

SAWBRIDGECWORTH 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 October 2024**.

Those present

Cllr Eric Buckmaster	Cllr Nathan Parsad-Wyatt
Cllr Ruth Buckmaster	Cllr Greg Rattey
Cllr Annelise Furnace	Cllr John Rider
Cllr Salvatore Pagdades	Cllr Reece Smith
Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt	Cllr Steve Smith

In attendance:

Town Clerk	12 x Members of the public
Officer Lisa Nolan	1 x Member of the press

Welcome by the Town Mayor.

Thought for the day was read by Cllr Greg Rattey.

24/74 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs Simon Penney, Dawn Newell
[prop Cllr Nathan Parsad-Wyatt; sec'd Cllr Ruth Buckmaster]

24/75 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

No declarations of pecuniary interest were declared.

24/76 MINUTES

Resolved: To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the town council held on 22nd July 2024 (M03)
[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.

Action	Owner	Update
<i>The County Councillors report included that there has been a 20% rise in bus use in the County, can this research be broken down to show use in Sawbridgeworth</i>	<i>Cllr Eric Buckmaster</i>	<i>This detail was not recorded as part of the survey.</i>
<i>Email Taylor Wimpey to ask if they would assist in funding the resurfacing of footpath 9</i>	<i>Clerk</i>	<i>Response received 3rd October 2024, 'I can confirm that Taylor Wimpey's position remains the same. As the footpath in question is owned and managed by Hertfordshire County Council then Taylor Wimpey has no</i>

		<i>objection to them upgrading this'.</i>
<i>To enquire with EHDC to assess if the market can be situated in the Bell Street car park</i>	<i>Clerk</i>	Email sent to EHDC 9 th October 2024 and chaser sent 21 st October 2024, update on Clerks report for the market update later in the agenda.
<i>To contact other youth groups to assess if alternative groups would want a representative to attend civic functions with the Mayor for one year.</i>	<i>Clerk</i>	Commissioners emailed for Scouts and Guides 2 nd October 2024 and chaser sent 21 st October 2024 to both. Awaiting response from Guides and Scouts

24/77 PLANNING COMMITTEE

Received and noted: the minutes of the planning committee held on 30th September 2024 (P07)

Received and noted: the draft minutes of the planning committee held on 14th October 2024 (P08)

24/78 PUBLIC FORUM

Cllr Eric Buckmaster explained the management and governance framework of Leventhorpe Swimming Pool and how the recent decision has been reached to close the pool due to the school funding being withdrawn and East Herts Council being unable to fund education.

Q1 Would it be possible for the school to lease the pool and create a Community Interest Company (CIC) for the pool to be managed by the town and community?

Cllr Eric Buckmaster stated this decision would need to be with the school but they are also facing huge decommissioning costs.

Q2 How long would Government funding keep the pool open for?
Operating hours could be extended to increase the revenue generated to reinvest into the pool and keep it open.

Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt answered, we will not know the figure of money the government funding may be if awarded or for how long. Also the costs involved in keeping a swimming pool are spiralling and the commercial set up would need to make it more sustainable.

Q3 Could solar panels be put on the roof to make it more sustainable? I think the pool has been run down on purpose.

Cllr Annelise Furnace stated, there are some good sustainable additions that could assist, there is a company putting data centres in swimming pools to disperse the heat and make it more sustainable.

Cllr Nathan Parsad-Wyatt, I believe the key is to ensure the local MP is aware of the local feeling by promoting the petition which can be used to demonstrate to the Government that funding is necessary.

Members of the public, one working at the pool explained that the pool was empty throughout the day and Leventhorpe do not use it for their pupils.

Q4 Four junior schools in the town use the pool for lessons and due to the cost to get children on transport to Grange Paddocks would make this unaffordable for most parents. We are failing our children.

Cllr Eric Buckmaster explained he has asked East Herts to ensure there is provision to take the children from Leventhorpe to fit them time in Grange Paddocks.

Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt stated this was part of the case the town need to make to make it clear to the Government why we need our pool.

Resolved; Cllr Reece Smith asked if members wanted to extend the 15-minute public forum for a further five minutes.

