

# SAWBRIDGEGWORTH 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 29th January 2024**.

### Those present

Cllr E Buckmaster	Cllr N Parsad-Wyatt
Cllr R Buckmaster (Chair)	Cllr S Penney
Cllr A Furnace	Cllr G Rattey
Cllr D Newell	Cllr J Rider
Cllr S Pagdades	Cllr R Smith
Cllr A Parsad-Wyatt	Cllr S Smith

In attendance:

Chris Carter – Press

6 x members of the public

The Mayor introduced the meeting and welcomed new Councillor Simon Penney.

Thought of the day delivered by Councillor S Pagdades which was followed by the Mayor lighting a candle both in memory of the victims of the Holocaust.

### **23/103 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None were made

### **23/104 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST**

None were received.

### **23/105 PUBLIC FORUM**

**Q1** Does this Council think it was appropriate for one group, on this Council, in its social media posts and campaign literature for December's by-election, to once again seek to claim exclusive credit for supporting residents, rather than recognising the value of collaborative working and of reminding residents how they can report issues and making sure those processes and follow up are fit for purpose?

It was felt this question was a political question, after a short debate the Chair decided to move to the next question.

**Q2** Is this Council concerned about the very low turnout at the December by-election and is there a communication and engagement strategy to improve communication with residents on local, district and county issues and consultations, and to encourage greater involvement in our local democracy?

Cllr A Parsad-Wyatt stated the drop off in voters could be due to having the recent May election. It was December and the weather may have deterred people attending the polls. It is down to each individual candidate and parties to encourage people to vote.

The second part of the question Cllr A Parsad-Wyatt highlighted the collective work the councillors had made reviving the town action plan and many members of the council around the table had ensured that leaflets were delivered to every household in the town.

**Q3.** A second member of the public stated that for the past fifteen years the community had been stating that the town has too many houses being built. Temporary traffic lights and traffic was getting worse and the reason people are not coming out to vote is because nothing ever changes. She also raised concerns at the Wrenbridge development and the traffic increase this will generate through the town.

Cllr R Buckmaster stated the council did share her frustration with the Wrenbridge development situation.

**Q4,** A third member of the public stated he was concerned regarding the Wrenbridge development and the traffic this would encourage through this town.

Cllr R Buckmaster said she supported restricting the routes away from the town but this had been challenged and now all restrictions had been rescinded.

**23/106**

**MINUTES**

**Resolved:** To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the town council held on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023 (M06)  
*[prop Cllr N Parsad-Wyatt; sec'd Cllr A 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.

Owner	Action	Completed
Cllr S Pagdades	To make police aware of the HUG2 project so residents realise the funding opportunity is not a scam	Email sent 21/11/23 by the Clerk to PC Marshall and the project manager and the Police neighbourhood watch coordinator are now linked in.
All Cllrs	To send a response to Cllr A Furnace and the Clerk with their views on the proposed air quality action plan.	Email sent to all councillors requesting views 21/11/23

**23/107**

**PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**Received and noted:** the minutes of the planning committee held on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023 (P11)

**Received and noted:** the draft minutes of the planning committee held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 (P12)

**23/108 FINANCE, POLICY and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**  
*Received and noted:* the minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 (F03)

**23/109 BUDGET 2022-23 & DETERMINATION OF PRECEPT**

1. **Resolved** To consider the Recommendation of the Finance & Policy Committee and adopt a Budget for 2024-25

*[prop Cllr E Buckmaster; sec'd Cllr N Parsad-Wyatt]*

2. **Resolved** To determine the Precept for 2024-25 and instruct the principal authority accordingly.

*[prop Cllr E Buckmaster; sec'd Cllr N Parsad-Wyatt]*

*Precept demand signed by the Mayor Cllr R Buckmaster, Cllr E Buckmaster, Cllr N Parsad-Wyatt and the Clerk*

**23/110 MAYOR'S CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATIONS**

To receive Mayor's appointments and communications  
Cllr R Buckmaster.

- Attended the Hilton Garage event at Spellbrook school for a car decorating project that has been held previously where children can draw on cars.
- Met with the 'Christmas lights switch on' badge winner
- Attended the Ukrainian local residents Christmas party
- Attended a quiz night in Hertford
- Attended Fawbert and Barnard school to talk to the children on the Royal Family
- Visited the Congregational Church to look at the plans for their extension
- Attended the local air quality meeting.
- Visited Otters and Beavers to celebrate the Chinese new year event
- Visited the cubs group regarding the subject of disabilities
- Attended the Indies award event where two Sawbridgeworth residents received awards.
- Saturday was the Mayors quiz night where £1200 was raised.

**23/111 REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS**

*Received and noted:* Representatives reports from:

County Councillor E Buckmaster referred to his report additionally adding.

- The County budget will see an increase in 4.99% which reaches over a billion pounds. Two thirds will be spent on social care. Other areas were detailed on the investments into the road infrastructure and fire service.
- Vantorts Road has seen signage added to the no entry restriction.
- The pothole has been repaired at the same location.
- He has been working on issues with drivers outside schools and he visited Reedings School with parking enforcement officers and the police. A school crossing patrol warden's role has been advertised for this school.
- At district level he had met the officer responsible for the swimming pool
- The waste contract will be changing with a fourth bin for cardboard and paper as well as a food waste container added.
- Air quality scrutiny had been attended and he raised branding to be the same at county level as well as at district. The issues of diesel pollution and HGV movements were raised.
- An extra ordinary district council meeting was held in relation to the completion of the refurbishment of the Hertford Theatre.

