

SAWBRIDGEGWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes

of the meeting of the Town Council held at the Council Offices, Sayesbury Manor, Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth at 7.30 pm on **Monday 29 January 2018**.

Those present

Cllr Sotirios Adamopoulos	Cllr John Burmicz
Cllr Angela Alder	Cllr Annelise Furnace
Cllr Roger Beeching	Cllr Don Hall
Cllr Eric Buckmaster	Cllr Heather Riches
Cllr Ruth Buckmaster	

In attendance:

Lisa Dale - Finance Officer	Joanne Sargant – Town Projects Manager
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The meeting was preceded at 7.15pm by a presentation by Mr Simon Marlow of AgeUK Hertfordshire to launch their activities in East Hertfordshire

Welcome by the Town Mayor
Prayers were read by Cllr Beeching

The mayor thanked council staff for their continuing commitment to carrying out the business of the council in the absence of the town clerk.

17/124 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from:
Cllr Royle – other engagement
Cllr Shaw – work commitment
Cllr Coysten - unwell

17/125 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

To receive any Declarations of Interest by Members
Cllr E Buckmaster explained that members were exempted from a declaration of interest in the budget discussions.

17/126 PUBLIC FORUM

To receive representations from members of the public on matters within the remit of the Town Council.

Cllr Riches commented on donations left outside AgeConcern over week-ends, and how could the town council help to prevent this. She had spoken to Nick Kirby at EHDC who would provide fly tipping posters. The mayor had spoken with the manager who had asked whether the town council would provide CCTV coverage. Contact to be made with police and the landlord.

Cllr E Buckmaster reported that Mrs Mead and Mr Leary had asked about progress on the Elwood footpath. Contact with the neighbours has been attempted without success. Next steps to be considered

17/127

MINUTES

Resolved: To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 27 November 2017 (M06)
[prop Cllr E Buckmaster; secd Cllr Beeching]

To attend to any matters arising from these Minutes and not dealt with elsewhere on this Agenda. There were none.

17/128

FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE

Received and Noted: The draft minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee Meeting held on:

- 15 January 2018 (F03)

17/129

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Received and Noted: The minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held on:

- 27 November 2017 (P10)

Received and Noted: The draft minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held on:

- 15 January 2018 (P11)

17/130

MAYOR'S CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATIONS

To receive the Mayor's appointments and communications

Letter from Sawbridgeworth Rotary thanking the Town Project Manager for supporting Carols on Fair Green.

Letter from East Herts Citizens Advice to the Town Clerk thanking the council for their continued support.

The last two months have been busy but also varied.

They began with a Christmas Quiz at Dunmow and the Scouts Carol service, both being very enjoyable.

Suzuki car dealers at Spellbrook annually invite children from Spellbrook school to decorate cars in their showroom. The children thoroughly enjoy this.

The winners of the Christmas competitions were presented with their prizes in the council chamber.

The new year started with another Quiz this one at Hertford.

I was also asked to welcome the new incumbent Rev. Wendy Carter to the parish of High Wych.

The first Sawbridgeworth Brownies have been taking part in various activities under the heading 'this girl can' and I was honoured to present the badges.

Last Wednesday I held a charity evening at the New Mexico it was a very enjoyable evening. That raised approximately £600.

A different tone was felt on Thursday when I attended a Holocaust Memorial gathering. This was a very thought provoking event with many people of different faiths contributing.

My next event will be my Civic Dinner in April I hope you will attend

17/131

REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS

To receive representatives reports from:

- County Councillor Eric Buckmaster reported:

An update on three important consultations:

1) **The Local Transport Plan** consultation closed on 23rd January. You can see the plan online at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/ltp.

2) Just as important locally is the **Draft Minerals Plan** which includes Briggens Park on the very edge of Stanstead Abbots. This is open until 9th February. Inclusion in the adopted plan would result in a vast number of vehicle movements over a considerable period of time. In December I attended a public meeting in Stanstead Abbots designed to increase awareness and encourage a large response to the consultation. I have also posted on Facebook asking people to share. The consultation can be seen on-line and responses submitted or comments can be sent minerals.planning@hertfordshire.gov.uk.

3) Herts County Council has launched a public consultation on the next phase of the '**Inspiring Libraries**' strategy. www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/libraryconsultation.

