

SAWBRIDGEWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE, POLICY and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes

of the meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee held at the Chamber, Sayesbury Manor, Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth at 8:00pm on **Monday 9th June 2025**.

Those present

Cllr Eric Buckmaster
Cllr Ruth Buckmaster

Cllr Greg Rattey
Cllr Reece Smith
Cllr Steve Smith

In attendance:

Christopher Hunt - Town Clerk
1 x member of public

F 25/01 ELECTION OF CHAIR

To elect a Chair of the Committee for the year 2025/26.

Resolved: Cllr Eric Buckmaster

[prop Cllr R Buckmaster sec'd Cllr R Smith]

F 25/02 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

To elect a Vice Chair of the Committee for the year 2025/26.

Resolved: Cllr Reece Smith

[prop Cllr E Buckmaster sec'd Cllr R Buckmaster]

F 25/03 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr N Parsad-Wyatt, Accepted

F 25/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none

F 25/05 MINUTES

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee held on 14th April 2025 (FO4).

[prop Cllr R Buckmaster sec'd Cllr R Smith]

F 25/06 STAFF MATTERS

To consider any matters relating to members of staff.

The Clerk referred to his report and covered the welfare of staff and that one member of staff is on long term sick but receiving support from the Clerk and team members. Cllr R Smith asked for best wishes to be sent from the councillors.

F 25/07 FINANCE MATTERS

To consider any matters relating to the finances and year end arrangements of the Council.

The Clerk reported that the internal auditor had sent his report and shared this with the committee members explaining the two areas highlighted being tendering for architects and an incorrect VAT claim of £6.

Following this the Clerk addressed the meeting:

- To advise members of arrangements following the visit of the Internal Auditor.
- To advise members of the arrangements for External Audit by PKF Littlejohn.
- To advise members of the draft Annual Return for 2024/25 and recommend adoption by council.

Resolved: [prop Cllr S Smith sec'd Cllr G Rattey]

The Clerk raised he had been working to obtain three insurance quotes for the Council vehicle fleet. Numerous companies refused cover one had quoted £6,000 and the current insurer James Hallem quoted £4,360. It was agreed to remain with the current insurer for the following year.

No motion due to the lateness of the policy results being sent after the agenda was written

F 25/08 JUBILEE GARDENS (TOWN GREEN) WORKING PARTY

Update on the current project status, the Clerk reported that a planning application has been submitted and awaits an update. A meeting has been arranged for this Thursday with the designer and Cllrs E Buckmaster and R Buckmaster.

F25/09 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

To discuss proposals for promoting economic development in the town: Cllr G Rattey informed members that only one shop were occupied. He visited Toro, the gardening machine manufacturer in Spellbrook and enjoyed the tour of the premises. He highlighted the communication he had previously with business owners in the Maltings just over the county border into Essex. The Clerk will add an agenda item onto the next cross border agenda to ensure Sheering PC are happy for Sawbridgeworth TC to include these business's into the consortium Cllr Rattey manages to promote trade in the town.

ACTION – Clerk to add agenda item onto the cross-border meeting agenda to ensure dialogue with Maltings business owners by Sawbridgeworth TC will not encroach on any work they may be doing at the same location.

F25/10

POLICY MATTERS

To consider any matters relating to policies for the future development of Town Council services to the community.

- To propose adoption of the Sawbridgeworth Town Council Safeguarding Policy at the next Full Town Council meeting on 29th September 2025. It was agreed that further work was needed to be completed to ensure the policy was ready for implementation.

Resolved; to alter the proposal to develop the policy further with standards to be adhered to prior to adoption at Full Town Council.
[prop Cllr R Smith sec'd Cllr S Smith]

Resolved; to present the full policy and standards at the next full Town Council meeting for adoption.
[prop Cllr R Buckmaster sec'd Cllr R Smith]

ACTION – Clerk to add standards to the policy prior to presenting to the full town council meeting.

F25/11

COUNCILLOR ENGAGEMENT

The Clerk stated that continued engagement is managed through the events delivered by the town council. Cllr R Smith mentioned that the recent Flyer page the council had invested in was an excellent engagement tool and was a good platform to engage as it is both hard copy and accessible online.

F25/12

REDUCING THE COUNCILS CARBON FOOTPRINT

To discuss the following items to present a motion to the next full Town Council meeting. It was agreed that the following wording be presented.

- To aim to achieve net zero for the council's own generated emissions by 2030 and do all that we can to assist in achieving this by the same year for the wider town.
- In the interim, commit the council towards reducing its own carbon footprint to an absolute minimum by May 2027 [end of current council's term] whilst at the same time identifying a pathway to offset its residual carbon.

The Clerk made the committee aware of the report and progress being made in this area. Several concerns were raised in relation to cost and it was suggested that replacing items with greener credentials should be completed when items came to end of life rather than increasing costs with changing items before this.

F25/13

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The Clerk highlighted the opportunity to work with a company who identify and apply for funding for projects with a small fee. He would explore this in more depth this Thursday when he meets with the designer of the Jubilee Gardens who highlighted this opportunity.

F25/14

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

To add a regular agenda item to assess the progress for reducing the councils carbon footprint.

Meeting Closed at 7:49pm

Signed.....

Date.....

Owner	Action	Update
Clerk	To add agenda item onto the cross-border meeting agenda to ensure dialogue with Maltings business owners by Sawbridgeworth TC will not encroach on any work they may be doing at the same location.	
Clerk	To add standards to the Safeguarding Policy prior to presenting to the full town council meeting.	