

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 September 2025**.

Those present

Cllr Eric Buckmaster
Cllr Ruth Buckmaster
Cllr Dawn Newell
Cllr Salvatore Pagdades

Cllr Greg Rattey
Cllr John Rider
Cllr Reece Smith
Cllr Steve Smith

In attendance:
Joanne Sargent – Events Manager

4 x members of the public
2 x Police Officers PC Shelly Marshall, PS
Andy Crow

Welcome by the Town Mayor followed by a 1-minute silence to mark the passing of former Sawbridgeworth Cllr Fred Parr and Bishops Stortford Cllr Norma Simmons.

Thought for the day was read by Cllr John Rider
[Attached appendix A].

25/58 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Received and approved from Cllr Annelise Furnace, Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt, Cllr Nathan Parsad-Wyatt, Cllr Simon Penney
[prop Cllr Greg Rattey; sec'd Cllr Ruth Buckmaster]

25/59 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were none.

25/60 MINUTES

Resolved: To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Meeting of the town council held on 28th July 2025 (M03)
[prop Cllr Reece Smith; sec'd Cllr Steve Smith]

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

Action	Owner	Update
To write to Morrisons again to raise concerns over the size of delivery vehicles used in Bell Street deliveries.	Clerk	Email sent 29 th July 2025 and copied into the police Cllrs Pagdades, Rattey and Eric Buckmaster copied in. No response received chase email sent 23 rd September 2025
To liaise with Cllr Rattey regarding local businesses being considered for the Responsible Food	Cllr Furnace	**Carry Over to the next Full Town Council Meeting in October**

Awards		
To Liaise with Bob Reed to collate a response to be submitted to the local Nature Recovery Strategy consultation.	<i>Cllr Furnace</i>	<i>**Carry Over to the next Full Town Council Meeting in October**</i>
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	<i>Clerk</i>	<i>Letter sent 29th July and confirmation received from Helen Standen who has referred the letter to the Monitoring Officer. Further action being taken in conjunction with Buntingford Town Council, Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt leading.</i>
To review the application process for grant funding to assess if it needed updating	<i>Clerk</i>	<i>The funding application has been reviewed following the last round in July. This was due to concerns over information included in the applications. The applications when received will be assessed and any further information that is required the Clerk will request this is submitted prior to consideration.</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. Response from MP Josh Dean received 18th September and attached to meeting pack. [Attached Appendix B] Chase email sent to Cllr Crystal 23rd September 2025. Response received 25th September 2025 and circulated at the meeting from Helen Standen Attached Appendix B</i>

25/61

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Received and noted: the minutes of the planning committee held on 28th July 2025 (P05)

Received and noted: the draft minutes of the planning committee held on 15th September 2025 (P06)

25/62

PUBLIC FORUM

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

Q1. I note that Bishop's Stortford Town Council is working with Hertfordshire Police to introduce a speed gun monitoring scheme on various roads in the town, aimed at tackling speeding and improving road safety. Will this Council consider a similar scheme?

Cllr Eric Buckmaster answered stating that the question related to the community speed watch scheme where volunteers could undertake speed awareness and recording speed of vehicles. This was reinforced by PC Shelly Marshall who will liaise with the member of the public regarding this.

Q2. What has been the extent of councillor engagement with residents on the pros and cons of warding?

Cllr Eric Buckmaster stated the process of engagement by East Herts District Council was flawed and this subject will be covered later in the agenda.

Q3. Do the council have any outdoor gym equipment?

The Clerk stated they did not have any in the green spaces the council manage but this could be a consideration for the next budget he will be working on soon.

Q4. I have seen on Facebook one of the Town Council bus drivers has started a fund me page for the Sawbobus. Do Sheering Parish Council contribute to the service as many of the passengers are from their area?

The Clerk confirmed Sheering Parish Council did contribute to the bus service and the fund raising was set up by a driver as a member of the public to compliment the reserves being built up to purchase an electric bus as the council was some way from being able to afford one at this time. The fund raising was fully independent of the Town Council and treated as any donation to the service as well as sponsorship that is received.

25/63

FINANCE, POLICY and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Received and noted: the draft minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee held on 15th September 2025 (F02)

25/64

MAYOR'S CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATIONS

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

- Received the members of the French Town Twinning group from Bry-sur-Marne
- Handed out medals and certificates to children completing the 2025 Summer Reading Challenge.
- Attended the allotment show at the Memorial Hall
- Attended St Elizabeths Centre Much Hadham for a service to celebrate the Daughters of the Cross, former trustees of St Elizabeths Centre and met with the Archbishop of Westminster Cardinal Vincent Nichols with the Clerk.
- Attended Full of Beans for an exhibition of local artists.

REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS

Received and noted: Representatives reports from:

- County Councillor Eric Buckmaster additionally added;
 - Has had speed indicator devices fitted in the town
 - Will be reviewing yellow lines in the town one area as highlighted by the police will be in Knight Street to reduce pavement parking which is a regular concern.
 - Has been liaising with EHDC around the new bin scheme that had been launched who were receiving up to 1000 calls every day regarding issues being faced by residents.
 - Positive news on the bin collection scheme was the implementation of the food waste bins which has improved recycling and may reach over 60% moving forwards.
 - The Unitary Council consultation was explained with the three choices for local people to be aware of and three reasons each choice could affect residents and the scale of council tax payments.
 - The Hailey Centre improvements were explained but these were limited due to budget restraints.

Cllr John Rider explained that he had been advised to put food waste into his garden waste bin by contractors and was worried this could cause a rat infestation issue if this was a regular practice.

