

SAWBRIDGEWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes

of the Annual Meeting of Sawbridgeworth Town Council held at 19.30 in the Council Chamber, Sayesbury Manor, Bell Street on **Monday 24 May 2021**.

Those present

Cllr Angela Alder
Cllr Eric Buckmaster
Cllr Ruth Buckmaster
Cllr John Burmicz
Cllr Craig Chester

Cllr Annelise Furnace
Cllr Greg Rattey
Cllr David Royle
Cllr Nathan Parsad
Cllr Dinesh Patel

In attendance:

J Sargant – Interim Town Clerk
Lisa Dale – Admin Officer

Chris Carter Bishop's Stortford Independent
1 member of the public
2 members of Hertfordshire Constabulary

Welcome by the Town Mayor followed by thought for the day from Cllr Ruth Buckmaster

21/01 ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR

Cllr Greg Rattey was elected as Town Mayor for the civic year 2021/22
[prop Cllr Alder; secd Cllr Burmicz]

21/02 DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

The Town Mayor signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Town Mayor's Address:

First of all fellow councillors ladies and gentlemen, can I say what an honour it is for me to be Mayor of Sawbridgeworth and I shall take my responsibilities as an honour to the office. To our outgoing Mayor, Cllr Furnace, there was not really a worse time for someone to become Mayor, but can I say you did it with dignity and grace and you literally had to Zoom your way around the town but carried out your duties amazingly and you were a great Mayor, a great example to others and can I say a great example to me, so for that I truly thank you.

(Presentation of past Mayor badge made by Cllr Rattey to Cllr Furnace)

Moving on, the charities that I have chosen are firstly the Men's Health Forum, this is a fantastic charity and is there for men with mental illness, depression or for those that have suicidal tendencies. This is something that I have worked with in the past and sadly something that has touched me personally, at the age of 25 I left home in Bishop's Stortford with the direct intent of taking my own life at a difficult time. As I walked to the train station I had a memory, a light bulb moment and I had a vision in my head of my dear mum and dad receiving the news from the local police. It was at that point that I stopped and I turned around and I never looked back and I am never going to either, so this makes me very happy to support the Men's Health Forum.

On a lighter note, I have chosen the Hailey Centre as my second charity, I have been a trustee of the Hailey Centre for 18 months and have seen the fantastic work that they do for the elderly in our community, there are activities and classes, and I would like to give a

big shout out tonight to the staff there and the marvellous volunteers who do such a sterling job.

Annelise, when she made her address to the council said that she wanted her theme to be building bridges, and she did just that. I would like my theme to be about the positivity of our town and I fully intend to spend the next 12 months talking this town up. We have so much going for us with incoming growth which will greatly help our local economy and really build it up. I also have to say that I am going to conclude by saying, for the shop owners in this town that I have the utmost respect for and have got to know so many of them so well over this past 18 months, and for all those that remained open to serve the community through the pandemic, I give my heartfelt thanks to you.

Finally, to those shops and businesses in the town I simply want to say to you 'I've got your back'

21/03 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Coysten – Long term illness
Cllr Gray - Illness

21/04 THE RETIRING MAYOR

It's surprising just how quickly the year has passed since that online Annual Meeting of the Town Council last May. Even in the midst of our first national lockdown it was hard to imagine that 12-months on our daily lives would still be so affected by Covid-19.

Firstly I would like to express my deepest sympathies for those who have lost loved ones. And I know that times continue to be difficult for those affected by worry and by grief. But unlike 12-months ago, there is light at the end of the tunnel and we know we will get through.

Secondly I would like to reflect on how lucky we are to be here in Sawbridgeworth. The past year has shown what an amazing community we belong to, from support for those self-isolating led by the churches, innovation from our fantastic businesses, to the amazing efforts by key workers who have continued to serve the town throughout. Sawbridgeworth is clearly a place where residents, businesses and professionals pull together to help and support one another.

As we re-awaken and move into much better times, I believe we are now equipped with greater resilience, greater imagination and a far greater appreciation of what we have right here on our doorstep, and which we perhaps took for granted before. The coming year is not without its challenges as Sawbridgeworth recovers, changes and grows, but it also brings us new opportunities, new ways of thinking and the chance to welcome new residents to our community.

