

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 24th November 2025**.

Those present

Cllr Eric Buckmaster
Cllr Ruth Buckmaster
Cllr Annelise Furnace
Cllr Dawn Newell,

Cllr Salvatore Pagdades
Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt
Cllr Greg Rattey
Cllr John Rider

In attendance:

1 x members of the public

A one-minute silence was held due to the passing of former Cllr Tony Dodd.

Thought for the day was read by Cllr Ruth Buckmaster.

25/95 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Received and approved from Cllr Simon Penney, Cllr Nathan Parsad-Wyatt,
Cllr Reece Smith
[prop Cllr Greg Rattey; sec'd Cllr Ruth Buckmaster]
Cllr Steve Smith - absent

25/96 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were none.

25/97 PUBLIC FORUM

Q1. How many opportunities have there been this year for genuine engagement between councillors and residents, leaving aside the Annual Town Meeting? Has this council considered adopting a communication and engagement strategy like Hertford's or prioritising communication like Bishop's Stortford? I note that communication is the very last line of the Town Action Plan.

Cllr Salvatore Pagdades responded, this year, aside from the Annual Town Meeting, councillors have had several opportunities for genuine engagement with residents, including:

- **Regular Council and Committee Meetings** – These are open to the public, with time allocated for public participation.
- **Community Events** – Councillors have attended events such as the Christmas Lights switch-on and other local gatherings, providing informal opportunities for dialogue.
- **Police Engagement Activities** – Councillors have been present at most local police initiatives, including *Walk and Talk* sessions and focused surgeries, to hear residents' concerns directly.
- **Direct Contact** – Residents can contact councillors via published email addresses and phone numbers, and many councillors respond promptly to queries.

Regarding a **formal Communication and Engagement Strategy**, the Council is aware of approaches taken by Hertford and Bishop's Stortford. While we have not yet adopted a standalone strategy, communication is recognised as a priority within the Town Action Plan. Its position in the plan does not diminish its importance; rather, it reflects the sequencing of actions. The Council is actively considering how best to strengthen engagement, including exploring structured strategies and improved use of digital platforms.

We welcome feedback from residents on how they would like to engage with us, and this will inform future decisions.

Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt explained that the ATM has actions grouped by category, with these categories prioritised according to how frequently residents raised questions on each subject. Communication was not identified as a top priority; however, work is still being carried out to strengthen this area. Updates are currently being made to the Council's website, and regular events are held throughout the year to provide opportunities for residents to engage with their councillors. All councillors remain fully contactable and maintain regular communication with residents regarding local matters, including door to door knocking when necessary. Residents will come to meetings when there are matters relating to them but generally people don't turn up regularly. Further comments were made to echo this that several ideas have been tried and residents will engage from matters that effect them.

Cllr Eric Buckmaster stated, he shares information and messages from County and District Council. We have a new page in the Flyer and social media is being used but other areas will be explored moving forward.

Cllr Annelise Furnace would like to ask Mr Royle what parts of Hertford and Bishops Stortford communication strategy he was referring to.

25/98

MINUTES

Resolved: To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Meeting of the town council held on 27th October 2025 (M05)
[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
To produce a report for the Action Plan halfway point for publication.	Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt	Report completed
To email Cllrs to request they submit their views to the Clerk by the 3 rd November in support of the LCWIP recommendations for shared Cycling and walking route from West Road to Leventhorpe School and to increase pedestrian crossing points	Cllr Annelise Furnace	Email sent 28/10/2025. Clerk emailed a response to the LCWIP Team on 04/11/2025.
To alter Agenda items to put public forum on before minutes for approval.	Clerk	As per this agenda

25/99 PLANNING COMMITTEE

Received and Noted the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 27th October 2025 (P09)

Received and Noted the draft minutes of the Planning Committee held on 10th November 2025 (P10)

25/100 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

Received and Noted the draft minutes of the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Working Group.

25/101 MAYOR'S CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATIONS

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

- Attended Nostalgia Day at the memorial Hall and thanked Hazel Mead for the event at the airfield where he laid a wreath.
- Held his charity quiz night raising £1,800 for his chosen charities for the year.
- Laid a wreath on behalf of Sawbridgeworth Town Council at Grt St Marys Church on Remembrance Sunday
- Attended an interfaith service in Harlow at the Synagogue
- Attended Leventhorpe School to assist with mock interviews.