The consultation will run until 18 February, and seeks feedback on ambitions for Hertfordshire Libraries over the next three years, and on the proposal to establish an alternative delivery model for library services. There are a number of different ways of organising and delivering library services, These include:

- a) Keeping the service in-house – run by the County Council.
- b) Operating the service through a Local Authority Trading Company.
- c) Transferring the service to a Public Service Mutual – a not for profit organisation, created and commissioned by the County Council to run the service.
- d) Outsourcing the service to a third party – an independent organisation or business.
- e) Operating the service through a joint venture – a partnership between the County Council and a third party organisation.

The full document and consultation can be found at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/libraryconsultation.

Health Matters:

On health matters in December I chaired a scrutiny topic group of two NHS trusts. Princess Alexandra Hospital and East of England Ambulance Trust. As you know PAH has been in special measures and in financial deficit for a number of years. The estate in general is in a very poor condition. At East Herts Full Council last month I proposed a motion urging the government to support the provision of a new Health and Wellbeing Hub in the area. It was approved unanimously by council. Princess Alexandra is currently formulation an outline business case.

2018 is also designated the year of Physical Activity. It is promoted by Herts Sports Partnership and Herts County Council. The focus will be on:

- * Increasing physical activity levels
- * Shifting stubborn inactivity levels
- * Celebrating what's already happening
- * Encouraging new programmes and events.

East Herts District Council is also working with Herts County Council on a whole systems approach to tackling obesity. Workshops were arranged in December with a number of stakeholders to consider the causes of obesity and barriers to tackling it. Officers will now consider programmes that could help reduce obesity in both adults and children and encouraging healthy lifestyles in areas and circumstances where it is most prevalent.

Highways:

Winter can be a very difficult time for travelling. Bad weather may result in localised flooding or damage to roads. Residents may log problems themselves very easily on the County Council website or let me know and I can do it for you.

Swap a slipper at your Library:

This is an excellent example of collaboration with Adult Care Services and gives the libraries an opportunity to welcome new and existing visitors. Falls

at home can be a dreadful situation and sometimes these are caused by a person slipping on the floor. These slipper swap event at libraries will provide the opportunity for older folk to exchange their existing slippers for a new pair with anti-slip soles. At the same time, we hope that they will stay in the library and if it has a café attached as is the case in some libraries they will be able to enjoy and hot drink before continuing. The slipper swaps will take place locally on 1st February at Bishops Stortford

Warm Homes:

New scheme launched to help Hertfordshire residents stay warm in their homes A new scheme that provides free or discounted household improvements to help residents stay warm in their homes has been launched by Hertfordshire County Council in partnership with all 10 district and borough councils. In Hertfordshire, over 32,000 households are estimated to live in fuel poverty meaning they do not have enough money to adequately heat their home. Colder temperatures can lead to excess winter deaths. Between August 2013 and July 2016, there were 1795 excess winter deaths in Hertfordshire. The Hertfordshire Warmer Homes scheme aims to make homes easier and cheaper to heat by offering free or discounted energy efficiency measures, such as insulation and heating repair, or fuel switching advice to low-income and vulnerable households.

The Hertfordshire Warmer Homes scheme will be managed by the National Energy Foundation, using funding from the national Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and local authority contributions. It will run to 31 October 2018.

Please help us raise awareness of this scheme with the vulnerable residents you are in touch with by publicising it through your own channels. Anyone can find out more information by contacting HertsHelp on: 0300 123 4044 (local rate) or info@hertshelp.net. Alternatively, you can visit www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/hertswarmerhomes

Recycling:

'Keep calm and carry on recycling'. That's the message from the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership (HWP) following news reports about changes which will impact on the ability of the UK and other countries to trade mixed recyclables with China.

As a result HWP contractors have been investigating and diversifying by using alternative markets and consequently the amount of mixed recyclables exported to China has significantly reduced in recent months.' A significant proportion of material such as separately collected newspapers and magazines, steel and aluminium cans and textiles are sent to re-processors here in the UK. Similarly all of the organic materials collected in Hertfordshire, such as garden waste and food waste, are also processed at recycling plants in the UK including at a number of facilities in Hertfordshire. Although China has previously acted as a large market for mixed recyclables, many other countries in the region are actively engaged in the international trade in mixed recyclables.

