



# Saxmundham Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of Saxmundham Town Council held on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025  
at the Market Hall, High Street, Saxmundham at 7:00 pm.

## Minutes

### 124/24TC Attendees

Cllr John Findlay (Chair)  
Cllr Geraldine Barker (Vice-Chair)  
Cllr Nick Jackson  
Cllr Marianne Kiff  
Cllr John Fisher  
Cllr Elizabeth Clark

### Apologies

Cllr Jeremy Smith  
Cllr Tim Lock  
Cllr David Humphreys  
Cllr James Sandbach – none received

### Also Present

Sharon Smith (Town Clerk/RFO)  
County Cllr Richard Smith  
6 members of the public

### 125/24TC Declaration of Interests

None.

### 126/24TC Open Forum

- a) A member of the public reiterated his concern raised last month about the increase in litter. The Chair explained the steps the Town Council had taken since his last report.
- b) A member of the public asked the Town Council if they were aware of the Kelsale and District Wildlife Action Group and their published environmental strategy. The Town Clerk replied that she was aware but had not yet shared the booklet with the Council. The member of the public said he would like to see an environmental policy linking the three parishes along the River Fromus. To initiate this, he is preparing a proposal to increase the biodiversity at the Memorial Field which he will submit for the Council's consideration via its Environment Coordinator.
- c) County Cllr Richard Smith reported that the County Council budget for next financial year will be considered and approved shortly. It is proposed to increase the Council Tax element by 4.99% which is the maximum without a referendum. The increase is necessary to support challenges arising from the minimum wage rises and national insurance contributions for social care staff. The County Council's net spend is £803 million per annum of which 77% is required for social care for the elderly and safeguarding vulnerable adults and children.

Cllr Richard Smith also reported that there is a lot of misinformation circulating about the proposals for local government reorganisation. He explained that Suffolk is on the government's priority list which will see the current District, County and Borough Councils abolished to be replaced by one or more unitary authorities. Preliminary business cases from the existing Councils are to be submitted by the end of March 2025

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

followed by full business cases in September 2025. The County Council elections scheduled for May 2026 will be delayed by one year to allow the business case to be prepared. The government is also keen to have a directly elected mayoral authority to cover Suffolk and Norfolk, to be appointed in May 2026. In response to a question from Cllr John Fisher, Cllr Richard Smith responded that the government would decide whether County Council elections will be held in May 2027 and there may be a shadow council in place for one year. Cllr Smith also said the government will conduct a public consultation regarding the mayoral combined authority and any decisions regarding this and local government reorganisation will ultimately be taken by the government.

d) District Cllr John Fisher reported that the District Council may have a different view to the County Council about local government reorganisation, but no decisions have been made. In response to a question from Cllr Geraldine Barker, Cllr John Fisher responded that Cllr Tom Daly usually attends Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project meetings.

#### **127/24TC Minutes**

- a) Cllr John Fisher requested an amendment to 116/24TCe to reflect that the matter was agreed but not unanimously resolved. Following acceptance of this amendment, it was **unanimously resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025.
- b) The Council received the draft minutes from the:
  - i. Resources Committee meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025.
  - ii. Amenities and Services Committee meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2025.
  - iii. Events and Communications Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2024.
  - iv. Planning and Development Committee meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

#### **128/24TC Casual Vacancies**

The Town Clerk reported that six expressions of interest had been received for the two Councillor vacancies. It was **unanimously resolved** to postpone decisions regarding co-option until the next meeting to allow for firm applications to be received from eligible candidates.

#### **129/24TC Reports**

- a) The Vice-Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group reported that meetings continue with the consultants to modify the Neighbourhood Plan to include policies which address the Garden Neighbourhood and the proposed converter stations.
- b) The Council received a written report from the Town Clerk and noted that the latest Crime Statistics were not available.

#### **130/24TC Energy Projects**

- a) The Chair of the Fromus Energy Projects Team summarised her written report which is published on the Town Council website.
- b) It was **unanimously resolved** to approve a draft response from the Chair of the Fromus Energy Projects Team to the House of Lords Energy Grid and Grid Connections Inquiry.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### 131/24TC Strategic Plan

The Council received the draft Strategic Plan. It was agreed to provide the Town Clerk with feedback prior to its publication for community consultation next month.

### 132/24TC Finance

- a) The Council received the payments, receipts and bank balances to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025.
- b) The Council received the budget versus actual income and expenditure report as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 including a forecast to the financial year end.
- c) It was **unanimously resolved** to accept the Resources Committee recommendation to adopt the revised budget for the financial year 2025-2026.
- d) It was **unanimously resolved** to accept the Resources Committee recommendation to adopt the forecasted budget for the financial years 2026-2027 and 2027-2028.

### 133/24TC Policies and Procedures

- a) It was **unanimously resolved** to accept the Resources Committee recommendation to approve a new Sexual Harassment Policy.
- b) It was **unanimously resolved** to accept the Events and Communications Committee recommendation to approve the biennial review of the Communications Policy and the Website Accessibility Statement.

### 134/24TC Correspondence

The Town Council noted the correspondence received since the last meeting.

### 135/24TC Next Meeting

The Town Council noted the date and time of the next meeting which is scheduled for 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 7:00 pm.

The meeting closed at 8:30 pm.

**Sharon Smith**  
**Town Clerk/RFO**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_