

SOUTHWOLD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council of Southwold, held on Tuesday 30th June 2020 at 4pm via Zoom

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

Also present; 6 members of the public, and the Town Clerk.

Agenda

1. **Apologies:** Apologies were received from Cllr Goldsmith 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.* N/a
 - 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 9th June 2020.
On the proposal of Cllr Windell, seconded by Cllr Betts it was unanimously RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of 9th June 2020.

Public section

4. **Public Forum**

- a) *To receive a report from East Suffolk Councillor D Beavan.*
Cllr Beavan advised that all information was as per the circulated report.

Questions from Councillors:

Cllr Windell – asked about the ESC opening procedure for play areas.

The Town Clerk explained the guidance that had been forwarded to the Town Council and the procedures that ESC/Norse were putting in place to open their areas.

Discussion as to whether the Town Council play areas should be opened. Cllr Windell advised that he had spent much time picking up the ‘play area closed’

signs/notices/tape for the past 2 days and that it would be difficult to keep ours shut if others were opening.

It was suggested that if they were to be kept closed then more secure measures would need to be put in place such as fencing. The alternative is to open with the appropriate guidance notices/risk assessments. After discussion of the pros/cons it was agreed that the Town Clerk/Town Mayor would reassess the situation on 3rd July in line with recommendations being made from ESC, and that if risk assessment and guidance notes can be made available to stipulate the terms on which the areas are opening then this would be the way forward. Councillors to be updated at end of week.

Cllr Jeans asked whether ESC could arrange for litter picking to take place around the Pier, Pier Avenue, Centre Cliff. Ward Cllr Beavan advised that he will ask ESC.

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

SCC Cllr Ladd advised that SCC is concerned about a second wave and that the Suffolk Local Plan has been drawn up to deal with the possibilities. Copy will be forwarded to the Clerk.

SCC has agreed that concessionary bus travel arrangements will go back to the pre lockdown normal hours from 6th July 2020.

Climate Change paper is going to full SCC Cabinet and will then be made available for Town Council.

c) *To receive comments from Southwold electors on matters on the agenda.*

Agenda item 8 re Station Yard re contamination report – a member of the public asked about the contamination and bore holes, and whether a risk assessment would be prepared detailing the risk to the scheme, in view of Covid implications for business space.

A member of the public asked SCC ward Cllr Ladd – whether if there is lockdown in Southwold, would visitors have to go home or stay here? SCC Cllr Ladd will check and send a copy of the plan to the member of the public.

A member of the public advised that there are quad bikes being ridden on beach/dunes, and that dogs are on the beach. Cllr Bradbury suggested that the Town Council make representations to ESC on these matters. Cllr Ladd advised that there is also cycling on the prom.

ESC Ward Cllr Beavan advised that there are 2 dog wardens for whole of the northern area and that the community police should be asked to enforce too.

PCSO Hedley Lewis has advised that the restriction of dogs on beach is being enforced.

5. **To receive reports from Committees: (See Yellow papers)**

a) *To receive the written report of the meeting of the Planning and Development Committee meeting held on Tuesday 16th June. No recommendations*

Cllr Jeans advised that ESC has had success on the Planning Inspectorate appeal which had been lodged for 37 Pier Avenue. The Local Planning Authority had agreed with Southwold Town Council in their consideration of the application, the response from the Town Council having been drawn up with the assistance of Carter Jonas.

Cllr Jeans advised that this sets a precedent for enforcement and should form a

position statement for the Town Council to go to ESC re change of use application for holiday lets.

Cllr Jeans asked whether the Town Council felt the need to do anything re the Jenrick issue, and whether in a non-political way the matter should be raised to Leader/Chair of ESC and to MP, to acknowledge that this affects the moral of local authority planning case officers when they are trying to carry out their job.

Cllr Bradbury thanked Cllr Jeans for offering support for the local planning authority and suggested that Cllr Jeans could prepare a draft and send this round to Councillors for sign off. Cllr Jeans to send the draft to the Town Clerk to circulate.

c) *To receive the written reports of the Sustainable Travel Cttee meetings of 16th and 23rd June 2020. No recommendations*

Cllr Bradbury provided an update to members of the discussions that have taken place. Cllr Windell asked whether cycle charging installation could be a short-term goal - Cllr Bradbury advised that the facility is already available within the Town Council cycle racks.

d) *To receive landlords written update on property works June 2020 – and to consider, and if agreed, approve recommendations contained therein.*

Property works.

