

# Sawbridgeworth Town Council

Sayesbury Manor, Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth  
Hertfordshire CM21 9AN  
Tel: 01279 724537



MAYOR  
Cllr Reece Smith  
TOWN CLERK  
Christopher Hunt

e-mail: [info@sawbridgeworth-tc.gov.uk](mailto:info@sawbridgeworth-tc.gov.uk)  
web: [www.sawbridgeworth-tc.gov.uk](http://www.sawbridgeworth-tc.gov.uk)

To: Cllr's Furnace, Newell, Pagdades, Rider, A Parsad-Wyatt, Penney  
[Cllr R Smith (Ex Officio)]

## TOWN ACTION PLAN AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE

You are invited to attend a meeting of this committee which will take place on **Monday 14th October 2024** at the **conclusion of the 7:00pm Planning meeting 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  
8th October 2024

## AGENDA

- T24/16**      **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
[👏]              To receive and approve any apologies for absence.
- T24/17**      **PUBLIC FORUM**  
                    To receive representations from members of the public on matters within the remit of the Town Action Plan and Amenities Committee.
- T24/18**      **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
                    To receive any Declarations of Pecuniary Interest by Members
- T24/19**      **MINUTES**  
[📄] [👏]        To approve as a correct record the draft minutes of the Town Action Plan and Amenities Committee Meeting held on 15th July 2024 (T01) [Attached appendix A]
- To attend to any matters arising from these Minutes and not dealt with elsewhere on this Agenda.

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 <sup>nd</sup> July 2024	Added 16 <sup>th</sup> July 2024
Clerk	To add the Town market to be discussed at the next Full Town Council meeting 22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2024	Added 16 <sup>th</sup> July 2024

**T24/20**



**ALLOTMENTS**

To receive Allotment Officers Report and discuss matters relating to Allotments.

*[Attached appendix B]*

**T24/21**



**CEMETERY**

To note the Cemetery Mangers report and discuss any matters arising.

*[Attached appendix C]*

**T24/22**

**FOOTPATHS & OPEN SPACES**

To note and discuss matters relating to Footpaths & Open Spaces.  
*Cllr Rider*

The Clerk sent an email sent to Ramblers website 20/09/24 to assist in identifying in overgrowth and obstructions of footpaths.

**T24/23**



**OPERATIONS**

To receive, note the Clerks report relating to Operations.

- Sawbobus.
- Public Toilets
- CCTV

*[Attached appendix D]*

**T24/24**



**ECO-AUDIT WORKING PARTY**

- To note the latest Eco-Audit Working Party minutes 17<sup>th</sup> September 2024

*[Attached appendix E]*

**T24/25**

**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.
- To review the 3 acorns report and debate the actions to progress the recommendations.
  - Reduction in skip use at the cemetery.
  - To explore the cost difference in buying out of the current electricity supply contract. If this is a viable option to then explore gas boiler replacement for heating system to the old part of the office.
  - Change of bank to greener option, i.e. Coop or Unity Trust
  - Explore solar panel energy production.
  - Explore water harvesting at the new allotment site at West Road. Clerks report attached

[📄]

*[Attached appendix F]*

**T24/26**

**TOWN ACTION PLAN**

- Update on the 2023-27 Town Action Plan,  
*Cllr A Parsad-Wyatt*

**T24/27**

**COUNCILLOR ENGAGEMENT**

- Future engagement opportunities

**T24/28**

**ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

To note items for future agendas

# Appendix A

# SAWBRIDGECWORTH 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 Dawn Newell  
Cllr Salvatore Pagdades  
*Cllr R Smith (Ex Officio)*

Cllr Angus Parsad-Wyatt  
Cllr John Rider

#### 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 25<sup>th</sup> 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 <sup>th</sup> 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 <sup>th</sup> 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 <sup>th</sup> 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 22<sup>nd</sup> 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 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2024

**T24/14 COUNCILLOR ENGAGEMENT**

- Love Parks 12 – 3pm on the 1<sup>st</sup> August
- Bike Marking Event 7pm – 8pm 15<sup>th</sup> 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 <sup>nd</sup> July 2024	Added 16 <sup>th</sup> July 2024
Clerk	To add the Town market to be discussed at the next Full Town Council meeting 22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2024	Added 16th July 2024

# **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 October 2024**  
Date: 07 October 2024

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### **General**

Allotment Renewals went out in September with a rider to the tenancy agreement only allowing machinery and power tools to be used only between 09:00 and 20:00hrs.

