

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 15th July 2024.**

Those present

Cllr Annelise Furnace	Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt
Cllr Dawn Newell	Cllr John Rider
Cllr Salvatore Pagdades	
<i>Cllr R Smith (Ex Officio)</i>	

In attendance:

Christopher Hunt - Town Clerk	5 x Members of the Public
	2 x Councillors

T24/01 ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

Resolved: Cllr Annelise Furnace was elected Chair of the Committee for the year 2023/24. There were no other proposals
Approved [Prop Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt; Secd Cllr Salvatore Pagdades]

T24/02 ELECTION OF COMMITTEE VICE CHAIR

Resolved: Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt was elected Vice Chair of the Committee for the year 2023/24. There were no other proposals
Approved [Prop Cllr Salvatore Pagdades; Secd Cllr John Rider]

T24/03 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Simon Penney

T24/04 PUBLIC FORUM

Q1. The proposed bench positions in Jubilee Gardens may cause an increase in ASB, one may be too close to the nursery.

The Clerk reassured that this matter would be discussed at the next Jubilee Gardens working party scheduled for the 25th July 2024. Planting, wall lowering, CCTV and lighting will also be considered to reduce the ASB in the area that currently exists.

Q2. Who is responsible for a tree stump opposite Reedings School as this has become a trip hazard.

Cllr Reece Smith stated he would raise this with SYPRC.

Q3. Will the EV chargers be arriving soon in the town?

Cllr Annelise Furnace and Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt stated they have explored avenues to fit chargers in the Bell Street car park and local businesses that has proved negative so far. Enquiries with East Herts Council will continue but the procurement stage needs to progress and it may be several months before these are seen.

Q4. In the light of a number of people expressing their concerns to me, what more the committee thinks we all might do to get

immediate further action from Herts County Council on our Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO) for the legally unprotected Elmwood to the River informal footpath of 20+ years, on which our Town Council spent thousands of pounds resurfacing it?

We want to get the DMMO progressed quickly to a successful conclusion with a declaration as a Public Right of Way within the next couple of months, given the threat from development activities in that area? An allotment holder reported to me that men with Darren Glover of Basildon (the recent digger driver on the area next to the allotments), were seen taking photos of the footpath. That doesn't sound to me like the actions of a man who is director of a building company and who is reported as saying he is clearing the land to put horses on it. The land is a designated flood plain and an allotment holder with knowledge of keeping horses tells me it is completely unsuitable for horses.

The Clerk explained he had been in contact with a solicitor at Tees Law who had been involved in the DMMO application process in 2018. The solicitor then has since retired and as such they are checking their archives for documentation. This will be added to what the Clerk has sent and for advice to follow.

Cllr John Rider asked for this matter to be the number one priority for the council as the risk was high in relation to some form of development that may take place. He stated that residents and allotment holders were keeping a close eye on the land for signs of illegal activity which can be reported to Cllr Eric Buckmaster at any time.

T24/05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Pecuniary Interest by Members.

T24/06 MINUTES

Resolved: To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 13th May 2024 (T04)
[prop Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt sec'd Cllr Dawn Newell]

There were no matters arising from these Minutes and not dealt with elsewhere on this Agenda.

Owner	Action	Completed
Clerk	To ask rangers to repair the goal area in the park near to the Crescent.	Requested 29 th May 2024 and completed
Clerk	To write to Bob Reed and Gilly Squires to explore if projects were underway regarding hedgehog houses and bat boxes.	Email sent 28 th May 2024 Bob keen to ask local groups to build hedgehog houses. He is looking for designs for specifications.
Clerk	To diary in regular meetings throughout the year	Completed 29 th May 2024

	with Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt to review the Town Action Plan	
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T24/07 ALLOTMENTS

Received and noted – Allotments Officer Report

The report was talked through by the Clerk. It was agreed that the water charge increase of 50p per year was acceptable but would need to be proposed as a motion at the next full town council meeting.

T24/08 CEMETERY

Received and noted – Cemetery update from the Clerk

The Clerk highlighted the grass cutting had been managed through use of one of the drivers with the Ranger as the rapid growth was due to the heavy rainfall this year.

Community payback members had only visited once this period and eight interments had taken place in the last two months.

T24/09 FOOTPATHS & OPEN SPACES

Cllr Rider highlighted the following points from Keith Mattacks and Nicholas Maddex from Hertfordshire County Council Rights of Way Officers.

- Sawbridgeworth FP22: We are not aware of any other sections of the riverbank that had deteriorated to the point where we needed to undertake further works. Nicholas will inspect when he is next in Sawbridgeworth. The works previously undertaken were on the basis of an Environment Agency Exemption which had to be registered with them and comes with a number of fixed conditions ie (including a maximum of 10meters length). Any further works would need to be undertaken on a similar basis using a separately registered exemption and we need to be careful as registering two exemptions for the same thing that are adjacent might bring concerns that we are trying to avoid the standard application route.
- Church Crescent is a tarmac surface and as such is the responsibility of Highways to maintain. The issues with this surface have been reported to Highways.
- Fair Green: the public right of way ends at the point it joins Fair Green and as such there is no public right of way across the common land on the definitive map. The responsibility for maintaining this path rest with the persons who own the land, the “commoners” and there may be some responsibility with the resident who drives their vehicle across the path.
- Leventhorpe (Sawbridgeworth FP9): We have been looking into the improvements to this path and while we have made some progress, there are still issues to be resolved. The section of the path opposite the new development should be relatively straightforward technically and the ownership is effectively with the management company for the new development site. The section that runs to the rear of the properties in School Lane is narrow in places and has a number of mature trees with their root structures on or adjacent all of which will make it technically difficult to excavate and compact in this area and we need an alternative

solution to providing a robust surface in this location. We are also struggling to identify who owns this land currently. The section that runs down to the main road A1184 has a neighbouring property on the boundary and as such we will not be able to either raise the height of this path or to introduce a camber to avoid any risk of bridging any damp proofing in the property. Therefore the solution to providing a more robust path at this location is likely to result in rainwater washing down in the gutters on the main road. We are not certain of the ownership of this section of the path.

