



# Saxmundham Town Council

## Minutes of the Meeting of Saxmundham Town Council 7.00pm Monday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023, Market Hall, Saxmundham

### Councillors

Di Eastman (Chair), John Findlay (Vice-Chair), John Fisher, Charlotte Hawkins, Tim Lock, James Sandbach, Jeremy Smith, Nigel Hiley, Benjamin Gulliford, Elizabeth Clark & Marianne Kiff

Also present: Katy Bailey (Town Clerk),

Open Forum: There were two members of the public.

119/22TC

105

The members of the public raised their concerns about the National Grid Ventures project which will affect the coastline as it has been earmarked for power to come onshore in the local area. Dr Therese Coffey MP has said that brown field sites should be used, eg Bradwell-on-Sea in Essex. It was noted that some 15,000 leaflets had been distributed regarding a public meeting in the town, but many people had said that they had not received the information. One member of the public had written to the Chair of the Council about her concerns, she hoped that the Council recognised the issue and would prioritise it.

Cllr. Eastman responded that Energy Projects would be a regular item on the Town Council agenda in order for the matter to be kept under close scrutiny by councillors. Cllr Eastman reassured the member of the public that the Town Council would ensure that any future public meetings would be well publicised as long as it was made aware of them and was open to the Town Council organising an open meeting on the subject in the future if it was felt that this was needed.

Cllr. Hiley added that a further planning enquiry will be held and that the Town Council should be represented at any such meeting.

120/22TC

106

### Apologies and approval for absence:

- Cllr. Clark – written and accepted.
- Cllr. Gulliford (received verbally 9/1/2023)
- Cllr. Sandbach – written and accepted.
- Cllr. Lock – absent – apologies given after meeting.

121/22TC

107

**Declaration of Interest:** Cllr. Eastman declared a non-pecuniary interest for IP17 GNS

122/22TC

108

### Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> December were presented for approval. It was noted that there was an error in the heading in that the day of the week was Monday not a Thursday. Amendments had been made to the Minutes and a revised copy circulated to Councillors before the meeting. Cllr Di Eastman went through the changes to the Minutes.

The amended Minutes are attached as Appendix i

**It was unanimously resolved to accept the amended Minutes of the meeting and the Chair signed the document.**

Signed

Date

15/2/23

123/22TC  
109

NE

**Minutes of the Previous Committee Meetings:**

**a) Resources Committee:**

It was requested that draft minutes be more detailed and that recommendations made should be recorded in minutes in future. The Draft Minutes of the Resources Committee meetings held on 8th December and 19th December 2022 **were noted**.

**b) Market Hall Management Committee:**

Cllr Jeremy Smith noted:

- That the clock had been put up outside the Market Hall
- That a quote had been received for repairs to the window adjoining Crisps.
- That costings had been requested to use Council staff to promote and support the Market Hall programme of entertainment

The draft minutes of the Market Hall Management Committee held on 8th December 2022 **were noted**.

**c) Gannon Rooms Management Committee:**

Cllr John Smith noted:

- The Licence with ABC had now been signed by all parties.
- Cllr John Smith had drafted a licence agreement with IP17 GNS.

The draft minutes of the Gannon Rooms Management Committee held on 8th December 2022 **were noted**.

**d) Events & Communications Committee:**

It was noted that the notice board outside Waitrose would be replaced.

The draft minutes of the Events and Communications Committee held 22nd December 2022 **were noted**.

Jeremy NE  
Jeremy NE

124/22TC  
110

NE

**County Councillor's Report:**

County Councillor Richard Smith:

**Sealink –**

- In response to the comments made by the member of the public at the start of the meeting, Cllr Richard Smith did receive a leaflet about the proposals, and thought that leaflets were probably delivered to all. Cllr Richard Smith did not believe this to be the fault of National Grid Ventures.
- Cllr Richard Smith did not believe the lack of circulation of information to be a serious matter as the proposal is at a very early stage in the process.
- Some Parish Councils affected by the proposal have sent a joint letter outlining their concerns and the County Council has also expressed the view that none of the sites proposed are suitable.
- As for the convertor stations, the one outside Saxmundham is the one thought most likely to happen, however Cllr Richard Smith did emphasise that this was a minimum of three, more likely five years away. The community does need to be alert to developments, but this kind of drawn out process grinds people down
- Cllr Richard Smith will be opposing the sites which have been proposed and believes that the power should come in under the sea or further south in Essex

**County Deal**

- The County Council has signed this deal with the Government which is on the Suffolk County Council website. It is a manifesto for the future of the kind of negotiations that will have to take place with the Government about gaining extra powers.
- Suffolk will not have a Mayor, but it will have a directly elected leader of the County Council. However, this is some time away, possibly 2024, but more likely to be 2025 at the same time as the County Council elections.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

15/2/23

- When the County deal is brought into effect it will bring £480 million into Suffolk from the Government over 30 years - £16 million per annum - not index linked. 40% can be used towards capital projects and 60% towards revenue projects.
- Negotiations happening with Government but Cllr Richard Smith will keep the Town Council informed of any developments.

