

Saxmundham Town Council

Committee Meeting	Civic and Community
Meeting Date	1 st May 2025
Item Number	5e
Report Title	Wild Words Suffolk
Report Author	Community Officer

Background

Wild Words is a community project led by Jane Spencer-Rolfe and Mai Black, two Suffolk authors. The project is a travelling outreach programme aimed at harnessing and promoting creativity and wellbeing across the county.

The Wild Words postbox travels around Suffolk, stopping at community hubs, cafés, and publicly accessible spaces and members of the public are encouraged to sit down and write something based on a prompt.

[Writing workshops](#) are also available from the group for an additional fee, starting from £110.

Invitation to Saxmundham

The Community Officer has been in touch with Jane and Mai enquiring about bringing the Wild Words box to Saxmundham for the following reasons/benefits:

- Saxmundham has a rich history of creativity and artistic expression.
- The Literary Workshop at 2024 Arts Festival was very well attended and well received.
- The project has a good presence in the media and online which will raise the profile of Saxmundham by association.
- It is a (potentially) free event which can encourage community togetherness, creativity and collective pride.
- The project is inclusive and open to all. There are no barriers to entry.

Correspondence:

Hi Jess, thank you for getting in touch with us. We would love to bring the Wild Words Suffolk project to Saxmundham.

We are currently being hosted in Framlingham Library, and then we'll be at the Ink Festival in Halesworth. After that we are off to Carlton Marshes Suffolk Wildlife for 10 days, and have also been invited to run a workshop at that hosting.

Later in May, the project will have a presence at Suffolk Poetry Festival, at The John Peel Centre in Stowmarket, and at the end of May we are planning a week or so in Southwold to hopefully capture some Wild Words to visitors to seaside Suffolk over Witsun Bank Holiday week. Would you be able to host us later on, in the summer sometime? Have you got a public space in mind? The Framlingham hosting in the Library is a first as up until now we have been in Cafe spaces, which seems to have worked well, as people are likely to time to sit at a table and write something, fairly spontaneously.

We have also had a hosting at a Care Home in Woodbridge for a few days, and Mai Black ran a 2 hour workshop at their instigation and invitation (for which she was paid), offering some more structured activities with the residents. It was tremendous fun, and they enjoyed the opportunity to do some wild writing, and get creative in a new way.

Generally though, it is completely FREE to simply host, and post in the box.

Here is a link on Mai Black's Suffolk Writers Group website, who has helped and supported Jane since the project was launched in October 2024. This gives a summary of the project to date.

<https://suffolkwritersgroup.com/wild-words-suffolk/>

We look forward to hearing from you, with your ideas and suggestions for Saxmundham.

Best wishes

Jane Spencer-Rolfe and Mai Black

Options:

- Collaborate with a business or organisation within Saxmundham to host Wild Words and support with promotion.
- Host Wild Words in a Town Council building or at a Town Council event.

Recommendation

Saxmundham Town Council hosts Wild Words in the Market Hall, along with a writing workshop and associated activities. Perhaps this could link with the September indoor market.



Saxmundham Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Events and Communications Committee held on Thursday
17th March 2025 at the Town House, Station Approach, Saxmundham at 2:30 pm.

Minutes

61/24EC

Attendees

Cllr Nick Jackson
Cllr Geraldine Barker
Cllr John Findlay (Ex Officio)

Apologies

Cllr James Sandbach

Also Present

Jess Palmer (Community Officer)
Sharon Smith (Town Clerk)

62/24EC

Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensations from members on matters in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest, other registerable interest, or non-registerable interest.

63/24EC

Open Forum

There were no members of the public present.

64/24EC

Minutes

It was **unanimously resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 6th February 2025 as a true and accurate record.

65/24EC

Matters Arising

- a) The Community Officer delivered an update on the status of the website project and plans to commission designs for Committee symbols, both projects are ongoing.
- b) The Committee noted that the Communications Policy had been approved by the Town Council despite not being recommended by the Committee. The Town Clerk explained that the policy required further review and will therefore be tabled for approval by the Committee shortly.

