



Saxmundham Town Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Saxmundham Town Council 7.30pm Wednesday 12th June 2023, Market Hall, Saxmundham

Councillors

Present: John Findlay (Chair), John Fisher, Jeremy Smith, Benjamin Gulliford, Elizabeth Clark, James Sandbach and Marianne Kiff

Also present: Katy Bailey (Town Clerk), Sharon Smith (RFO),

Open Forum: There were no members of the public present.

37/23TC **Apologies and Approvals of Absence** – Apologies were received and approved from Cllrs. Di Eastman, Charlotte Hawkins and Tim Lock

38/23TC **Members Declarations of Interests and Consideration of Requests for Dispensations**
No pecuniary or non-pecuniary Interests were declared.

39/23TC **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**
It was unanimously resolved to accept the minutes of the Saxmundham Town Council meeting held on the 15 May 2023 as a true and correct record, following the amendment of 20/23TC to state 'It was agreed to add the **exclusion** of the Gannon Institute Trust' to the Amenities and Services Committee Terms of Reference.

40/23TC **Minutes of the Previous Committee Meetings**

- a) The updated draft minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 25th April 2023 were noted.
- b) The draft minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 30th May 2023 were received.
- c) The draft minutes of the Events and Communications Committee meeting held on 2nd June 2023 were received.
- d) The draft minutes of the Planning and Development Committee meeting held on 3rd May 2023 were received.
- e) The draft minutes of the Market Hall Management Committee meeting held on 24th May 2023 were noted.
- f) The draft minutes of the Gannon Institute Management Committee meeting held on 24th May 2023 noted.

41/23TC **County Councillor's Report:**

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County Councillor Richard Smith MVO was absent and sent his apologies.

42/23TC

District Councillor's Report:

It was noted that there had been a change of political control of the Council with possible implications for Saxmundham, for example for housing developments and for Sizewell.
It was noted that there were 28 new councillors on the Council.

There was a discussion about planning, including ways in which the Town Council could remain up to date with the Local Plan review process. It was noted that the next Local Plan working group will be held on the 29th June 2023 and that Cllr. John Fisher would be attending and that a Planning forum, organised by District, would be held on 7th July 2023 at High Lodge to talk about the Planning process. The Town Clerk would forward information to Council.

43/23TC

Chair's Report

The Council received a written report from the Chair (attached as Appendix i)

44/23TC

Clerk's Report

The Town Clerk reported on developments with the Saxmundham and North East 'Connect' meeting, including

- The creation of a Wellbeing hub at The Waterloo Centre in Leiston including a number of community groups.
- a fund of £50,000 that to be distributed between different local community groups.
- a public consultation about how the fund money could be distributed.
- a further meeting in September.

45/23TC

Financial Matters 2023-2024

- a) The payments and receipts for May 2023 for the Town Council, Market Hall and Gannon Institute were noted and ratified.
- b) The bank balances at 31st May 2023 for the Town Council £130,454.67, Market Hall £15,191.42 and Gannon Institute £3,862.61 were noted.
- c) The Town Council budget versus actual income and expenditure at 31st May 2023 was reviewed. The RFO noted an overspend on Rialtas and Grounds and Maintenance.
- d) **RESOLVED-Following approval by the Gannon Institute Trust, to seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to apply for a Public Works Loan Board loan of £20,000 over the borrowing term of 10 years for the purpose of funding necessary capital expenditure to refurbish the Gannon Rooms.**
- e)
- f) It was noted that annual loan repayments would be £2,846.76 and that it was not necessary to increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments, as the existing loan on

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the Town House would shortly be paid off.

- g) It was unanimously agreed by vote to underwrite all, or part, of the proposed PWLB loan repayments of £2,846.76 per annum.

46/23TC **Neighbourhood Plan:** An update was received from Cllr. Jeremy Smith.

A referendum run by East Suffolk District Council would be held on 29th June 2023.

It was noted that leaflets, posters and banners were being produced, encouraging people to vote.

47/23TC **Energy Projects**

A report has been compiled by RFO was received. (Appendix ii)

48/23TC **Reports from Outside Bodies**

- a) CAB - Cllr. James Sandbach - nothing to report.
- b) Community Partnership - report from Cllr. Di Eastman (Appendix iii). John Fisher is now Chair for this committee.
- c) ESTA - Cllr. John Fisher - nothing to report.
- d) Footpath Warden - Cllr. Elizabeth Clark - nothing to report.
- e) Tree Warden - Cllr. John Fisher - nothing to report. It was noted that Ann Westover coordinated the tree wardens.
- f) PPG - Cllr. Tim Lock and Cllr. James Sandbach - nothing to report.
- g) SALC -a report provided from Cllr. Di Eastman (Appendix iii)
- h) Sizewell A & B - Cllr. James Sandbach - Outage is now complete.
- i) Saxmundham Welfare Charities - Cllr. James Sandbach - nothing to report.

49/23TC **To consider a motion to exclude the public under the Public Bodies** (admission to meetings) Act 1960 on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to public interest by reasons of the confidential nature of the business being transacted.

