

**ASSET & SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
**SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN COUNCIL**

MINUTES of the ASSETS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING in the Town Hall, Saffron Walden.

Date of meeting: Monday 24 June 2024 at 7.30pm

**Present:** Councillors Asker, Ahmed (from minute reference A&S 070-24), Curtis, Hawke-Smith (Chair), McLellan and Porch.  
Councillor Abercrombie was in attendance as the working group chair for agenda item 7.

**Officers:** Lisa Courtney, Town Clerk; Terry Frostick, Operations Manager and Georgia Arnold, Deputy Town Clerk.

**Public:** x5 residents of Tudor Park regarding Min Ref A & S 070-24 & 071-24

A & S 067-24	<p><b>Apologies for absence</b></p> <p>Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Eke, Freeman and Jones.</p>
A & S 068-24	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>Cllr Asker declared a non-pecuniary interest as District Councillor for Uttlesford District Council</p>
A & S 069-24	<p><b>Minutes of the last meeting of the Assets &amp; Services Committee 28.05.2024</b></p> <p>The minutes of the 28.05.2024 Assets &amp; Services Committee meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.</p>
A & S 070-24	<p><b>Public Speaking Time</b></p> <p>Five residents spoke further to agenda item 5 (below) regarding the Tudor Park re-wilding proposals, raising the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The residents are not against re-wilding as a concept however it is inappropriate in the proposed location at Tudor Park (surrounding the play area). The area is used as a leisure space</li> <li>b. The long grass makes the play area inaccessible to residents and becomes dangerous for young children and dogs to walk through.</li> <li>c. The benefits from the proposed rewilding scheme do not outweigh the impact on the neighbouring residents and users of the space.</li> <li>d. Residents welcomed the consultation but noted it was not received by all of the properties.</li> <li>e. Residents maintain their gardens well with an array of plants and flowers supporting biodiversity.</li> <li>f. Queries around whether the proposal is a cost saving exercise, to cut let grass.</li> </ul> <p>Cllr Ahmed arrived.</p>

	<p>Committee thanked the residents for their comments and responded explaining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The rewilding proposal was never a cost saving exercise, with the benefit of experience, the Council has found rewilding is more resource intensive and No Mow May requires additional resourcing to cut the longer grass.</li> <li>ii. The proposal was first considered in 2023 as a Tudor Park resident approached SWTC, explaining they had conducted a consultation with residents who would like to see the space rewild.</li> </ul>
<p>A &amp; S 071-24</p>	<p><b>Tudor Park Rewilding</b></p> <p>Committee considered the written report regarding the future grass cutting regime at Tudor Park and that the Working Group recommend continuance of the rewilding project at Tudor Park. The Committee noted this recommendation was in contrast to the objections and concerns raised by local residents.</p> <p><b>It was resolved:</b> Not to pursue re-wilding at the Tudor Park play area and to retain the grass cutting regime at the site.</p> <p>Residents thanked committee for their time and consideration of their concerns and they left the meeting.</p>
<p>A &amp; S 072-24</p>	<p><b>Strategic Public Open Space S106 Monies</b></p> <p>Committee considered the written report, detailing potential project plans for the S106 monies from the Linden Homes development. It was noted the money cannot currently be spent because the S106 specifies it must be spent on land, which is outside of SWTC's control; noted this was an historic S106 agreement dating back to approximately 2014. The developer is minded to allow the money to be spent elsewhere but wishes to see a project proposal from SWTC prior to authorising a change in the use of monies.</p> <p>In considering the S106 report, Committee deferred a decision pending conversation on agenda item 7, Splash Park.</p>
<p>A &amp; S 073-24</p>	<p><b>Splash Park</b></p> <p>The Splash Park Working Group Chair, Cllr Abercrombie attended the meeting, explaining the working group is recommending SWTC pursues with installation of a splash park.</p> <p>Committee noted the written report, noting and considering the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The Strategic Public Open Space S106 monies could be utilised for the project, subject to an approved project plan from the developer (as noted above).</li> <li>b. The Working Group proposes installation of a once used system neighbouring the skate park on Thaxted Road, utilising existing utility connections.</li> </ul>

