

SAWBRIDGEWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL Minutes

of the Meeting of Sawbridgeworth Town Council held at 7:00pm in the Council Chamber, Sayesbury Manor, Bell Street on **Monday 29th June 2026**.

Those present.

Cllrs A Parsad-Wyatt (Mayor), S Pagdades, E Buckmaster, R Buckmaster, R Smith, A Furnace, N Parsad-Wyatt, S Smith, J Rider and D Newell.

Also present was P Evans (Locum Clerk) and seven members of the public.

Cllr A Parsad-Wyatt welcomed everyone and asked Cllr R Buckmaster to read the thought for the day.

26/29 Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Cllrs G Rattey and S Penney.

26/30 Declarations of Interests – None.

26/31 Public Forum

Cllr A Parsad-Wyatt then suspended standing orders so that the members of the public present could address the council.

One member raised concerns that a 'Vape' shop had been allowed to open near local schools.

The council replied that although SWTC was not responsible for this permission, it too had concerns. This was the responsibility of East Herts District Council (EHDC), although even they would be only giving permission for a shop. However, should any evidence of illegal trading be noticed this would be passed onto trading standards and/or the police.

Another member of the public asked why Cllr J Rider was stepping down next May, as she had read this in the local news. He confirmed that due to way in which, he felt, EHDC had carried out the consultation on 'Warding' Sawbridgeworth for the next elections, he was not prepared to stand in the elections for just part of the town.

There was also a question regarding the cost of providing the different waste collection bins, which was answered by EHDC Cllr E Buckmaster.

One member had also submitted three questions prior to the meeting which he was happy to receive a written response, these were regarding, the council's policy on flying the Ukrainian flag, how the council would keep residents updated on the EHDC Local Plan, and the website.

As there were no further questions Cllr A Parsad-Wyatt resumed standing orders.

26/32 Minutes

There was some discussion regarding the minutes of the two meetings of the town council held on 18th May 2026 (M1) as they had not been included in the pack circulated prior to the meeting. It was pointed out that they had been circulated after the meeting in May once the mayor had approved them.

However, members were not prepared to agree them, so it was;

Resolved that the Clerk circulates them again and Cllr A Parsad-Wyatt signs the minutes as a true record of that meeting on 13th July.

26/33 Clerks Report

This report which was an update on previous agreed actions for the council was circulated prior to the meeting and noted. P Evans added that C Hunt had returned to the office for a few hours that morning.

26/34 Mayor's Correspondence/Communications.

Cllr A Parsad-Wyatt stated that he had attended

- Mayor of Buntingford Civic Dinner
- Unfortunately, due to the weather, River Day on the 27th June had been cancelled. However, Cllr A Parsad-Wyatt thanked Cllrs A Furnace, E Buckmaster & R Buckmaster for all their efforts leading up to the event.
- However, the weather did not affect the Civic Service on 28th June which was well attended and thanks to the staff who prepared the food etc.
- He reminded councillors of upcoming events and thanked the locum Clerk P Evans for his help over the last few months whilst C Hunt was unwell.

26/35 FINANCIAL

- a) To note and approve the payments for June
This has been circulated prior to the meeting and was noted.
- b) To note the report of the Internal Auditor.
This had been discussed at the Finance Committee meeting and was noted.
- c) To review and agree the statement 1 of Annual Return 2025/26.
A report on this matter had been circulated prior to the meeting. There was a short discussion before it was

Resolved;

(i) To approve Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement 2025/26.

(ii) Approve the publication of the Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance and Accountability Return and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026, with the inspection period commencing on Tuesday 30th June 2026 and ending on Friday 31st July 2026.

[prop Cllr E Buckmaster sec'd Cllr N Parsad-Wyatt]

- d) To review and agree the statement 2 of Annual Return 2025/26.
A report on this matter had been circulated prior to the meeting. There was a short discussion before it was

Resolved to approve Section 2 of the Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 and authorise the chairman to sign the form on behalf of the council.

[prop Cllr E Buckmaster sec'd Cllr N Parsad-Wyatt]

26/36 Planning Committee minutes

- a) To receive and note the minutes and draft minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 18th May (P2) and 8th June 2026 (P3)

The planning committee minutes of the meetings on 18th May and 8th June 2026 had been circulated prior to the meeting and were noted.

- b) To discuss the Council's response to the East Herts Local Plan Scoping Consultation.

A report from the locum clerk had been circulated prior to the meeting. All the EHDC Cllrs present gave an update on the process, with this being the first of three consultations on the Local Plan over the next few years. They urged everyone present to lodge their personal views with EHDC. Several comments were made regarding;

- Lack of infrastructure
- Green Belt/Grey Belt assessment
- Health in the community
- Nature in Sawbridgeworth
- The benefit of urging EHDC to carry out local events and information evenings.

Concerns were also raised that the current local plan was now out of date, and as the new plan would not be ready for nearly three years, could interim guidance be put in place to ensure that speculative planning applications could be rejected.

It was then agreed that the mayor and the Chairman of the Planning Committee will circulate a SWTC response to all councillors for consideration before this is submitted by the Clerk prior to the deadline date.

26/37 FINANCE, POLICY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

To receive and note the draft minutes of the Finance, Policy and Economic Development Committee meetings held on 8th June 2026 (F1). These minutes were circulated prior to the meeting. These were noted including the two recommendations which were adopted.

- a) That the Clerk investigates what bank offers the facility that will mirror the requirements under section 7 of the financial regulations – electronic payments.***
- b) That the Locum Clerk continues to be employed by the council at the agreed rate per hour until 30th June 2026, when it is envisaged that the Clerk will be able to return to full duties.***

26/38 Representatives Reports

The following reports were received.

County Councillor E Buckmaster stated that his report had been circulated prior to the meeting. He commented on the future road closures on the A414 due to the housing development at Guilston. He added that as the LC WIP had been approved, a meeting should be called with Sustainable Sawbridgeworth as some of the approved schemes could start the planning stage soon.

He was asked if residents were aware of the future road closures. He added that he had updated on social media, but no leaflet drops had been carried out.

District Councillor R Buckmaster stated that she had no report as the DMC meeting had been cancelled. District Councillor A Parsad-Wyatt added that there had been an extraordinary meeting called to discuss the Local Plan.

SYPRC-- Cllr R Buckmaster reported that the centre was doing well with bookings every day. She urged Cllrs to attend the AGM on 29th July 2026 at 7pm.

RHSO -- Cllr R Buckmaster reported that the group were looking at the equipment that they held for use on the orchard. This was spread over the town in various garages. They were investigating, with the Rivers Hospital management, installing a container to hold all the equipment on site.

The next event will be the 'Apple Day' on 26th September.

Sustainable Sawbridgeworth -- Cllr A Furnace had circulated a report prior to the meeting. She thanked the staff for their work on the paperwork and equipment retrieval from storage for 'River Day'.

Hailey Centre -- Cllr S Smith reported that there were still ongoing discussions with the contractor that had carried out recent works. He thanked the staff at the Hailey Centre for their work during the current weather which had meant that the centre was closed for a few days.

26/39 Local Government Reorganisation

Cllr E Buckmaster stated that he had attended some briefing meetings recently as the County and District/Borough Councils gear up for the announcement from government in July.

26/40 Deposit & Consultation Documents –There were no items to report.

26/41 Items for Future Agendas – None.

There being no further business to transact the meeting closed at 8.12pm

Signed.

Dated.