The majority of renewals have now been returned and processed.

### **Water Charge**

A small increase was made to the water charge across all sites this year, as agreed. The charge is now £3.00 per half plot per year for water.

The water charge had not been increased for many years so this should bring the charge up to current cost of providing water. It is not anticipated that the charge would need to be increased yearly, but will continue to be monitored.

### **New West Road Site**

The Clerk and Allotment Officer met with the developers on site regarding the agreed requirements and took initial measurements for plots in preparation of the transfer. Please see the photograph below, which shows the site in its current form for your information.



# Appendix C

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# Sawbridgeworth Town Council

## Cemetery Paper by J Sargant

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**Subject: Cemetery Report**

**Date: 07 October 2024**

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**Burial Data: 01 Jan 2024 – 07/10/2024**

Full Burials = 17

Created Remains = 22

Scattering = 0

21 graves were new graves sold, 15 were pre-purchased grave spaces or re-opening. (Note: 8 of the graves were sold new as Tree Graves with Plaques, this is a discussion point for future meetings)

**Probation Service:**

The group have returned to the cemetery this September and completed painting the southern fence, this is of great help to us and a valuable resource. They have some staff shortages at present and are looking for new supervisors so are unable to visit as regularly as they would like. Cemetery Manager to instruct the supervisor what work could be carried out during the visits, but it is dependent on what resources are available to them on the day.

**Ground Maintenance:**

Grass cutting has now ceased, with the exception of a few small areas – dependent on burial locations. We are fortunate that the cemetery is not subject to flooding within our boundaries, however the flooding in the layby outside is a continual problem as the silt and detritus obstructs the yellow lines, Cemetery Manager continues to report the issue to HCC for clearance including overhanging trees and vegetation.

Items for future discussion –

- Review of burial fees for 2025
- PEAR (mapping system) plotting and planning update for the layout of new areas in the cemetery.
- Allocation of cemetery manager's time to create and distribute new brochure to promote the cemetery.
- Memorial Trees – the changing attitudes of memorialisation

# Appendix D

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# Sawbridgeworth Town Council

## Memorandum from the Town Clerk

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To: TAPAC Meeting  
From: Christopher Hunt  
Subject: Clerks update  
Date: 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024

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### **Sawbobus**

The Sawbobus is now back on the road after an extensive time being repaired. Two new sponsors are being explored to assist with the overall running of the service.

The bus is still popular with regular passengers and will be of a real benefit moving into the colder months where those more vulnerable members of the community will utilise the service.

### **Public Toilets**

A repair has been made to one of the door locks which had come loose and allowing users to enter without paying. The toilets continue to be a form of revenue and have not suffered with any damage recently.

### **CCTV**

The CCTV continues to work well and has been utilised for an accident whereby the driver failed to stop. The incident was fully captured including the number plate of the offending vehicle and forwarded to police. The system will be extended when a meeting with highways can be agreed to cover the Jubilee Gardens.



# Appendix E

Eco-Audit Working Group Meeting via Teams, 17 September 2024 at 12.00

Attendees: Cllr Annelise Furnace (AF) Chair; Bob Reed (BR); Hazel Mead (HM); David Royle (DR); Chris Hunt (CH), Joanne Sargant (JS) Town Projects Manager; notes taken by DR. Apologies: Cllr Ruth Buckmaster (RB).

