

## SOUTHWOLD TOWN COUNCIL

### **Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council of Southwold, held in the Council Chamber at 7.30pm on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024.**

PRESENT:	Councillor	S Flunder – Town Mayor
	“	Cllr Beavan (arrived 8.20pm)
	“	Mrs P Goldsmith
	“	M Palmer
	“	Mrs V Redington
	“	R Temple
	“	M Wells

Also present: The High Steward, The Town Clerk. SCC Cllr M Ladd and 4 members of the public.

1. a) **Apologies:**

*To note/approve apologies for absence.* Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Davy, Gladwell, Jarvis and Sutton. All apologies were noted.  
The council presently has one councillor vacancy.

2. **Declarations of interest:**

a) *To receive any declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests regarding the agenda.*  
Cllr Temple declared a pecuniary interest re the Red Cross Hut as a Trustee of the Fox Trust.

b) *To receive Declarations of Other Registerable Interests regarding the agenda.*  
Nil.

c) *To receive Declarations of Non-Registerable Interests regarding the agenda.* Nil.

d) *To note the decision of the Town Clerk regarding requests for dispensations relating to this agenda.* Nil.

e) *To note that the Register of Interests of all Members is to be completed within 28 days of the election and updated thereafter with changes as they occur.* Noted.

3. **Minutes:** (i) To approve and sign the minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

**On the proposal of Cllr Goldsmith, seconded by Cllr Redington it was RESOLVED by all to approve the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024. All agreed.**

4. **Public Section**

a) *To receive a report from East Suffolk Ward Councillor D Beavan.*  
*ESC Cllr Beavan will then take questions from Councillors and electors.*  
See below.

b) *To receive report from Suffolk County Councillor M Ladd including update on Potters Bridge.*  
*SCC Cllr Ladd will then take questions from Councillors and electors.*

*Potters Bridge* – Environment Agency and Suffolk County Council held a joint meeting and a joint statement has been issued. Short – medium term – SCC will improve signage and drainage supported by the EA. EA is more receptive now to allowing third party to help dig out the beach area.

*York Road* markings are all complete, and cars are parking better and this is aiding traffic flow.

*East Street* traffic regulation order is on pause at the moment - the Roads Committee will consider this matter on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2024. SCC Cllr Ladd advised that he would still recommend that both bays be taken away to provide adequate road width, but this is for the Roads Committee to consider.

*SCC budget is challenging* - Scrutiny Cttee has done the audit on the budget - more money has gone to supporting vulnerable. 77% = social care allocation.

Arts grant from SCC has been cut – but the cut wasn't to start until April 2025 but since then more money has been given to all counties.

SCC gets additional £7m funding and some of this will go to Arts & Culture. SCC supported 9 organisations originally, but the new pot will be open to bids from any arts organisations.

£16m has been taken from reserves to balance SCC budget and some of the government money will go back to build up the reserves.

No questions from Councillors.

Questions to SCC Cllr Ladd from a member of the public re mental health responsibilities. SCC Cllr Ladd advised that mental health is not SCC responsibility but is the responsibility of the NHS.

- 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).*

Question was raised re Millennium car park picnic area as it was felt that this could be made to look better. Michael Ladd – Trustee of the Millennium Trust – asked for volunteers to help and suggested the person asking could help to volunteer too.

Public would like some signage to show what is going on there. Noted. Michael Ladd advised that the Trust is always looking for potential Trustees.

Question to be forwarded for ESC Cllr Beavan – vacant bungalow in Hotson Road – advertised by ESC but bandings are not clear. Shoal Flats – 1 flat is vacant. Need to understand what A/B/C mean. Cllr Beavan to be asked to contact the member of the public.

5. **To receive reports from Committees.**  
**Planning and Development Committee**

- a) *i) To receive the written report of the meeting of the Planning and Development Committee held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024. Cllr Temple – see report.*

*ii) Any other planning matters – including Planning Forum.*

Planning Forum at ESC – new call-in process was explained, and a flow chart is awaited.