My theme for the year has been building bridges – between generations, communities and countries – and the past year has shown us just how connected we all are. I have so enjoyed meeting new people and groups, connecting through online events and in-person meetings when restrictions allowed. I have learnt about our charities, voluntary groups, schools, businesses, faith groups and our twinned towns in France and Germany. As a result I feel that I understand this not so big world a little more.

Thank you so much to our council officers who have worked incredibly hard this past year under difficult circumstances, keeping business going "as usual" while putting in place Covid-secure procedures, processes and facilities.

Thank you too to my fellow councillors for all your support, for your

Thoughts for the Day, and for mastering Zoom and the mute button.
And thank you to Cllr Rattey for having been a fantastic Deputy Mayor and for all his work together with our Town Projects Manager in supporting local businesses through such difficult times – I am so glad to be passing the baton onto him – Cllr Rattey, you will do an amazing job.

Finally thank you to the people of Sawbridgeworth for all their support – I am deeply honoured to have served as Mayor of this remarkable and amazing town.

21/05 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no declarations of Pecuniary Interests.

21/06 ELECTION OF DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR

Cllr Craig Chester was elected as Deputy Town Mayor for the civic year 2021/22

[prop Cllr Furnace; secd Cllr R Buckmaster]

21/07 PUBLIC FORUM

There was one question from a member of the public, submitted to the Clerk prior to the meeting, on matters within the remit of the Town Council:

Question Southbrook allotment holder - eco-audit:

There are two plots 34A and 35A which cannot be rented out as a storm drain overflows there. With the help of others we are looking at making these into eco-friendly areas for the benefit of all. There is currently a hedgehog survey taking place and plans are for a refugia for toads, frogs etc and compost bins for various creatures. We will be using reclaimed material where possible but will have to purchase new for some projects. Therefore we need to know if there would be some funding we could apply for so that we know this exciting project can go ahead.

Interim Clerk responded that there was not a sum budgeted for this project, but would advise the group to make a grant application for the next Town Council grants in July 2021.

A phone call into the office on 24th May 2021 from a member of the public who wanted to pass on thanks in the public forum to the amazing work that the local police community team had done with regards to the vandalised bench in Bakers Walk.

21/08 MINUTES

Resolved: To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 26 April 2021 (M10) *[prop Cllr E Buckmaster; secd Cllr R Buckmaster]*

There were no matters arising from these Minutes and not dealt with elsewhere on this Agenda.

21/09 PLANNING COMMITTEE

Received and noted: the draft minutes of the planning committee held on 26 April 2021 (P19)

21/10 MAYOR'S CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATIONS

To receive new Mayor's appointments and communications
There was none to consider

21/11

REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS

Received and noted: Representatives reports from:

- County Councillor E Buckmaster who added;
 - Yellow lines at Burnside are imminent.
 - Sheering Mill Lane, potential one way system public consultation around Vantorts Road and Fairway – first public engagement around the beginning June 2021.
 - School Lane – ongoing problems with vehicles being monitored, School contacted and the problem explained, this should be resolved after the May half term when the children return to school.
 - More work required on the double yellow lines in Bullfields as there was no consensus on requirements.
 - Speed Volume Surveys ordered for Cambridge Road.
 - 20MPH zone for the central part of the town is due to be ordered. Approval complete with Traffic Regulation Orders.
 - County Council Annual Meeting will be held on 25th May 2021, Cllr Buckmaster will have a portfolio for the Environment which includes Sustainable Hertfordshire and Waste Disposal.
 - **District Council Role** – waiting to sign of a non-key decision for Pishiobury Park for it to become a local nature reserve.
- **West Road Update** – Marshalls in place at the top of West Road are working out well. Unplanned major work is required from one of the sites as the current water and gas supply is not adequate to supply the development.
- District Councillor Cllr R Buckmaster added:
 - Draft Easts Herts Housing Strategy work in ongoing and will go out for consultation in July 2021.
 - DMC – most of the applications were granted with a focus on diversity and inclusion.
- District Councillor Cllr A Alder – no further information to report.
- District Councillor Cllr J Burmicz – no further information to report.
- Hertfordshire Police – no further information given to that in the report.
- Other Representatives – **Cllr D Royle**, updated his report on FP 21 between Fair Green and Vantorts Park, he is progressing plans for resurfacing the path as the surface is dangerous in places.