- **Discussion re the feasibility of converting 1 Strickland Place into 3 flats. It was proposed by Cllr Jeans, seconded by Cllr Jordan and agreed by all to consider an ‘in principle’ budget for this to be assessed.**
- **Painting the front of 11 Station Road. It was proposed by Cllr Jeans, seconded by Cllr Betts and agreed by all to incorporate this within the present maintenance programme.**
- Town Hall - Thanks were extended to Cllr Jordan for her work in sorting space at the Town Hall - much space is now available in the basement and chamber as these areas have been cleared.
- Casino - Cllr Windell met with Jon Chick last week to discuss options. Preferable option would be the localised repairing of the steel stanchions, to cut out rust and reweld metal at the base. Decent maintenance will keep this going along with annual redecoration. Cllr Windell recommended that Council approve these localised repairs at a cost of £2-£3k and using local craftsman, otherwise there will be a need for more serious costs. **It was proposed by Cllr Jeans and seconded by Cllr Jordan to approve localised repairs at a cost of £2k - £3k. Agreed by all.**
- 23 Market Place – water softener is required at the property - maximum cost £2k for a mechanical water softener. **It was proposed by Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Flunder and agreed by all to purchase a mechanical water softener - cost £2k.**
- Angling Shop - the ceiling works are still outstanding.
- Station Yard – survey for contamination. Chicks advise that the bore hole surveys need to be taken as part of the phase 2 surveys and gas monitors need to go in. Chicks main concerns are in relation to petrol contamination, which will need remediation recommendations from the EPO and the Environment Agency. **It was proposed by Cllr Windell, seconded by Cllr Tobin and agreed by all that the Phase 2 surveys, as detailed by Chicks, take place at the site.**

To consider options for basis of sale of any further property at Strickland Place.

Cllr Windell introduced the agenda item regarding sale of any further property at Strickland Place and the various sale options. Options for any sale would be Freehold sale, Leasehold sale, Leasehold sale with a full-time residency clause (along same lines as No 5 Strickland Place).

Discussion took place on the pros/cons of each. Members acknowledged that a sale on leasehold would be lower priced than that for a sale for freehold and that the extra money could potentially create another property/ies for full time residents. However, it was also acknowledged that the aim of increasing permanent residency was incorporated within both the Town Strategy and the Neighbourhood Plan and that the way to ensure this can occur on this property would be to have a permanent residency clause within the sale terms.

Discussion also took place on having the same policy for all Strickland Place properties.

On the proposal of Cllr Rowan-Robinson, seconded by Cllr Ladd it was proposed that the policy for a sale of a property at Strickland should be on the basis of a long lease with permanent resident clause. It was RESOLVED unanimously to approve this recommendation.

On the proposal of Cllr Jeans, seconded by Cllr Jordan it was unanimously RESOLVED to market 3 Strickland Place through Durrants on the basis of a long lease with permanent resident clause.

e) *To receive verbal update from Leisure and Environment Cttee meeting held on 26th June 2020.*

Members noted that Rights Road/Pier Avenue garden is now looking very good – it was suggested that the same contractors be asked to consider works required at Ferry Road garden.

6. **Neighbourhood Plan Task and Finish Group** - *to receive verbal update.*

Cllr Rowan-Robinson advised that the Regulation 16 documents are now with ESC.

Thanks were extended to Cllr Jeans for all her work on the Plan.

Cllr Flunder asked for clarification of the next stages of the process, as Reydon N Plan is at examination stage. Cllr Rowan-Robinson advised that the Southwold N Plan is very complex and detailed and that as no referendum can take place until May 2021 both the Reydon and Southwold Neighbourhood Plans are likely to be at referendum at the same time.

Cllr Jeans advised that the Southwold Neighbourhood Plan has incorporated pioneering work on principle residency and holiday lets.

Town Clerk to provide Cllr Flunder with details of the timetable for Reg 16 consultation to completion.

SCC Cllr Ladd advised that as SCC ward Cllr he sees all the Neighbourhood Plans for the parishes within his wards and he has not seen such a complex N Plan as that of Southwold.

7. **Covid Community Group** – *to receive verbal update.*

Cllr Beavan advised that he is disappointed about the centralisation of the response, and that local volunteers are not being used as much as they could be. The local foodbank is available and ready if there is a second spike. Cllr Tobin advised that the

government food boxes are stopping at the end of July but that the local foodbank has a very good stock/supply.

8. **Coastal Community Funding award** – to receive written update – *and to consider, and if agreed, approve recommendations contained therein.*

Station Yard Redevelopment Scheme

Cllr Bradbury advised that a written update has been circulated as part of the supporting papers and that ESC confirms that the grant funding is extended to April 2022.

Proposals are that;

An overall Strategic Manager/Contract Manager be appointed for the scheme as soon as possible. £60,000 is available within the grant award for this position. East Suffolk Council are able to offer advice on such recruitment if so required.

The Manager would then be supported by the Economic Development Team at ESC in respect of both the capital and revenue elements of the project

A project board to be set up comprising STC representation, and representation from ESC as the accountable body, bringing in additional specific expertise as/ when required.