It is very important that residents follow the advice issued by their local council on which materials can and cannot be recycled, especially at certain times of the year such as after the festive period, or Easter when contamination levels can increase significantly. This type of information is available on each local council's website, along with additional guidance, such as remembering to 'wash and squash' recyclables where necessary.

- District Councillors, Cllr Alder reported:
 - Attended meeting in Bishops Stortford concerning the budget for EHDC looking for areas where savings could be made.
 - Attended Performance Audit and Governance Scrutiny committee for a budget briefing
 - Attended a District Council meeting in December
 - Attended a Community Wellbeing Forum in Bishop's Stortford
 - Attended a Master Planning meeting regarding shaping Sawbridgeworth
 - Attended a Task and Finish group regarding the Grounds Maintenance contract for East Herts open spaces

- Attended a LEP session at County Hall.
- Carried out a partial inspection with Circle Anglia Housing which has now subsumed into Clarion Housing.
- Attended a Task and finish Group on Leisure
- Attended a District Plan briefing in Hertford
- Went to the Holocaust Memorial Day
- Went to the Shaping Sawbridgeworth planning session
- District Councillor E Buckmaster reported:
 - Residents with heating problems in Clarion housing have been solved.
 - Clarion housing have changed from a supportive response regime to a concierge service. This is the end of daily safety checks. Booked appointments will be chargeable.
- Hertfordshire Police were not present
- Other Representatives
 - Cllr Alder attended the Stansted Airport Consultative Committee and heard about the new Stansted Airport College.
 - Cllr Alder reported the launch of children's centres at the Charis Centre and presented a notice for publication.

16/132 DETERMINATION OF A MAYOR-ELECT

Resolved: That Cllr Alder be nominated as mayor-elect for the civic year 2018-19. Election of a mayor will be by resolution at the Annual Town Meeting in May 2018.

[prop Cllr E Buckmaster; secd Cllr Burmicz]

16/133 BUDGET 2018-19 & DETERMINATION OF PRECEPT

1. To consider the Recommendation of the Finance & Policy Committee and adopt a Budget for 2018-19

Chairman of Finance and Policy Committee Cllr Eric Buckmaster introduced the budget discussion:

This time last year I told you that owing to a significant difference in the direction of travel in our income and expenditure we should set a medium term financial plan to ensure we are able to balance our budgets. This would involve increases in precept of 8% for 3 years followed by a year at 4% and enable us to maintain the level of services to which residents have become accustomed. The principle thereafter is to track inflation as far as possible.

During the last year we have undertaken a review of staff job roles with the help of an independent consultant and new salaries and contracts were agreed. We have a framework for periodic review and increases will be based on the nationally agreed awards which could be 2% or more this year. The budget includes provision of a part time receptionist for 12 months. My proposal is that the contract period stays at 12 months and is subject to review each year.

In keeping to the spirit of the principles we agreed in 2017 the proposed budget for 2018/2019 is for an increase in precept of 8.67% although the additional homes in the council tax base serve to bring in a precept income of 10% more. You can see this on page 15 of your budget pack. There is a small but inconsequential error in the 2017/18 figures. The council tax

base should show 3,699 not 3649 and the band D equivalent precept should be £72.42 not £73.4 but they calculate the same end result.

On page 15 you can also see in the closing reserves section that we are maintaining our general reserve at 26% of precept or £76,000, our Sawbobus capital reserve at £43,000 and War Memorial Reserve at 15,000. Officers now believe, following further discussions with a contractor, that this sum is more than adequate. Furthermore we shall apply to other bodies such as the War Memorials Trust for grant funding in order to minimise the cost to the council.

Our New Homes Bonus is tapering away at just £18,000 this coming year and thereafter will be insignificant. It should be noted that a large proportion of our New Homes Bonus had been used to provide an hour free parking for residents in support of local business. East Herts currently provides 30 minutes free parking.

The budget continues to make provision for discretionary grants and also of direct grants for community organisations but at a reduced level. Rivers Heritage Site and Orchard Group is now largely self-sufficient but we retain a budget of £2,000 as custodians of the site for grass cutting and tree work.