[prop Cllr Nathan Parsad-Wyatt; sec'd Cllr Ruth Buckmaster]

Q5 The pool is more a sensory place to assist people with there mental health and wellbeing due to it being quite intimate and quiet. If we get to the closing date and we haven't received the funding will the pool ever open again?

Cllr Reece Smith stated that all councillors will be doing everything they can to try and keep the pool open.

Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt stated that funding will be needed to either keep the pool open or decommission it. But councillors will continue to fight for the pool.

Cllr Steve Smith states he is in dialogue with he MP Josh Dean and he is aware funding for the long term will be needed but he will be supporting the town with its campaign.

Q6 Why wasn't some of the money from developments in the town not used to go towards the pools funding? If the public knew about this in the summer more arrangements could have been made to increase pool use.

Cllr Reece Smith stated the money from developments could not be used for running costs, but could have been used for improvements.

Cllr Eric Buckmaster stated he covers off 106 development funding in his report, he was working trying to keep the pool open and it was for East Herts Council and the school to inform people when they came to the decision to close the pool.

2 x further written questions were received being.

1. Are our district councillors confident that planning officers are making decisions which will improve the 'economic, social and environmental conditions of the area' as the NPPF puts it, and are such decisions monitored against these criteria?

2. Is this council aware of any new sites proposed for further development in Sawbridgeworth and will the District Plan Review now be a standing agenda item at full council and/or Planning Committee meetings so that the process is fully transparent?

which Cllr Ruth Buckmaster and Nathan Parsad-Wyatt stated they will respond to in writing.

ACTION; Cllrs Nathan Parsad Wyatt and Ruth Buckmaster to respond to the two questions received prior to the meeting by email.

***** 7 members of the public leave *****

24/79 TOWN ACTION PLAN AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE

Noted; the draft minutes of the Town Action Plan and Amenities Committee held on 14th October 2024 (T02)

24/80 MAYOR'S CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATIONS

To receive new Mayor's appointments and communications
Cllr Reece Smith advised.

- Visited sunflower house in the Maltings a charity offering counselling sessions and drop-in sessions.
- Attended the annual apple day event with his family
- Attended the well-beloved club lunch for the over 65's.
- Attended the fun games night in Bishops Stortford
- Attended Mandeville school to hand out awards to the mini police students.
- Held my charity bingo night and raised £1500
- Visited the new squirrels branch of the scouts
- Attended the town twinning event with our German guests.

24/81 REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS

Received and noted: Representatives reports from:

- County Councillor E Buckmaster additionally added.
 - Explained 106 funding from local developments and detailed where this was allocated.
 - A vast proportion of the funds went to extend Mandeville School to two forms of entry.
 - The roundabout junction at West Road which may be used for an alternative upgrade
 - Central Surgery
 - Hailey Centre
 - The library
 - Bullfields
 - Travel plan monitoring
 - Grange Paddocks
 - Allotment allocation
 - 40% of affordable homes
 - Flood improvements were working well
 - Yellow lines had been painted in Bullfields
 - 20mph in the Northeast of the town is progressing and residents in the east of the town are requesting the same
 - Some pavements have been resurfaced
 - The lights on the footpath near the sports club have been installed ready for the winter
 - Various request for yellow lines are being considered.

Questions

Cllr Ruth Buckmaster, are there any Sawbridgeworth schools receiving air purifiers.

Cllr Eric Buckmaster stated these were for Infant schools only and

he didn't think any of the town's schools were receiving them.

Cllr Ruth Buckmaster

- Explained the five-year housing supply which is a government target for sites and approved developments. This equates to 800 homes for East Herts District. A development in Buntingford was refused but granted on appeal due to EHDC not hitting the five-year housing supply target.
- Sawb4 will start if the reserved matters are resolved

Questions

Cllr Annelise Furnace asked if councillors would have sight of the 106 funding suggestions.

Cllr Ruth Buckmaster stated that district councillors do not get to see the proposals until the officers send over their report with the agreed funding.

Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt stated that money will be allocated to schools and GP surgeries firstly. Sawb4 is a smaller development than the previous West Road ones.

