



# Saxmundham Town Council

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

## Minutes

### 136/24TC Attendees

Cllr John Findlay (Chair)  
Cllr Elizabeth Clark  
Cllr Nick Jackson  
Cllr Marianne Kiff  
Cllr John Fisher  
Cllr Jeremy Smith  
Cllr Tim Lock  
Cllr James Sandbach – part of the meeting

### Apologies

Cllr Geraldine Barker (Vice-Chair)  
Cllr David Humphreys

### Also Present

Sharon Smith (Town Clerk/RFO)  
10 members of the public

### 137/24TC Declaration of Interests

None.

### 138/24TC Open Forum

- a) A member of the public asked the Council to raise awareness about the 3 Communities Cycling Link Project which aims to improve active travel routes through Benhall, Saxmundham and Kelsale. The Chair confirmed the Town Council supports the initiative, and it is embedded within the Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Jeremy Smith noted the project was championed by Action Sax. Cllr John Fisher added that Benhall Parish Council is leading the charge, and the scheme is now a flagship project support by both East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council.
- b) A member of the public reiterated ongoing concerns about litter and encouraged the Council to involve local businesses in keeping their premises tidy.
- c) A representative from the Rapid Relief Team introduced the charity, which provides emergency response support to first responders. He shared recent involvement in a litter pick in Aldeburgh and their open day to raise community awareness at IP17 GNS.
- d) District Cllr John Fisher reported on proposed local government reorganisation. Suffolk County Council has suggested forming a single unitary authority for the county, while District Councils and Ipswich Borough Council are working on alternative proposals involving two or three authorities. He also expressed concern that the proposed Mayoral Combined Authority would centralise power rather than devolve it. Cllr Fisher also shared concerns about the future of Suffolk Libraries. Although Suffolk County Council is responsible for the service, District Council staff are involved. He noted that the County's intention to bring the service in-house appears disingenuous, given that Suffolk Libraries, as a charity, has delivered strong service under financial pressure. Increased costs linked to the minimum wage and national insurance contributions have put the current tender process under strain.

### 139/24TC Minutes

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

- a) it was **unanimously resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025.
- b) The Council received the draft minutes from the:
  - i. Resources Committee meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025.
  - ii. Amenities and Services Committee meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2025.
  - iii. Events and Communications Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2025.
  - iv. Planning and Development Committee meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025.
  - v. Staffing Sub-Committee held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025.

#### **140/24TC Casual Vacancies**

The Chair reported that four eligible applications had been received for the two vacant Town Councillor seats. The Chair voting process was outlined, and it was agreed that voting would take place by secret ballot. It was **unanimously resolved** to co-opt Georgina Burns to fill the first vacancy and it was **resolved by majority** to co-opt Laura Purina to fill the second vacancy. Both signed their Declarations of Acceptance of Office, witnessed by the Town Clerk, and took their seats immediately.

*Cllr James Sandbach joined the meeting and offered apologies for his late arrival.*

#### **141/24TC Wildlife Action Group**

A Green Team volunteer presented a proposal to establish a Saxmundham Wildlife Action Group, modelled on the successful Kelsale Biodiversity Group. The Council expressed support in principle but requested further clarification on how the new group would align with the established Green Team and Blue Spaces Saxmundham. The volunteer also submitted a proposal to increase biodiversity at the Memorial Field. It was agreed that the Amenities and Services Committee would consider the proposal as part of its broader aspirations for the site.

#### **142/24TC Reports**

- a) The Chair of the Town Council attended a recent workshop led by the MP on NHS priorities, where there was renewed optimism around the development of a new medical centre for the town. The Chair also participated in the latest meeting of the Aldeburgh, Leiston and Saxmundham Community Partnership, where funding was awarded to The Art Station to facilitate wellbeing walks.
- b) The Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group reported that work is underway to draft new chapters addressing the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood and mitigatory policies for the proposed converter stations.
- c) The Chair of the Fromus Energy Projects Team summarised a written report previously circulated and published on the Town Council website.
- d) The Town Clerk summarised her previously circulated reported, which included Crime Statistics.

#### **143/24TC Finance**

- a) The Council received the payments, receipts and bank balances to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

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

b) The Council received the budget versus actual income and expenditure report as at 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025 including a forecast to the financial year end.

#### **144/24TC Strategic Plan**

Following comments from Councillors, it was **unanimously resolved** to initiate public consultation on the draft Strategic Plan and to amend the document as appropriate in response to feedback received from both the community and Councillors.

#### **145/24TC Consultations**

It was agreed that individual Councillors would submit their own responses to the government's consultation on the proposed Mayoral Combined County Authority.

#### **146/24TC Training**

It was **unanimously resolved** to accept the Staffing Sub-Committee's recommendation to commission training for all Councillors and staff.

#### **147/24TC Policies**

a) It was **unanimously resolved** to approve:

- i. the annual review of the Asset Register
- ii. the annual review of the Model Publication Scheme
- iii. the annual review of the Internal Controls Statement
- iv. the annual review of the Community Grants Policy and Application Form.
- v. a new Celebration Leave Policy

b) The Council also received and considered a draft policy on Councillors Representing the Town Council. It was agreed that the content would be incorporated as guidance within the existing Communications Policy.

#### **148/24TC Correspondence**

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

#### **149/24TC Next Meeting**

The Town Council noted the date and time of the next meeting which is scheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at 7:00 pm.

The meeting closed at 8:35 pm.

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

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