

# Sawbridgeworth Town Council

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MAYOR  
Cllr Greg Rattey  
TOWN CLERK  
Christopher Hunt

To: Cllr's Burmicz, Chester, Furnace, Rider, Smith, Wyatt  
[Cllr Rattey, Cllr R Buckmaster]

## TOWN ACTION PLAN AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE

You are invited to attend a meeting of this committee which will take place on **Monday 13th February 2023 at 8pm in the Council Chamber of Sayesbury Manor** for the transaction of the following business.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christopher Hunt'.

Christopher Hunt  
Town Clerk  
9th December 2022

## AGENDA

- T22/28 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
[👏] To receive and **approve** any apologies for absence.
- T22/29 PUBLIC FORUM**  
To receive representations from members of the public on matters within the remit of the Town Action Plan and Amenities Committee.
- T22/30 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
To receive any Declarations of Pecuniary Interest by Members
- T22/31 MINUTES**  
[📄] [👏] **To approve** as a correct record the draft minutes of the Amenities Committee Meeting held on 13th June 2022 (T01) [Attached Appendix A]  
  
To attend to any matters arising from these Minutes and not dealt with elsewhere on this Agenda.
- T22/32 ALLOTMENTS**  
[📄] To **note** and receive the Allotment Officers Report and discuss matters relating to Allotments. [Attached Appendix B]
- T22/33 CEMETERY**  
[📄] To **note** and discuss matters relating to the Town Cemetery, update from town projects manager. [Attached Appendix C]

- T22/34**  
[📄] [👤] **FOOTPATHS & OPEN SPACES**  
*To resolve;* a formal request to write to HCC Countryside and Rights of Way department, to consider the repairs to footpath 22 to be graded as urgent due to the negative impact on walks, environment and likelihood the path will become unusable. *[Attached Appendix D]*
- T22/35**  
[📄] [👤] **OPERATIONS**  
*To resolve;* the proposal to raise the 'self-drive hire' charges from April 2023.  
Clerks report *[Attached Appendix E]*
- T22/36**  
[📄] **ECO-AUDIT WORKING PARTY**  
To **note** and receive the report and update from Cllr Furnace and Project Manager on matters relating to the Eco-Audit Working Party. *[Attached Appendix F]*
- T22/37** **TOWN ACTION PLAN**  
To review current status of the Town Action Plan
- T22/38** **COUNCILLOR ENGAGEMENT AND REPRESENTATIVES UPDATES**
- T22/39** **ADOPT A RAIL STATION**  
Update on project  
Cllr Wyatt
- T22/40**  
[📄] **DEVELOPMENT TO MAXIMISE PARTNERSHIP WORKING BETWEEN TOWN, DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILS**
- To discuss recent challenges during the snow fall and closure of Bell Street, December 2022.
  - Planning for preparing for future extreme weather events  
Cllr Riders observations  
*[Attached Appendix G]*
- T22/41** **ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**  
To note items for future agendas

# **Appendix A**

# SAWBRIDGEWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

## TOWN ACTION PLAN AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE

### Minutes

of the meeting of the Town Action Plan and Amenities Committee held at the Council Offices, Sayesbury Manor, Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth at 8pm on **Monday 18th October 2022.**

#### **Those present**

Cllr Craig Chester

Cllr Annelise Furnace

Cllr Greg Rattey (*Ex Officio*)

Cllr John Rider

Cllr Angus Wyatt

#### **In attendance:**

Christopher Hunt - Town Clerk

Joanne Sargent - Events manager

Cllr Angela Alder

#### **T22/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr Burmicz, received 18/10/22

#### **T22/16 PUBLIC FORUM**

Cllr Alder, wanted to raise questions on two agenda items being the Sawbobus and councillor engagement.

Thanked the Council for re-arranging bus routes to assist in the attendance to the Hailey Centre for afternoon events.

Thanked staff for the Community Connections event and wanted further details regarding the West Road community event and will be liaising with PCSO Higham.

#### **T22/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Rider – as an allotment holder and would not vote on agenda item T22/19

#### **T22/18 MINUTES**

**Resolved:** To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 13th June 2022 (T01)

*[prop Cllr Chester; sec'd Cllr Rattey]*

The Clerk updated several actions from these minutes.

- Wrote to Nicolas Maddox re Path 22 and safety improvements will be carried out.
- Bird flu advice had been explored and this had been increased to restrictions nationwide and Cllr Rider was supplied the guidance for the chickens held at the allotments.
- Cllr R Buckmaster wanted the chatter bench re-located and this had been resolved as another bench was in a position that negated the need to move this bench.
- EV chargers were now going to be fitted and a surveyor employed by East Herts District Council was planning to assess the site.

