



Saxmundham Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of Saxmundham Town Council held on Monday 14th July 2025
at the Market Hall, High Street, Saxmundham at 7:00 pm.

Minutes

42/25TC Attendees

Cllr John Findlay (Chair)
Cllr Geraldine Barker (Vice Chair)
Cllr Marianne Kiff
Cllr John Fisher
Cllr Elizabeth Clark
Cllr David Humphreys
Cllr Georgina Burns
Cllr Laura Purina
Cllr Jeremy Smith
Cllr Tim Lock

Apologies

Cllr Nick Jackson
Cllr James Sandbach – none received

Also Present

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

43/25TC 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.

44/25TC Open Forum

- a) A member of the public raised concerns about noise disturbance caused by overnight resurfacing works at the Waitrose supermarket car park. The resident had reported the issue to the contractors on site and to East Suffolk Council's Environmental Health team but had not received a satisfactory response. The Chair expressed sympathy and asked the Town Clerk to escalate the matter by writing to Waitrose Head Office.
- b) A member of the public asked about the Town Council's position on the proposed South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood and what could be done to oppose what they described as an ill-conceived plan.

The Chair responded that the Council has engaged with the developer, Pigeon, over a long period. He noted that the Council had successfully opposed earlier proposals to build on The Layers, which led to the development being relocated to its current proposed site.

Cllr Jeremy Smith explained that the site is allocated for development in the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, which identifies Saxmundham as a 'growth node' due to its strategic location between Lowestoft and Ipswich, and its good road and rail links. During the Local Plan process, the Town Council had argued for growth to be directed to the west and east of the town instead, but this was not successful.

He clarified that while the Neighbourhood Plan cannot override the Local Plan, it can influence how the development takes shape by adding detailed policy guidance. Cllr Smith also noted that the Town Council has not supported the proposed addition of a service area adjacent to the employment land, as this land

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is not allocated in the Local Plan. However, East Suffolk Council may still grant consent, so the Town Council has been lobbying for meaningful community benefits, such as an indoor sports centre, although no final decisions have been made.

The Chair concluded by stating that these issues are being carefully considered and that the Town Council has spent a significant amount of time engaging with the process. However, he acknowledged that the Town Council's powers to oppose allocated development are limited.

- c) District Councillor John Fisher reported that the principal issue currently under consideration by East Suffolk Council is Local Government Reorganisation. The District Council is expected to formally debate its position at a meeting next week, although there appears to be growing support for a three-unitary model. Cllr Fisher commented that this approach seems sensible, noting that the difference in projected costs between the available options is likely to be minimal. He added that local authorities have already demonstrated their ability to work collaboratively where needed, while also maintaining distinct operational functions.

45/25TC Minutes

- a) It was **unanimously resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 9th June 2025.
- b) It was **unanimously resolved** to approve the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 16th June 2025.

46/25TC Committee Minutes

- a) The Council received the draft minutes from the Resources Committee meeting held on 8th July 2025.
- b) The Council received the draft minutes from the Civic and Community Committee meeting held on 3rd July 2025.

47/25TC Reports

- a) The Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group reported that there was no written update as matters are currently in active progress.

The NPSG is consulting on the Modified Neighbourhood Plan, with the proposed changes primarily focused on responding to the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood and major energy infrastructure projects. Approximately 50 people attended a public exhibition to view the proposed modifications, which aim to shape forthcoming developments through strengthened local policies.

It was noted that the developer, Pigeon, also held a consultation event attended by around 200 people. As Pigeon's consultation will close before the next Town Council meeting, it was agreed that the NPSG will prepare a draft response for approval by the Town Council, which will be ratified at the following meeting.

As part of the process, the Suffolk Design Panel conducted a site visit to the Garden Neighbourhood area and subsequently held a formal discussion on Pigeon's proposals, observed by members of the NPSG.

The NPSG is scheduled to meet next week with East Suffolk Council planners to discuss the current status of both the Garden Neighbourhood and the Modified Neighbourhood Plan.

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- c) Cllr Geraldine Barker, Chair of the Fromus Energy Projects Team, provided a summary of her written report, which had been circulated in advance and is available on the Town Council's website.

Cllr Barker reported that the Planning Inspectorate has reopened the registration period for Interested Parties in the Sea Link examination due to a procedural error in the original publication. This has delayed the formal start of the examination and may result in it overlapping with the forthcoming statutory consultation on the Lion Link project, creating an additional burden for affected communities.

The Planning Inspectorate has also requested that National Grid submit further supporting information for the Sea Link application, including photomontages showing the cumulative visual impact of the proposed Sea Link and Lion Link converter stations.

Cllr Barker expressed disappointment that the Inspectorate had conducted unaccompanied site visits, despite the Town Council's request in its Relevant Representation to participate in these visits and provide local context.

- c) The Town Clerk summarised her previously circulated report including Crime Statistics.

48/25TC Finance

- a) The Town Council received the payments, receipts and bank balances to 30th June 2025.
b) The Town Council received the budget versus actual income and expenditure report to 30th June 2025.

49/25TC Policies

It was **unanimously resolved** to accept recommendations from the Staffing Committee and the Resources Committee to approve:

- a) the revised Appraisal Policy and Form.
b) the annual renewal of the Open Spaces Policy
c) the annual renewal of the Complaints Policy
d) the annual review of the Vexatious Contacts Policy
e) the biennial review of the Equality and Diversity Policy

50/25TC Councillor Training

The Town Council considered arrangements for group Councillor training to be delivered by SALC in September 2025. As members did not have their diaries to hand, it was agreed that a suitable date would be identified and confirmed outside of the meeting.

51/25TC Acquisition of Fromus Green

Following consideration of a report from the Town Clerk, it was **unanimously resolved** to pursue the potential acquisition of Fromus Green, including the play park, from East Suffolk Council.

Members acknowledged that several matters would need to be negotiated and clarified before any transfer could proceed. These include the precise extent of the land to be transferred, the availability of any legacy funding for ongoing maintenance, the presence of covenants, and the condition of existing infrastructure such as footpaths and a known unstable bank. It was also agreed that community

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consultation would be essential.

Notwithstanding these complexities, the Town Council agreed in principle to proceed, recognising that local ownership would provide an opportunity for residents to have greater control over a valued green space and to manage it for the benefit of the community. (*Annual Delivery Plan 1.12*)

52/25TC Exclusion of the Public

It was **unanimously resolved**, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, to exclude the public and press from the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

53/25TC Destination Website

The Town Council considered a recommendation from the Civic and Community Committee to accept a quotation from Xtrahead for the development and delivery of a new 'Visit Saxmundham' destination website. (*Annual Delivery Plan 1.1*)

Members discussed whether to establish a dedicated Working Group to oversee the project and expedite its development. However, it was agreed that the Civic and Community Committee already has the appropriate remit and membership to provide oversight and ensure timely progress, including Councillor involvement.

It was unanimously resolved to accept the quotation from Xtrahead and proceed with the delivery of the 'Visit Saxmundham' website.

54/25TC Next Meeting

The Town Council noted the date and time of the next meeting which is scheduled for Monday 9th September 2025 at 7:00 pm.

The meeting closed at 8:15 pm.

Sharon Smith
Town Clerk/RFO

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