Cllr Eric Buckmaster stated that agreements at committee for funding can be seen historically but these can be changed later by officers within the district council. With funding earmarked for Grange Paddocks or Leventhorpe we would not see those decisions initially He has also noted errors in legal agreements he will be requesting that members in the Town Council are consulted as they know what is needed locally.

Cllr Nathan Parsad-Wyatt explained that 106 money is an agreement between the developer and the council granting the planning permission. This forms part of a contract agreement being drawn up and this is why locally these agreements are not shared. The council can highlight a wish list for investment but will not be involved in the negotiations. He highlighted that the Sawb4 agreement is now 5 years old and the economic environment has changed and this will alter the investment.

ACTION: The Clerk to write to EHDC planning department to enquire if Sawbridgeworth Town Council members can send in a wish list for investment from section 106 contract negotiations.

Cllr John Rider asked if Cllr Ruth Buckmaster could let him know about the recycling project for soft plastics and the blue bags as he feels communication has not been consistent across the town.

Cllr Ruth Buckmaster states the project was sent out to only part of the town to assess its success.

ACTION; Clerk to write to Waste and Recycling to ask for clearer messaging regarding local projects.

Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt

- Discussed community governance review is about to start and a consultation with the community to give everyone an opportunity to assess views and creating separate wards within the town.
- East Herts has opposed the decision to withdraw the winter fuel allowance and has written to the chancellor and is liaising with the four MP's covering East Herts. A campaign is being set up to raise awareness for the community regarding pension credit as many are eligible but do not claim this.

Cllr Greg Rattey asked the district Councillors why the Sawbridgeworth Day Nursery have four allocated parking spaces when other requests have been made, they have been refused.

Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt explained there is a carparking review taking place but renting or buying spaces is proving a problem, but he will raise the issue.

ACTION; Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt to explore why the four parking places for the nursery have been given and other approaches to rent spaces have been turned down by EHDC.

Cllr Salvatore Pagdades

- updated on local police surgeries and the walk and talk they are completing in Bell Street and encouraged Councillors to join them.
- He will try to set up a cross-border meeting with Herts and Essex
- He updated the increased ASB patrols in the town and the targeted approach these now take.

Cllr Ruth Buckmaster RHSO

- Has taken delivery of 1000 bottles of apple juice with three varieties.
- The new 300 anniversary logo will be on the bottles.

Cllr Annelise Furnace

- Highlighted on the date for Tidy Up Sawbridgeworth is the 9th November.

24/82

TOWN CLERK REPORT

Received and noted: the clerk's report for the month of October 2024.

24/83

TOWN PROJECTS MANAGER REPORT

Received and noted: the Town Project Managers report for October 2024, a reminder was made in relation to Remembrance Sunday parade on 10th November at 2:50pm.

24/84

SAWBRIDGEWORTH TOWN MARKET

Noted; the current position of the town market project, a request has been made to use the Bell Street car park and EHDC are considering this request.

24/85

FINANCIAL REPORT

Noted: The current Financial Report

24/86

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Noted and Approved: Accounts for payment.

24/87

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

- Cllr Steve Smith requested the Hailey Centre representative report be added.
- Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt requested a motion to be added to write a letter attached to the petition to MPs for the Treasury and Department of Education regarding the closing of the Leventhorpe Swimming Pool in November's meeting.

Meeting ended at 8:14 pm

Action	Owner	Update
<p>To respond to the two questions received prior to the meeting by email.</p>	<p>Cllrs Nathan Parsad- Wyatt and Cllr Ruth Buckmaster</p>	<p>Response by email sent On the 11th November 2024. Dear David, Thank you for your questions. We have provided some clarification on the topics you raised below. The Development Management Committee (DMC) is a cross-party committee comprising 12 councillors. Any development proposals involving more than 10 houses must go before the DMC, ensuring that all significant projects are carefully considered. Officer reports presented to the DMC are thorough and must adhere to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which sets out standards to improve economic, social, and environmental conditions. As DMC members, we review all relevant documents, including all consultations, to ensure we are fully informed before making decisions. Our role as DMC members is also to scrutinise the officers' recommendations, examining their alignment with the NPPF objectives. Recently, for example, a DMC application was 'called in' by a councillor, demonstrating the Committee's commitment to active oversight. Regarding your second question, the 'Call for Sites' process is currently underway, but neither councillors nor the public have been informed of the suggested sites at this stage. These sites will undergo a sifting process to assess their suitability, and any updates will be communicated in due course. As part of the District Plan Review, we have so far had two workshops with officers and district councillors, which allow for discussion and input into the evolving plan. We recognise the importance of transparency in the District Plan Review process. While it is not currently a standing agenda item at full Council or Planning Committee meetings, the process is ongoing, and we are committed to keeping both councillors and the public updated as</p>

