

SUDBURY TOWN COUNCIL**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD IN THE ASSEMBLY ROOM, TOWN HALL,
SUDBURY ON WEDNESDAY 22ND MARCH 2024 AT 7.00 PM**

Presiding: Mrs J Osborne Mayor of Sudbury

Attending: Inspector Ben Hollands Suffolk Police
Mr John Kemp River Stour Trust

About 40 electors were in attendance.

1. MINUTES

That the Minutes of the last Town Meeting held on 29th March 2023 were taken as read, confirmed by a show of hands, signed and ADOPTED.

2. RIVER STOUR TRUST UPADTE

Mr John Kemp from the River Stour Trust gave an update on the joint initiative to gain 'designated bathing water' status for the River Stour between the Granary Cut in Sudbury and the Great Cornard Lock. The stretch of the river had been reduced during the consultation period to just a 400m frontage of Friars Meadow, but this had been included in the national group of rivers and beaches to be taken forward to the next stage.

Much more work would be required to ensure that the levels of pollution in the river were reduced and that Anglian Water took the necessary action to keep the water quality up to the required standard for bathing.

3. MAYORS REPORT ON TOWN MATTERS

The Mayor Cllr Jan Osborne gave her report a copy of which is shown on pages 4 to 6.

4. COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

Copies of Councillor Ms Jessie Carter's Annual County Council report were available for the electors to read, but unfortunately Cllr Carter was unable to attend in person. A copy of the report is shown at minute pages 7 to 8.

5. DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORT

Councillor Mr Tim Register attended to deliver his report on the District Council. Copies of the report were available for the electors to read and it is included at minute page 9.

Questions from electors included;

- Were details of the Babergh homelessness policy available on their website? Cllr Register confirmed that the full details could be found in the minutes of the last full Babergh Council meeting.
- Had the EV charging lost disabled and parent and toddler parking spaces? Cllr Register would speak to the Public Realm to see if other spaces could be designated to replace them.
- Could the hedgerows in the car parks be maintained in a better manner to protect the nesting birds and other wildlife? Cllr Register supported this and would speak to the Public Realm section about this.

- What were the plans for the land behind the bus station? Cllr Regester did not know the current plans as the grant applications to central government had not succeeded. The Mayor noted that a 'plan B' would be required.
- How many members of Babergh District Council would make the decision on increasing parking charges? Cllr Regester confirmed that it would only be the members of Babergh Cabinet.
- What were the plans for the Ormiston School sports centre to be used by the public? Cllr Regester explained that this would be up to the academy chain which owned the site and operated the school. A rebuilding plan would probably include new sporting facilities.
- When had the whole Babergh District Council voted to adopt a policy of increasing car parking charges in Sudbury? Cllr Regester explained that this was the 2021 parking strategy that had been adjusted. It had been reintroduced as a cabinet paper by the officer in charge of Public Realm. Any issues of pre-determination would be considered by the Monitoring Officer.

6. SUDBURY MUNICIPAL CHARITY ACCOUNTS

The accounts of Sudbury Municipal Charities were distributed to those present at the meeting. A copy of the account is shown at minute page 10. No issues were raised.

7. POLICE REPORT

Inspector Ben Hollands attended the meeting to present a verbal report on the Police in Sudbury. His main points were;

- The change in the way uniformed policing was delivered in Suffolk. There were now two new uniformed police teams, a community policing team and a response investigation team. Sudbury now had two dedicated community police officers (PC John Moore covering Sudbury South and PC Deon Ramdhanie covering Sudbury North and East) as well as three others covering the surrounding villages. All the details were available on the Suffolk Police website.
- The police gazebo on the market days would offer an excellent point of contact for the public to engage with the new community policing team.
- Tackling illegal drug use would always be the top priority as this drove much of the other crime.
- Sudbury was lucky to be one of the few towns with community wardens who were trained to take part in the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS).

Inspector Hollands offered to take questions. The main points raised were;

- The new system was much appreciated, and electors thanked Inspector Hollands for the attendance on market days and the greater public engagement.
- The police were invited to set up their gazebo in the Chaucer and Clemont areas.
- How great was the problem with illegal hare coursing? This was a priority but was challenging due to the large area to be covered.

At the end of the questions there was a spontaneous round of applause for Inspector Hollands.

8. TOWN MATTERS

Sudbury Expansion – Concern was raised over Sudbury expanding with new peripheral developments that were not supported by commensurate increases in provision of public services such as healthcare. The Mayor emphasised that these issues must be considered by the district council when agreeing to planning applications. The Town Council were only a consultee in planning applications.