65/24EC

Events

- a) VE Day: It was **unanimously resolved** to hold a VE Day picnic to coincide with the Saturday market on 10th May. Subject to the landowner's permission, the Committee identified the fenced area in Fromus Square as their preferred location. The Committee noted the short timescales and agreed that, if possible, a band should be hired, bunting erected, and they suggested key people to invite.
- b) The Committee noted that a bid for funding from the East Suffolk Council Arts and Culture Grant Scheme was unsuccessful. However, a grant of £5,000 has been awarded from the Town Economic Development Team for increased staffing resource to support events.

66/24EC

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 1st May at 11:30am.

Signed _____ Date _____

The meeting closed at 12:15 pm

Jess Palmer
Community Officer

Signed _____ Date _____

VE Day Community Picnic 2025

Category	Item	Responsibility	Status	Comments
Overall	Agree date and timing of the event	Events and Communications Committee	Green	Saturday 10 May 2025
	Approve delegation of authority to members and officers	Events and Communications Committee	Red	
	Ask permission from land owner	Community Officer	Green	Agreed by phone 06.03.25
Infrastructure/overall organisation	Book Market Hall in case of extreme weather	Community Officer	Green	Done (9 am - 2 pm)
	Gather a team of volunteers	Town Clerk/Chair/Community Officer	Red	
	Ask land owner for use of his tables and chairs	Community Officer	Red	
	Ask Maintenance Officer about small tables	Community Officer	Red	
	Ask neighbouring Parish Councils for loan of small tables?	Town Clerk	Red	
	Check whether Shepherd's hut will be in use	Community Officer	Red	
	Complete risk assessment	Town Clerk	Red	
	Write a checklist of activity for the day (for staff and volunteers)	Community Officer	Red	
Communication with stakeholders	Liaise with Black Dog Deli	Community Officer	Yellow	In progress, awaiting a response re their special offer.
	Liaise with Market Traders re special offers	Community Officer	Green	
	Liaise with IP17GNS re craft activity	Community Officer	Yellow	
	Liaise with Waitrose re opening the café doors	Community Officer/Cllr /Cllr Barker	Red	
	Liaise with Bearded Stag Barbers	Community Officer	Green	He is happy
	Liaise with Claude Cox book shop	Community Officer	Red	
	Notify Poppy Appeal	Community Officer/Cllr Barker	Green	Invited to help plan and/or attend - not able to attend
	Notify Saxmundham Museum	Community Officer/Cllr Barker	Yellow	Invited to help plan and/or attend
	Notify Royal British Legion	Community Officer	Yellow	Invited to help plan and/or attend
	Invite District Councillor	Town Clerk/Chair	Red	
	Invite Julia Ewart	Town Clerk/Chair	Red	
	Invite MP	Town Clerk/Chair	Red	
Entertainment	Hire a band and/or PA system	Town Clerk	Green	Cool Vibes Jazz
	Secure electricity source or hire generator	Community Officer	Red	
	Create a playlist	Community Officer	Red	
	Plan an activity	Community Officer/IP17GNS	Yellow	IP17GNS confirmed their attendance - awaiting confirmation of activity and cost of materials
	Liaise with ABC Radio regarding OB	Community Officer	Yellow	Requested - awaiting reply
	Agree a commemoration speech or event?	Cllr Jackson/Community Officer	Yellow	
	Obtain TEN for live music	Community Officer	Yellow	Application submitted, payment needs to be made
Marketing and promotion	Create event poster	Community Officer	Green	
	Write event blurb	Community Officer	Green	
	Create a social media campaign	Community Officer	Green	
	Put posters out around town	Town Clerk	Green	
	Distribute posters to High Street shops	Cllr Barker	Yellow	Printed and awaiting delivery
	Notify local radio stations	Community Officer	Red	
	Create A-board signs to go outside Waitrose	Community Officer	Red	
Decorations	Purchase bunting	Town Clerk	Yellow	WI are allowing us to re-use theirs - smaller size=6x10m larger size 2x20m of stiff paper bunting.
	Purchase table cloths	Town Clerk	Red	
	Purchase flowers/vases/table decorations	Town Clerk	Red	
Market	Liaise with Asst Town Clerk re market layout	Community Officer	Green	Plan confirmed
	Liaise with Asst Town Clerk re curated stalls	Community Officer	Green	She will start to select traders to cold-email and invite
	Measure Fromus Square dimensions to inform market layout	Maintenance Officer	Green	