	<p>c. The proposed location (neighbouring the skate park) is leased by SWTC from UDC and specific permission would need to be gained from UDC to install the splash park. It was further noted that an extension to the lease should be sought, and/or a request to UDC for the freehold transfer of the land</p> <p>d. Concessions and toilets will be required on site.</p> <p>e. The A&amp;S Committee recommendation will be presented to July Full Council for consideration, if Council determines to progress with the splash park (and subject to the developer agreeing to the proposals), future budgets must include specific monies for the general upkeep and maintenance of the splash park, including contributions towards ear-marked reserves to replace the splash park at the end of its shelf-life.</p> <p>f. It is currently uncertain whether a splash park requires planning permission or whether it is deemed permitted development.</p> <p>g. Committee preferred a simple style park, rather than lots of additional features which could be vandalised.</p> <p>h. Queries were raised regarding parking for the splash park and that discussions should take place with UDC regarding use of the leisure centre car park</p> <p><b>It was unanimously resolved to recommend to July Full Council:</b></p> <p>a. To install a splash park in Saffron Walden, noting the current proposed location is neighbouring the skate park (subject to receipt of the S106 monies and approval from UDC as the current landowner).</p> <p>b. To prepare a project plan, seeking approval from the developer to use the strategic S106 monies to fund the splash park project (as considered in Min Ref A &amp; S 073-24).</p>
<p>A &amp; S 074-24</p>	<p><b>Internal Glass Panel/door in the Town Hall</b></p> <p>Committee considered whether to pursue with installation of a glass panel door in the Town Hall, noting:</p> <p>a. Whilst hirers are using the committee room and/or council chamber, the back door typically remains open. Installation of a glass door would support safety of the building and retain heat for the upper floors of the Town Hall.</p> <p>b. Listed Building Consent (LBC) could be applied for at no cost to SWTC (at this stage) and this would help inform any future style or design of the internal panel and door. Assuming LBC is received, further project plans and designs would be presented to a future A &amp; S Committee meeting, including a costed project plan .</p> <p><b>It was resolved:</b> To authorise Officers to progress with listed building consent, on the basis that this will not incur any direct costs save for staffing time in submitting the application.</p>

<p>A &amp; S 075-24</p>	<p><b>Blue Plaque</b></p> <p>Committee considered whether SWTC should progress with seeking installation of a blue plaque to mark the Rose and Crown fire. Committee noted the considerable administrative task in applying for a blue plaque, requiring permission from English Heritage. Officers explained that other groups have tried (and failed) in endeavours to install blue plaques given the bureaucratic application process. Officers noted the work could form part of a future commitment and should therefore be included in the Council's core priorities.</p> <p>In considering the above and the anticipated time and bureaucracy in the English Heritage process, Committee considered installation of a commemorative plaque rather than a blue plaque. It was further noted that blue plaques were more commonly associated with commemorating a person.</p> <p><b>It was resolved:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. To pursue the installation of a commemorative plaque on the Rose and Crown building. Cllr Curtis offered to work with officers in researching a commemorative style plaque for installation in the archway of Rose and Crown Walk.</li> <li>b. To write to the owners seeking consent for installation of a plaque.</li> <li>c. To present findings at a future committee meeting for review.</li> </ol>
<p>A &amp; S 076--24</p>	<p><b>Urgent Information Items</b></p> <p>Cllr Asker noted the huge success of the Fete de la Musique event which had been hosted and organised by SW Arts Trust on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June; it had been a very well attended and popular event. Cllr Asker noted the public toilets had not remained open towards the end of the evening, causing some distress to the public.</p> <p>The Operations Manager advised there were a couple of options available to event organisers, being:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. They could bring in portable toilets</li> <li>2. They could directly employ the Council's cleaning contractor (who also locks the toilet each evening) to leave the toilets open on event evenings.</li> </ol> <p>These options were noted with a note that 3<sup>rd</sup> party event organisers could be reminded of the need to make arrangements for toilet facilities if the event is outside of the operating hours for the public toilets in Hill Street.</p>
<p>A &amp; S 077-24</p>	<p><b>Date and time of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>Noted and agreed as being 22 July 2024 at 7.30pm in the Town Hall Saffron Walden</p>

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9pm