Speed Limits – Although the traffic flow in Cross Street had improved since the parking rules had changed, cars were still driving far too fast round the dangerous bend by the Mill Hotel. Even 30mph was too fast and the speed limit should be reduced to 20mph on the A131 between Church Street and Plough Lane where the road was very narrow. The Mayor offered to consider this at the Highways Committee.

Fair Trade Status – The renewal of fair trade status for Sudbury had been raised with some town council members. If a member asked for this to be put on an agenda it could be discussed and adopted.

St Peter’s Reopening - The re-opening of St Peter’s Church as the Sudbury Arts Centre after the refurbishment was discussed. It had been hoped that a representative from the group operating St Peter’s would have been able to attend to report back on their work. There was great support for the work but concerns were raised about dropping ‘St Peter’s’ from the name. This had already been discussed by the town council and a letter had been sent to the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT). At the end of the discussion the Mayor asked for a show of hands.

- 31 voted in support of the words ‘St Peter’s’ being included in the new name.
- 1 voted that he was ‘not bothered’ about just ‘Sudbury Arts Centre’.

Market Hill - The plans to pedestrianise Market Hill during the summer months were discussed. These plans had been shown at the public consultation in June 2022 and since then the Town Council had been working closely with the district and county councils to implement an 18-month trial. At the end of the discussion the Mayor asked for a show of hands.

- 20 voted in support of the pedestrianisation plans.
- 4 voted against the pedestrianisation plans.

One resident raised concern about the reduction in the number of parking places, especially those for disabled people. Others emphasised the need for a trial of the new scheme to make Sudbury better. An application had been made to the rural prosperity fund to provide temporary furniture and planters to make Market Hill look more attractive when pedestrianised.

New Ideas for Sudbury – The Mayor emphasised that the town council were always interested in new ideas for improving Sudbury. Residents were welcome to email their proposals to the town clerk at any time.

Redevelopment of Mill Acre – The boating pond had not been in use for a number of years and the town council were developing plans for redeveloping the area for public recreation. The first phase involving replacement of the picnic tables and benches had been completed. The second phase involving redevelopment of the pond had been reconsidered due to recent flooding. New flood proof ideas had been brought forward and these were discussed by the Leisure and Environment Committee on the last Tuesday of each month. Members of the public were welcome to attend and listen to the proposals.

There were no other matters proposed for discussion and the Mayor concluded the meeting.

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Presiding Officer

TOWN REPORT – COUNCILLOR MRS JAN OSBORNE

Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen welcome to the Annual Town Meeting.

Overview of the main events during the year.

- Sudbury should be proud to have won Suffolk Town of the Year Award 2023 (SALC) - principally for our strides for sustainability and community cohesion demonstrated through Covid and the cost-of-living crisis.
- We've doubled the capacity of our rainwater harvesting project, we are now successfully harvesting 19,000 litres of rainwater which is used to water our town floral displays, at our cemetery and allotments.
- In 2023 we trialled our first 'no-mow' areas on the Croft and within closed churchyards we manage at St Gregory's and All Saints to encourage biodiversity and attract wildlife during the summer months. This was well managed by our warden team, ensuring the area was manicured around the no mow zones. We will be implementing this again in summer and recording some of the species we find in these areas.
- We continue to review and update our waste management systems across all our areas of business. We are now recycling and reusing as much as possible at our cemetery and market.
- In partnership with Abbeygate Cinema, we have had two successful visits from The Moving Cinema to Sudbury. The first visit was during Autumn Half Term 2023 - we had over 1,400 people attend, and during February Half Term 2024 and we had over 1,900 visitors with 8 sell out showings. The partnership has proven very successful, and the wheels are now in motion for The Moving Cinema to visit Sudbury at least twice a year during the February and October half term holidays. There is also potential for a third visit during the summer holidays which is currently being explored. Thank you to the 500+ people who have completed our survey, which has been instrumental in capturing data that has supported the project.
- In addition to The Moving Cinema, this year we delivered a successful programme of public events including Green Sundays Eco Markets, Party in the Park, Heritage Open Days and the Dalmatian Creation Trial, a public guided tour programme including a 'Gainsborough's Landscape' tour during Suffolk Walking Festival, Christmas Window Display Competition, and our ever-popular Christmas Light Switch on and Fair.
- Over £47,000 has been distributed to Sudbury based charitable organisations during the year as part of our Annual Grant Aid Programme. Applications for our 2024/25 programme are now open and details can be found at: **sudbury-tc.gov.uk/grant-aid** and the deadline is Friday 28 June.
- During the year, our Cost of Living 'Pick up and Drop off' service has seen 1,365 bags of essential food and toiletries collected, supporting local people in most need at this difficult time for many. Thank you to the many who have supported the initiative, run with passion by Mel Edwards.
- Over the past year we have welcomed 16 new independent businesses to Sudbury, they are: *M Hair & Beauty, Gainsborough Pie & Mash, Debra Boutique, The Angel Shop, Under Your Skin, Direct Pizza, The Courtyard Tap, Two Seven's Deli, Auntie Ree's Cookies, Jilani – Indian Cuisine, Finnegan's Whiskers* – Suffolk's first cat café,

