

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 28th July 2025**.

Those present

Cllr Eric Buckmaster
Cllr Ruth Buckmaster
Cllr Annelise Furnace
Cllr Dawn Newell
Cllr Salvatore Pagdades
Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt

Cllr Nathan Parsad-Wyatt
Cllr Simon Penney
Cllr Greg Rattey
Cllr John Rider
Cllr Reece Smith
Cllr Steve Smith

In attendance:

3 x members of the public

Welcome by the Town Mayor followed by thought for the day was read by Cllr Annelise Furnace.

25/41 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies, all members were present.

25/42 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were none.

25/43 PUBLIC FORUM

Questions

1. A question was received via email in relation to making the Annual Town Meeting more inclusive with the use of a larger venue.
The Clerk stated he had secured the use of the Hailey Centre which would allow for community groups to engage with community members and the chamber for a more formal area for councillor engagement.
2. A question regarding the proposed yellow lines in Bell Street was made due to difficulty in entering and exiting the car park when vehicles park at these points in Bell Street.
Cllr Eric Buckmaster will review the plans for the parking restrictions.
Cllr Greg Rattey raised the issue with the delivery lorries to Morrisons.
The Clerk stated he has written three times to Morrisons with no response from the area manager but he will try again.

ACTION - Clerk to write to Morrisons again to raise concerns over the size of delivery vehicles used in Bell Street deliveries.

25/44 MINUTES

Resolved: To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Meeting of the town council held on 30th June 2025 (M02)
[prop Cllr Greg Rattey; sec'd Cllr Ruth Buckmaster]

To attend to any matters arising from these Minutes and not dealt with elsewhere on this Agenda.

<i>Action</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Update</i>
Clerk to write to Gary Salisbury at Harlow College offering support on behalf of Sawbridgeworth Town Council for the development of the colleges specialism in construction for students.	Clerk	Email sent 1 st July 2025 and thanks sent from Gary Salisbury for the councils quick response and support for the project.
Clerk to update and circulate new calendar date for the ATM 2026	Clerk	Updated meeting calendar/schedule emailed to all Cllrs and Staff 1 st July 2025.
Clerk to set up a meeting regarding section 106 funding with Cllr Simon Penney and the EHDC 106 officer.	Clerk	Email sent to Jackie Bruce 1 st July 2025, further emails have answered questions in relation to diverting Sect 106 funds which is not achievable due to regulations and agreements made at the time of the development planning process for Sawb 3.

25/45 PLANNING COMMITTEE

Received and noted: the minutes of the planning committee held on 30th June 2025 (P03)

Received and noted: the draft minutes of the planning committee held on 14th July 2025 (P04)

25/46 TOWN ACTION PLAN AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE

Received and noted: the draft minutes of the Town Action Plan and Amenities Committee held on 14th July 2025 (T01)

25/47 MAYOR'S CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATIONS

To receive new Mayor's appointments and communications
Cllr Salvatore Pagdades advised.

- Welcomed the new vicar for Grt St Mary's Church Dr Sara Batts-Neale who was present at the meeting.
- Attended the 'LevFest' at Leventhorpe School.
- Attended 'Mande-Fest' at Mandeville School.
- Attended Leventhorpe and liased with head of sixth form and careers staff regarding the youth initiative and youth engagement.
- Celebrated the repair café's third anniversary.
- Supported the Mayor of Broxbourne's charity event.
- Thanked councillors for attending his civic function.

25/48 REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS

Received and noted: Representatives reports from:

- County Councillor Eric Buckmaster additionally added;

- Conservative members questioned the administration regarding the decision to putting the council chamber up for sale. It was felt this decision was premature due to the unknown demands relating to the local government reorganisation and what type of council chamber will be needed. A large conference area in Stevenage will be used in the interim it was reconsidered at cabinet but the decision was upheld.
- Raised awareness of the Gilston area monitoring framework, made up of different agencies, Hunsdon and Eastwick and Gilston parish councils have not been invited to join the groups and are not happy with this decision and are hoping to get more involvement over time.
- A new parking enforcement contract has been agreed, shared with Stevenage, Welwyn and East Herts.
- Consultations launched last week were draft statement of gambling principles.
- Some severe weather incidents took place with heavy rain two weeks ago, where some areas suffered hydraulic overload. Thames Water has been contacted who have responded with limited information to resolve these issues.
- The LCWIP consultation is in September
- Footpath 9 will be considered for a more permanent surfacing for the future.

Questions.

Cllr Pagdades asked how much it would be costing to move the County Council to Stevenage offices.

Cllr Eric Buckmaster stated approximately one million pounds.

Cllr Furnace asked regarding the Local Government Reorganisation, can a meeting be held in Sawbridgeworth?

Cllr Eric Buckmaster responded, there will be a consultation in the Autumn which will offer the Town Council the chance to respond.

Cllr Furnace asked if the Hertfordshire Responsible Food Awards could be applied to our local businesses, she agreed to work with Cllr Rattey on this matter.

Cllr Eric Buckmaster stated this could be worthwhile and a good approach.

Regarding the local Nature Recovery Strategy, which is due in by the 8th September it would be good if we responded as a Council. She suggested she could contact Bob Reed for a response to be developed. Cllr Eric Buckmaster stated this was a good idea and supported this suggestion.

ACTION – Cllr Furnace to liaise with Cllr Rattey regarding local businesses being considered for the Responsible Food Awards

ACTION – Cllr Furnace to liaise with Bob Reed to collate a response to be submitted to the local Nature Recovery Strategy consultation.

- Cllr Ruth Buckmaster
 - The Sawbridgeworth Library were taking part in Children's summer activities.
 - At DMC a battery energy storage system was discussed in Stocking Pelham.

- Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt

- Explained the Hatfield Forest Mitigation Strategy to stop the degradation from the large number of visitors. A levy will be placed on developers in the local area. This will be £540 per house being built within a 11.1 KM radius around the forest.

Cllr John Rider raised why local money was being demanded when the National Trust have a Billion pounds of assets. Our local infrastructure is in dire need of finance. Should local development fund Sawbridgeworth rather the Hatfield Forest in Essex.

Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt explained this was a separate levy and developments will have section 106 funding to fulfil which the Town Council will need to monitor to ensure this is earmarked for the Town.

- An update was made on the Community Governance Review and the decision that EHDC members agreed that Sawbridgeworth was to be warded even though on several occasions Town Councillors and other representatives had argued against this several times. He made representations at the working group and at the East Herts District Council meeting last week. He outlined reasons as to why the decision to ward was flawed as the ratio of councillors to voters was disproportionate creating an unequal representation. Consultation leaflets are in question if these were produced and sent out to the community. A five year electorate forecast is to be produced and shared as part of the CGR process and this was not made available. The request by the community to remain unwarded has been ignored.

Due to these matters he has written to the Interim Chief Executive at EHDC to review the decision to separate Sawbridgeworth into wards.

Cllr Eric Buckmaster stated Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt's report was excellent and the meeting to ward the town was disappointing and makes it difficult for independent councillors to stand.

Cllr John Rider stated this was an imposition for all the Town Councillors and was voted to represent the people of the town. He stated the consultation held in the chamber was a farce as he feels it wasn't a consultation and the procedures were wrong. He asked if the Clerk could refer the matter to the boundary commission. He also stated London wards have a maximum of three councillors, it was wrong to have five councillors for one of the four wards in Sawbridgeworth.

Cllr Nathan Parsad-Wyatt asked for a letter to be sent from Sawbridgeworth Town Council as he felt there was a case for a legal challenge.

Cllr Reece Smith stated the decision to Ward the Town was shocking and disappointing. The decision appears to be made along political lines and not what Sawbridgeworth people want. He asked what was available under the legal challenge route.

Cllr Ruth Buckmaster said she was extremely upset at the decision and mentioned that the leader Ben Crystal stated that no one had emailed him saying they didn't like it. She would encourage residents to email him offering feedback to this decision.

Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt explained the legal procedure and

hopefully it can be resolved at a local level at an early stage. Again the Town has been ignored as with other recent matters such as the swimming pool and car parking charges.

Cllr Steve Smith raised a matter from the EHDC meeting that should town councillors be consulting members of the public regarding warding.

