group* – Cllr Beavan advised that the Health Centre are carrying out local vaccinations. Southwold is in the Norfolk and Waveney CCG rather than in the Suffolk CCG. All care home staff and residents apart from one care home in Beccles have been vaccinated. 120 people have volunteered to assist with car parking etc at the Health Centre – and there has been a great team effort.

Members thanked Cllr Beavan for his work on this matter.

A member asked when the housebound would receive the vaccination – Cllr Beavan advised that these are now being done.

- b) *Christmas Lights Cttee feedback* – Cllr Goldsmith advised that there had not been a meeting.

- c) *East Anglia One/Two* – Cllr Flunder advised that the Hearings are going ahead and will soon be discussing the compulsory purchase aspects. Members were advised that the Friston site is concerning. Examiners will finish by April 2021. At the Hearings Adnams spoke of their concerns for the tourism industry.

16. **Date of next Town Council Meeting:** Tuesday 23rd February 2021 at 6.30pm.

17. **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.

- *Employment and contractual matters – to receive report from Employment working group meeting of 15th January 2021. Rep Employ 1/21 See recommendations relating to PCSO and Town Manager roles.*

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Discussion re PCSO SLA to be renewed for a further 12 months (as included within the budget) with a review by month 6 to decide situation with regards to the 2022.23 year. The evidence for such discussions will be via the information provided in the monthly returns. Members noted that the SLA does provide for the PCSO to attend quarterly Town Council meetings or as the need arises.

After full discussion it was RESOLVED by all to approve the SLA for the PCSO for 2021.22. PCSO Role – Town Council to commit to 1 year contract for 2021.22 with full time hours.

SLA Priorities – see draft SLA Priorities in agenda. Data to be received via monthly police report which will provide quantitative data for future analysis of role.

Review of role to be undertaken September 2021 - noting that if role is not to be continued after 31st March 2022, such notice will need to be given to Suffolk Police Authority by 1st October 2021.

External funding partners to be sought before September 2021 to alleviate cost to Town Council in second half of year and/ or for 2022.23.

Town Manager – see confidential Employment working group papers 15th January 2021.

On the proposal of Cllr Ladd, seconded by Cllr Betts it was RESOLVED by all to approve the recommendation of the Employment working Group as follows; If drawing down CCF revenue grant funding is still not possible - STC to support the role for 6 months in 2021/22 – i.e., to 30th Sept 2021. This is included within the Budget calculations together with a small marketing budget for the 6-month period. If the role is to continue further - the role to then be funded by the CCF Revenue grant or through partner funding to 31st March 2022.

- *To receive and note Confidential backing reports 8th December 2020 and 21st December 2020.*

Received and noted.

Signed

Dated.....