Discussion on the above. Cllr Jeans advised that both of the above proposals offer a good way forward and would help to alleviate concerns about the ability of the Town Council to deliver. Cllr Ladd advised that as ESC is the accountable body, it would be good to have them involved with the project and have access to the expertise that they have available. Cllr Flunder advised that he would like the Project Manager role to incorporate a review of the business plan in view of the implications of Covid 19. Cllr Bradbury advised that it is anticipated that a) the Project Manager will report to the Project Board and b) that consideration of the business model will take place.

On the proposal of Cllr Windell, seconded by Cllr Ladd it was unanimously RESOLVED that;

An overall Project Manager (who works at a strategic level) be appointed for the scheme as soon as possible. £60,000 is available within the grant award for this position. East Suffolk Council are able to offer advice on such recruitment if so required.

The Manager would then be supported by the Economic Development Team at ESC in respect of both the capital and revenue elements of the project.

On the proposal of Cllr Windell, seconded by Cllr Ladd it was unanimously RESOLVED that;

A Project Board to be set up comprising STC representation, and representation from ESC as the accountable body, bringing in additional specific expertise as/ when required.

9. **Sizewell C** – *To receive the written reports and to consider, and if agreed, approve a Town Council position on the proposals.*

Cllr Flunder had provided a paper for this agenda item. Discussion took place.

With regards to point 2 – it was suggested that ‘rail freight’ strategy be added.

SCC Cllr Ladd suggested that the Town Council align to the ESC and SCC position on this matter. Cllr Bradbury asked that ESC Cllr Beavan and SCC Cllr Ladd keep the

Town Council updated. Cllr Beavan advised that ESC has asked for more time to reply but are in support of the project.

Cllr Rowan-Robinson advised that he would not support the paper in view of the negative view of the project and that he would need STC to support the project to support the paper. Cllr Flunder explained that the Council should put in a response to have some protection over the environment and over the impacts of the scheme.

It was suggested that the Town Council vote on the opportunity to engage on the project, but to have further discussion as to a Town Council response.

On the proposal of Cllr Bradbury, seconded by Cllr Flunder it was agreed by a majority of 9 in favour and 1 against that the Town Council register/engage and STC will then have the discussion about a response at a later date.

10. **Southwold to Walberswick Project Board** – *To receive draft Terms of Reference.*
Cllrs Beavan and Ladd are on the Board which will co-ordinate agencies/groups i.e. those at the harbour. The Harbour Management Committee is also included.

11. **Finance and Governance Committee**

- a) To receive and approve the Accounts for Payment for June 2020.

On the proposal of Cllr Betts seconded by Cllr Windell it was RESOLVED by all to approve the payments as presented.

Cllr Rowan-Robinson left the meeting at 17.50.

- b) *To receive the Minutes of the Finance and Governance Cttee meeting held 16th June 2020 FIN REP 06.20. Recommendations in relation to staff resource reserve, Town Manager budget, Investment Strategy 2020/21, and Annual Risk Assessment 2020/21.*

Recommendations

On the proposal of Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Jordan it was unanimously RESOLVED;

that £10,000 of the Strategy Reserve of £160,000, be transferred to a new Staff Resources Earmarked reserve for 2020/2021.

General Reserve of £141,038 is over 1 year's precept (precept £120k). It is Recommended that £20,000 of the general reserve be transferred to the new Staff Resources Earmarked Reserve for 2020/21. Staff Earmarked Reserve will then be at an appropriate level of £30,000.

On the proposal of Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Jordan it was unanimously RESOLVED; to provide a budget of £5k for the Town Manager to enable immediate actions/events etc to be initiated (whilst awaiting the budget request for the full year).

On the proposal of Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Jordan it was unanimously RESOLVED; To accept the Annual Investment Policy and Risk Assessment Document.

12. **Consultation on new Model Member Code of Conduct** – *consultation to 17th August 2020 – Town Council response to be prepared.*

On the proposal of Cllr Windell, seconded by Cllr Jordan it agreed to request that the Finance & Governance Committee consider the consultation and provide a draft response for Council. Agreed by all.

13. **Date of next Town Council Meeting:**

Tuesday 28th July 2020 via Zoom. Time to be confirmed.

14. **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.*

Property matters – To receive confidential verbal report and recommendations in relation to rental sums owed.

- **Flat 1 HT** – Covid interrupted the completion of the works outstanding and tenant moved out for several weeks. Due to the inconvenience caused it was **proposed by Cllr Bradbury, seconded by Cllr Windell to provide the tenant with a rebate of £1000. Recommendation agreed by all.**
- To receive update regarding resolution made on agenda item 16c) 25th February 2020. Station Yard Redevelopment.
It was RESOLVED by a majority of 7 in favour and 2 against to complete the approval of the recommendation as contained within Rep legal sub cttee L2/2020 approved at Town Council 25th February 2020 item 16 c), in relation to present leases.