- The path associated with the Southbrook Allotments; as these paths are not part of the Definitive Map we are not able to comment on these until the various applications come up for consideration at which point all interested parties will have a chance to comment.

Cllr John Rider stated that the budget may need to include additional funds to maintain the pathways across Fair Green as these are not owned by the County or District Councils.

The Clerk added that he reported criminal damage and a theft to the police today due to a picnic bench that had been set on fire and a memorial bench stolen from West Road green space. Cllr Reece Smith and Cllr Salvatore Pagdades would like to take this matter forward through the local press.

T24/10 OPERATIONS

To receive, note and discuss matters relating to Operations

The Clerk covered the following items

- Sawbobus: the bus has received a new sponsor assisting in maintaining the service at a low cost to passengers. It had been broken into a week ago and the first aid kit and glass hammer stolen.
- Public toilets have had some damage caused to one of the locks which was under repair but the toilets remain operational.
- CCTV has been used to collate evidence in several police investigations locally and outside of the county.

T24/11 ECO-AUDIT WORKING PARTY

Received and noted – Eco Audit Report

Cllr Furnace advised that:

- The group will support the councils net zero aims and report to this committee as well as the finance committee
- The next energy hub will be at the Fun on the Field event which will promote reducing energy and heating expense.
- Discussion was held over the LCWIP and the local recovery plan.

ACTION. The clerk to add the above agenda items on to the full town council meeting on the 22nd July 2024.

- Bob Reed will be attending the next full town council meeting

Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt stated the LCWIP consultation is now open and this needs consideration from the town council for suggestions to be made for the project.

T24/12 REDUCING THE COUNCILS CARBON FOOTPRINT

Update on progress in relation to the following two items;

- To aim to achieve net zero for the council's own generated emissions by 2030 and do all that we can to assist in achieving this by the same year for the wider town.
- In the interim, commit the council towards reducing its own carbon footprint to an absolute minimum by May 2027 [end of current council's term] whilst at the same time identifying a pathway to offset its residual carbon.

Cllr Annelise Furnace updated the meeting with the following:

- In 2019 the three acorns company produced a report following an Eco Audit and a second report has been requested following a recent assessment of the day to day running of the town council.
- The data showed a reduction from the initial audit until now in 10% reduction in electricity use, gas reduced by 93%, diesel down 8.5%, water has doubled in use which may be due to water leaks at the allotments, paper now 100% recycled, office waste down by 33% and the waste at the cemetery needs to be addressed to lower this.
- Banking has an impact on the carbon footprint and switching banks can have a positive impact.

A full report is to be sent in around three weeks' time for more information to be worked on to reduce the carbon footprint.

Cllr Reece Smith stated that if an electric bus was to be considered the cost to charge it must be born in mind as he currently has an electric vehicle and the charging costs are very high.

T24/13 TOWN ACTION PLAN

Cllr A Parsad-Wyatt updated the meeting with current progression on the action plan.

- Police liaison has improved and offices regularly used by local officers with the police car parked in the carpark. Police visibility has improved.
- Sawbobus commuter service is being explored and a driver is driving the route 3 times in the morning and 3 times in the evening prior to and following the Sawbobus normal timetable. Once assessed and costs known this service may be trialled with paying passengers to assess the uptake.
- The Rangers are assisting with small tasks in the town rather than waiting for district or county resources which are not always timely.
- Road treatment in the winter is being monitored by Cllr John Rider and locally a salt spreader will be purchased to allow small areas to be treated by the Rangers that may have been missed or not on the county treatment plan.
- Communications has been looked at and a newsletter is being explored that has useful information, to include the town action plan and all the councillors listed with their responsibilities and contact details. This will be refreshed every four years to coincide with the election of the local councillors.
- The market needs to be revisited and a new project explored and this to be added to the Full Town Council meeting next week.

ACTION – the Clerk to add the above matter to the full town council agenda on the 22nd July 2024

T24/14 COUNCILLOR ENGAGEMENT

- Love Parks 12 – 3pm on the 1st August
- Bike Marking Event 7pm – 8pm 15th August

T24/15 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

No suggestions were made.

Meeting ended at 8:25pm

ACTIONS

Owner	Action	Completed
Cllr Reece Smith	A tree stump opposite Reedings School has become a trip hazard.to be raised with SYPRC who may own the land the stump is on	
Clerk	To add LCWIP and the local recovery plan to the next Full Town Council meeting 22 nd July 2024	Added 16 th July 2024
Clerk	To add the Town market to be discussed at the next Full Town Council meeting 22 nd July 2024	Added 16th July 2024