Waterstone's, Dinky Treats, Mughal Express and the very recently opened *Imarri* on Market Hill, *Rewind Records* on Gaol Lane and *Esquire's Organic Coffee House* (opening soon on Market Hill).

We also had some re-openings: Sudbury Arts Centre at St. Peter's, The Post Office (Borehamgate) and Pizza Town on East Street.

- Following a tendering process, we are very pleased to have selected our new floral maintenance contractor The Garden Nursery at Constitution Hill, based just a stone's throw from the Town Hall, the simply stunning winter, spring and summer displays have been carefully planned to be as pollinator friendly and colourful as possible.
- We continue to invest in our town centre CCTV, working closely with partners to identify 'hot spot' locations for cameras.
- We continue to invest in the promotion of Sudbury Market and our traders. We now regularly have between 18 – 25 stallholders on our Thursday and Saturday Markets, and interest from new traders continues to grow. We are grateful for the continued support of Sudbury residents, businesses and visitors for supporting Sudbury Market – it is a vital part of Sudbury's identity and town economy.
- With the support of CIL funding, we have introduced new 100% recycled plastic heritage bins and benches on the Croft and Mill Acre and Sudbury Cemetery
- Sudbury Cemetery is now maintained in house by our dedicated team of Community Wardens. In 2023 we began implementing a number of measures to encourage biodiversity, reduce and reuse waste and improve the overall environment at Sudbury Cemetery.

Measures include:

- The introduction of 1,000 litre IBC tanks to harvest rainwater for general use.
- Installation of Aerobin hot composters for green waste - compost is used in town floral displays.
- Leaves are mulched down and re-employed on town floral displays.
- Felled branches are chipped and used across our town centre floral beds, donated to local school and community gardens and made available to our allotment holders.
- Creation of undisturbed biodiversity areas in parts of the cemetery.
- Installation of new bins made from 100% recycled plastic.
- Replanting of native hedgerows.

We have also seen Belle Vue House sold to be refurbished as two family homes. Unfortunately, this work did not progress and the property has gone back on the market.

We have worked with Babergh District Council on options for the front of Belle View Park and are hoping to make a public announcement in the near future.

We have working in partnership with Babergh District Council on the new toilets in Gaol Lane, which are a great improvement for the town centre.

We are concerned about the increased parking charges in the town centre car parks owned and operated by Babergh District Council. We made representations to the councillors considering these and asked them to listen to the thousands of residents who object.

During my time as Mayor, I have also had great pleasure in attending many town events, such as:

- Welcoming new businesses to the town
- Heritage Open Days in Sudbury
- Re-opening of St Peter's Church as Sudbury Arts Centre
- The Remembrance Day Parade and Service
- Switching on of the Town's Christmas Lights

It is now time for Sudbury to look forward to what we can achieve in the spring and summer of 2024. We wish to work in partnership with the District and County Council for the benefit of the people of Sudbury.

I wish you all well for the year ahead.

Councillor Mrs Jan Osborne

**Annual Report for March 2024 to Sudbury Town Council - From
Jessie Carter (SCC Councillor)**



Date: 13/03/2024

Email: jessie.carter@suffolk.gov.uk

Phone: 07955 434411

Sudbury

Locality Budget

There have been a lot of opportunities over the past year to support different groups and organisations from my locality budget such as: The Christopher Centre, Go Start, The Town Council, CAB, ActivLives, Stour Valley Men's Shed and more. To date I have been able to distribute nearly £12,000

Highways Budget

From my highways budget I have been able to fund TRO waiting restrictions, Unsuitable for HGV signs, Traffic Surveys, SID Posts and more. My most recent commitment was for directional HGV signs through Sudbury to divert lorries and HGV's away from the town centre and inappropriate streets.

Bathing Water Status

In a announcement on February 26, the Environment Agency revealed that the River Stour in Sudbury is now being considered for designation as a bathing water site among 27 new swimming spots in England. Following a period of consultation which concluded on the 10th, the agency will further investigate pollution sources and potential responses involving water companies, farmers, and landowners. If approved, the Environment Agency will conduct weekly water testing in the River Stour near Friars Meadow during the bathing season from mid-May to late September, with results made public to ensure the safety of swimmers. Pollution sources will be identified and addressed accordingly to maintain water quality standards.