25/102 REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS

Received and noted: Representatives reports from:

County Councillor Eric Buckmaster

- Has seen a reduction in the problems with the waste collection services the scrutiny report showed failure after failure but it was now being managed well.
- Footpath 20 will be resurfaced
- On street parking will be reviewed in the town with some flexibility added to areas. Bell Street will have sections of double yellow lines opposite entry and exit points and Knight Street and Station Road will have updates.
- He held meetings with residents of Hoestock Road and parking restrictions were discussed to provide a resolution they were in agreement with.
- Local Government Reorganisation at district meetings has been presented and different unitary arrangements are being considered. He questioned the process on voting for the three choices and after disagreement the Conservative members walked out the meeting and explained the options that could be considered and the time pressures the government has put on councils to come up with an agreement

District Councillor Ruth Buckmaster

No report for this meeting.

District Councillor Angus Parsad-Wyatt

Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt provided an update on the current proposals for the unitary council arrangements. He explained that the Government is expected to make recommendations in the spring, with a final decision anticipated in summer 2026.

He noted that one of the concerns within some of the proposed models is that Sawbridgeworth could face an increase in council tax when aligned with other areas of the county. Cross-party members expressed agreement that the current Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) process is not supported and

should be referred back to the Government. It was also highlighted that Parish and Town Councils do not appear to be included within the emerging model.

Cllr Annelise Furnace asked whether Essex had reached a decision.

Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt confirmed that Essex is approximately six months ahead of Hertfordshire in the process and is currently at the consultation stage.

Herts Police No report was read by the Mayor, Cllr Salvatore Pagdades

SYPRC Cllr Ruth Buckmaster

The Perspex window in the roof is leaking and the current price to replace the windows is at £20,000 and funding is being sought. A quiz night and Halloween film raised almost £2,000.

Cllr Annelise Furnace asked why grants were difficult to arrange which Cllr Ruth Buckmaster stated it was due to being owned by a Town Council but other streams were being explored.

RHSO Cllr Ruth Buckmaster

A juice stall will be held on the 13th December. Wassail is arranged for the 17th January 2026.

Sustainable Sawbridgeworth Cllr Annelise Furnace

Sawbridgeworth brook project is being progressed and Bob Reed is looking at setting dates for the project to start and sessions throughout the year.

A cycle repair station has been offered to the group and the Rail Station is being explored as a location for it.

An energy hub has been arranged for the Christmas Lights Event.

East Herts Climate meeting has been arranged on Teams on the 3rd December

ACTION – To explore the possibility of placing a repair bike station at the rail station – Cllr Annelise Furnace and Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt

25/103 TOWN CLERK REPORT

Received and noted: the clerk's report for the month of November 2025. West Road Allotments have now been signed over to the Council.

Cllr John Rider offered his assistance at the Christmas Light Switch on event and raised issues with the Council email system. Cllr Salvatore Pagdades said he would assist Cllr Rider if required.

25/104 TOWN PROJECTS MANAGER'S REPORT

Received and noted: the Town Projects Manager's report for October 2025. The Clerk showed Cllrs the new layout of the Christmas event on the large screen in the chamber.

25/105 REDUCING THE COUNCILS CARBON FOOTPRINT

Current update on progress to reduce the councils carbon footprint.

Received and noted: the clerk's report

25/106 SAWBOBUS OPTION TO LEASE AND DISPOSE OF COUNCIL ASSET

The following matters were debated and approved relating to leasing a bus to run as the Sawbobus to replace and then sell the current Ford Transit bus index YN66YEE.

- **Resolved** To approve the sale of the current Sawbobus for an estimated £11,000. *[prop Cllr Greg Rattey; sec'd Cllr Ruth Buckmaster]*
- **Resolved** To approve entering into a lease agreement with Alley Cat Hire Services at £600 per month. *[prop Cllr Annelise Furnace; sec'd Cllr Dawn Newell]*
- **Resolved** To approve the use of the earmarked reserve for vehicle replacement to fund the lease cost for the remainder of the financial year (£2,400 for 4 months). *[prop Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt; sec'd Cllr Ruth Buckmaster]*
- **Resolved** To note that any surplus from the sale will be transferred back into the earmarked reserve. *[prop Cllr Greg Rattey; sec'd Cllr Ruth Buckmaster]*

25/107 FINANCE MATTERS

Received and noted: the finance and variance report up to November 2025

25/108 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Noted and Approved: Accounts for payment

25/109 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Nothing raised

Meeting ended at 8:25pm

Signed.....

Date.....

Action	Owner	Update
To Explore the siting of the cycle repair station at the rail station	Cllr Annelise Furnace and Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt	