

SAWBRIDGEWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL Minutes

of the Meeting of Sawbridgeworth Town Council held at 7:30pm in the Council Chamber, Sayesbury Manor, Bell Street on **Monday 25th September 2023**.

Those present

Cllr Eric Buckmaster	Cllr A Parsad-Wyatt
Cllr Ruth Buckmaster	Cllr N Parsad-Wyatt
Cllr Annelise Furnace	Cllr Greg Rattey
Cllr Dawn Newell	Cllr John Rider
Cllr Salvatore Pagdades	Cllr Reece Smith
	Cllr Steve Smith

In attendance:

Joanne Sargant
Chris Carter – Press

9 x members of the public

The Mayor addressed the members of the meeting and asked for everyone's thoughts and prayers for Mrs Hazel Mead after the passing of her husband Mr David Mead.

Welcome and thought of the day delivered by the Town Mayor

23/62 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None were received.

23/63 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

None were received.

23/64 MINUTES

Resolved: To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the town council held on 31st July 2023 (M03)

[prop Cllr E Buckmaster; sec'd Cllr Furnace]

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

Actions noted from the previous minutes and both had been resolved.

23/65 PLANNING COMMITTEE

Received and noted: the minutes of the planning committee held on 31st July 2023 (P05)

Received and noted: the draft minutes of the planning committee held on 11th September 2023 (P06)

23/66 PUBLIC FORUM

Questions

- *Elaine Irvine.*

Q1. Referring to the information sheets provided on s106 monies, totalling over £5m, from Taylor Wimpey and BDW Trading Limited. This very large sum appears to go first to either EHDC or HCC and is then allocated back to Sawbridgeworth.

- a) How do we account for the actual sum that comes back to Sawbridgeworth for the local community? How much do EHDC and HCC retain for their own use?

Cllr E Buckmaster stated, there are 3 major developments. The many millions that have arisen from the developments are probably 99 percent for mitigations in Sawbridgeworth. The purpose of the legal agreements/contributions is to mitigate against the impacts of development and population growth which is why a large sum is going to Education, Early Years, Youth, and older people plus Highways. There are sums for the Library.

The District and County Councils only hold the money. It has to be used for the purposes stated in the legal agreements. The County and District Councils are providers of services so they would assess needs based on the nature of the developments. So some section 106 monies could be requested by the District Council to upgrade Leisure Services where demand would increase. The section 106 agreements also include the requirements for affordable housing in the developments which the developers provide at a discount for Housing Associations to bid for. Sums were included for the Bullfields Centre, and the Hailey Centre to help with increasing demands for youth and older peoples services. The County Council has a toolkit which includes sums for Education, Primary and Secondary and Early Years. Typically 500 homes equates to one form of entry. So funding was provided for Mandeville to double in size. Funding was also allocated for early years for High Wych preschool at Bullfields. County will also request obligations for Highways improvements the developers need to include. These haven't all been actioned yet but the funds are identified. They also asked for some funding for Sawbridgeworth Library. The description of the £122,000 allocated to Leventhorpe or Grange Paddocks was pretty much the exception, and the response from East Herts is that using some of that for Grange Paddocks was justified since it is a facility for the wider area. I had a very productive meeting with the head of Service at East Herts and asked for funding to refresh the facility at Leventhorpe in discussion with the Service Provider SLM.

The legal agreements are on the planning portal for anyone to read. The additional land we were hoping for towards sport didn't materialise because the landowner withdrew it from the District Plan. So the short answer is that the s106 funding is overwhelmingly for Sawbridgeworth.

- b) What is/was the process for inviting local community organisations, societies, clubs, etc. in Sawbridgeworth to request grants from the s106 monies?

Cllr E Buckmaster answered, the section 106 monies are not grants, or compensation for development. The vast majority of the 106 allocations are very specific, so only those named will be able to apply, e.g. High Wych preschool/SYPRC, Hailey Centre and based on need, hence Education, Highways, affordable homes, Early years etc. The developers also submit viability assessments for what they say they can afford to contribute, and this often means we don't reach the

Target of 40pc affordable homes but a lower figure.

There will be a review of the District Plan over the next couple of years where there will be further consultations and will include looking at sports provision based on housing growth so its important for the community and sports associations to respond to any consultations. Section 106 cannot be used to plug existing shortfalls but only to meet the need arising from the developments.

There will be more but similar contributions coming from Sawb 4 in Kecksys. we expect them to be broadly pro rata those already agreed for the West Road developments since the planning obligations were also agreed 5 years ago but could not proceed for issues around probate

Q2. SAWB2 and SAWB3 s106 allocations total £58,439 for our library in The Forebury, but in the 'Flyer' recently, an article by David Royle expressed concern about the long term strategy for the library. With such a sum spent on the library, is it safe to assume that the library will be staying on the current site?