#### **T22/19 ALLOTMENTS**

***Received and noted*** – Allotments Officer Report

The report was talked through by the Clerk.

***Resolved:*** Not to raise the price of the allotment rent prices for 2023/24 and the water prices will need to rise but will be assessed throughout the year.

- 20 people remain on the waiting list and 16 plots have tenants with outstanding payments which may offer those on the waiting list an opportunity to take some of these.
- Flooding prevention works will be starting soon with removal of fly tipping at the front of the site, plots and further flooding work will be assessed after the initial fly tipping removal.
- Ranger work schedule discussed and will not be implemented at this time.

**T22/20 CEMETERY**

***Received and noted*** – Cemetery Officer Report

- Burial numbers are down on previous months.
- The current space available will offer 30 years of burials for the future and consideration will be made to purchasing more land to secure the future site for the Town.
- Wildflower meadow will be assessed and re sown
- Community payback work is going well and weekly Sunday visits are being made.

**ACTION** – Town Clerk to thank the probation officer involved in the maintenance completed in the Cemetery.

**T22/21 FOOTPATHS & OPEN SPACES**

David Royle stated he would be happy to continue to report on this subject as a member of public and it was agreed for the Clerk to invite him to do this.

**T22/22 OPERATIONS**

To receive, note and discuss matters relating to Operations

- SawboBus is running well under the donation scheme and the Co-op have made contact in sponsorship following the closure of Budgens.
- A new driver for the bus has been appointed and starts on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 2022
- Cllr Wyatt enquired in respect to sponsors and 5 sponsors currently advertise and support the scheme and further support is being explored.

**T22/23 ECO-AUDIT WORKING PARTY**

***Received and noted*** – Eco Audit Report

Cllr Furnace advised that:

- DEFRA – EHDC have been supported in making a grant application on air quality and using Sawbridgeworth as an exemplar town. This application has been submitted
- The Jubilee hedge -English Heritage may not allow for the planting as it may damage the Causeway heritage site.
- Bob Reed is setting up a series of 10 nature walks
- The town travel challenge had four schools taking part

- Cllr Furnace thanked Cllr Chester for arranging for students to assist with the Sawbo saurus at the Town Walk event

**ACTION** – Town Clerk to thank the police officers involved and for the funding from Cllr Buckmaster for supporting Sawbo saurus

**T22/24      TOWN ACTION PLAN**

Cllr Wyatt will be reviewing the current plan and how to develop this for the next two years it will run.

**T22/25      COUNCILLOR ENGAGEMENT**

- Community Connections was discussed and raised as a success and agreed that this should be repeated every year.
- Councillors had been emailed regarding an engagement opportunity to work with PCSO Higham in meeting and greeting new residents moving in to Sawb 2 and 3 development areas.

**T22/26      RAIL STATION ADOPTION**

- Cllr Wyatt updated meetings had occurred with volunteers and a list of actions and questions had been created with short and longer term issues.
- Funding was being explored and if planters are fitted the Town rangers may be required to assist in watering next year.
- Additional signage and information boards were being investigated to draw people in to the town from the station.

**T22/27      ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

No further items were raised.

Meeting ended at 20:55

# **Appendix B**



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# Sawbridgeworth Town Council

## Paper from the Allotments Officer

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To: Amenities Committee  
From: Laura Carter  
Subject: **Allotment Report February 2023**  
Date: 06 February 2023

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This report will focus on a project at Southbrook Allotments. The next report in June will give more details across all sites once the season is fully underway.

### **Flooding at Southbrook Stage 1**

The first stage in alleviating the flooding at Southbrook Allotments began at the end of October 2022. The aim at this stage was to remove fly-tipping and debris from the area outside the entrance to the allotment gardens, footpath and drainage ditch, which had built up over many years and was preventing the drainage system working properly. Before pictures are shown below:







Once the initial debris had been removed we waited to see if the rain water would start to pass through the drain/tunnel and clear the build-up of mud.



The final part of stage one was to build fencing around the area. The rain water now runs off the estate into the drain and away from the allotments and footpath, which has marked it a successful project. Please see pictures below. The flooding inside the allotment site will be monitored over the coming season and the plots that have been vacated due to flooding will be left fallow until we have resolved the issue.



After pictures



# **Appendix C**

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# Sawbridgeworth Town Council

## Cemetery Paper by J Sargent

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**Subject: Cemetery Report**

**Date: 07 February 2023**

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### **Burial Data: Feb 2022 – Feb2023**

Full Burials = 12

Created Remains = 13

Scattering = 1

10 graves were new graves sold, 15 were pre-purchased grave spaces or re-opening and one was a scattering in the memorial garden area.