Cllr Pagdades felt it was EHDC's responsibility to run the consultation and the matter had been on the Town Councils website, minutes and letters sent previously echoing the communities view.

Cllr Ruth Buckmaster stated she had consulted with members of the public when asked at the EHDC meeting and was accused by an officer of only speaking with likeminded people regarding her views.

ACTION - Clerk to write to EHDC Interim Chief Executive on behalf of Sawbridgeworth Town Council challenging the recent decision and process in separating the town into four wards.

- Herts police – No report received.
- Cllr Ruth Buckmaster updated on SYPRC who had held an AGM recently and the officers remain the same and funding is being sought for window replacement.
- Cllr Annelise Furnace updated that it was the 3rd anniversary for the Repair Café. The next energy hub will be at Fun on the Field event and could the councillor stall be placed next to the Energy Hub and councillors support the volunteers.
- Cllr Penney wanted it minuted that the Sawb3 106 funding inflexibility was disappointing and Sawb4 should be a real focus moving forwards.
Cllr Furnace stated the wording in the 106 agreements appeared to offer some flexibility. The Clerk responded that this was looked into in some depth and the only flexibility related to the football club funding and that Leventhorpe and Grange Paddocks funding was to pay back loans for the Grange Paddocks development which has now been completed and therefore not available for reallocation.
Cllr Nathan Parsad-Wyatt highlighted the inflexibility of the 106 funding and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was more flexible and the new unitary council may want to apply this funding process in the future.
- Cllr Steve Smith updated at the recent Hailey Centre AGM. Cllr Eric Buckmaster had been voted in as the chair of the committee and Angela Alder stood down following 18 years in the role and will take up the deputy chair role.

25/49 TOWN CLERK REPORT

Received and noted: the clerk's report for the month of July 2025.

25/50 TOWN PROJECTS MANAGER REPORT

Received and noted: the Town Project Manager's report for July 2025

25/51 GRANT APPLICATIONS

To consider and **resolve** the following grant applications:

The Mayor explained the process and invited councillors to indicate if they were for or against the applications.

1. Hertfordshire Boat Rescue
Water Safety Patrols **£500**
Granted,
[prop Cllr Ruth Buckmaster; sec'd Cllr Nathan Parsad-Wyatt]

2. East Herts District Council
Diversionary Activities **£500**
Not Granted to supply detail in how many young people have used the activity. The scheme should be scheduled at high demand times over the summer school holidays rather than the half term periods. Encouraged to reapply in January to cover the summer holidays.
[prop Cllr Reece Smith; sec'd Cllr Greg Rattey]

3. Sawbridgeworth Fire and Rescue
Replacement defibrillator **£500**
Granted,
[prop Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt; sec'd Cllr Penney]

4. The Fabric Folk CIC
Run Repair workshops **£500**
Not Granted The scheme appears to fall closely with the Repair Café and volunteers have welcomed a meeting with the applicant. It was agreed that the scheme should be set up alongside the Repair Café and once up and running a further application should be made if proving successful.
[prop Cllr Nathan Parsad-Wyatt; sec'd Cllr Ruth Buckmaster]

5. Canal Ability
Volunteers name badges **£400**
Not Granted It was agreed the organisation was doing an amazing job but further detail around the cost of the badges, number of people and events in Sawbridgeworth would assist councillors decision and a further application was encouraged,
[prop Cllr Greg Rattey; sec'd Cllr Newell]

ACTION - The Clerk to review the application process for grant funding to assess if it needed updating

25/52

REPRESENTATION TO THE COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL

To consider issuing a formal response to Hertfordshire County Council and/or EHDC, requesting a reassessment of the financial and service provision allocation and urging greater investment in our town's infrastructure.

Cllr John Rider made the following observations;
I wish to bring forward a number of pressing concerns regarding recent decisions and ongoing challenges that have deeply affected our town and its residents.

Firstly, the changes to parking fees at the Bell Street car park have placed undue strain on local businesses and community clubs. Due to the town's geography and the lack of viable alternative parking in the center, these increases threaten to undermine economic activity and community engagement in our town core.