### County Council Budget

- The Budget is nearing completion, after the County Council have worked on it for the last six months producing a balanced budget and considering the impact
- Main budget to be considered on 10<sup>th</sup> January by the County Council in an all-day meeting with the Scrutiny Committee.
- They have also been working on their carbon budget.
- The cabinet will meet at the end of the month and the full Council will meet on 9<sup>th</sup> February in order to make the final decision. The recommendation is likely to be that the Council Tax to rise by 3.99%.

Cllr Nigel Hiley asked about the County Deal and would the County Council be expected to take on extra responsibilities in exchange for the money. Cllr Richard Smith stated that the County Council may wish to, but they are not obliged. Any responsibilities picked up should be financially guaranteed.

Cllr Jeremy Smith enquired about the converter station and asked whether the County Council were able to look into the off shore option similar to the Dutch. Cllr Richard Smith is part of the committee and will raise it, but suspects that the issue is the cost.

Friston may be the favoured option for the convertor station, but the County Council will find out more over the next couple of months.

Cllr Nigel Hiley raised the concern that companies do not look at projects in conjunction with each other and the public end up paying a lot more in the long run. Cllr John Findlay added that these sorts of projects cry out for a strategic approach.

Cllr John Fisher asked how the County Council budget would impact on the libraries. Cllr Richard Smith responded that they were in early stages of negotiations to renew the contract with the libraries, possibly by March 2023, but that this had not been finalised. Cllr Richard Smith also recognised the good work that the libraries did, but could not say more at this time. Cllr Di Eastman declared a non-pecuniary interest at this point as she had recently become Chair of the Friends of Saxmundham Library Committee.

Jeremy

MS

Cllr John Smith asked if there was any risk to Saxmundham Library. Cllr Richard Smith said that as far as he was aware, the County Council had never closed a Library and in fact a new one had recently open at Moreton Hall, near Bury St Edmunds.

125/22TC

!!!

MS

### District Councillor's Report:

District Councillor John Fisher:

Cllr. Fisher did not have a lot to report.

- The main point that applied to Saxmundham was the Neighbourhood Plan which would be covered later in the meeting.
- There is an initiative with Government funding to look at affordable housing. Cllr Kiff asked how affordable is the affordable housing. Cllr John Fisher was not sure, but Cllr John Findlay thought possibly 80% of market value. Cllr Richard Smith contributed the idea of shared equity. There was then a discussion about social housing and the percentage of a development that

Signed

MS

Date

15/2/23

should be affordable.

Cllr Jeremy Smith asked about the District Council budget. Cllr John Fisher was not sure, but thought that the increase would be similar to Saxmundham.

~~126/22TC~~

112

NK

### Chair's Report

Anti-social behaviour update:

There was an Anti-Social Behaviour meeting with East Suffolk Council and the Community Support Officer in December - Katy Bailey (Town Clerk) and Cllr Di Eastman attended.

- Aggressive knocking on doors was being addressed.
- Cllr Di Eastman expressed surprise that neither the Community Support Officer nor East Suffolk Council knew about the station vandalism and their seemed a lack of liaison between the different branches of the police.
- Cllr Richard Smith knows the Police Commissioner (Tim Passmore) and said that he was disappointed that a public meeting had not been held in Saxmundham.
- Cllr Marianne Kiff asked whether there was photographic evidence or videos of the vandalism. Cllr Di Eastman said that this would be in the hands of the British Transport Police. The waiting room at the station is now locked in the afternoon.
- It was noted that there had been vandalism of plants as well as in the waiting room.
- Amy Rayner (Environment Co-ordinator) had become a station adopter.

~~127/22TC~~

113

NK

### Clerks Report

The Clerk commented on the following:

- Plaques – Memorial Field. The first run of plaques have been checked, paid for and ordered.
- Economic Development. A meeting is taking place next week with Jo Chapman and Jo McCallum, Economic Development Officers at East Suffolk. An update will be provided at the next meeting.
- Market Hall Clock. An article had been prepared for the next edition of Saxmundham News. Cllr Jeremy Smith agreed to provide a photo for the article.
- Cllr Di Eastman shared the thank you card that had been received from King Charles III. The envelope had been addressed to the people of Saxmundham as well as the Town Council and would be shown in Saxmundham News too.

~~128/22TC~~

114

NK

### Financial Matters:

- a) It was unanimously RESOLVED to note and ratify the payments and receipts for December 2022 for the Town Council, Gannon Institute and the Market Hall.
- b) The Bank balances were reported as follows:

Gannon Rooms	£4,893.83
Market Hall	£17,498.21
Town Council (Unity Bank & Cambridge BS)	£202,157.09

- c) 2023/2024 Budget:

The 2023/24 Budget had been discussed at the last Town Council Meeting and it had been resolved at the Resources Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> December that the 2023/24 budget be put forward for final approval to the January Town Council meeting.