### **Probation Service:**

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2022 the Probation Service provided us with a team to provide unpaid work at the cemetery. In total we benefited from 32 Sundays of 7 hours per day of unpaid work that was undertaken on cemetery tasks, this amounted to 259 hours per person and on average there were 6 people in the team, therefore 1554 hours of unpaid work was carried out. I attended a 50<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration event of the Probation Service on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> February at Victoria House, Chelmsford to thank the team for the great work they do and express our interest to continue the relationship with the probation service moving forward. They have just completed work at Great St Mary's Church on Saturdays and I hope to re-establish this in the future for both sites.

### **Ground Maintenance:**

The extreme weather conditions (heat) and the prolonged summer in 2022 meant that the grass cutting season ended around July. The grass did recover in the autumn, and the cold winter has delayed the growing season at present.

### **Memorials:**

'Topple Testing' and inspection of memorials will now be continued by J Sargent and ranger(s). By law, the testing and inspection program must take place on a continual inspection program.

Memorial that had been laid down over the last two years have now been removed from the main cemetery area and are in storage at Three Mile Pond. When a memorial is laid down for health and safety reasons following 'Topple Testing' a laminated letter is placed on the 'made safe' memorial and indicates to someone visiting that it is our wish for them to contact the office with further information about the owner of the grave space, this is our best efforts to trace a family where the Exclusive Right of Burial records are no longer correct or current.

### **Wildflower Meadow:**

Some additional seeds will be placed shortly to provide a further and more diverse display for 2023.

# **Appendix D**

**Email sent to Nicholas Maddex from Bob Reed with his concerns re Footpath 22**

**Dated 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

Dear Nicholas Maddex, My name is Bob Reed and I am a local naturalist active in the Sawbridgeworth Parish area. In 2021 I completed an Eco--Audit for the Town Council as part of the year of Sustainability and Biodiversity. More recently I have originated 12 'Nature Walks' in the Parish with the aim of making local people aware and appreciate what we have in our area in terms of countryside and biodiversity. I am concerned to see that Footpath 22, has been effectively barricaded off at the Springhall Road end and that the necessary repairs seem to have been largely put on hold. The Sawbridgeworth Brook is the only significant water body of its type in the Parish and I have carried out a biodiversity survey drawing people's attention not only to what lives there, but also the problem is that urban water bodies of this type experience. With the access largely denied it is not possible for people to either witness what I am describing or follow one of the 'Nature Walks', a number of which follow this route to and from the starting point, which is always the Fair Green. Footpath 22 is an ancient route, starting at West Road and probably further and connecting through with Springhall Lane and ultimately Pishiobury Park. I am concerned that the longer this path is out of use, the more it will go into decline and the accepted as no longer a footpath by local people, which will be regrettable. I understand the logistical problems associated with a necessary repair but would urge you to give this priority to get it repaired as early as possible in the New Year so that we can continue to use it during Spring and Summer in 2023. Regards, Bob Reed



# **Appendix E**

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# Sawbridgeworth Town Council

## Memorandum from the Town Clerk

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To: Town Action Plan and Amenities Committee  
From: Christopher Hunt  
Subject: Sawbobus – Self-Drive Hire  
Date: 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023

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### **The Sawbobus**

This service is running well with healthy passenger numbers with an average of donations from users returning an average of £25 per day.

Currently we have 5 sponsors, another local company is in the process of assessing sponsorship.

### **Self-drive hire**

Hire charges have remained static since pre-2015, this side of the service requires and increased admin support to assess drivers and invoicing for hirers, maintenance of the vehicle as well as the consideration for the rise in fuel costs.

Due to these impact factors the Clerk and the bus administrator propose the Town Action Plan and Amenities Committee consider the following price increases from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.

#### **Regular Hires**

- From £12 per day + 90p per mile - To £15 per day + 95p per mile travelled

#### **Occasional Hirers**

- From £15 per day + 90p per mile - To £18 per day + 95p per mile travelled

# **Appendix F**

## **Eco-Audit Working Group Meeting via Teams, 31 January 2023 at 12.00**

**Teams meeting attendees:** Cllrs Annelise Furnace (AF), Ruth and Eric Buckmaster (RB/EB); Mr David Royle (DR), Mr Bob Reed (BR), Mr Chris Hunt (CH), Town Clerk, Ms Joanne Sargent (JS), Town Projects Manager; notes taken by David Royle. Apologies from Mrs Hazel Mead (HM) and Ms Sarah Brown (SB).

### **1 EV Charging Points in Bell Street Car Park (JS)**

- Linda Meehan at EHDC now dealing; proposed contract with Electric Blue too expensive resulting in re-tendering; delivery date unknown but we are being prioritised; project dates back to late 2019.