*Note: Sarah Brown has left the group because of work commitments; we should consider a replacement from the community.*

### 1 STC Eco-Audit next steps

- CH/JS Report not yet received; chased. Awaiting presentation to STC Amenities and Finance committees. Workshop proposal on the table, can be funded from EJDC grant (£500) as part of a town-wide approach. EN suggested HCC retrofit guide could be included. CH to contact Terry Philpott at Ware TC to see if we could access some of his full-time adviser's time for more face-to-face work.

### 2 Energy Hub

- Feedback on Fun on The Field event: new gazebo from EHDC and Raynet vehicle (superfluous?); lack of visible hardware; ASOS (Cheshunt) employee present; about half the number of contacts (c 40) compared to last time
- Next events: 28 September Town Walk; 30 November Christmas Lights with Raynet vehicle.

### 3 Citizen Science Group

- BR reported good progress on water quality; Rivers Officer for Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust came to train CS group (of two); kit provided to get data on river in our area as part of <https://earthwatch.org.uk/greatukwaterblitz/>
- Link to Environment Agency test sites (Grange Paddocks, Spellbrook, Station Road) available
- River not 'good' but not 'bad' either
- AF suggested promoting CRT local painting event on 21/09 to possibly get more CS members (STC will do)
- AF asked about funding: BR felt kit adequate for a year's testing.

### 4 Sustainable Sawbridgeworth update

- Responded to LCWIP consultation; poor route maps; walkabout on Taylor Wimpey site; question over future of path behind Mandeville's new sports field and link to Footpath 9 to Cambridge Road via Taylor Wimpey site. EB noted that funding for West Road/Station Road junction improvement unallocated; developers want to pass responsibility to HCC; possibly use to resurface Footpath 9 and make it an all-weather route to avoid poor main road air quality.
- Assisted at Energy Hub event at Fun on the Field
- Ongoing bi-monthly Repair Café; Tidy up Sawbridgeworth on 10 August; Scarecrow Festival stall 7 and 8 September; Veggie Night on 21 September; Town Walk stall to come on 28 September.

## **5 Allotments**

- HM reported that the eco plot at Southbrook to be extended to include 125 tree whips and orchard area with 13 trees
- Other allotments: no reply from Bell Mead or Vantorts; Bullfields mentioned sprayed bank area; JS confirmed this was STC to clear area following complaints from Reedings Way properties. HM will liaise with Sarah there about allotment holders taking this over.

## **6 Consultations: LCWIP (closes 20/09), Local Nature Recovery Plan; HCCSP Climate Adaptation; Air Quality (09/09 to 20/10)**

- LCWIP: representatives from Sustainable Sawbridgeworth, the BS Climate Group and District Footpaths Association will attend a two-hour meeting on 25 September to discuss walking and cycling priorities
- BR has provided a list of areas via CH/STC. Second consultation phase coming (EB) to follow up data provided.

## **7 Air quality real time data update**

- Tim Hoskin from EHDC has offered access to the Beta version of the website; contact AF if interested.

## **18 AOB**

- EB reported on the local pilot of a soft plastics collection; plastic bags given to residents in different parts of town.

## **Next Meeting dates**

- **21 January**
- **15 April**

# **Appendix F**



## 3 Acorns Eco-audits

Inspiration  
Information  
Implementation

2 Coleman Road  
Camberwell  
London  
SE5 7TG

Telephone: + 44 (0)20 7703 8748  
Email: [contact@3acorns.co.uk](mailto:contact@3acorns.co.uk)  
Website: [www.3acorns.co.uk](http://www.3acorns.co.uk)

## Eco-audit Update Report: Sawbridgeworth Town Council

FAO: Chris Hunt ,Town Clerk

The original eco-audit was carried out in 2019.

This summary update was carried out by Donnachadh McCarthy FRSA, from **3 Acorns Eco-audits** and this is your resulting update report.

It is important that this update should be read in conjunction with the recommendations from your original main eco-audit report, as the update process consists just of a data collection process and a review meeting with your officers, with no site inspections.

