



Saxmundham Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of Saxmundham Town Council held on Monday 11th March 2024 at the Market Hall, High Street, Saxmundham at 7:30 pm.

Minutes

142/23TC

Attendees

Cllr Di Eastman (Chair)
Cllr John Findlay (Vice-Chair)
Cllr John Fisher
Cllr Jeremy Smith
Cllr Benjamin Gulliford
Cllr Tim Lock
Cllr Charlotte Hawkins
Cllr Marianne Kiff
Cllr James Sandbach (part of the meeting)
Cllr Geraldine Barker
Cllr Elizabeth Clark

Apologies

None

Also Present

County Cllr Richard Smith
Sharon Smith (Town Clerk/RFO)
No members of the public

143/23TC

Declaration of Interests

None.

144/23TC

Open Forum

- a) County Cllr Richard Smith reported that the budget for 2024-2025 passed as proposed at the February 2024 full Council meeting. With regard to LionLink, Cllr Smith said that he understands the objections locally to the proposed converter stations. He said his reasoned objections have been overruled but all he can do is keep carrying on. A motion is to be put to the next full Cabinet meeting regarding the difficulties and distress being caused to communities. He intends to speak at this meeting and expects there will be widespread support.
- b) District Cllr John Fisher reported that the Aldeburgh, Leiston, Saxmundham and Villages Community Partnership will fund a Breakfast Club at Alde Valley High School. In response to a question from Cllr Jeremy Smith, Cllr Fisher responded that he met with Nick Kahn, ESC Strategic Director, to discuss the proposed cycle route from Saxmundham to Benhall as part of the ESC Cycling and Walking Strategy. The route had previously been designated as a leisure route therefore ESC were not considering it as part of its pilot scheme. Cllr Smith stressed the importance of the route and asked whether the Town Council needed to take a view to ensure ESC include it in their feasibility study. Cllr Fisher confirmed that there was no need to lobby ESC as the route had now been taken forward in the pilot. County Cllr Richard Smith said he would be happy to cooperate with this initiative as he is keen for cycle routes to be joined up. He has a small Highways budget which could support the Town and District Councils as a pooled resource.

145/23TC

Minutes

- a) Following a minor amendment by Cllr John Fisher, it was **unanimously resolved** to approve

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the draft minutes of the meeting held on 12th February 2024 as a true and accurate record.

- b) The Council received the minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 5th March 2024.
- c) The Council received the minutes of the Amenities and Services Committee meeting held on 21st February 2024.
- d) The Council received the minutes of the Events and Communications Committee meeting held on 22nd February 2024.
- e) The Council received the minutes of the Planning and Development Committee meeting held on 5th March 2024.
- f) The Council received the minutes of the Staffing Sub-Committee meeting held on 27th February 2024.

146/23TC

Reports

- a) The Chair reported that she and the Clerk attended the recent Community Partnership meeting which included a presentation from the Community Safety Officer at ESC on the Sizewell C Community Safety Plan. The Chair also reported that she and the Clerk attended Emergency Community Rest Centre Training delivered by ESC. The Chair explained that with the increasing likelihood of severe weather impacting Suffolk, the District Council would like to see additional Emergency Community Rest Centres being designated around the county. The purpose of these centres is to provide emergency shelter for a maximum period of 24 hours in the event of a large number of residents having to be evacuated quickly from their homes. The Chair said it would seem a sensible step for Saxmundham to have one or more Emergency Community Rest Centres and, to this end, the Chair and the Town Clerk are meeting with the ESC Emergency Planning Officer in April 2024 to help identify suitable locations.

Cllr James Sandbach arrived.

