

SUDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE TOWN HALL ON TUESDAY 25TH MARCH 2025 AT 6.30PM

Committee members present: Mr S Hall – Chair
Mr J Jeagar (from 6:35pm)
Mrs J Osborne
Mr T Regester
Mr A Welsh

Officers in attendance: Mr C Griffin – Town Clerk
Mrs D Deeks – Administration Manager

1. SUBSTITUTES AND APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor A Owen.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor Mr T Regester declared that he was also a Babergh District Councillor.

3. DECLARATION OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

There were no declarations of gifts or hospitality.

4. REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

No requests for dispensations had been received.

5. MINUTES

A member proposed a change to the minutes, but this was not seconded.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Leisure and Environment Committee meeting held on the 25th February 2025 be confirmed and signed as an accurate record.

6. ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Town Clerk updated the committee on the actions from previous meetings.

- The Sudbury Common Lands Charity had responded to the letter sent as resolved under item 12 at the previous meeting. The Sudbury Common Lands Charity confirmed that were the owners of the west bank of the Mill Stream. They did not think that this had

been disputed by them, rather, the issue was about what works were appropriate to maintain the Mill Stream and at what times of the years these should take place. There was a balance between the competing needs of birds, animals and plants for an undisturbed environment against clearing the channel to help the water flow through. There was no simple answer to this, and both sides were advised to consult government advice provided by the Environment Agency before carrying out any work. The Town Clerk would respond to thank the Sudbury Common Lands Charity for their answer and pass the details on to the residents of Cross Street who had brought this up.

- Members noted that Gainsborough's statue now looked the best it had done for many years after being cleaned and the work to clear the bamboo from the Croft had been completed. A member believed that there was Japanese knotweed on a patch of land owned by the town council near Woodhall Business Park and would pass the details to the Town Clerk.

RESOLVED

To note the Town Clerk's report.

7. TO AUTHORISE THE EXPENDITURE OF UP TO £1,914.70 EXCLUDING VAT FOR THE ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT FOR THE TOWN HALL LIFT

The Town Clerk explained that a maintenance contract was needed to ensure that the Town Hall lift was kept in good condition. This would cover the cost of routine servicing but not repairs and breakages, for which there would be an extra charge.

RESOLVED

That, under the power of the Local Government Act 1972, s133, members authorised the expenditure of £1,914.70 excluding VAT for the annual maintenance contract for the Town Hall lift.

8. TO AUTHORISE THE EXPENDITURE OF UP TO £500 FOR A PICNIC LUNCH ON THE CROFT AREA ON THE BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY BEFORE VE DAY (5TH MAY 2025)

The Chair explained that the Royal British Legion were holding a short outdoor service at the war memorial by St Gregory's Church to commemorate the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day on Thursday 8th May. This would be from 7:30 to 8:00pm and the Mayor had been invited to attend. This would be open to the public and other councillors could also attend.

The Chair had seen that the Pageant Master was encouraging local communities across the country to hold events to commemorate VE Day 80. He proposed holding an event in Sudbury, such as a picnic on the Croft, but this was not seconded.

9. TO CONSIDER A LETTER FROM SUDBURY CHORAL SOCIETY

Members agreed to discuss the letter from the Choral Society together with the update on Sudbury Arts Centre under item 15 at the end of the meeting.

10. TO AUTHORISE THE EXPENDITURE OF UP TO £5,000 FOR PARTY IN THE PARK 2025, INCLUDING WORKSHOPS AND ENTERTAINMENT

The Town Clerk explained that the town council staff had worked with Babergh District Council officers to ensure that the Party in the Park could take place in Belle Vue Park on Sunday 20 July 2025. Initial income and expenditure estimates had been produced based on a family friendly event with workshops, rides and entertainment to encourage physical activity, for a range of ages, with a focus on younger children. Members were keen that local sports clubs were invited to book stands at Party in the Park to promote their activities. Although the net cost was expected to be within the budgeted figure of £3,069, the gross expenditure was likely to be over £5,000 and so would need authorisation from the full council.

RESOLVED

To recommend that the full council authorise expenditure of up to £5,200 for the Party in the Park 2025, noting that the net cost is estimated to be about £3,000.

11. TO AUTHORISE THE EXPENDITURE OF £1,005 FOR 3 STAFF TO ATTEND A HIGHWAYS OPERATIONS TRAINING COURSE

The Town Clerk explained that the streetworks qualifications necessary for staff to close public roads for markets only lasted 5 years. Two members of staff needed to requalify and a new member of staff needed to do initial training. These 3 staff had been booked to attend a course in June at a total cost of £1,005.

RESOLVED

That, under the power of the Local Government Act 1972, s. 111, members agreed to approve expenditure of £1,005 for 3 staff to attend a highways operations training course.