We would like to thank Joanne Sargant and the rest of the team for their help with this update report.

Taking environmental action has become even more urgent since the original eco-audit. The UN now says that there is now no credible path to not breaching a catastrophic 1.5C rise in temperatures, which the BMA Journal editorial warns will be devastating for human health. Chatham House now states we have less than 5% chance of staying under 2C.

Since the 1970's we have lost over 70% of global wildlife populations and continue to lose that at a rate of 1% per annum. The UK is one of the most nature depleted nations in the world.

We also face a soil crisis, with globally over 50% of fertile soils lost since the agricultural revolution.

The UK government has warned that some soils in the UK, have been so damaged by industrial agriculture, that they have less than 40 crops left in them.

We are now in a race against time to prevent a human civilisation ending 3C rise in temperatures and to ensure any remaining populations of wildlife can be saved and regenerated for future generations.

Since the original eco-audit, there have been reductions in consumption of electricity (10%), paper (18%), diesel (9%) and total office waste produced (24%).

The office recycling rate has positively gone from 0% to 66%.  
2.5 trees were saved by the switch to recycled paper.

But reported consumption of gas, cemetery waste and water are up.

### **Greening Finances**

Since the original eco-audit was carried out, there have emerged useful metrics to estimate the significant associated carbon emissions with the council's bank accounts and pensions.

We suggest tackling these should be one of the council's priorities for tackling its own internal carbon emissions over the coming year. And seeking to reduce cemetery waste production and introducing recycling if possible is a key operational priority.

We hope the updated recommendations in this report will be helpful in guiding your next steps in improving the council's environmental performance over the coming year and enabling the planning of your actions over the coming six years to achieve a carbon-free Sawbridgeworth 2030.

To achieve energy carbon-free status would involve switching to a green electricity tariff, replacing gas heating and hot water at the civic centre, replacing bus fleet with EVs and switching any diesel operated open-spaces machinery to electricity supplied by a green tariff.

The cost of the green mains electricity consumption would ideally be mitigated by the production of your own on-site renewable energy.

We were delighted to learn the council had liaised with the local wildlife trust and were taking new steps to improve the wildlife potential of the council's open spaces.

# Headline Eco-Data

	2018/19	2023/24
<b>Building Energy Consumption</b>		
Electricity kwh:	18,700	16,777
Electricity CO <sub>2</sub> (tons)	5.2	4.0
Gas kwh	21,000	37,500
Gas CO <sub>2</sub> (tons)	4	7.1
<b>Building Energy Carbon Footprint (tons)</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>11.1</b>
Flights CO <sub>2</sub> (tons)	0	0
Diesel vehicles CO <sub>2</sub> (tons)	15.5	14.1
<b>Total Energy carbon footprint (tonnes):</b>	<b>24.7</b>	<b>25.2</b>
Square meterage	238	238
Mains water consumption (litres):	51,000	119,000
Water supply CO <sub>2</sub> (tons)	0.05	0.05
A4 Sheets virgin photocopying paper	27,500	22,500
% made from recycled paper	0	100
Paper CO <sub>2</sub> (tons)	0.6	0.2
Trees consumed	3	2.5
Total annual office waste (tons)	6.2	4.7
Non-recycled waste (tons)	6.2	1.6
Recycled (tons)	0	3.1
Waste CO <sub>2</sub> (tons)	2.9	0.7 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Recycling rate (%)</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>66%</b>
<b>Cemetery waste (tons wt)</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>73<sup>2</sup></b>
Cemetery recycled waste	0	0
Cemetery waste CO <sub>2</sub> (tons)	13	34
<b>Utility Bills</b>		
Electricity	£ 3,000	£5,400
Gas	£ 840	£2,400
Water <sup>3</sup>	£ n/a	£ 460

## Finances

Bank a/c (Lloyds) year-end cash	n/a	£356,474
Bank CO <sub>2</sub> (tons)	n/a	25
Investments: (CCLA) year-end reserves	n/a	£100,000
Investment CO <sub>2</sub>	n/a	7
<b>Total Financial Reserves CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>32</b>
Pension Provider (Herts LGPS x 2 + 2 Nest)		
Number of staff pensions	n/a	4
Age deciles of Staff 1x40s,2x50s,1x60s		
Total estimated pension pot	n/a	£193,300
<b>Estimated pension CO<sub>2</sub><sup>5</sup></b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>(58E) 94</b>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Presuming all waste is landfilled.