Cllr Ruth Buckmaster asked if the Library Service and Education were to be split across the unitary councils. Cllr Eric Buckmaster stated that nothing was decided yet, but he will monitor decisions moving forwards and encouraged members to do the same.

- Cllr Ruth Buckmaster

RHSO - New juicer was being used which changed the process as the fallen apples could not be used and apples will be stored until ready to press. The annual picking day may need to change due to climate change and fruit ripening earlier but will monitor this next year and a date will be circulated if it needed to be bought forward.

SYPRC – are holding a quiz night and are actively raising money as grants are difficult to obtain. The windows in Bullfields are in need of upgrading

LIBRARY – thanks was mentioned for the mayor attending the library prize giving for the children and the travel challenge was being supported by giving children with a completed passport a bookmark to reward their achievement over the week of walking to school.
- Herts police – PC Shelly Marshall
 - Explained the new structure for the senior management for the force
 - A visit to Welwyn Garden City with local children, the Mayor and the Clerk had been arranged to see the Knife Angel statue.
 - A bid has been made to the PCC for a speed camera in the town.
 - A speeding initiative is planned with students from Spellbrook School speaking to drivers exceeding the speed limit near the school.
 - The “Air-mazing” event was successful with over thirty bikes marked and in excess of one hundred fingerprint trees completed with young children and positive engagement completed with parents.
 - Halloween and Remembrance Sunday has plans for policing locally
 - Work with housing associations has proved positive with a perpetrator of ASB being served with an injunction.

- 25/66 TOWN CLERK REPORT**
Received and noted: the clerk's report for the month of September 2025.
- 25/67 TOWN PROJECTS MANAGER'S REPORT**
Received and noted: the Town Projects Manager's report for July 2025
- 25/68 FINANCE MATTERS**
Received and noted: Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) of the Council for the financial year 2024 2025 from external auditors PKF Littlejohn and the Clerks variance report.
- 25/69 POLICY MATTERS**
Approved: To adopt the draft document, Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.
[prop Cllr Ruth Buckmaster; sec'd Cllr Steve Smith]
- 25/70 STC ASSET PURCHASE**
Approved: To purchase and manage the original red telephone box situated in The Forebury.
[prop Cllr Reece Smith; sec'd Cllr Dawn Newell]
- 25/71 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION**
Approved: To create a working party to consider devolution and the impact on new asset management in the town.
[prop Cllr Ruth Buckmaster; sec'd Cllr John Ryder]
- 25/72 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**
 To discuss the Community Governance Review (CGR) and the impact on warding and next steps.
- Cllr Eric Buckmaster explained, he believes the process is completely flawed, He mentioned Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt and others really tried hard to convince EHDC that warding was not a good thing for our town. Following a meeting with representatives from Sawbridgeworth Town Council and Buntingford who are also facing the same decision of warding are promoting petitions. A group of Councillors are going to go out delivering leaflets around town to raise awareness of this decision and to try and get the process to be run again with the community fully aware of the impact warding can have.
- He stated, *"What we're saying is run the process again so that people can have their say because too often the so called 'Listening Council' don't listen. It's really not good enough, so let's do it again".*
- 25/73 FOOTPATH UPDATE**
 To discuss the gritting of roads and carparks in the town and the footpath from Elmwood leading to the river Stort.
- Cllr John Rider explained that he had submitted a freedom of information request and the results showed that several carparks in East Herts had been treated throughout the winter by gritting but the Bell Street car park in Sawbridgeworth had not been treated as far back as records showed.
- 25/74 REDUCING THE COUNCILS CARBON FOOTPRINT**
 Cllr Furnace to update at the next full town council meeting.

25/75 FINANCIAL REPORT

Noted: The current Financial Report

25/76 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Noted and Approved: Accounts for payment.

25/77 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 8:16pm

Signed.....

Date.....

Action	Owner	Update
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 <i>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.</i> To <i>In the interim, aim to reduce the council's own carbon footprint to an absolute minimum by May</i>	<i>Clerk</i>	

<i>2027 (the end of the current council term), while identifying and pursuing a clear strategy to offset any residual emissions</i>		
<i>To liaise with Cllr Rattey regarding local businesses being considered for the Responsible Food Awards</i>	<i>Cllr Furnace</i>	<i>**Carry Over to the next Full Town Council Meeting in October**</i>
<i>To liaise with Bob Reed to collate a response to be submitted to the local Nature Recovery Strategy consultation.</i>	<i>Cllr Furnace</i>	<i>**Carry Over to the next Full Town Council Meeting in October**</i>
<i>To form a working party regarding Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)</i>	<i>Clerk</i>	

Appendix A

Thought of the Day Cllr John Rider

Prince William recently said, "Life is sent to test us, and being able to overcome that is what makes us who we are." He was referring to his family's health challenges, these words resonate with me for a different reason.

We as councillors, must overcome the lack of engagement and respect from the East Herts District Council over the past two years. This council has failed our town on multiple levels.

The recent criticism in The Times newspaper, which singled out East Herts District Council for its shambolic new bin collection system, is just one example. The article described the system as "politically stupid and divisive," infuriating households and achieving little.

This is not an isolated issue. Having moved to Sawbridgeworth in 1975 for a better life for my family and having worked in management services at East Herts District Council, I recall a time when the council was run professionally and effectively. Sadly, that is no longer the case.

With over 40 years of experience in other boroughs at a high level, I can confidently say that East Herts District Council is failing to provide the services our town deserves. They are not listening to or engaging with our town councillors, nor are they acting on feedback to best serve the people.

Despite these challenges, our town council must overcome these obstacles. We are being tested, but we will overcome, and our voices will be heard. It is what makes us who we are.