Bus Services

There will be an increased number of bus services benefiting Sudbury Residents as well and those that wish to travel to and from Sudbury. All schemes are expected to commence operations between April 2024 and September 2024.

Including:

Duplicated Bus services to avoid overcrowding at peak times, Better connections to Sudbury health centre, the reintroduction of Sunday and Night Busses and more.

Suffolk County Council

Ukraine: One Year Anniversary

A year has passed since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. It was on the 24th March that Councillors cross-party shared a single motion in support of Ukraine. Our Group recommended the motion, condemning the actions of Putin, as well as committed to support and welcome refugees to become a part of Suffolk communities.

The 'Homes for Ukraine' programme continues to provide hosts for refugees, but is in dire need of more households to come forward and offer temporary accommodation. If you think you can still help, please visit: www.suffolk.gov.uk/Ukraine.

Hosts are entitled to £350 per month, which increases to £500 after 12 months.

Carbon Budget – SCC is Not on Track

At the beginning of 2023, the Scrutiny Committee met to discuss the Carbon Budget. This is a document that aims to calculate the amount of carbon SCC emits through its services. More importantly, it shows the Council's progress towards achieving Net Zero by 2030 – a declaration made by SCC in 2019.

This year's carbon budget shows that SCC is not on track to reach Net Zero by 2030. Current forecasts show that SCC will still be producing 10,000 tonnes of CO₂ in 2030 – that's still half of what we are emitting now. In addition, the Council's calculations are not accurate enough to develop the full assessment of carbon impact our services have on the environment.

Report into SEND Provision: Review & Recommendations

Back in 2021, Suffolk County Council commissioned an independent review into its Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision. The report found severe failings in the delivery of Education, Health, and Care (EHC) plans for children, serious issues in communicating with parent/guardians, as well as an inefficient work environment within the service revealing high absenteeism. Recommendations were given, in which SCC have worked to implement them.

Priorities moving forward continue to be the timeliness of EHC plans, the number of school exclusions, availability of provision, and the ongoing rise in demand for SEND services.

Suffolk Devolution: Big Deal?

In 2022, the Government published its White Paper on Levelling-Up, within which it has agreed that Suffolk will be one of nine initial 'County Deals' up for negotiation to devolve powers. In December 2022, government met with SCC to sign an initial county deal. A public consultation will now follow, asking residents if this is what communities want.

My Group have questioned whether this is the 'big win' that the Conservatives are portraying this as. £16m a year to deliver 'long-term' transformation is less than what the Conservatives have cut from the council's annual budget over the decades. Other agreements include:

- £5.8m for housing on brownfield sites
- Devolved Adult Education budget (amount undisclosed)
- Transport settlement starting in 24/25 (amount undisclosed)
- £3m to improve energy efficiency in houses

In addition, the deal will look to install a directly elected leader, commonly known as a Mayor – when the Conservatives have said that this wouldn't be the case. Politically, there is a real risk of a stalemate in politics. Not enough information has been given to show how to prevent a gridlock if a Mayor from a minority party is elected.

Overall, I will always welcome devolving more power to local authorities. However, this deal is being wrongfully lauded as the all-encompassing answer, when currently it is not. The public will now need to decide whether this is something they want.

Council Budget for 2024-25

At Council on 15 February 2024, Suffolk Councillors met to discuss and vote on the administration's budget proposals. The council is borrowing heavily from its reserves to meet the growing demand for social care for adults and children, and council tax is due to rise by £74 annually for Band D properties from April this year. There will also be cuts to Family Hubs (children's centres) and Housing Related Support, which supports vulnerable people like care leavers to find accommodation. Funding for arts and museums will be maintained for 2024-25 but not from SCC core funding, and subject to a bidding process for grants from April 2025. The Bury St Edmunds local archives will be moved to The Hold in Ipswich, which like the arts funding cuts has been controversial locally.

Babergh District Councillor's Report for Sudbury Annual Town Meeting 2024

Compiled by Cllr Tim Regester

- In May 2023 a full election of Babergh District Council elected a new council of 10 Green Councillors, 9 Independents, 7 Conservatives, 5 Liberal Democrats and one Labour councillor.

The Greens, Independents and Liberal Democrats formed a coalition administration.