<sup>2</sup> Estimate for 2024 cemetery waste based on 2 x 8-yard skips/month.

<sup>3</sup> Reported water consumption is only for the civic centre and excludes water usage at cemetery and allotments.

<sup>4</sup> Financial carbon metrics taken from the My Mother Tree website tables.

<https://www.mymothertree.com/>

Estimate based on all reserves being with Lloyds, as My Mother Tree do not have a metric for CCLA

If they were all with Barclays = 85 tons

Thus currently saving = 53 tons.

If they were all with Co-op = 15 tons

Thus, potential further saving = 17 tons.

<sup>5</sup> We do not have a carbon metric for the Herts pension fund, so we have provided the estimated emissions for all four pensions being invested with the Nest non-ethical option and the ethical option.



## Data Analysis

### Carbon

Your largest sources of estimated carbon pollution are your cemetery waste and pension investments.

Pension	94.0
Cemetery Waste	34.7
Cash Reserves	25.0
Diesel	14.1
Gas	7.1
Investment account	7.0
Electricity	4.0
Office waste	0.7
Paper	0.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>186.1</b>

This is the equivalent of the annual energy emissions for about 62 UK homes.

To get to net zero for your premises would require you to switch the remaining gas boiler to some form of electric heating, powered by a green tariff & with the costs mitigated by producing as much of your own green electricity as possible.

### Electricity

There was a 10% reduction in electricity consumption. It would be carbon-free if you moved to a green electricity contract.

### Gas

Gas consumption was up significantly. We do not know the cause of this. However, as the flat is now unoccupied, this consumption will be radically reduced in next data set.

Gas is largely only used for heating in the flat upstairs and some hot water. If you replace this with a form of electric heating powered by a genuine green electricity tariff, then you will have achieved net zero carbon for your premises energy consumption.

### Paper

There was a drop of 18% in paper usage and the switch of the remaining paper consumption to recycled paper, saved the equivalent of 2.5 trees.

## **Greening Finances**

Banking and pensions are now by far your largest estimated source of carbon emissions.

You could move your bank account to a lower emitting bank and ensure existing staff know about the lower carbon emitting ethical option from NEST and make the ethical option the default for new staff members, with or without the option to opt-out for the non-ethical fund.

## **Waste**

Recycling has not only been introduced since the initial eco-audit, but total office waste has been reduced and the recycling rate of 66% is above the national average of 43%.

However, waste emissions remain a significant proportion of your operational emissions, due to the high waste arisings at the cemetery.

Carry out a waste audit to identify opportunities to eliminate or reduce the various waste streams.

## **Water**

Reported office water consumption more than doubled. We were unable to determine the cause of this. No data was available for the allotments and cemetery.

It is important to reduce consumption, due to its impact on nature and the energy used to transport it.

Set a target for your allotments being mains-water free.

# Some Significant Achievements Since 2019

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This is a list of some of the positive actions implemented since the original eco-audit report. It is not an exhaustive list but gives a taste of actions taken to date.

## **Electricity**

1. Electricity consumption is down 10%.
2. Inefficient fluorescent lamps have been replaced with more efficient LED lamps.

3. Light movement sensors were installed in relevant locations.
4. EV charging point is planned for the council's vehicles to be installed in the spring.
5. Use of windows is prioritised in preference to use of air-conditioning.

