



Saxmundham Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of Saxmundham Town Council held on Monday 10th November 2025
at the Fromus Centre, Street Farm Road, Saxmundham at 7:00 pm.

Minutes

84/25TC Attendees

Cllr John Findlay (Chair)
Cllr Geraldine Barker (Vice Chair)
Cllr Marianne Kiff
Cllr John Fisher
Cllr Elizabeth Clark
Cllr David Humphreys
Cllr Steve Peck
Cllr Georgina Burns

Apologies

Cllr Jeremy Smith
Cllr Laura Purina
Cllr James Sandbach
Cllr Tim Lock

Also Present

Sharon Smith (Town Clerk)
County Cllr Richard Smith
1 member of the public

85/25TC 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.

86/25TC Open Forum

- a) A member of the public raised two matters. Firstly, he expressed concern about the behaviour of some motorists in the town, citing a general lack of courtesy and observance of the Highway Code. He reported several instances of inconsiderate parking to the Town Clerk and County Cllr Richard Smith, including three vehicles regularly parking on the grass verge along Brook Farm Road. The Town Clerk advised that such matters can be reported to Civil Parking Enforcement and invited the member of the public to provide photographs so that she could submit a report.

Cllr Marianne Kiff raised similar concerns regarding vehicles parking illegally on the zigzag markings at the pedestrian crossing in the town centre, which she has reported to the East Suffolk Council. The Communities Officer had advised that such incidents may be reported as antisocial behaviour. Cllr John Findlay also commented that parking near junctions on Warren Road is creating hazards by restricting visibility.

Secondly, the member of the public sought clarification regarding local government reorganisation, and which responsibilities might transfer to the Town Council under the new unitary structure. The Town Clerk responded that the process represents an opportunity for the Town Council to consider taking on devolved assets and services to provide locally managed solutions for Saxmundham. She confirmed that the new unitary authority cannot compel the Town Council to assume responsibility for any service or asset, and that any functions not taken on locally would remain with the new authority.

- b) County Cllr Richard Smith reported that he had attended the Remembrance Service at St John's

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Church and would also be laying a wreath at Fromus Square on Armistice Day.

He commented that this is one of the most uncertain periods he has experienced in his sixteen years as a County Councillor. He outlined the forthcoming changes in local government, noting the confirmed elections in May 2027 for a Suffolk and Norfolk Combined Mayoral Authority, though many details of the governance arrangements, powers and candidates remain unclear. In relation to local government reorganisation, it is expected that by March 2026 there will be clarity on whether Suffolk will move to one, two or three unitary councils. He highlighted the scale of work required to transfer responsibilities and resolve complex matters such as the division of existing County Council debt, while maintaining delivery of current services.

Cllr Smith also provided an update on education and special needs provision, reporting that Suffolk County Council continues to work to improve SEND and EHCP performance and hopes to publish results above the national average. The Council is carrying a £170 million deficit in SEND spending, incurring around £6 million in annual interest payments. He noted that the government's long-awaited plans for SEND reform may be published in January.

He advised that the County Council is awaiting its financial settlement from government, expected later this month, with the draft budget to be considered by the Scrutiny Committee in January and by Cabinet and Full Council in February.

In response to questions, Cllr Smith confirmed that the next County Council elections will take place under the new division boundaries. He also confirmed that the Sizewell C traffic cones on the A12 are due to be removed by the end of the week and warned of extensive roadworks ahead linked to Sizewell C which will cause considerable disruption over the next 18 months.

- c) District Cllr John Fisher had nothing to report.

87/25TC Minutes

- a) It was **unanimously resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 13th October 2025
- b) The Council received the draft minutes from the Resources Committee meeting held on 4th November 2025.
- c) The Council received the draft minutes from the Staffing Committee meetings held on 16th October and 4th November 2025.
- d) The Council received the draft minutes from the Planning and Development Control Committee meetings held on 9th and 23rd October 2025.

88/25TC Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects

- a) Cllr Geraldine Barker presented her written report on the energy projects, which had been circulated in advance and is available on the Town Council's website.
- b) The Town Council received a draft response from the Town Clerk to the Northumbrian Water non-

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statutory consultation on proposed water-supply infrastructure. The draft had been prepared using research notes provided by Cllr Geraldine Barker and the Environment Coordinator. Members noted that the consultation relates to early proposals for new water-supply infrastructure affecting the Saxmundham area. The Council agreed to review the draft response and submit comments to the Town Clerk before the final version is presented for approval at the next meeting.

- c) It was **unanimously resolved** to enter a voluntary Non-Intrusive Site Investigation Licence with Northumbrian Water regarding land at the Memorial Field and Seaman Avenue play park.

89/25TC Finance

- a) The Town Council noted the schedule of payments and receipts together with the bank balances as at 31st October 2025.
- b) The Town Council received the budget versus actual income and expenditure report to 31st October 2025, including the year-end forecast. The Council noted a forecasted surplus of £17,633. It was **unanimously resolved** to accept the Resources Committee recommendation that £10,000 of this surplus be transferred to the Capital Replacement Fund to replenish this earmarked reserve, which is currently nil, thereby strengthening the Council's position to fund future capital projects.
- c) The Council received the forecasted earmarked reserves position to 31st March 2026.

90/25TC Policies

It was **unanimously resolved** to accept the recommendation from the Resources Committee to adopt an amended Information Technology Policy and a new Councillor Absence Policy.

91/25TC Exclusion of the Public

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

92/25TC Proposed Staffing Restructure

The Chair of the Staffing Committee provided an update on the proposed staffing restructure. He reported that all staff had been provided with a copy of the business case for restructuring, and individual consultation meetings were held with four members of staff - three at the Council's invitation, as their roles may be directly affected, and one at the staff member's own request. The remaining staff member, whose role is not directly impacted, submitted comments by email.

The Committee Chair advised that the consultation process has not yet concluded, as several matters were raised which require further consideration and specialist professional advice. It is the Staffing Committee's intention to bring a formal proposal to the next meeting for consideration, as the Town Council's budget for 2026–2027 cannot be determined until the future staffing structure has been agreed.

The Committee Chair also noted that local government reorganisation was one of the key drivers for the proposed restructure, and he invited the Town Clerk to present a report on the opportunities for taking responsibility for devolved assets and services for the Council's consideration at the next meeting.

93/25TC Next Meeting

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The Town Council noted the date and time of the next meeting which is scheduled for Monday 8th December 2025 at 7:00 pm.

The meeting closed at 8:15 pm.

Sharon Smith
Town Clerk

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