

## SOUTHWOLD TOWN COUNCIL

### **Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council of Southwold, held in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Southwold, at 7.30pm on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2016**

PRESENT:	Councillor	Mrs M C Tucker (Town Mayor)
	“	Miss E A Betts
	“	Mrs S Allen
	“	I R Bradbury
	“	Mrs S M Doy
	“	M G C Horwood
	“	Mrs J Jeans
	“	M Ladd
	“	D J Palmer
	“	G M Rowan Robinson
	“	R D Temple
	“	J A Windell

Also attending: The High Steward, 1 member of the press, the Town Clerk, and 50 members of the public.

7.30pm - Simon Tobin – Community Emergency Response Team – to provide an update on the Community Emergency Plan and Volunteer Group – Mr Tobin presented the Community Emergency Plan and advised that this is presently being updated. New copy will be forwarded to the Town Hall as soon as it has been received.

### **BUSINESS**

1. **Apologies:** Apologies were received from the Police.
2. **Declarations of Interest:**
  - a) *To receive any declarations of Personal Interest regarding the agenda.*

Cllr Doy declared a personal interest in any items relating to planning as a member of the Executive Committee of the Southwold & Reydon Society

Cllr Allen declared a personal interest in any items relating to planning (Agenda item 5) as a member of the WDC Planning Committee and in any matter relating to the divestment of WDC public conveniences, Southwold Harbour, and WDC Local Lettings Policy as a member of WDC.

Cllr Ladd declared a personal interest in any matter relating to the divestment of WDC public conveniences as a member of WDC.

Cllr Jeans declared a personal interest in any matter relating to Southwold Library as a “Friend of Southwold Library”.
  - b) *To receive any declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.*

Nil.
  - c) *Town Clerk regarding requests for dispensations relating to this agenda.*

Nil.
  - d) *Councillors to be reminded of the requirement for them to individually update their Register of Interests as appropriate. Noted.*

3. **Minutes:** The Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2015 were confirmed and signed.
4. **Standing Orders:** It was proposed, seconded and,  
**RESOLVED: That Standing Orders be suspended for the consideration of the following item;**
- (a) **To receive a report from the police representative:** A copy of the police report was made available to members prior to the meeting and was read to the meeting by the Town Clerk. The Town Mayor advised that the report had not been provided in the standard format and this will be requested for future meetings. Councillors noted that as a matter of course the police were not now attending town and parish council meetings, and it was felt by some that this was a retrograde step.
- (b) **To receive a report from Waveney District Councillors S Allen and M Ladd:** WDC Cllr Allen advised that WDC need to find another £385,000 from their budget for 2016/17 to ensure that the budget will balance and this will mean reductions will need to be made in certain areas of the budget. WDC Cllr Ladd advised that the Town Council is anxious to ensure that the public conveniences in Southwold are not closed and are trying to encourage partnership working so that these may remain open. Cllr Windell asked whether the possible devolvement of public conveniences would include those of the harbour or whether the harbour public conveniences be considered part of the harbour land. WDC Cllr Ladd advised that joined up working would be required to ensure that the public conveniences could be retained throughout the town and this could include a range of proposals/solutions. Within the WDC consultation paper, various public conveniences are not being suggested for devolution as they are in a “tourist hotspot” but none of the toilets in Southwold have this categorisation. WDC Cllr Ladd confirmed that Southwold is a tourist hotspot. The Mayor advised that data had been requested from WDC to ensure that the Town Council could understand the criteria for the closure/divestment of any toilets.
- (c) **To receive a report from Suffolk County Councillor M Ladd:** SCC Cllr Ladd advised that SCC budget is going to be harsher than originally envisaged due to the greater than expected cut in Government subsidies. SCC Cllr Ladd advised that the bid for devolution to Norfolk and Suffolk had not progressed as Cambridge had, at a late stage, also been added to the bid process. Cambridge have now confirmed that they are not wishing to be part of the Norfolk/Suffolk bid and it is still hoped that the partnership bid will now be duly considered.
- (d) **To receive comments from Southwold electors:** A business owner spoke about fishing at the harbour advising that the harbourmaster was rigorously enforcing a ban on fishing. The proprietor had taken the matter up with WDC but was still awaiting a satisfactory conclusion.

A resident spoke about the precept advising that Southwold Town Council had not set a precept since it had been established in 1974. The resident suggested that with the income being received from assets, the Town Council should be able to manage its expenditure within its income.

Various residents spoke regarding the hospital site – many suggesting that this could be a project on which the community work with the Town Council. The Town Council was thanked for listing the asset as an Asset of Community Value. The Friends of Southwold Library advised that they were concerned about the term of their lease being due to expire and that they would assist in any way that they could with a project for the hospital site. Council were advised that Rosebuds Pre-school could be looking for additional space.