		<p>we move forward. Additionally, both the Sawbridgeworth Town Council Planning Committee and the Full Council will actively scrutinise any sites that come forward in the District Plan and will submit comments as part of the consultation process, ensuring thorough local input.</p> <p>We hope this addresses your questions,</p> <p>Best regards, Cllr Ruth Buckmaster - District & Town Councillor Cllr Nathan Parsad-Wyatt - Town Councillor</p>
<p>To write to EHDC planning department to enquire if Sawbridgeworth Town Council members can send in a wish list for investment from section 106 contract negotiations.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>	<p>Email sent 30th October 2024 awaiting a response</p> <p>Response – Jackie Bruce 106 Manager</p> <p>Identifying potential Section 106 contributions - I work closely with Planning Officers to ensure the East Herts Section 106 contributions that are identified and included in legal agreements are in accordance with the legislation requirements and local need to mitigate the proposed development – that is all identified contributions must be necessary, directly related and reasonable in scale to the development.</p> <p>All East Herts contributions and obligations are sought and calculated in accordance with the current Local Plan and specific Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's) requirements. These, along with the associated calculation spreadsheets, can be found on the Planning Policy Supplementary Planning Documents webpages. However, there are constraints on what these contributions can be allocated to, for example they are usually for capital projects and we cannot use the East Herts contributions as revenue or to fund educational establishments as these are funded from Hertfordshire County Council contributions.</p> <p>For more information on East Herts contributions and project funding including how to let me know of any funding requirements, please refer your Members to the Section 106 funding information on the council's website - Section 106 Agreements</p>

		<p>and Funding for Projects East Herts District Council</p> <p>Regarding the SAWB4 development - it is my understanding the planning application was granted in 2020 and is awaiting the sign off of the agreed Legal Agreement so it is not possible to include further financial contribution obligations. Should this situation change or further major developments come forward, we would be happy to look again at the financial contributions required as per the requirements of the Local Plan and associated Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). But I must emphasise that all contributions are subject to agreement with the developer and must be in accordance with the planning legislation requirements now in place.</p> <p>Future developments and potential S106 contributions in Sawbridgeworth - you may recall that I have previously requested ideas to add to my list of 'potential S106 projects' to help support this process and I am very happy to work with Sawbridgeworth Town Council and local organisations to see if any of their proposed projects can be funded from any future developments in the local area. Please email me directly or ask your Members and local organisations to use the 'Expressions of Interest' form on the website to let me know of any funding requirements locally so I have a formal audit trail for S106 funding proposals.</p>
<p>To write to Waste and Recycling to ask for clearer messaging regarding local projects.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>	<p>Email sent 30th October 2024 awaiting a response. Cllr Eric Buckmaster has advanced this enquiry and is waiting a response on the observations from Cllrs on the planned removal of litter bins.</p>
<p>To explore why the four parking places for the nursery have been given in the Bell St car park and other approaches to rent spaces have been turned down by EHDC.</p>	<p>Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt</p>	<p>Response from EHDC officer</p> <p>The Elms Cherish Day Nursery was originally held on a long lease and granted 4 parking bays connected to the business which did not form part of the public car park. The property was sold on 16th June 2008.</p> <p>Under the TP1 it states that Rights granted to the transferor is for access</p>

		<p><i>and egress over the car park and to and from the Designated Parking Spaces - which remained at this stage adjacent to the public parking bays.</i></p> <p><i>To allow the development of the Central Surgery, circa 2018, the bays were moved into the car park. This was a decision of which the council was duty bound - to provide as an alternative, to make the development possible and fulfil the rights provided under the transfer of sale.</i></p>
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Signed.....

Date.....