Cllr E Buckmaster stated the library service will decide where money is spent, for the foreseeable future the library will be staying where it is but has money to spend if required.

Cllr Furnace asked if the Sawb 4 section 106 money allocation decisions could go before councillors rather than council officers through their delegated powers.

Cllr N Parsad-Wyatt stated that planning applications for developments this size will have a contract with wording similar to planning application approval are subject to section 106 legal agreements being signed. This allows lawyers from planning and developers to agree on the 106 monies utilising council officers under delegated powers.

Cllr Furnace asked if representation could be made to have all the 106 money allocated to Sawbridgeworth.

Cllr R Buckmaster stated that it was the officers and not the residents who decided where the money was spent.

Cllr E Buckmaster noted that the previous Sawb 2 and 3 planning meeting minutes from 5 years ago stated that £122,000 had been earmarked for indoor sport and leisure. From the officer report it stated the money was to go to either Leventhorpe pool and gym or Grange Paddocks which is a facility for the wider community. This amount is less than one percent of the allocated 106 money from these developments. He stated he thought that the questions had been answered and that any further questions on this subject be emailed directly to him so he can answer them outside of this meeting.

- *David Royle.*

Q1 I understand that there is no longer to be a Ukraine-related item on the Council agenda, which is very disappointing. How does this Council plan to help maintain awareness locally of this conflict and its impact and to help support our Ukrainian guests?

Cllr R Smith responded, councillors are aware and will continue to monitor the conflict in Ukraine. Local events and money

raising initiatives will be supported and publicised on the council website and on line.

Q2 I have been asking questions over the past year about progress on key town 'projects': the Jubilee Gardens, the market, EV charging points, plus the future of the library. I realise these are often dealt with in committee, but will the Council include an item on the Full Council agenda to provide a regular update, as well as on Facebook, so that there is easier access to this important information?

Cllr N Pasad-Wyatt responded that the council are currently in the consultation period for the action plan which covers this point on communication and councillors are aware this does need to be addressed. All the minutes from meetings are available on line but communication recommendations will be used from the consultation moving forwards.

- *West Road resident*

Q1 Asked what is being done regarding the traffic issues in West Road due to the high volume of traffic and vehicles driving up kerbs, it is dangerous and a child could be seriously hurt.

Cllr E Buckmaster responded stated his report will cover this subject. He has been working on this issue for two years and is working with partners to address the parking problems. This is a difficult issue to deal with and he has become aware new residents are unhappy due to parents dropping children off. He hoped existing and new residents can work together to help resolve some of the problems.

- *Tony Carr*

Q1 What are the future plans for the Leventhorpe pool and gym?

Cllr E Buckmaster responded that he has visited the gym recently and it is in a poor condition. He has had a meeting with the head of service regarding this subject and raised his concerns and this will be looked at. He explained that there are three joint use pool agreements with schools and Leventhorpe is one of these. The pools are not making enough money and the pools are heavily subsidised. There is 13 years left on the joint use agreement and he wanted the pool kept open and the facilities improved.

Mr Carr asked when were these improvements going to happen
Cllr E Buckmaster said he couldn't state when but he would keep asking for these improvements to be instigated.

23/67

FINANCE, POLICY and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Received and noted: the draft minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee held on 11th September 2023 (F02)

23/68

MAYOR'S CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATIONS

To receive Mayor's appointments and communications

Cllr R Buckmaster advised.

- Noted the letter from citizens advice thanking the council for the recent grant.
- Attended the West Road community engagement event with the

local police and partners.

- Attended fun on the field, thanks was given to Joanne Sargant for organising the event.
- Attended the allotment event which was running at the same time as fun on the field.
- Presented medals to the finishers of the summer reading challenge and the winners of the town trail.
- The French town twinning visitors had attended Sawbridgeworth last weekend and several activities took place and each was presented with a book with photographs of places of interest in the town. All to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the twinning.
- Attended the Dunmow festival and fayre.
- Attended the bereavement café at the Hailey Centre
- Attended the Reedings school democracy week, following this she thought it may be nice to run a school council again.
- This week is the school travel challenge and this is to reduce car travel to school and this culminates in a travel challenge on Saturday.
- Congratulated the mothers of recent births being her daughter Francesca and Cllr Reece Smiths wife Katie.