### **2 STC Eco-Audit update (JS)**

- Full year of data now available; 3 Acorns have been contacted with a view to a return visit in February
- Gt St Mary's also interested in using them.

### **3 Citizen Science (BR) and River Day (JS/BR)**

- Project to test for phosphate levels in the river; kits of visual tests available for around £30; funding could come from Sustainable Sawbridgeworth account (DR) and future budgeting for CS projects
- Sawbridgeworth Nature walks with route maps have been developed on a Nature Walk blog; BR will send link to AF for wider publicity; involve schools (?); also parish sound profiles
- River Day repeat on 3 June, to be confirmed with CRT (AF); involving police, fire brigade, Whoosh and Citizen Science projects; toilet to be provided (JS)
- EB noted a forthcoming HCC Nature Improvement Plan

### **4 Sustainable Sawbridgeworth update (DR)**

- Successful Eco Café on 28 January; 40 people; film clips; presentations on energy efficiency; air quality; cycling; no-dig gardening; thermal imaging camera loan scheme (website development promised and second donated camera); follow-up event(s) on water and waste management/recycling (EB underlined the importance of the latter following the recent government response to the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) consultation); plus the importance of food waste reduction; SS has worked with Duncan Jones of HCC/HWP and local primary schools on a joint waste management contract and has surveyed Bell Street businesses about their waste management procedures.
- Bi-monthly Repair Café now well established plus occasional Tidy UP Sawbridgeworth events; SS has set up a list of sustainable community groups in Herts and plan Zoom with Herts/HCCSP officers to improve engagement and share best practice; important to engage with younger people and those less well informed about sustainability and net zero targets to promote local behaviour change.

### **5 Thermal Imaging Camera loan scheme (AF)**

- As mentioned above; loan scheme for camera supplied from EB's locality budget introduced at Eco Café on 28 January.

## **6 Allotments (BR)**

- Note from HM saying work at Southbrook allotment with BR awaiting improved weather.
- Community allotment ongoing; lease extended by CH.

## **7 Water saving (AF)**

- Important issue still to be fully explored; SB asked about installing community water butts; AF to ask her for more details/a proposal.
- Opportunities to work with Affinity Water?

## **8 Doughnut Economics (AF)**

- AF briefly explained. The Doughnut consists of two concentric rings: a social foundation, to ensure that no one is left falling short on life's essentials, and an ecological ceiling, to ensure that humanity does not collectively overshoot the planetary boundaries that protect Earth's life-supporting systems.
- Cornwall CC and others have adopted this approach. EB said that all HCC policies go through a sustainability check.

## **9 Community groups forum (DR)**

- EHDC Forum with Hertford, Stortford and Buntingford stopped by mutual agreement.
- SS has set up a list of sustainable community groups in Herts and a Zoom with Herts/HCCSP officers to improve engagement and share best practice.

## **10 AOB**

- JS mentioned Essex CC's plan to only allow residents with Essex post codes to use its civic amenity sites; this was raised at Council on 30th; EB reported that HCC were considering the best response to use of their sites by non-Herts residents.

**Next meeting: TBC before Amenities meeting on 10 April; agenda items to AF**

**DR 310123**

# **Appendix G**



## Cllr J Rider

Amenities discussion points:

Last year 2022 saw 3 major unprecedented effects of climate change on our Town. The drought; intense rain causing flooding and ice and snow. Although County and District coped admirably across the region, locally we struggled and on occasions left without support. Our Town Council did much with scant resources and without their help and residents/Community actions it could have been made much worse. We need to act smarter and coordinate actions with County/district/water board and other providers.

In particular a review of gritting roads should take place;

1st priority gritting needs to include to Bell Steet (surgery car park)/Knight Street/ Vantorts /Brook Road. The Forebury to include school/library and Memorial Hall and other vulnerable roads.

Secondary priority should be bus routes inc Sawbo bus/car parks.

Salt bins should be placed at strategic points including Vantorts Hill/Elmwood. These bins should be provided not at a Cllrs discretion but by strategic importance to support gritting efforts. They should be regularly topped up. A central supply should be provided to the Town Council. We must reinforce Community actions with the tools to do the job.

We need a local emergency protocol. Slipping accidents could have been avoided. Bell street should have been signed better

All providers of services must open communications to work with the Town Council. We must alleviate "passing the buck" and improve areas of responsibility by County/District /Water Board/Env Agency/private ownership. etc. Thanks again to the Town Council for Southbrook allotment drainage and footpath maintenance despite difficulties in providers taking responsibility. We need the public better informed ie cows roamed in the drought over the allotments to get water ..how and why? I would like to see a central register of resident complaints and action taken and more feedback to Council on LOCAL improvements.

Cllr John Rider