ESC will also consult re pre-application advice i.e. when/ if the advice given should be made public. Quality of place award = announced - STC could nominate

community garden at Ferry Road. ESC also has stats available on their website and these will be circulated.

b) **Landlords Cttee** – *To receive the written report of the meeting of the Landlords Committee REP 7.2023 held 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and REP 01.24 held 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024. Recommendation in relation to 21 Market Place, Red Cross Hut, and Casino (see also Finance cttee minutes) See papers. Recommendations*

a) Casino - £480 to cover water damage to the wiring. All agreed.

b) Store room at Little Gems – budget £11k to be set aside. Proposed by Cllr Goldsmith, seconded by Cllr Redington. All agreed. Further scope of works to be considered.

c) Red Cross Hut – pre-planning = £13,500 cost. Cllr Flunder advised that this is a long-standing project. Costs seem high but it is a complex planning process. Council has asked how much extra the cost will be for full planning costs.

It was proposed by Cllr Goldsmith, seconded by Cllr Redington to allocate the costs for this work. Agreed with 1 abstain.

c) **Leisure and Environment Cttee** – *Next meeting 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024*

*To receive verbal update re AONB volunteer assistance.*

AONB volunteers came today and did work around the side and rear of Ferry Road Garden. L and E will be looking for access funding, hopefully through AONB grants. Thanks were extended to all volunteers and Cllr Flunder extended thanks to Cllr Goldsmith too.

Question to Cllr Goldsmith with regards to the area behind the rugby pitch which has been cleared of Alexander. A wildlife area was to be created but it transpires that this would cause more Alexander on the rest of the common and would need significant volunteer time, so is not now being planned.

d) **Roads Cttee** – *Next meeting 9<sup>th</sup> February 2024. Road consultation closed – responses being analysed.* Over 500 responses being analysed by the Town Clerk from the recent consultation.

6. **To receive reports from Working Groups (task and finish) Groups.**

a) *Comms working group* – No meeting held. Nil.

b) *NSIP working group.* No meeting held. Nil.

7. **To receive reports from the Town Council representatives on other bodies/organisations, of meetings attended and any training events 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) *Christmas lights* – Cllr Flunder gave an update as he had attended the Lights meeting tonight – the group were doing a “lessons learnt” session. There will be people available to help with 2024 lights. The business group have discussed this event, and it is hoped businesses will support the event more. Improvements to the PA system/ and additional health and safety measures are the 2 learning points. The group did have surplus income over expenditure from 2023 and hope that 2024 would be the same. Town Council representative requested for the Lights Committee who will meet the third Tuesday of the month. Cllr Wells will attend (Cllr Sutton is also a rep).

b) *HMC/SAG/ Harbour Users – Cllr Flunder.* One of the key points is creating a vision for the harbour going forward. New harbour manager had presented a vision and would like to present this to STC. ESC new director = Kate Blakemore.

Cllr Beavan is arranging to apply for “Heritage Trust” award for the harbour. This would enable additional grants to be applied for.

Caravan Site = an issue due to the lack of investment. Harbour manager is undertaking a consultation with the caravan users with a view to upgrading the site.

8. **National Energy Projects** –

*Lionlink / Sizewell/Anglia One//Sealink, and North Falls Offshore Wind Farm, Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm Project – To receive updates.*

Sizewell DCO has been approved. But still a gap in funding (Hinckley Point budget has again increased). Sizewell project team will present to Council on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 7pm.

Sealink – further consultation is going ahead. Walberswick have rejected the suggestion of a cable route coming in there.

9. **Enterprise Hub** *to receive progress update from meetings with Project Board, construction team, and operators. \*\**

At latest update last week, a matter has arisen regarding the drainage on site. There is a need to create a one metre area deep for drainage. This is a result of design amendments which will cause a 3-week delay as LPA need to sign off the work reference the subsequent testing of the topsoil.

Menta lease is nearly complete. Last few queries being responded to. Await ESC approval of the formal documents. Cllr Goldsmith asked re Menta start on site – can they go in whilst the LPA permission is awaited? Cllr Flunder advised that this was not possible. Menta already have one tenant wishing to occupy premises.

10. **Business meetings** *Feedback from meetings for businesses/traders December 2023 and January 2024.* Very positive. Around 50 people attending each time. Includes clubs/organisations/pier/harbour etc. Ultimate aim is to try to get an organisation to go forward which includes everyone. Next meeting 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

11. **Councillor Vacancy - Election February 2024** – election is on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024. Millennium Hall is the site of the polling station.