We have a record of providing successful events for residents so Christmas Lights, Fun on the Field, and Town Selfie walk will continue. Any other events or markets will need to be self-funding.

My expectation is that the grant from East Herts for Sawbobus will continue for the coming year. I do not see it as a risk to our budget since the service is dependent on partnership and will continue through the support of the District and/or the willingness of residents to provide it. Additional income is expected to come through recovering concessionary fares through section 22 permits and reluctantly through fares for residents of lower sheering since we no longer receive a grant from Epping Forest.

We are free to set our precept currently without restriction but the financial context sheet I have provided shows us the relationship between our demand and council tax as a whole. From the declared intentions of other authorities we can see that Sawbridgeworth Band D will increase by £97.42 to £1,726.76. Our portion of the increase is just £6.28 per annum. While this is a small fraction of the total increase we should be mindful that as members we are accountable to the public, that we act responsibly, and can demonstrate that we provide value for money.

Subject to my stated proposals for the War Memorial, and the provision of receptionist cover I recommend the budget as shown in the papers.

Cllr Beeching commended the budget especially as the NHB Grant had been reduced. He commended the work of the Amenities committee in phasing planned work.

Cllr Riches queried the cost of storage premises

Resolved: To adopt the budget for 2018-19.

[prop Cllr E Buckmaster; secd Cllr Alder]

2. **Resolved:** To determine the Precept for 2018-19 at £294,701 and instruct the principal authority accordingly.

[prop Cllr E Buckmaster; secd Cllr Alder]

16/134 GRANT APPLICATIONS

To consider grant requests made by the following:

1. East Herts Citizens Advice Service

This is CAB asking for an annual contribution. Service had gone this year from once a week to once a month because of a lack of councillors and a lower demand for the service in Sawbridgeworth.

Resolved: To make a grant of £500

[prop Cllr Burmicz; secd Cllr Furnace]

2. Al's Adventures in Wasteland

A second application asking for further support for this initiative as a contribution to the on-going costs of setting up the project. Since a grant had been made to this project within the last year it was agreed that no further grant be made

3. The Wellbeloved Club

An application for assistance in setting up a new Sunday lunch club to be held in the Hailey Centre. Addresses loneliness and isolation issues. Relying on crowdfunding for extra moneys.

Resolved: To make a grant of £250

[prop Cllr Beeching; secd Cllr Hall]

4. Keech Hospice Care

NHS commissioned hospice based in Luton but serving Herts, Beds and Milton Keynes. This is a day support service for pre-school children with a life threatening condition. Support requested for their Tots and Toys Group.

Resolved: To make a grant of £500

[prop Cllr Alder; secd Cllr Adamopoulos]

17/135 TOWN PROJECT MANAGER'S REPORT

To receive the Town Project Manager's report verbally for the months of December 2017 and January 2018.

- Bakers Walk project to rejuvenate the passage way. Friday 28 April is proposed launch day. Schools are closely involved in the preparation of artwork.
- War Memorial progress. Memorial has consent from the diocese to progress with initial specialist cleaning. This will be publicised.

17/137 EAST HERTS DISTRICT PLAN

To report on any developments following the public examination of the East Herts District Plan.

- Examination in public has taken place.
- Extraordinary meeting of EHDC on 06 February to consider modifications that are needed

- Approved District Plan expected in May.
- Master planning programme was detailed but has revealed no major changes for Sawbridgeworth.
- One specific objective is to secure s106 funding for Sawbobus expansion, community centres and securing amenity land as a community asset.
- Leader of EHDC has been insistent that the developers must conform to local wishes.

17/138 GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS

Noted: The town council's responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) which will come into force on 25 May 2018.

Resolved: That a Policy be drawn up requiring that all e-mail correspondence to and from Members must use the town council's allocated addresses.

[prop Cllr Adamopoulos; secd Cllr Furnace]

17/139 DEPOSIT & CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS

To note receipt of any Documents for Noting and Consultation
There were none.

17/140 FINANCIAL REPORT

Noted: The current Financial Report

17/141 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Noted and Approved: Accounts for payment

17/142 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

To consider any items for inclusion on future agendas.

- To review and follow up on the presentation by AgeUK,

Meeting Closed at 20:50