### **Waste reduction/ Purchasing / Recycling**

1. Recycling system has been introduced.
2. Office recycling system has reached 66%, well above national 43% rate.
3. Spoil from grave digging is no longer dumped.
4. Total paper consumption was reduced by 18%.
5. Three quarters of councillors now being sent electronic reports rather than on paper.
6. Have switched to photocopying paper made from post-consumer recycled paper.
7. Bathroom tissue and paper towels etc have switched to products made from recycled paper also.

### **Open Spaces / Water**

1. Some experimentation with wildflower meadows have taken place.
2. Mulching mowers have been introduced which eliminate need to dispose of grass cuttings.
3. Push button taps were installed at the allotments, to stop water wastage from taps being left on.
4. Hedging has been installed at the cemetery boundary, including 200 hedgerow trees.
5. Cemetery manager liaised with local wildlife trust on how to maximise wildlife at the cemetery.

### **Management Issues**

1. Original eco-audit report circulated to councillors and placed on council's website for the public to see.
2. Council has adopted a net zero target date of 2030 for both the council's own carbon pollution and to do all it can to enable the town to do likewise.
3. It has set a target of May 2027 to do all it can to have minimised its own emissions.
4. Green rider added to staff employment contracts.

# Additional Recommendations 2024

## **Pensions**

New metrics have emerged since your original eco-audit for carbon emissions associated with banking cash reserves and pension funds.

We made an estimate of the amount in the collective staff pension pot by taking the national average for people in each age group and with staff numbers as being: 1 in 40s, 2 in 50s and 1 in sixties.

Two are with the Herts pension scheme and two are with the Nest pension fund.

We do not know the carbon emissions associated with the Herts CC scheme that you are a member of.

So we calculated the estimate as if this total was all placed with The Nest Pension scheme.

The estimated emissions according to My Mother Tree would be about 94 tons if placed with the non-ethical fund and if placed with their ethical option, it would be 58 tons.

***If all four pots were placed with the Nest ethical option, the notional saving could be 36 tons.***

## **Recommendations**

1. The most urgent task with your pension emissions is thus to seek information from the Herts pension providers as to what their carbon metrics are and to then develop a strategy in consultation with your staff based on the information provided.
2. As all new staff are now offered the NEST pension rather than the Herts scheme, it is important that the default option for new staff is the ethical fund.
3. The council should decide as to whether they allow an opt-out from the ethical fund, if the new staff member wishes this.
4. Ensure current staff know that they can switch to the ethical option if they so wish and that they understand the carbon impacts of their pension choices.

## Banking/ Cash Reserves

Divesting cash reserves from fossil-fuel funding banks is even more important than divesting shareholdings and pensions, as it can help restrict the flow of funds for new fossil-fuel expansion.

Since the last eco-audit, a new metric estimating carbon emissions from bank reserves has been launched by Mother Tree.

This estimates that for each £1,000 deposited with Lloyds, it emits about 0.0704 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> but with the Co-operative Bank only 0.0328tons. The worst carbon polluting bank is Barclays.

Estimate based on all reserves being with Lloyds, as My Mother Tree do not have a metric for CCLA	= 25 tons
If they were all with Barclays	= 85 tons

Thus you are currently saving an estimated 53 tons by being with Lloyds instead of Barclays.

But if they were all with Co-op	= 15 tons
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Thus, potentially saving a further 17 tons.

The full Mother Tree list is here:

<https://www.mymothertree.com/bank-league-table>

## Recommendations

1. Thus, we suggest you consider switching where you bank your cash reserves be a top priority.  
If you need a local high-street bank account, you could still maintain your high-street bank account but switch your reserves to a lower CO<sub>2</sub> bank.  
The Co-operative Bank account can be used at local post office branches.
2. Ask the CCLA for their carbon metric per £1,000 deposited and whether they invest with fossil fuel corporations and then decide using the My Mother Tree banking carbon metric table, how to proceed.

## Management

1. Include an eco-audit report, including the above eco-data in parallel with your annual accounts. This will help keep your focus on your annual environmental progress in future years.
2. Keep implementation of the eco-audit and the update recommendations as a standing item on relevant management meeting agendas.