Secondly, following the closure of the Leventhorpe swimming pool, there has been a distinct lack of support in facilitating children's access

to Grange Paddocks. This gap in provision is unacceptable and risks excluding our young people from essential recreational and developmental opportunities.

We also remain concerned about planning and licensing decisions regarding the Vault, which were made despite local objections. Similarly troubling is EHDC's refusal to grit its own car park during adverse weather, while Hertfordshire Highways has been unable to resolve gritting issues on Bell Street. While alternative solutions are being explored, these failures raise serious questions about preparedness and responsibility.

Additionally, the removal of frequently used litter bins—without consultation with elected members or our local community—has further eroded trust. This lack of communication and consideration is symptomatic of a wider disconnect, now reflected in ongoing debates over warding arrangements for our town.

Another matter requiring urgent attention is the Jubilee Gardens project. Despite our commitment and efforts, the initiative has suffered from insufficient support, risking the loss of critical funding. Furthermore, a related planning application has been left unaddressed for months.

Collectively, these issues paint a troubling picture. I speak plainly when I say: our town is being sidelined. We pay our fair share of rates and yet do not receive equitable service provision compared to other towns in the district. Our residents deserve better.

I urge this Council to reflect seriously on these concerns and take meaningful steps toward remedying the imbalance. We are ready to engage in constructive dialogue—but only if there is a genuine commitment to fairness, transparency, and investment in our community.

Resolved - The Town Clerk to write on behalf of the Town Council raising concerns to both Councillor Ben Crystall and MP Josh Dean to review these matters with urgency and to advocate for greater fairness, transparency, and investment in the town's infrastructure and community resources.

[prop Cllr Rider; sec'd Cllr Rattey]

25/53

REDUCING THE COUNCILS CARBON FOOTPRINT

Cllr Furnace updated on areas that have been attributed to reducing the councils carbon footprint in line with the 3 Acorns report recommendations.

- Skip use and fly tipping has been reduced.
- Mulching mower in use to reduce waste production
- Chamber electricity turned off when not in use
- Energy Hub advice available on the website
- Staff handbook updated to highlight energy saving areas whilst at work
- Eco cleaning products are being utilised
- Changing bank is still under review
- West Road water harvesting
- New member of the Eco Group is reviewing the 3 acorns report

25/54 DEPOSIT & CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS

Noted: deposit and consultation documents

25/55 FINANCIAL REPORT

Noted: The current Financial Report

25/56 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Noted and Approved: Accounts for payment.

25/57 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

To debate the wording for the REDUCING THE COUNCILS CARBON FOOTPRINT agenda item.

To consider re wording the second paragraph of its pledge from

From

- *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.*

To

- *In the interim, aim to reduce the council's own carbon footprint to an absolute minimum by May 2027 (the end of the current council term), while identifying and pursuing a clear strategy to offset any residual emissions*

Meeting ended at 8:30pm

<i>Action</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Update</i>
To write to Morrisons again to raise concerns over the size of delivery vehicles used in Bell Street deliveries.	<i>Clerk</i>	<i>Email sent 29th July 2025 and copied into the police Cllrs Pagdades, Rattey and Eric Buckmaster copied in.</i>
To liaise with Cllr Rattey regarding local businesses being considered for the Responsible Food Awards	<i>Cllr Furnace</i>	
To Liaise with Bob Reed to collate a response to be submitted to the local Nature Recovery Strategy consultation.	<i>Cllr Furnace</i>	
To write to EHDC Interim Chief Executive on behalf of Sawbridgeworth Town Council challenging the recent decision	<i>Clerk</i>	<i>Letter sent 29th July and confirmation received from Helen Standen who has referred the letter to the Monitoring Officer</i>

and process in separating the town into four wards		
To review the application process for grant funding to assess if it needed updating	<i>Clerk</i>	
To write on behalf of the Town Council raising concerns to both Councillor Crystall and MP Dean to review these matters with urgency and to advocate for greater fairness, transparency, and investment in the town's infrastructure and community resources.	<i>Clerk</i>	<i>Letter sent 29th July 2025 to Cllr Ben Crystall and MP Josh Dean.</i>

Signed.....

Date.....