23/69

REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS

Received and noted: Representatives reports from:

- County Councillor E Buckmaster referred to his report additionally adding;
 - Mentioned the heavy rain suffered last week and raised awareness of the fire and rescue service interventions with flooding. He is supporting residents who are in dispute with Thames water regarding flooding due to hydraulic overload. He has also been liaising with county and district officers regarding maintenance so gully's and drains are kept clear.
 - He has produced a list of local highways interventions utilising his budget. All are from resident requests regarding safety and reservicing. He is still chasing the no entry completed at Sheering Mill Lane which he started work on five years ago.
 - Many emails and messages he receives relate to driver behaviour, parking and visibility. Due to the increase in residents in the town this calculates to an average increase of 1200 cars in the town.
 - Yellow lines around the town needs to benefit the majority and any yellow line placement will require other restrictions removed to allow enough parking for residents. He encourages drivers not to block pavements and drive on the pavement in Vantorts Road.

Questions.

Cllr A Furnace stated she had read that the air quality management areas, Sawbridgeworth being one of these, were not going to be removed. We have been allocated a DEFRA grant for a real time air quality monitor, can we keep the pressure on to ensure we are going to receive the monitor.

Cllr R Buckmaster stated that all district councillors will chase this up.

Cllr Rider asked if there was a think tank at East Herts Council due to recent weather events. He has noticed increased tree growth and is concerned regarding dangerous trees.

Cllr E Buckmaster stated it was his role as the cabinet member to keep

climate change on the agenda. Climate change is on the agenda for both district and county councils. There is information on the East Herts Council website regarding this matter.

District Councillors reports

Cllr E Buckmaster referred to his report he read previously.

Cllr R Buckmaster referred to her report.

Cllr A Parsad-Wyatt referred to his report and was supporting fellow district councillors regarding resident's concerns and is working on the towns action plan.

Police

The Clerk read the report submitted by PC Marshall, this related to an engagement event in Griffin Way, attending the fire station open day and fun on the field. The police will be supporting the walk to school week and community connections event.

Question

Cllr R Smith asked if the police had responded to the request for money to be paid to repair the toilets from those involved and the police had issued banning notices.

The Clerk, stated he had spoken to the local officer and as the evidence threshold did not support a prosecution the evidence for compensation did not exist and demanding compensation was not applicable in this case.

Cllr Rider thanked the new local PCSO walking around the streets. He felt that councillors can write to demand compensation and in the future the council should seek compensation.

Cllr Newell asked could future offenders be asked to complete work locally and *Cllr Furnace* suggested helping at community events may help them understand the effects on their actions.

Cllr A Parsad-Wyatt asked if the police could attend meetings and update councillors on proactive work being completed to deter crime as we approach winter.

ACTION – The Clerk to request further information from the police on proactive work in the town

- Cllr R Buckmaster, reminded people of Apple Day at the orchard on the 7th October 10am – 3pm.
- Cllr A Furnace, referred to her report and plugged the travel challenge and community connections event the week. Also raised that there will be a countryside rights of way work party and volunteers were welcome in Pishiobury Park Tuesday 26th September 10am – 3pm.

Question

Cllr Rider raised the fact he thought he could smell jet fuel when on his allotment in Southbrook. Cllr A Parsad-Wyatt stated that pilots do dump fuel if they have too much as they are limited to an amount on landing for safety reasons. It may be that Sustainable Sawbridgeworth could liaise with Stansted airport on this matter?

23/70

TOWN CLERK REPORT

Received and noted: the clerk’s report for the month of September 2023. The Clerk wanted it noted the great work completed by Graham Langley for going over and above his role. He has covered another drivers long term sickness and assisted at a community event. The chair agreed this good work should be noted.

23/71

TOWN PROJECTS MANAGER REPORT

A verbal update was made by Joanne Sargant regarding the start to the walk to school week. Community connections will take place this Saturday with different attendees including the High Sherrif and the MP Julie Marson. and confirmed the Christmas lights event with be the last Saturday in November 3pm until 6:30pm.

23/72

POLICY MATTERS

Resolved: to adopt the draft document 2.1 Standing Orders [prop Cllr N Parsad-Wyatt; sec’d Cllr A Parsad-Wyatt]

23/73

FINANCIAL REPORT

Noted: The current Financial Report

23/74

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Noted and Approved: Accounts for payment.

23/75

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Cllr S Smith asked if the focus of the meetings should be from the results of the town action plan survey.

Cllr A Parsad-Wyatt stated the town action plan highlights will come through from the sub committee with information that will need to be raised at full council.

Cllr E Buckmaster stated he does cover and will continue to raise safety matters in his report.

Cllr S Smith stated he wanted noted that all the councillors are volunteers and the amount of work that each invests for the town is phenomenal.

Cllr R Buckmaster thanked the members of public for attending the meeting.

Meeting ended at 8:44pm

ACTIONS

Owner	Action	Completed
Clerk	To request further information from the police on proactive work in the town	Pending, email sent 26/9/23