### *The Meeting reopened*

The Agenda items were rearranged at the discretion of the Town Mayor.

12. **Southwold Hospital Site** – *to receive confirmation of the listing of the site as an Asset of Community Value.* Cllr Jeans advised all present of the process that would be required by any community group wishing to take forward a bid for this site. Once the site is available for sale, the owner advises WDC who will in turn will advise the Town Council. A community group would then have six months to put a bid together and submit it to WDC. Other interested parties could also bid during this period.

Members were advised that the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire would refer to this site. Cllr Bradbury as Chairman of Neighbourhood Planning advised that the listing of the site as a Community Asset would be an opportunity to consider the vision for the site. Cllr Bradbury advised that a request for change of use would need to be duly considered by WDC planning officers in the normal manner.

Cllr Ladd advised that the community/Council had been provided with an opportunity to purchase the Kings Head but that no organisation had come forward with the capital to buy this site, which it had been hoped would be suitable for the library and other community services.

### 13. **Financial Matters**

- a) Accounts for Payment - *To receive the accounts for payment for January 2016 circulated to members*). **It was RESOLVED by all to approve the payments.**

- b) Budget 2016/17 – *to confirm and approve the Budget for 2016/17.* Cllr Horwood as Chairman of the Finance Working Group presented the Budget for 2016/17 which had been set following a series of budget meetings commencing on 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov 2015, and concluding with a meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2016. It was proposed by Cllr Horwood and seconded by Cllr Palmer that Council approves a net deficit Budget of £98,107. Lengthy discussion took place regarding the Budget with all councillors being given the opportunity to present their views. Views expressed relating to the budget included; the cost of repairs to the Town Council property portfolio, process of devolution from County and District councils, lack of policing, issues relating to parking enforcement, management of parking, availability of new sites in the town, the statutory responsibilities of the council. Other views suggested that some projects could be moved forward to 2017/18 once projects had been fully costed.

After a full discussion a vote was taken on the proposal to approve a net deficit Budget of £98,107 as proposed by Cllr Horwood and seconded by Cllr Palmer. **On a majority of 9 in favour and 3 abstentions it was RESOLVED to accept the net deficit Budget of £98,107.**

- c) Precept 2016/17 – *to confirm and approve the Precept for 2016/17.* Cllr Horwood as Chairman of the Finance Working Group spoke regarding the Precept acknowledging that this had always been set at £0 in previous years. However in view of the approved net deficit Budget for 2016/17 as agreed above, Cllr Horwood proposed that a Precept of £120,000 be levied for the year 2016/17. Cllr Horwood explained that this would cover the net deficit Budget and add a small contingency. Cllr Horwood explained that a precept of this sum would entail a payment of £2.21 per Band D household per week. This would include all eligible households. Proposal Seconded by Cllr Jeans.

Lengthy discussion took place regarding Precept with all councillors being given the opportunity to present their views.

Views expressed relating to precept included; the results of the Town Plan question on this subject, maintaining services to the community, divestment from County and District authorities, new projects, financing a PCSO, financial statutory responsibilities of Town and Parish councils, opportunities that may be presented to the council, ensuring financial security to the council, support of Town Plan projects, possible Government 2% cap on precept increases. Other views expressed suggested that the council should only take back any divestment opportunity if they were cost neutral, and that the timing of completion of opportunities/ projects may mean that the funding is not required in 16/17 but could instead be 17/18.

Cllr Rowan Robinson proposed an amendment to the proposal of a Precept of £120,000, proposing that a Precept of £100,000 be levied. There was no seconder for this proposal.

After a full discussion a vote was taken on the proposal to approve a Precept of £120,000,107 as proposed by Cllr Horwood and seconded by Cllr Jeans. A recorded vote was requested. On a majority of 9 in favour – Cllrs Allen, Betts, Bradbury, Horwood, Jeans, Palmer, Rowan Robinson, Tucker, Windell and 3 against – Cllrs Doy, Ladd and Temple it was **RESOLVED to approve a Precept of £120,000 for 2016/17.**

The Mayor thanked all Councillors for their professional conduct during the debate for both the Budget and the Precept.

5. **To receive reports from Committees:**

- a) *To receive the written report of the meeting of the Planning and Development Committee held on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2015 (see attached yellow papers). No recommendations.* Cllr Windell presented the report on behalf of the Planning Committee and advised that the Town Council's comment regarding the planning application for the Old Service Station Site is available on the website.