12. TO APPROVE THE FREE USE OF THE ASSEMBLY ROOM FOR THE SUDBURY MUSEUM TRUST TO GIVE SCHOOL TALKS

The Town Clerk explained that the policy on the free use of the Assembly Room did not give him discretion to approve bookings where there was time for the committee to consider the request. The Sudbury Museum Trust had received a request from Tudor Primary School to visit the Heritage Centre for talks on Sudbury during World War II as part of an ongoing project. The Trust had asked to book the Assembly Room on Tuesday 29th April from about 10.30am to 3.00pm to allow two classes to attend. The Town Clerk said that he had made a provisional booking and recommended granting free use.

RESOLVED

To approve the free use of the Assembly Room for the Sudbury Museum Trust to give school talks on 29th April 2025.

13. TO APPROVE FREE LOAN OF EQUIPMENT FOR THE BALLINGDON FETE

The Town Clerk explained that the organiser of the Ballingdon Fete had asked for free use of crowd barriers and staging for this year's fete on 7th September. The equipment would be collected on 6th September and returned on 8th September. The Town Clerk had checked the details with the Ballingdon Fete organiser and recommended that members approve the loan.

RESOLVED

To approve the free loan of equipment for the Ballingdon Fete on 7th September 2025

14. TO APPOINT COUNCILLOR J JEAGAR TO THE VACANT POSITION ON THE MILL ACRE WORKING GROUP

Cllr Mr J Jeagar had volunteered to fill the vacant position on the Mill Acre working group.

The Chair stated that he would contact all the members of the Mill Acre working group to identify a suitable date for their next meeting, which would be supported by the new Operations Officer.

RESOLVED

To appoint Cllr J Jeagar to the vacant position on the Mill Acre working group.

15. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE SUDBURY ARTS CENTRE IN ST PETER'S.

The Chair read out the message below that had been posted on social media by the management team at the Sudbury Arts Centre.

With the sad news that The Bridge Project is closing and will cease trading on 29th March, we understand that this will be unsettling for some. Our first thoughts are with the students, service users and our colleagues at The Bridge, who are coming to terms with this news.

The Arts Centre team are working in close partnership with the owners of our venue, the Churches Conservation Trust, to ensure that any disruption at Sudbury Arts Centre is kept to a minimum. We are collectively working with the aim of keeping the centre open and adopting a 'business as usual' approach, with the existing team retained in order for us to continue to grow the site for the community and visitors to the town. We will be in contact with stakeholders and customers as soon as possible with what we hope will be a positive update.

In the meantime, we are open as usual and events and activities are still taking place so please do continue to visit.

As a team, with our amazing volunteers, we've worked tirelessly to bring St Peters to life. We've expanded the programme, working with industry professionals to bring acts from around the world for you to enjoy. We've supported many local community organisations with free or low cost use of the space. We've built great partnerships and have worked with arts practitioners and organisations, and the Town/District Council on some wonderful collaborative events such as the SPARK projection project, a large scale orchestral project, and inaugural Street Food Fest last year. Crucially, we work with sometimes vulnerable children and adults on projects that the

public may not be aware of, including sound&music workshops, work experience and supported opportunities to take pride in delivering their very own events. Students from The Bridge have been helping to look after the churchyard, have enjoyed being in the space as they and their tutors have listened to stories, or have learned history and made art. Some are familiar faces helping out in the cafe or greeting some of the 60,000+ people that have visited us. One way or another, we want to continue what we've started. Thank you for your support.

The Chair also informed members that he had spoken to a member of the Sudbury Arts Centre management team, who had relayed the following information.

'That with regards to employment arrangements, the Sudbury Arts Centre staff and CCT are in close collaboration to ensure continuity of the Arts Centre'.

'Noting that all equipment that allow the Arts Centre to function inside St Peter's is owned by the CCT with the exception of some minor non-essential items'.

Members agreed that they should focus their support on keeping the Sudbury Arts Centre open, but that at the moment, they must leave the management team and the CCT to explore the options.

Members noted the concerns raised by the Sudbury Choral Society and were keen that local cultural and arts groups continued to use the Sudbury Arts Centre in St Peter's as they had done for many years. There was a need for a sensible balance between hosting sufficient profitable events to ensure that Sudbury Arts Centre did not make an operating loss and providing a low-cost venue for local cultural and arts groups.

Members were particularly keen to support visits by cultural group from Sudbury's twin towns and were interested in whether there was an alternative venue for a joint concert with Fredensborg in September 2025.

RESOLVED

To support the efforts by the management team at the Sudbury Arts Centre to transition to a sustainable new business model with the owners of St Peter's, the Churches Conservation Trust, that would provide continuity for events.

To be ready to engage in a constructive discussion with the management team at the Sudbury Arts Centre on the balance of bookings required to sustain a viable business model and to deliver local cultural events.

To engage with the Sudbury Choral Society to see if alternative venues were available and suitable for a joint concert with Fredensborg.

The meeting concluded at 7:43 pm.

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Chairman