- b) Cllr John Fisher raised a concern about the Post-Office renting a large white van which is parked in front of the sorting office and extending into the highway by 4-5 feet. The Town Clerk agreed to report the potential highways obstruction to ESC parking enforcement. Cllr Fisher also noted that many Post-Office red vans are parked for long periods outside the sorting office. They do not currently receive parking tickets and the Post Office is in the process of applying for longer parking permits.
- c) The Council received a verbal report from the Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. Cllr Jeremy Smith explained that the ESC consultation regarding the modified neighbourhood plan area is underway and expires on 5th April 2024. The modified plan will allow the Council to include an expanded area of the parish and to add policies arising from the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood and the proposed converter stations. The meetings with the proposed developer of the Garden Neighbourhood are ongoing and it is hoped that a masterplan will be ready for the public exhibition scheduled for early April.
- d) The Council received and noted a report from the Town Clerk. In response to a question from Cllr Elizabeth Clark, the Clerk explained that, due to a misunderstanding, she, the Chair and Cllr Geraldine Barker unfortunately missed the opportunity to meet with the SCC Highways Community Liaison Engineer to discuss the frequently blocked culvert at North Entrance. The

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Clerk explained that the Engineer subsequently reported that he met with the Environment Agency on site and it was agreed that when the culvert is partially blocked it should be reported to SCC via the online reporting tool who will arrange for it to be cleared. The Clerk further explained that she will contact SCC to request how to report blockages, caused by sudden and prolonged downpours, which require urgent attention. The Chair raised the problem of tree cutting further upstream being undertaken by ESC contractors who leave the debris on the bank, and it is subsequently washed into the river. The Town Clerk agreed to report the matter to ESC.

- e) The Council received and noted a Crime Report from the Town Clerk. The Council discussed the recent reports of youths seen climbing on High Street roofs resulting in damage and danger to themselves. The Town Clerk said the matter had been reported twice to the police who had checked nearby CCTV but they were unable to identify the perpetrators. The police have increased patrols in the High Street. The Chair reported the matter to the ESC Anti-Social Behaviour Forum who will arrange for a Crime Reduction Officer to attend and advise the Council on preventative measures. Cllr Charlotte Hawkins reported that, due to antisocial behaviour, some train passengers were too intimidated to use the waiting room. The Chair reported that the ESC ASB Forum had received reports that younger children were subject to bullying from older children at the Memorial Field. The Chair responded that the Council will work with CYDS Youth Club to try to address this problem. Cllr Marianne Kiff asked to be involved as she has some experience in this area. It was agreed that the Town Clerk would contact CYDS and the ESC Community Officer to progress this.

147/23TC Energy Projects

- a) The Council received and noted an Energy Projects Report from the Town Clerk.
- b) Cllr Geraldine Barker reported that the LionLink Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Notification and Consultation requires a response by 4th April 2024. Cllr Barker explained that this is an opportunity for local authorities to identify areas where the developer, National Grid Ventures, has not identified appropriate measures for mitigation in its EIA, and to communicate these to the Planning Inspectorate. It was **unanimously resolved** to delegate authority to Cllr Barker to draft a response on the Council's behalf. The draft response will be circulated for the Council's review and approval before submission by the Town Clerk to the Planning Inspectorate.

148/23TC Finance Report

- a) The Council noted the payments and receipts for February 2024.
- b) The Council noted the bank balances as at 29th February 2024.
- c) The Council noted the budgeted versus actual income and expenditure report as at 29th February 2024.
- d) The Council noted the forecast to the financial year end.
- e) The Council agreed to transfer the £5,000 donation from Cllr Charlotte Hawkins to an Earmarked Reserve named Project Improvements Fund and to honour her requests for expenditure from this reserve fund. Cllr Hawkins explained that the funds were to be used to finish some Council projects beginning with the centre roundel in the Memorial Garden.

149/23TC Communications

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The Council noted the correspondence received since the last meeting.

150/23TC

Policies

- a) The Council accepted the Resources Committee recommendation to approve the Financial Regulations 2024.
- b) The Council accepted the Resources Committee recommendation to approve the Asset Register as at 31st March 2024.
- c) The Council accepted the Resources Committee recommendation to approve the Internal Controls Statement for 2023-2024.
- d) The Council accepted the Resources Committee recommendation to approve a Training and Development Policy.

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Next Meeting

The Council agreed the date and time of the next meeting which is scheduled for Monday 8th April 2024 at 7:00 pm.

The meeting closed at 8:25 pm.

Sharon Smith
Town Clerk/RFO

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