21/12

OFFICERS REPORTS

Received and noted: Officers' reports for the month of May 2021

21/13

ECO-AUDIT

Received and noted: the notes from the EHDC and STC Eco-Audit Meeting held on 12 May 2021.

21/14

ALLOTMENTS

Received and noted: the Allotment Officer's Report and resolve on matters relating to Allotments.

- Resolved to approve updated Tenancy Agreement
[prop Cllr E Buckmaster; secd Cllr A Alder]
- Resolved to approve allotment rent increase for October 2022.
[prop Cllr R Buckmaster; secd Cllr D Patel]
- Resolved to approve Bee Keeping Policy

[prop Cllr A Furnace; secd Cllr J Burmicz]

- 21/15 COMMITTEE STRUCTURE & MEMBERSHIP**
Resolved: To agree a Committee structure for the year 2021/22 and to appoint Members to Committees, sub-Committees, Working Parties and Task and Finish Groups for the year 2021/22.
[prop Cllr R Buckmaster; secd Cllr A Alder]
- 21/16 DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY**
Resolved: to confirm the delegation of authority to the chair and vice - chair and clerk of the Planning Committee for the months of August and December 2021.
[prop Cllr J Burmicz; secd Cllr R Buckmaster]
- 21/17 CHAMPIONS AND REPRESENTATIVES**
Resolved: To appoint Members as Champions and Representatives for areas of Council responsibility.
[prop Cllr E Buckmaster; secd Cllr N Parsad]
- 21/18 SUBSCRIPTIONS**
Resolved: The payment of the Subscriptions for the year 2021/22
[prop Cllr E Buckmaster; secd Cllr R Buckmaster]
- 21/19 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS**
Resolved: To approve the Calendar of Council and Committee meetings for the year to June 2022
[prop Cllr E Buckmaster; secd Cllr J Burmicz]
- 21/20 STANDING ORDERS**
Resolved: To approve the continuation of current Standing Orders
[prop Cllr R Buckmaster; secd Cllr C Chester]
- 21/21 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**
Resolved: To approve the continuation of current Financial Regulations.
[prop Cllr A Alder; secd Cllr D Royle]
- 21/22 DEPOSIT & CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS**
There were no Documents for Noting and Consultation
- 21/23 FINANCIAL REPORT**
Noted: The current Financial Report
- 21/24 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**
Noted and Approved: Accounts for payment
- 21/25 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**
There were no items for future agendas

Meeting ended at 20.28

Thought for the day – Cllr Ruth Buckmaster

As we return to meetings in person after 15 months of zoom. I would like us to reflect on the what those months have wrought. Being in lockdown, not seeing family or friends, missing some of those important milestones in our lives

Firstly I feel we should be thankful. Thankful that we are here, able to meet again, thankful for the NHS, thankful that the vaccine is giving us a way forward, and to remember those whom we have lost, for what ever reason, on the way.

Our way of life has gone through many changes, some temporary some permanent and we are all learning to deal with the new normal. The world has changed. Our world is not the same world we knew 18 months ago.

While we reflect on this, the poem I would like to read is called The World by William Brighty Rands.

Great, wide, beautiful, wonderful World, With the wonderful water round you curled, And the wonderful grass upon your breast- World, you are beautifully drest.

The wonderful air is over me,
And the wonderful wind is shaking the tree, It walks on the water, and whirls the mills, And talks to itself on the tops of hills.

You friendly Earth, how far do you go,
With the wheat fields that nod and the rivers that flow, With cities and gardens, and cliffs, and isles, And people upon you for thousands of miles.

Ah, you are so great and I am so small,
I tremble to think of you World at all,
And yet when I said my prayers today,
A whisper inside me seemed to say,
"You are more than the Earth, though you are such a dot, You can love and think, and the Earth cannot".