



# Saxmundham Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of Saxmundham Town Council held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2025  
at the Market Hall, High Street, Saxmundham at 7:00 pm.

## Minutes

### 27/25TC Attendees

Cllr John Findlay (Chair)  
Cllr Geraldine Barker (Vice Chair)  
Cllr Nick Jackson  
Cllr John Fisher  
Cllr Elizabeth Clark  
Cllr David Humphreys  
Cllr Georgina Burns  
Cllr Laura Purina  
Cllr Jeremy Smith

### Apologies

Cllr Tim Lock  
Cllr Marianne Kiff  
Cllr James Sandbach – none received

### Also Present

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

### 28/25TC 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.

### 29/25TC Open Forum

- a) A member of the public asked about the potential impact of the proposed Sea Link traffic on Church Street. Cllr Geraldine Barker explained that the Town Council's Relevant Representation to the Sea Link examination raised significant concerns regarding the cumulative effects of construction noise, prolonged working hours, HGV movements, and site-related traffic, all of which pose serious risks to the physical and mental wellbeing of residents. The Representation specifically highlighted that properties on Church Street and Church Hill are particularly vulnerable, as many front doors open directly onto a narrow pavement without a front garden or buffer zone, leaving residents highly exposed to noise, vibration, and reduced air quality at close proximity.
- b) County Cllr Richard Smith apologised for not attending the Annual Town Meeting, explaining that he had been required to attend a late-running County Council meeting. Cllr Smith noted that the Town Council would be considering later in the agenda whether to support walking and cycling improvements between Benhall and Saxmundham. He expressed his hope that such improvements might eventually be extended to Kelsale in the medium term, although he acknowledged the difficulties in providing a cycle path through the town centre. Cllr Smith also reported that he had visited the Head Teacher of the Primary School, who outlined several current challenges that he will follow up with the County Council. He further advised that the County Council's consultation on Local Government Reorganisation is ongoing. Cllr Smith mentioned that the government's Spending Review is expected shortly, and he hopes it will include increased funding and greater certainty for local government. Finally, he referred the disturbance caused by Sizewell C night trains. However, he noted that the introduction of continuous

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welded track has significantly improved the situation.

Cllr David Humphreys raised a concern that the secondary school site has now been closed for a year, which may lead to deterioration of the buildings and increased costs to bring them back into use, including for any proposed SEND provision. Cllr Humphreys expressed support for the SEND proposal but noted that the site is significantly larger than required for this purpose alone. He asked how the Town Council might lobby for the site to be developed in a way that benefits the wider town and ensures a connection with the proposed South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood. Cllr Smith responded that the site is the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Education, and there may be further information in the forthcoming Spending Review regarding funding commitments. Cllr Humphreys stated that he intends to write, as a resident, to the Secretary of State for Education, copying in the local MP, to highlight concerns about the buildings being left to deteriorate and the accelerating decline caused by their prolonged vacancy, particularly given their construction era. Cllr Smith noted that a new block was opened for SEND provision in 2022, which he hopes is being maintained appropriately. He added that some of the other buildings may not be suitable for renovation and could ultimately be redeveloped. He acknowledged the community's strong desire to see the site brought back into use.

- c) District Cllr John Fisher advised that he had no updates to report.
- d) The Art Station requested permission to show a video summarising their free arts and learning programme delivered over the past year, which they were unable to present at the Annual Town Meeting due to time constraints. The Director of The Art Station responded to a question from Cllr Jeremy Smith regarding future plans, which include an Arts Fest next year, exploring ways in which culture can bring together people and buildings along the High Street, and developing partnerships with other organisations to benefit both The Art Station and the wider community. Cllr Nick Jackson expressed his support for the work of The Art Station, noting that it is important for art and culture to form a central part of the town's identity, rather than it being defined solely by its shops.

*Cllr John Findlay temporarily withdrew from the meeting, and Cllr Geraldine Barker assumed the Chair for the following item.*

### **30/25TC Minutes**

- a) It was **unanimously resolved** to approve the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025.
- b) The Council received the draft minutes from the:
  - i. Resources Committee meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025.
  - ii. Amenities and Services Committee meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025.
  - iii. Events and Communications Committee meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025.
  - iv. Planning and Development Control Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025.
  - v. Staffing Committee meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2025.