3. Take meter readings from all your utility meters on the last day of the financial year. This will make future reporting much easier, as you will not have to depend on the erratic nature of estimated billing.
4. Allocate responsibility to a named member of staff for collecting your eco-data and collating it for reporting at the financial year end.
5. Check that areas designated to be suitable for wind-energy are included in the next area plan.
6. Develop an EV charging strategy for the town.
7. Create a section on your website with advice for local residents on how to reduce their carbon pollution and how to make a positive contribution to restoring local wildlife.

## **Electricity**

1. Your electricity contract is up for renewal next spring. It is important to use this opportunity to switch to a green supplier. SSE is a mainstream supplier who provides green electricity to its commercial customers at competitive prices. So worth getting a quote from them and others.
2. The main council chamber has an air-conditioning system. It was reported to be now very rarely used. Ensure if it is used that the recommended coolest temperature for operation is 25C.  
Place a locked box around the controls and ensure only a trained member of staff is allowed to change temperature settings and timer.
3. Commission a feasibility study on the potential for solar and wind energy across your properties, including ground located solar and solar carports in any carparks e.g. cemetery.

The new UK government has indicated it plans to launch a major local renewable energy programme with local councils. So, the more that you already have scoped your potential for such schemes and have costings ready, the faster you will be able to move, once the programmes are launched if they include local councils.

4. Once the EV charging point is in place, prioritise replacement of diesel vehicles with EVs.
5. Move to the cloud for server functions, as it uses up to 90% less energy.
6. Install 7-day timers on water cooler and hot-drinks machine, so that they are only on when required.

## Heating

1. Ensure heating temperatures are no higher than the CCC recommended 18C.
2. Ensure that cooling temperatures are no lower than the CIBSE recommended 25C.
3. Ensure bathroom heating is set at frost-protection.
4. If keeping the central heating system, ensure that pipes are properly insulated and heat-reflectors are installed on radiators on outside walls.

## Carbon Free Premises Energy

The area of the civic centre heated by the air-conditioning system would be carbon free (net zero) if you switched to a green electricity supplier.

To achieve carbon-free status for the rest of your civic centre, would require your 15-year-old gas-boiler central heating and hot-water system to be converted to some form of electric heating.

This could be air-source heat-pump (ASHP), electric boiler or infrared heating, if combined with a genuine green electricity tariff, supplemented wherever possible by your own green energy.

These have varying capital requirements and running costs:

- An electric boiler – cheaper than an ASHP capital wise but more expensive running costs. Current radiators and pipes can be kept.
- An air-source heat-pump powered central-heating system - high capital but lower running costs, but all radiators and pipes *may* need to be replaced. Not suited for spaces that have erratic usage patterns or high ceilings.
- Infra-red panels - lower capital cost than ASHP and more flexible to erratic usage patterns, but they may have higher running costs, depending on the circumstances. No pipes or radiators are required and entire system will not fail if one boiler fails.

<https://www.herschel-infrared.co.uk>

The hot-water supplied by the gas-boiler could be replaced by a local mini electric water-heater.

We suggest you get quotes for the capital and estimated running costs for each electric heating option and then take a decision, as to the best option for you.

## **Purchasing / Waste Reduction/ Recycling**

1. Landfilled unrecycled waste has high carbon emissions, of about 0.467 tons CO<sub>2</sub>/ton of waste.  
Examining potential to recycle some of the cemetery waste is thus important.
2. Carry out a waste audit, to identify waste streams that you might be able to reduce or eliminate entirely.
3. Avoid use of anti-bacterial soap, which poisons water sources. The FDA states that ordinary soap is perfectly adequate for non-clinical uses. Bio-D provides liquid plant-based soap for refillable dispensers.
4. Ensure cleaner is using microfibre cloths, which if used regularly only need water and no additional chemical products.
5. Buy organic catering for events and organic teas, coffee, plant and dairy/plant milk, sugar etc for staff hot drinks etc.  
Globally we have already lost over 50% of planet's fertile soils. In the UK, UK government states that we have only about 40 crops left in much of our soils. Thus, seeking to promote as much sourcing of organic produce as possible is crucial.
6. See if it is possible to estimate the number and length of car and cab trips that providing the local bus service removes from your streets.