Signed

Date

15/2/23

Cllr John Findlay reported that there should have been a motion on this Town Council Agenda to formally adopt the budget, set the precept, note the increase in the precept and the cost to a Band D property. It was therefore proposed to hold an Extraordinary Meeting of the Town Council on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> January to formally agree these budget items.

Cllr John Findlay formally proposed that an Extraordinary Meeting be held on Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> January. Cllr Nigel Hiley seconded the proposal, which was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED**.

Cllr Jeremy Smith advised that he would not be able to attend the Extraordinary Meeting, but supports the budget, the increase in the precept and the cost to a Band D property.

Cllr Nigel Hiley noted that the Litter Act had been put on the wrong line of the budget. Sharon Smith, Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), to correct.

129/22TC

115

NE

### Memorial Field

As Cllr Tim Lock was absent from the meeting, Cllr Di Eastman mentioned the watering system and Cllr Charlotte Hawkins shared her thoughts on the design for the central circle in the Memorial Garden - a mariner's compass was being considered, but other options were being researched too.

130/22TC

116

NE

### Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Jeremy Smith updated the following:

- The Examiner of the Neighbourhood plan had decided that there should be a public hearing to be held on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at the Fromus Centre at 09:30. This is the first time that East Suffolk Council have had a plan go to a public hearing. Councillors were encouraged to attend.
- There will be a meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023 in preparation for the public hearing.
- The Town Council had been invited to give a ten minute introduction which Cllr Jeremy Smith will draft, with our Consultants drafting answers to potential questions
- AECOM have also been invited.
- The Examiner hopes that it should be done in half a day, but has booked the centre for a day just in case it lasts longer.
- Cllr Jeremy Smith noted some of the questions to be discussed on Friday.

Cllr Charlotte Hawkins asked about how she could access the AECOM report. Cllr Jeremy Smith agreed to send link.

There was also a discussion about Pidgeon and the service station plans on the other side of A12.

Cllr Nigel Hiley asked a question about the Kelsale cum Carlton Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Jeremy Smith reported that he was due to meet with Cllr Julia Ewart from Kelsale cum Carlton Parish Council.

131/22TC

117

NE

### Energy Projects:

The Town Council's response to the proposals by National Grid Ventures to place a number of Interconnector Station sites in the vicinity had been completed and sent by Sharon Smith, the RFO.

132/22TC

118

NE

### Newsletters:

Hard copy newsletter: Cllr Di Eastman reported that she hoped a Council newsletter would be ready for distribution by the end of February.

Signed



Date

15/2/23

E-newsletters – Katy to approach Councillors to contribute to the e-newsletter

~~133~~/22TC

119 JK

### Reports from outside bodies

Reports received from outside bodies:

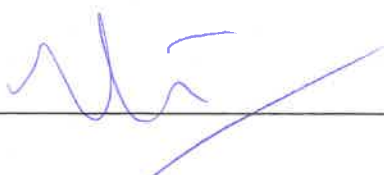
- a) CAB – Cllr James Sandbach –
  - Cllr James Sandbach absent
- b) Community Partnership – Cllr Di Eastman –
  - Cllr Di Eastman nothing to report.
- c) IP17 GNS – Cllr Di Eastman
  - IP17 GNS successfully delivered 200 Christmas lunches and had received some large donations of food recently which would help to support struggling households .
  - The Gather & Grow Club will restart on 12<sup>th</sup> January, the Line Dancing Club in February and it was hoped to hold a Funky Friday in the February half term week.
  - There had been an initial meeting about the Gannon Rooms and Cllr Jeremy Smith had drafted a licence agreement which was with Trustees for their consideration .
- d) ESTA- Cllr John Fisher - nothing to report.
- e) Footpath Warden – Cllr John Fisher –
  - Noted flooding again on path between Seaman Avenue and Mill Road. Cllr Jeremy Smith concerned about freezing over and becoming dangerous. Town Clerk to meet with Cllr John Fisher and provide report to County Council.
- f) Tree warden – Cllr John Fisher. Tree on Chantry Road to be cut back.
- g) PPG – Cllr Nigel Hiley & Cllr James Sandbach. Nothing to report.
- h) SALC – Cllr Di Eastman & Cllr John Findlay. Nothing to report.
- i) Sizewell A,B &C – Cllr James Sandbach and Cllr Nigel Hiley. The appeal against Sizewell C was postponed due to the judge being unwell

**Meeting ended at 20:50**

Katy Bailey

Clerk to Saxmundham Town Council

Signed \_\_\_\_\_



Date \_\_\_\_\_

15/2/23