



Saxmundham Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Events and Communications Committee held on Thursday
4th June 2024 at the Town House, Station Approach, Saxmundham at 11:30 pm.

Minutes

20/24EC

Attendees

Cllr Charlotte Hawkins
Cllr Di Eastman
Cllr Geraldine Barker
Cllr Benjamin Gulliford

Also Present

Jess Palmer (Community Officer)
Sharon Smith (Town Clerk)
2 members of the public

Apologies

Cllr James Sandbach – none received

21/24EC

Declaration of Interests

None.

22/24EC

Open Forum

A member of the public identified herself as the Director of the Art Station. She wished to raise a number of items relating to the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 10th June 2024. She noted that the Town Councillors had received positive feedback about the Arts Fest from members of the public and the business community and she sought reassurance that these will be presented to full Council. She noted that the agenda for the following full Council meeting included an item to endorse a post-event analysis document in a confidential session. She questioned why the post-event analysis document was confidential. The Town Clerk explained that the post-event analysis was currently an internal document which had not yet been considered by full Council and it was reasonable for it to remain confidential until it had been reviewed and approved.

The Art Station Director said that as the Arts Fest was a collaborative event, the post-event analysis should be shared with the Art Station. Cllr Geraldine Barker reiterated that during the Events and Communications Committee meeting held on 26th June 2024, the Committee noted that the post-event analysis had positive and negative elements however certain elements might be potentially sensitive. Since there were only four Councillors present at the meeting it was considered prudent to ask the Town Council to review the feedback to ensure it was a balanced and representative view of the majority of members before a decision was made whether to present it to the Art Station.

The Art Station Director again questioned the Events and Communications Committee's decision not to pass on the post-event analysis to the Art Station or present it at their feedback meeting held on 27th June 2024. The Art Station Director noted she received an email from the Town Clerk stating that no members of the team were available to attend the meeting despite it being agreed weeks beforehand.

Cllr Benjamin Gulliford clarified that the Events and Communications Committee felt that it would be prudent to have full Council's endorsement to ensure that the post-event analysis is representative of full Council's views.

In response to a question from the Art Station Director, the Town Clerk responded that the Town Council staff compiled the document.

Signed _____ Date _____

The other member of the public present identified himself as an Art Station volunteer. In response to his question about why the Art Station team had not been approached for their input, the Town Clerk responded that the intention was to collate internal feedback for the Town Council's purposes. The volunteer responded that it seems odd that, if the desire was to present a balanced view, why the Art Station were not consulted. The Town Clerk replied that the feedback received from members of the public will also be presented to full Council at their next meeting. In response to further questions from the volunteer, the Town Clerk agreed to add any further feedback received to the post-event analysis document and confirmed that the feedback will not be filtered.

Cllr Di Eastman stated that she has not yet viewed the document and will not do so until the full Council meeting.

The Art Station Director said that they have been a major partner in the Christmas Fayre/Winter Celebration in previous years and asked for the Committee's expectation for the Art Station's contribution this year. The Community Officer responded that community groups' participation in the Christmas Fayre was included on this meeting's agenda for consideration. The Art Station volunteer asked if it is likely that a decision will be made at this meeting as the Art Station require as much notice as possible. The Town Clerk responded that it is not possible to say for certain what decisions will be taken later.

23/24EC Minutes

It was **unanimously resolved** to approve the minutes of the meetings held on 6th and 26th June 2024 as true and accurate records.

24/24EC Christmas Fayre 2024

a) The Community Officer delivered an up-to-date income and expenditure report for the event and noted that there is currently a £466 underspend and that she cannot foresee any large additional costs for the event. Further market bookings will also increase this variance. Cllr Di Eastman noted that there may be some performers to pay for such as choirs and the Royal British Legion Band.

b) Cllr Eastman updated the Committee on performer bookings for the stage. It was noted that there are currently two slots to fill within the performance schedule.

Action: Community Officer to follow up with Saxmundham Primary School, the Rabble Chorus and the Royal British Legion Band.

The Committee **unanimously resolved** to accept Cllr Di Eastman's suggestion to invite the Ukelele Band to play on the stage in the Market Hall.

Action: Community Officer to book.

It was **unanimously resolved** to host one performance stage this year, outside the Market Hall.

c) Following consideration of a range of ideas to engage other organisations within the town, it was **unanimously resolved** to:

- Invite Saxmundham Horticultural Society, The Green Team and Saxmundham WI to decorate the Market Hall.
- Invite the Art Station and St John's Church to provide free craft activities for children/families.
- Invite the Art Station to create a Chronicles of Narnia themed window decoration competition.

Signed _____ Date _____

- Invite the Guides and Scouts to marshall the event.
- Invite IP17GNS to jointly host Santa's Grotto.

Action: Community Officer to liaise with the above community groups.

25/24EC **Town Digital Consultancy**

The Community Officer informed the Committee that she attended a meeting with representatives from the Town Digital Consultancy team at East Suffolk Council. She delivered a brief outline of the consultants' recommendations to split the Town Council's current website into two separate websites: with one meeting local government statutory requirements and the other focused on the visitor experience of Saxmundham. The Community Officer showed examples of other similar towns who have successfully engaged with the project. She noted that there is a grant available which will cover a portion of the costs to complete the project.

It was **unanimously resolved** to engage further with the project and recommend to full Council that funding be allocated to the project.

26/24EC **Social Media Strategy**

The Community Officer delivered a report on the Town Council's use of social media. The report also details some recommendations to improve consistency and engagement. The Community Officer noted that promotion of small towns as a destination for retail, business and leisure is often undertaken by a business association. In the absence of such an organisation in Saxmundham, the Town Council may wish to assume responsibility in order to raise the profile of the town. She noted that the Town Council will be a constant presence in the town and will offer continuity to ensure the promotion of culture, business and community. The social media report recommends that the Town Council introduces a new, commercially focused profile across multiple platforms aimed at marketing Saxmundham.

The Councillors noted the similarities in theme with the proposed website project and the social media strategy and that both represent a large piece of work for the Town Council. The Committee **unanimously agreed** with Cllr Benjamin Gulliford endorsement of the document and recommendation that this work be combined into one over-arching project to re-strategise the town's digital communications as a whole. Cllr Di Eastman noted that full Council may wish for the project to form part of the Town Council's Strategic Plan. Cllr Charlotte Hawkins noted Halesworth's success in incorporating physical signs and directional posts into their project and suggested Saxmundham may consider similar. Cllr Benjamin Gulliford suggested that the Committee decide on some campaign/platform names so that they can be ringfenced for future use.

Action: Community Officer to conduct research into handles being used by similar towns and present some options to the Committee at the next meeting. Community Officer to conduct research into demographics to see how social media is being used to inform the Council where best to aim their efforts on digital communication.

It was **unanimously resolved** that the Committee will recommend to full Council that a digital communication project be undertaken, following the Community Officer's recommendations.

27/24EC **Remembrance Sunday 2024**

The Town Clerk reported that she had contacted the Royal British Legion to ascertain their requirements for the Town Council to support their Act of Remembrance parade.

Signed _____ Date _____

It was **unanimously resolved** to approve expenditure of £50 for the road closure. Cllr Di Eastman mentioned that Suffolk County Council have previously waived road closure fees and East Suffolk Council have previously waived car parking fees for civic parades.

Action: Town Clerk to request waiver of fees.

It was **unanimously resolved** to approve expenditure of £75 for three poppy wreaths.

28/24EC Next meeting

It was noted that the next Committee meeting will be held on Thursday 5th September 11:30am

The meeting closed at 1:15pm.

Jess Palmer
Community Officer

Signed _____ Date _____