



# Saxmundham Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of Saxmundham Town Council held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025  
at the Market Hall, High Street, Saxmundham at 7:00 pm.

## Minutes

### 112/24TC Attendees

Cllr John Findlay (Chair)  
Cllr Geraldine Barker (Vice-Chair)  
Cllr David Humphreys  
Cllr John Fisher  
Cllr Tim Lock  
Cllr Marianne Kiff  
Cllr Jeremy Smith  
Cllr Nick Jackson (part of the meeting)

### Apologies

Cllr James Sandbach  
Cllr Elizabeth Clark  
County Cllr Richard Smith

### Also Present

Sharon Smith (Town Clerk/RFO)  
3 members of the public

**Cllr Nick Jackson arrived at 7:05 pm.**

### 113/24TC Declaration of Interests

None.

### 114/24TC Open Forum

- a) A member of the public raised a concern about an increase of litter around town and asked if the Green Team is responsible for litter picking or whether the Town Council would consider paying someone. He also reported that he feels strongly about the proposed converter stations and the huge impact to everyone. He said he sees action from the groups but not the Town Council. He feels it should be a priority of the Town Council to resist.
- b) A member of the public said Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council are undertaking a lot of work to respond to the energy developer's consultations. He said the Town Council has a working group which is also working hard and expressing the town's opposition. Cllr Tim Lock advised residents to write to the Secretary of State for the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero to raise their concerns. Cllr Geraldine Barker, the Chair of the Fromus Energy Projects Team, reiterated Cllr Lock's comments and said the Town Council was preparing to respond to the imminent National Grid application for a Development Consent Order for Sealink.
- c) A member of the public raised a concern about Suffolk County Council's recent resolution for Suffolk to join the fast-track towards devolution and a unitary authority. He said some services may devolve to the Town Council which will create extra work for the Councillors and staff and Council Tax may need to be increased to support this. He said some functions may no longer be funded, particularly the arts. He raised a concern that the leadership of Suffolk County Council may have voted to fast-track to avoid the scrutiny of electors at the upcoming elections.
- d) The Chair responded to the concerns raised by the members of the public. He said some Suffolk

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

residents may have opposing views and believe that a unitary authority may bring opportunities for Town Councils, as devolved services may make functions more local and cost-effective. The Chair explained that the street cleaner retired last year and East Suffolk Council have no plans to replace him. He said litter bin emptying is the responsibility of East Suffolk Council and residents can report directly to them if bins are not emptied. The Clerk added that the Green Team organised regular community litter picks last year but they were poorly attended. She said there was a litter picking station outside the Town House to provide community minded residents with the necessary equipment.

e) District Cllr John Fisher had no matters to report.

#### 115/24TC Minutes

- a) It was **unanimously resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024.
- b) The Council received the draft minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025.
- c) The Council received the draft minutes of Amenities and Services Committee meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2024.
- d) The draft minutes of the Events and Communications Committee meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2024 were not available.
- e) The Council received the draft minutes of the Planning and Development Committee meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025.
- f) The Council received the draft minutes of the Staffing Sub-Committee meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

#### 116/24TC Reports

- a) The Chair had no separate matters to report.
- b) The Council received a report from the Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The Group is still working with Pigeon to agree a masterplan for the Garden Neighbourhood. The Group has not yet succeeded with its attempts to arrange a tripartite meeting with East Suffolk Council planners to discuss the draft masterplan. The Group continues to meet with the consultants to modify the Neighbourhood Plan to include policies which address the Garden Neighbourhood and the proposed converter stations.
- c) The Council received a report from the Chair of the Fromus Energy Projects Team. The Town Clerk advised that the report will be available on the Town Council website.
- d) The Council received a report from the Chair of the Events and Communications Committee. A branding workshop was held with a cross-section of interested parties from the community. The full-day workshop was well attended, and some good thinking was captured. The first outcome will be input into the Town Council's website during its review.
- e) The Council received a report from the Town Clerk including Crime Statistics. The Council noted the responses from East Suffolk Council's Planning Enforcement following reports of alleged signage breaches by new businesses in the Conservation Area. If further unsatisfactory responses are received, it was **unanimously resolved** to raise further concerns to East Suffolk Council that they are not adequately protecting the Conservation Area.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## 117/24TC Finance

- a) The Council received the payments, receipts and bank balances to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024.
- b) The Council received the budget versus actual income and expenditure report as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 including a forecast to the financial year end.
- c) It was **unanimously resolved** to approve a recommendation from the Resources Committee to create an Earmarked Reserve of £4,000 for Energy Projects Consultancy.

## 118/24TC Financial Year 2025-2026

- a) It was **unanimously resolved** to accept the Resources Committee recommendation to adopt the draft balanced budget of £284,000 for the financial year 2025-2026.
- b) It was **unanimously resolved** to accept the Resources Committee recommendation to set the precept at £278,037 for 2025-2026 which is a 4.5% increase to last financial year's element of Council Tax to meet necessary expenditure and level of reserves. The cost to a Band D property will be £165.14 per annum which is an increase of £7.11 per annum compared with last financial year.
- c) It was **unanimously resolved** to support, in principle, the aspirations of the Amenities and Services Committee to make significant improvements to the Memorial Field and Seaman Avenue play park. The Committee was requested to submit costed proposals to the Resources Committee for consideration of funding sources which may include general reserves, community infrastructure levy, capital replacement fund, and/or borrowing.
- d) The Chair of the Market Hall Management Committee raised a concern that there was no grant allocation in the Town Council budget for the Market Hall on the grounds that it can draw from its reserves to support its budget for 2025-2026. It was **unanimously resolved** to approve a policy, in principle, for the Market Hall Trust and the Gannon Institute Trust to apply for funding from the Town Council to meet any necessary expenditure not provided for in the Trusts' budgets.

## 119/24TC Consultations

It was **unanimously resolved** that Councillors would respond individually to the government consultation 'Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England'.

## 120/24TC Policies and Procedures

It was **unanimously resolved** to accept the Resources Committee recommendation to approve:

- a) the annual review of the Risk Management Strategy,
- b) a new Wildlife, Biodiversity and Environmental Policy.

## 121/24TC Monthly Markets

It was **unanimously resolved** to approve the Amenities and Services Committee recommendation to reduce the provision of indoor monthly markets from 9 to 4 per year due to falling attendance from traders and shoppers.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**122/24TC Correspondence**

The Town Council noted the correspondence received since the last meeting.

**123/24TC Next Meeting**

The Town Council noted the date and time of the next meeting which is scheduled for 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 7:00 pm.

The meeting closed at 8:30 pm.

**Sharon Smith**  
**Town Clerk/RFO**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_