*Cllr John Findlay rejoined the meeting and resumed his role as Chair.*

### **31/25TC Reports**

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- a) Cllr Geraldine Barker, Chair of the Fromus Energy Projects Team, summarised her report, which had been previously circulated and is available on the Council's website. The Town Council noted that HGVs bound for the Scottish Power Renewables substation site at Friston are currently permitted by Suffolk County Council to pass through the town centre until the dedicated access road is constructed. It was **unanimously resolved** to strongly oppose this arrangement.
- b) The Town Clerk summarised her previously circulate report including Crime Statistics.

### 32/25TC Neighbourhood Plan

- a) Cllr Jeremy Smith, Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, summarised his report, which had been previously circulated.
- b) Following a minor correction proposed by Cllr David Humphreys, it was **unanimously resolved** to approve the Regulation 14 Pre-Submission Draft Modified Plan for submission to the local planning authority and to commence the statutory consultation.
- c) Following discussion and due consideration, it was unanimously resolved to delegate authority to the Chair of the Town Council, the Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, and the Town Clerk to amend the Statement to Accompany the Pre-Submission Draft Modified Plan. The amendment will clarify that the Town Council, as the qualifying body, does not consider the modifications to be so significant or substantial as to change the overall nature of the existing Neighbourhood Plan. However, this position remains subject to the subsequent views of East Suffolk Council and the independent examiner at later stages of the process.

### 33/25TC 3 Communities Link - Community Infrastructure Levy Bid

It was **unanimously resolved** to support a CIL bid by East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council for walking and cycling improvements between Benhall and Saxmundham.

### 34/25TC Financial Year 2024-2025

- a) It was **unanimously resolved** to approve the Annual Income and Expenditure Accounts for the financial year 2024-2025.
- b) It was **unanimously resolved** to approve the Annual Balance Sheet as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.
- c) It was **unanimously resolved** to approve the Annual Bank Reconciliation for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.
- d) It was **unanimously resolved** to approve the Internal Audit Effectiveness Review for the financial year 2025-2025.
- e) Following an explanation from the Town Clerk regarding the 'no' response to question 4, it was **unanimously resolved** to publish the explanation and approve the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

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- f) It was **unanimously resolved** to approve the Accounting Statements (Section 2) of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.
- g) It was **unanimously resolved** to approve the revised Community Infrastructure Levy Report for the financial year 2025-2026.
- h) The Council received the Annual Earmarked Reserves Report for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.
- i) The Council noted the period for the exercise of public rights from 10 June 2025 to 21 July 2025.
- j) The Council received the Internal Audit Report for the financial year 2024-2025 and it was **unanimously resolved** to address the recommendations therein.

### **35/25TC Finance**

- a) The Council received the payments, receipts and bank balances to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2025.
- b) The Council received the budget versus actual income and expenditure report to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2025.

### **36/25TC External Bodies**

It was **unanimously resolved** to appoint the following members to represent the Town Council on the following external bodies:

- i. Cllr Geraldine Barker - East Suffolk Council/Suffolk County Council – Energy Projects Cabinet Members and Officers
- ii. Cllr Jeremy Smith, Cllr John Findlay, Cllr Geraldine Barker and Cllr Nick Jackson - East Suffolk Council – Neighbourhood Plan Officers
- iii. Cllr Laura Purina - East Suffolk Council - Aldeburgh, Leiston and Saxmundham Community Partnership
- iv. Cllr Geraldine Barker - East Suffolk Communities Energy Partnership
- v. Cllr John Fisher - East Suffolk Travellers Association
- vi. Cllr Geraldine Barker - Sizewell C – Southern Transport Forum. It was **unanimously resolved** to withdraw the Town Council's representation from the Northern Transport Forum as the Southern Transport Forum more directly addresses issues relevant to the town, and that attending both forums resulted in duplication of information.
- vii. Cllr John Findlay - Suffolk Association of Local Councils
- viii. Cllr Laura Purina - Saxmundham Surgery Patient Participation Group

### **37/25TC Next Meeting**

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

The meeting closed at 8:30 pm.

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

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