Since then Babergh District Council has:

- Invested £1.6m to accelerate repairs to Council Housing in Babergh.
- Refurbished Gaol Lane toilets
- Replaced squash courts surface at Sudbury Sports Centre from locality budgets.
- Started work on replacing toilets in Belle Vue Park with new cafe/toilet block with changing places facility.
- Sold Belle Vue House to a developer, who then, annoyingly put it on the market at much higher price than they paid.
- Agreed a budget for 2024/25 though the finances are not good and the outlook gloomy.
- Agreed a second homes and empty homes policy to charge a lot more council tax for these properties
- Converted our refuse lorries to run on hydrogenated vegetable oil rather than diesel thus reducing carbon emissions and demand for fossil fuels.
- Installed EV charging points in three Sudbury car parks (funded by UK Government)
- Installed Solar panels over car parking spaces on Kingfisher car park to power Kingfisher Leisure centre and EV Charging (funded by UK Government)
- Installed the worlds first warm water recycling system for Kingfisher swimming pool saving 16 Tonnes of Carbon equivalent per year and reducing both energy and water bills. (funded by Sports England)
- Agreed a 5 year homelessness policy and procedures.
- Babergh with Mid-Suffolk Council won Council of the year at the 2024 iESE Public Sector Transformation Awards.

Discussions are still ongoing on the controversial subject of whether Babergh should charge for short term (under 3 hour parking) in Babergh Car parks, a move that Sudbury Councillors are opposed to.

Sudbury Municipal Charities Report

SUDBURY MUNICIPAL CHARITIES INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2023									
Date		INCOME	Total	SCLC	M&G	Misc.			
17-Jan		Sudbury Common Lands Charity	4,000.00	4,000.00					
28-Feb		M&G Investment Funds	336.14		336.14				
11-May	100002	RAFA Donation	1,000.00			1,000.00			
31-May		M&G Investment Funds	620.57		620.57				
31-Aug		M&G Investment Funds	544.20		544.20				
15-Dec		M&G Investment Funds	743.30		743.30				
			7,244.21	4,000.00	2,244.21	1,000.00			
Date	Chq/Bacs	EXPENDITURE	Total	Christmas Day Gifts	Grants to Organisation	Ascension Day Gifts	ADMINISTRATION Clerk Fee Moore Greer Misc.		
26-Jan	101108	Roys of Wroxham	525.00	525.00					
14-Feb	Bacs	Roys of Wroxham	70.00	70.00					
14-Feb	Bacs	Roys of Wroxham	140.00	140.00					
09-Mar	Bacs	Roys of Wroxham	245.00	245.00					
09-Mar	Bacs	Sudbury Common Lands Charity	500.00				500.00		
23-Mar	Bacs	Roys of Wroxham	105.00	105.00					
23-Mar	Bacs	Peddars	105.00	105.00					
13-Apr	Bacs	Moore Green	360.00					360.00	
16-May	Bacs	S. Town Council Room Hire	20.00			20.00			
02-Jun	101109	Roys of Wroxham	70.00			70.00			
02-Jun	101111	M&G Charifund Investment	1,000.00						1,000.00
15-Jun	101110	Roys of Wroxham	455.00			455.00			
06-Jul	Bacs	Roys of Wroxham	70.00			70.00			
20-Jul	Bacs	Roys of Wroxham	70.00			70.00			
03-Aug	Bacs	Roys of Wroxham	105.00			105.00			
09-Nov	Bacs	Grant: S. Community Depot	200.00		200.00				
09-Nov	Bacs	Grant: The Christopher Open H.	200.00		200.00				
09-Nov	Bacs	Grant: The Christopher Centre	200.00		200.00				
09-Nov	Bacs	Grant: New Life Church (Abis F.)	200.00		200.00				
09-Nov	Bacs	Grant: S&D Citizens Advice	1,000.00		1,000.00				
09-Nov	Bacs	Grant: Kernos Centre	1,000.00		1,000.00				
			6,640.00	1,190.00	2,800.00	790.00	500.00	360.00	1,000.00
Date	Chq/Bacs	EXPENDITURE	Total	Christmas Day Gifts	Grants to Organisation	Ascension Day Gifts	ADMINISTRATION Clerk Fee Moore Greer Misc.		
			6,640.00	1,190.00	2,800.00	790.00	500.00	360.00	1,000.00
13-Nov	101112	Grant: Mrs Bennett (Pats Dayz Owt	200.00		200.00				
			6,840.00	1,190.00	3,000.00	790.00	500.00	360.00	1,000.00
		Opening Balance 1/1/2023	1,726.05						
		Add Income 2023	7,244.21						
			8,970.26						
		Deduct Expenditure 2023	6,840.00						
		Closing Balance 31/12/2023	2,130.26						