6. **To receive reports from Working Groups/Task and Finish Groups and Southwold Neighbourhood Plan Team**
- a) *To receive the written report Fin 1/2016 from the Finance working group meeting of 5<sup>th</sup> January 2016. No recommendations. The Report was noted.*
  - b) *To receive a verbal update from the meeting of 25<sup>th</sup> January 2016 of the N Plan Team. Cllr Bradbury advised that actions were being taken to actively progress the Plan to the stage of creating a questionnaire for every household to complete.*
  - c) *To receive a verbal report from the informal meeting with Reydon Parish Council held on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2016. Cllr Bradbury advised the meeting of the discussions that had taken place on an informal basis. These had included the entrance to town.*
8. **Suffolk Constabulary –**
- a) *To note that an update from Suffolk Constabulary relating to ‘Suffolk Change Constables County’ will be presented to councillors by Inspector Jennifer Powell on Wed 17<sup>th</sup> Feb at 7pm at the Town Hall. All Councillors were asked to note the date and time of this meeting which is being held at the request of the Town Council.*
  - b) *To receive an update from Suffolk Constabulary in relation to Match Funded PCSO posts. Members were advised that the Town Council had lobbied for the Match Funded posts to be retained and parishes and towns who presently match fund will now be given the opportunity to continue to match fund for 2016/17.*
  - c) *To confirm that Southwold Town Council will match fund a PCSO post for 2016/17. The Town Mayor confirmed that the Police Authority will Match Fund payment by the Town Council for up to 50% of a PCSO post.*
9. **Southwold Harbour Byelaws:** *to consider in relation to fishing at the Harbour.* Discussion took place relating to the 2 sets of byelaws that appear to be in existence for Southwold harbour and the confusion that is arising, specifically in regard to fishing at the harbour. WDC Cllr Allen advised that much consultation had taken place by WDC prior to the byelaws being introduced and that the byelaws were a result of the views expressed at consultation. The Town Mayor confirmed that the confusion over the paperwork relating to the harbour byelaws was not helpful and that communication needs to be improved between staff at the harbour and those using the harbour, including those who wish to fish. It was suggested that a copy of the correct harbour byelaw be circulated to all Councillors. It was also suggested that a letter be sent to the harbourmaster with a copy to WDC and Sentinel Leisure Trust asking that clearer communication be established with those wishing to use the harbour, including for fishing, so that such members of the public could be directed to the suitable areas.
- 9.30pm The Town Mayor asked that Standing Orders be suspended and that allowance be given for the meeting to continue for a further 30 minutes. This proposal was agreed by a majority.
10. **WDC Local Lettings Policy:** *to receive and consider the draft WDC Local Lettings Policy.* WDC Cllr Allen suggested that this be deferred to a future meeting. Agreed by all.

11. **CCTV** – *Mights Bridge, Southwold. (see correspondence attached)* – The Town Mayor confirmed that she had asked for a full report from the providers of the CCTV camera. It was therefore suggested therefore that any debate be deferred to a future meeting. Agreed by all.

14. **To receive update from Town Mayor of events/ meetings attended including:**  
*Carol Concert at St Edmund's Church – 20<sup>th</sup> December 2015*  
*Town Council's Christmas Drinks Reception at Town Hall – 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2015*  
*Match funded PCSO meeting Suffolk Constabulary – 6<sup>th</sup> January 2016*  
*Southwold and Reydon Society meeting regarding entrance to town - Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2016*

***Future Events***

*Town Council Bowls Match – Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2016*  
*Lions Club Annual Charter Celebrations – 13<sup>th</sup> February 2016*

15. **To receive reports from the Town Council representatives on other bodies/organisations, of meetings attended:**

*Reports to be provided in written format and circulated to members prior to the meeting unless time allows for a verbal report to be given, subject to the Chairs discretion.*

No written reports provided. Cllr Doy provided a verbal update on the allotments advising that there were 11 people on the waiting list.

16. **Correspondence.**

*a) Letter from Norfolk and Suffolk Rehabilitation Co Community Payback Unit*  
*b) L from Sizewell Parishes Liaison Group and SCC regarding Sizewell C.*  
*c) L from SCC re Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service.*  
*d) AONB Course – Planning and Neighbourhood Plans in outstanding landscapes.*  
*e) Invitation to Business resilience workshop*  
*f) SALC – LAIS 1385 Public Service Ombudsman.*  
Correspondence noted by all.

17. **Urgent Business:** to act upon any matter of a non-financial urgency, within the meaning of the Standing Orders, which may be brought to the attention of the Town Council with the consent of the Town Mayor previously obtained.  
Nil.

18. **Exclusion of Public and Press:** Pursuant to section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it is resolved, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during consideration of the following;

a) To receive the Landlords confidential written report LL 1/2016 and LL 2/2016 of the meetings held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2016 and Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2016 (see attached pink papers).  
To receive the recommendations contained therein relating to; Town Council Properties. It was RESOLVED by all to approve the recommendations contained within report LL 1/2016 and LL 2/2016

19. **Date of next Town Council Meeting:**  
Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2016 at 7.30pm at the Town Hall.

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TOWN MAYOR 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2016

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