12. **To receive letter from MP** – see attached.

13. **Financial Matters**

a. *To receive report and recommendations of Finance and Governance Cttee – To receive reports from meeting 15<sup>th</sup> December 2023 FIN Rep 11.23.*

*To consider and if agreed approve recommendations in relation to; 21 Market Place/ pre application for Red Cross site (as per also Landlords minutes)*

The Town Clerk spoke on items 13a) and 13c) and advised that the recommendations from the cttee are as per Landlords Committee minutes. The balances, accounts/budgets were advised to members with an explanation about the balances held at the bank and at CCLA. No queries were raised.

*Suspend Standing Orders.*

*Cllr Beavan arrived at 8.20pm. ESC Ward Cllr Beavan spoke re ESC matters as below.*

ESC Cllr Beavan advised that ESC have a balanced budget but ESC Housing at district is under financial pressure.

Potters Bridge – Cllr Beavan is working with SCC Cllr Ladd to ensure longer term solution. Bridge will not happen. Both Wolsey Bridge and Potters Bridge are below sea level and ESC and SCC are discussing how to protect the area and safeguard Southwold. Housing Revenue account does have a £13m deficit so money is needed for alterations. ESC Cllr Beavan – flood project for Lowestoft has been withdrawn due to central Government funding being withdrawn from coastal communities’ projects.

ESC Cllr Beavan advised that ESC/ Harbour may get walls built along the Blyth Estuary.

Question from the public re the ESC housing banding. ESC Cllr Beavan explained the system. ESC Cllr Beavan suggested the resident go and see him personally to discuss further.

*b. Accounts for Payment - To receive the management accounts/bank reconciliation and balance sheet for January 2024.*

**On the proposal of Cllr Goldsmith, seconded by Cllr Wells it was agreed by all to approve the Accounts for Payment for January 2024. All agreed.**

*c. Investments – To receive update on investments and balances held. Update presented by the Town Clerk – see supporting papers.*

**14. Forthcoming Meetings/ Events for Council/Councillors**

*CAS meeting – 13th February – Cllr Flunder/Cllr Wells will attend at the Randolph. 2-day volunteering course CAS – Cllr Wells attending.*

**15. Town Mayor updates including.**

*a) Events attended*

*Burns Night Supper, Ipswich – 21<sup>st</sup> January 2024 – very well supported.*

*Holocaust Memorial Day – 27<sup>th</sup> January 2024 – Cllr Redington attended. Was a very well organised and thought-provoking event.*

*b) Upcoming engagements – Nil.*

*c) Town Mayor volunteering project – CAS meetings are being held monthly – everyone who attends are volunteers.*

*Members were advised that Trevor Clifford will retire as Chair of RDC at the end of 2024.*

**16. Consultations for council consideration**

*Nil.*

**17. Date of next Town Council Meetings:**

*Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024 – at 7.30pm (Sizewell C Update at 7pm).*

Members of the public left the meeting.

Confidential – 8.30pm start.

**\*\*Note: Discussions above may need to be considered as confidential as appropriate and dealt with in the agenda item below.**

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

- *Business promotion/ communication – to consider and if agreed approve quotes for new Southwold business/ community website.*  
See backing notes regarding the business website and the note circulated by the Chair of Finance Cllr Jarvis. Proposal is to invest in a new business website. 3 Quotes have been received. Consideration of all quotes – and subsequent discussion. The need to ensure that the High Street profile remains prominent around the area was noted during discussion.  
**Business Website - Proposal received to accept the quote provided by Spring. It was agreed by a majority, with 1 against, to accept the tender provided by Spring.**
- *To consider and if agreed approve H R recommendation– see attached. Additional office support being suggested on a part time basis for “Estates Officer” – see recommendation in supporting papers.*  
**Proposed by Cllr Temple, seconded by Cllr Redington to accept the recommendation. All agreed.**  
**Discussion regarding the term of the contract. Although the recommendation above is for 1 year – it was suggested that a 3-year contract would be more appropriate and that this would enable the role to be in place until the end of this Council term. 6-month probation suggested. Contract term of 3 years with a 6-month probation period agreed by all.**
- *Property/ legal updates if any.*  
New property purchase - Awaiting date for exchange and completion.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.45pm.

Signed .....

Dated .....