Cllr J Rider thanked Cllr E Buckmaster for his work and wanted to make everyone aware of the changes Cllr E Buckmaster will be suggesting to change the road gritting contract. He raised his concerns regarding drivers behaviour around schools and wanted police to enforce parking infringements.

Cllr E Buckmaster stated that the police cannot complete enforcement as this had been de-criminalised and was only in the remit of the civil enforcement officers.

Cllr E Buckmaster also explained the 20mph speed restrictions which was only placed with the support of local residents but enforcement was always going to be a problem.

Cllr A Furnace agreed the 20mph speed restrictions were affective. She raised the LCWIP programme and asked if the stalls for public engagement were available in the town.

Cllr E Buckmaster stated he would invite them along to Sawbridgeworth town council events.

Cllr S Pagdades asked if road use surveys identified the volume of diesel versus petrol cars using the road.

Cllr E Buckmaster will investigate if that detail is available.

#### District Councillors reports

Cllr R Buckmaster referred to her written report.

Cllr A Parsad-Wyatt had raised enquiries with the planning department over the old Barclays bank. The officers and residents will be re-consulted as changes were being submitted that are different from the original planning application. Only minor works can be made before the application is approved and any concerns should be raised with him.

The Police report was read out by Cllr S Pagdades from PC Marshall as follows;

In line with the current policing priority, a road traffic operation was held on the A1184 in December. The operation consisted of speed monitoring, mobile ANPR, and assistance from colleagues in RPU. The operation resulted in:

- 1 driver reported for speeding (48MPH in a 30)
- 1 vehicle prohibited
- 3 vehicles seized for no insurance

Other matters dealt with

No driving license/MOT

No MOT

1 vehicle stopped sus stolen

1 negative breath test

2 persons searched under section 1 PACE

On Friday 19th March PCSO Collins and PC Marshall conducted a community engagement event at the Co-Op from 3:30pm. This was a good opportunity to engage with Leventhorpe School Pupils.

Mini Police with year 5 at Reedings School commenced at the start of the spring term. PCSO Collins and PC Marshall have so far covered anti-social behaviour, bullying, internet safety and road safety which tied in nicely with the ongoing work we are carrying out around dangerous school parking. We have enlisted the support of civil enforcement officers and have some joint patrols organised to try and tackle the

problem. Although this will assist short term, a longer-term solution is being sought.

Plans are underway for a further road traffic operation in the coming weeks in Sawbridgeworth, and I am also planning some proactive partnership working with Essex Police.

PCSO Collins continues to regularly conduct speeding checks around the town. Most drivers are adhering to the speed limits.

A personal safety and crime prevention talk is scheduled to take place at the Hailey Centre in March.

Following some work with the Co-Op and their deployment of a loss prevention team, a significant reduction in thefts has been noted from the store.

Cllr R Buckmaster updated on the RHSO activities around the Wassail event where 150 people were present, where £350 was raised for more trees to be planted to celebrate the 150 years since Thomas Rivers set up in Sawbridgeworth. SYPRC update have had their planning permission approved for their air source heat pumps, grants money is being sought.

Cllr A Furnace, raised the real time air quality monitor had been fitted in London Road and data should be made available for everyone. St James community liaison group will invite sustainable Sawbridgeworth and the Town Council on future meetings regarding the Wrenbridge development. She also raised a meeting had been held with the town's Project Manager and the new East Herts Officer, regarding environmental sustainability for town councils, community groups and local community members. Ideas on an energy hub to advise members of the community had been discussed and funding had been applied for. BT are offering their old green boxes to be converted into EV charges and this is being explored.

## 23/112 GRANT APPLICATIONS

**Resolved** to consider grant requests made by the following:

- |                                |         |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| 1. St Clare Hospice            | Awarded |
| 2. East Herts District Council | Awarded |
| 3. Pets in Need Herts          | Denied  |

Debate was held over the Pets in Need Herts application as no link could be seen how local residents would benefit from awarding grant funding.

It was debated if the £500 maximum award could be exceeded, the Clerk advised this would need to be completed through a resolution to change the policy in the future.

**ACTION** – Cllr A Parsad-Wyatt to draft a motion to increase the maximum amount to be awarded to successful applicants for the town council grant funding scheme

*[prop Cllr N Parsad-Wyatt; sec'd Cllr A Furnace]*

- 23/113 TOWN CLERK REPORT**  
*Received and noted:* the Clerk's report for the month of January 2024.
- 23/114 POLICY MATTERS**  
*Resolved;* To approve the draft document, Financial Regulations 2024
- The Clerk raised changes to the attached document needed to be made as new procurement thresholds had been agreed Nationally that needed to be updated on this Policy being;
- The thresholds for public procurement have changed from 1 January 2024 Public contracts, with an estimated value (including VAT, since 1 January 2022):  
over £214,904 (previously £213,477) for goods or services, or  
over £5,372,609 (previously £5,336,937) for public works (construction),  
*[prop Cllr S Pagdades; sec'd Cllr A Parsad-Wyatt]*
- 23/115 TOWN PROJECTS MANAGER REPORT**  
*Received and noted:* the Project Manager's report for the month of January 2024.
- 23/116 DEPOSIT & CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS**  
*Noted:* The current deposit and consultation document
- 23/117 FINANCIAL REPORT**  
*Noted:* The current Financial Report
- 23/118 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**  
*Noted and Approved:* Accounts for payment.
- 23/119 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**  
*Meeting ended at 8:45pm*

**ACTIONS**

Owner	Action	Completed
Cllr A Parsad-Wyatt	To draft a motion to increase the maximum amount to be awarded to successful applicants for the town council grant funding scheme	