50/23TC **Staffing** - To receive a progress report from the Resources Committee on arrangements for a staffing review. It was noted that a staffing report by the Town Clerk had been prepared and was being considered by the chairs of the Council and the Resources Committee. A further report would be considered at the next meeting of the Resources Committee.

Meeting ended at 20:47

Next meeting on the 10th July 2023

Katy Bailey
Clerk to Saxmundham Town Council

Appendix i

Saxmundham Town Council

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| Committee Meeting | Town Council |
| Committee Meeting Date | 12 June 2023 |
| Item Number | 8 |

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| Report Title | Chairman’s Report |
| Report Author | Cllr Di Eastman, Chair |

My apologies for my non-attendance at this evening's Town Council Meeting, which has arisen due to unforeseen circumstances, and my thanks to Cllr John Findlay for taking the Chair in my absence.

There are two items I wanted to cover - The Arts Festival and following up on the Annual Town Meeting.

1) Saxmundham Arts Festival (10th June)

As with the 750th Anniversary celebrations, Saxmundham was blessed once again with glorious weather. I think as a first go at an arts festival, everyone involved should be congratulated on their efforts, particularly The Art Station who shouldered responsibility for putting together the programme of activities, whilst the Council’s resources concentrated on the statutory logistical items, such as road closures, waste bins, toilets, licences, etc and the Council was also able to help out financially with the hiring of a couple of generators. My thanks to Katy for helping to organise the Ceilidh in the evening, which was great fun.

No doubt, lessons can be learnt, not least ensuring the Festival does not clash with the primary school fete, and one can always do more on publicity. Talking to some of the artists they felt, as a first attempt, that the numbers attending, of all ages, was very pleasing as it can take time to build up the reputation of a festival. The food stalls and High Street food operators seemed to have had a good day and that’s important. It’s about bringing the whole of the High Street together, as much as it is about being an attractive place for stallholders to come and sell their products at such events. People being able to sit out on the pavement outside The Bell Hotel and other establishments on such a lovely summer’s day was particularly pleasing to see.

2) Following up on the Annual Town Council

Those who attended the Annual Town Meeting on 25th May will know that a number of community groups from the Town were present, with the majority making short presentations about the work that they do. There has been plenty of positive feedback from that meeting, in particular, that it was good to learn what other groups are doing and that it was nice to hear different voices, other than just from the Town Council.

I would like to build on this and, as a first step, I have written the attached article for July’s Saxmundham News (written early as the Editor is on holiday) which initially promotes volunteering, but also expresses the hope that the Town Council can develop greater dialogue with community groups in the Town over the course of the year. I hope Councillors will agree that this is a worthwhile issue to progress.

Cllr Di Eastman
Chair, Saxmundham Town Council

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING – COMMUNITY GROUPS & CHARITIES

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At the Saxmundham Annual Town Meeting on Thursday, 25th May, we were delighted to be joined by community groups and charities from the Town, a number of whom gave a short presentation on the work that they do. Their activities were varied and wide-ranging and, whilst unique in their own way, all had one thing in common – the need for more volunteers - and in some cases admin support.

If you have some spare time on your hands, you might have recently retired or moved into the Saxmundham area, why not give volunteering a go. You will find it rewarding and it's a great opportunity to make new friends.

The groups that attended were:

The Art Station

Disability Advice Service (DAS)

Fromus Centre (operated by SADCIC, Saxmundham & District Community Interest Company)

Greener Sax

IP17 Good Neighbour Scheme (IP17GNS)

Mens' Shed

Royal British Legion Saxmundham Branch

Sax Music Fest

Saxmundham Museum

Suffolk Accident Rescue Service (SARS)

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The above is not a definitive list of course, but the Town Council is keen to promote more dialogue with community groups and charities operating in the Town in an atmosphere of mutual co-operation and understanding to enhance community cohesion.

The Town Council does operate an annual Small Grants Scheme which all community organisations operating within Saxmundham can apply to. Please contact Katy Bailey, the Town Clerk at townclerk@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk for more information.

Cllr Di Eastman

Chair, Saxmundham Town Council

Signed _____ Date _____

Appendix ii

Saxmundham Town Council

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| Committee Meeting | Town Council |
| Committee Meeting Date | 12 June 2023 |
| Item Number | 12 |
| Report Title | Energy Projects Update |
| Report Author | Sharon Smith, RFO |

East Suffolk Council

The Green Party, Liberal Democrats and Independent formed a coalition group following the recent East Suffolk Council elections. A member of the coalition reported that there will be a greater focus on energy projects with the Green Party leading. They hope for more transparent processes on mitigation, more deliberation, and working together with the knowledge and insight of Town and Parish Councils and campaign groups.

The planning department intend to launch a specialised website to track all planning application movements for Sizewell C. Currently, all applications cannot be grouped and viewed as a whole and must be searched for individually. It is hoped that this launch will occur before construction begins and an alert function will be built in to inform interested parties of changes occurring with Sizewell C planning applications.

Sizewell C

The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) are seeking views on a recommended approach to community benefits for electricity transmission network infrastructure. The consultation is proposing to create voluntary guidance for industry and communities when developing individual community benefit packages as currently there is no framework for this sector. The guidance will cover how to deliver direct benefit payments to eligible individuals and wider community benefits. They also recommend establishing a recommended level of funding for community benefits in agreement with Ofgem. Energy Minister, Andrew Bowie, met with representatives from Town and Parish Councils, campaign groups and our MP on 17th May 2023. The stakeholders raised the importance of the community being involved in developing the benefits packages, ensuring they are tailored to local communities, and asked how they can be supported in developing benefit packages. The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) responded to the consultation on behalf of Town and Parish Councils (copy available on request from the RFO).

During his visit to the region, Minister Bowie visited the Sizewell B relocated facilities project and was shown the Sizewell C development site. He also visited Suffolk New College's Net Zero Centre which opened earlier this month. The centre will train young people so they are prepared for the upcoming job opportunities at Sizewell C and other energy projects in the region.

Marjorie Barnes, Head of Regional External Affairs of Sizewell C, attended the recent SALC East Suffolk Forum. She shared a project update via a slideshow and answered questions from the Town and Parish

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Councillors present. Questions included the strategy for sustainable water for the development, the 'temporary' removal of the trees at Goose Hill, the Property Price Support Scheme for Theberton, the funding model for the development, particularly the RAB model and whether the government (i.e. the public) will be liable for the development costs even if they overrun, the disparity in the publications regarding the number of the jobs proposed to be created, whether nuclear energy is necessary with the rise in renewable energy, and whether the supply chain and the skills development is in place for the construction phase. The recording of the forum is available here: [AREA FORUM - East Suffolk | SALC Website](#).

Three important permits required for Sizewell C to operate were granted by the Environment Agency earlier this year, making a significant step forward for the project. The permits allow Sizewell C to dispose of and discharge radioactive waste, to operate standby power systems using diesel generators, and to discharge returned abstracted seawater and other liquid trade effluents to the Greater Sizewell Bay in the North Sea.

Sizewell B

The station is back on the grid following the successful completion of a planned maintenance and £80 million investment programme bringing the outage to an end on 19th May 2023.

Scottish Power Renewables

An application for planning consent will shortly be submitted for a temporary compound near the old airstrip in Theberton parish for a park and ride facility for 100 cars and equipment for archaeology works in connection with the sub-station at Friston. It is deemed to be a practical location due to its concrete base and its proximity to the development site. Theberton and Eastbridge Parish Council have suggested to the developer an alternative vehicular access route to the site which may impact Saxmundham. The developer is meeting with Kelsale Parish Council and has asked for a meeting with Saxmundham Town Council to discuss the proposed vehicular routes to the compound. A suitable date and time are to be confirmed.

Campaign group Suffolk Energy Action Solutions (SEAS) was due to hear on 24th May 2023 whether its Judicial Review had been successful in the High Court. However, the presiding judge has a high workload, and a decision could take months, not weeks, to be made. The same judge also has jurisdiction over a legal challenge brought by Together Against Sizewell C (TASC) over the environmental impact of Sizewell C.

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Appendix iii

Saxmundham Town Council

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| Committee Meeting | Town Council |
| Committee Meeting Date | 12 June 2023 |
| Item Number | 13 b) and 13 g) |
| Report Title | Reports from Outside Bodies |
| Report Author | CLlr Di Eastman, Chair |

REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

13b) Community Partnership

A meeting of the Aldeburgh, Leiston, Saxmundham & Villages Community Partnership was due to take place on 31st May, but as this date was only a week after the formation of the new East Suffolk Council, it was felt that this did not give sufficient time for officers to properly brief new Councillors on the role and responsibilities of the Community Partnership. The next Community Partnership meeting is currently scheduled to take place on 6th September.

One other matter of note is that Zoe Botten, who has been the Communities Officer at East Suffolk Council for the Community Partnership, left the Council for a new job in Leiston at the end of May. Her replacement is Joss Mullett, who is currently also the Communities Officer for the Framlingham, Wickham Market & Villages Community Partnership.

13g) Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC)

I attended the last SALC Area Forum held via Zoom on 6th June, which was largely dominated by the presentation by Marjorie Barnes, Head of Regional External Affairs at Sizewell C, and subsequent question & answer session, which Sharon Smith, our RFO, has already reported on.

A progress report was provided on the meetings being held between SALC and East Suffolk Planning. Two points of note:

- 1) There was an intention to re-introduce "Planning Town & Parish Council Forums" with the aim of providing training and education on the planning process. These forums are likely to be held twice a year.
- 2) East Suffolk Council are intending to consult with Towns and Parishes on possible improvements to the pre-application advice and validation parts of the planning process as it had been acknowledged that there were regional and national variations in how the rules were applied.

The SALC AGM will be held on 19th July, via Zoom, which I will be attending.

CLlr Di Eastman

Chair, Saxmundham Town Council

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