This could then be translated into a positive carbon footprint impact it is having for the community, in addition to providing a much-needed service, reducing congestion and local air pollution.

## **Open Spaces/ Water**

1. The southeast of England has less water per person than Madrid, due to high population densities. This means in drier years water is over-extracted from rivers, lakes and aquifers, thus damaging the wildlife dependent on it.

This is an even more critical issue in your area, due to the impacts of over-extraction on the region's rare chalk stream ecosystems.

Thus, it is important that the council provides leadership in this area by reducing its mains water consumption, especially at the allotments and cemetery. In future years, include mains water consumption at the allotments in your annual eco-data report.

Set a target to eliminate mains water consumption for your four allotments, cemetery, hanging-baskets and open spaces as far as practical.

Wendover Parish Council grounds-team have installed very simple wood-framed



lean-to roofs at their allotments, (similar to one in the picture below but bigger) which feed an array of IBC rain-storage tanks (Intermediate Beverage Containers) which are readily available pre-used on eBay.

This has eliminated almost all mains-water consumption at their allotments.



2. Include native fruit and nut bearing trees in future tree plantings.
3. The UK government has signed up to the COP15 Biodiversity Treaty which committed us to protecting a minimum of 30% of UK land and oceans for nature.

The council could consider making a commitment to supporting this on its own open spaces (if not achieved already) and launching an initiative on how to take this out to the wider community.

4. Carry out a survey to see what % of your open spaces are protected for nature.
5. Britain has lost about 75% of our ponds in the last 100 years. They are invaluable for helping repair our decimated wildlife and insect populations. Identify suitable locations for new ponds in your open spaces including your allotments.

With industrial farming, insect populations have plummeted by as much as 80%, which has had the knock-on impact of causing starvation among many of our declining bird and small mammal populations.

6. Replace any diesel-powered parks equipment and machinery with electrical options, as they come up for replacement, but with a target date for all to be converted by 2027 or 2030 at the latest.  
As electrical equipment has much lower noise and vibrations and emits no local pollution, it improves workplace safety for staff.
7. Also get quotes for the replacement of your bus fleet with EV buses and establish a replacement schedule, with a target of completion by 2030 at the latest.
8. Continue with experiments with wild-flower meadows at your grassed open spaces and cemetery. It is crucial that they have neatly mown borders and clear signage explaining the purpose and benefits of them, for them to gain public acceptance.

9. Check any water meters quarterly overnight, to check for any water leaks.

## Thanks!

Many thanks again for the help officers kindly provided to **3 Acorns Eco-audits** in the carrying out of this update report and good luck with further reducing the council's environmental impacts over the coming years and achieving your carbon-free energy target for 2030.

**Report author: Donnachadh McCarthy FRSA pp 3 Acorns Eco-Audit  
September 2024**

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# Sawbridgeworth Town Council

## Memorandum from the Town Clerk

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To: TAPAC COMMITTEE  
From: Christopher Hunt  
Subject: CLERKS REPORT, Water supply West Road allotment  
Date: 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024

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I wrote to Wendover Parish Council in regard to water collection and use at there allotment sites as they have tried alternative methods successfully. I have attached the response below and will explore the viability at the new West Road site.

*Hi Chris,*

*Hope you are well.*

*I have attached pictures of the most recent water tanks we have made, these are a slightly different design to the first one we made about 5 years ago.*

*We don't treat the rainwater we collect in the tanks. The rain water harvesters have been a big success and collect a lot of water, they have actually inspired a lot of our tenants to create similar structures with tanks on their plots.*

*Kind regards  
Phoebe Sharps*

