

# THE MARKET HALL

England & Wales · Charity number 235072

## Details

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Other names	SAXMUNDHAM MARKET HALL
Status	Registered
Legal form	Other
Registered	1964-07-21
Register	<a href="#">View on the Charity Commission register</a>

## Contact

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Address	The Town House Station Approach Saxmundham Suffolk IP17 1BW
Phone	01728604595
Email	<a href="mailto:townclerk@saxmundham.org">townclerk@saxmundham.org</a>
Website	<a href="http://saxmarkethall.co.uk/">http://saxmarkethall.co.uk/</a>

## Activities

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**Objects:** A MARKET HALL TO BE USED FOR SUCH USEFUL OR BENEVOLENT PURPOSES IN CONNECTION WITH THE TOWN OR DISTRICT OF SAXMUNDHAM AS THE TRUSTEES SANCTION INCLUDING THE USER THEREOF AS A COURT HOUSE FOR MAGISTRATES MEETINGS AND THE COUNTY COUNCIL.

**Activities:** Provision of Market Hall with kitchen facilities

## Classification

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- **How:** Provides Buildings/facilities/open Space
- **What:** Arts/culture/heritage/science, Amateur Sport
- **Who:** The General Public/mankind

## Geography

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- **Area of benefit:** SAXMUNDHAM AND DISTRICT
- Suffolk

## Finances

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Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£28,012	£24,386	-	-
2024-03-31	£29,430	£32,907	-	-
2023-03-31	£23,998	£23,778	-	-
2022-03-31	£41,397	£35,007	-	-
2021-03-31	£46,472	£43,649	-	-

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## Trustees

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Name	Role	Appointed
SAXMUNDHAM TOWN COUNCIL		

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**THE MARKET HALL**

England & Wales - Charity number 235072

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# Accounts

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# Saxmundham Town Council



## Annual Report 2024-2025

# Chair's Report

## Introduction

I am pleased to present the Annual Report for 2024–2025, summarising our achievements over the past year and setting out our strategic direction for the years ahead.

This year has seen the Town Council step up its leadership role - strengthening partnerships, responding to major infrastructure proposals, and investing in long-term community wellbeing.



We have worked hard to ensure residents' voices are heard and local priorities guide our decisions, so Saxmundham continues to grow as a resilient, inclusive and forward-looking town.

## Community Engagement

Strengthening community engagement has been at the heart of our work this year. We are committed to creating opportunities for residents to share views, shape decisions, and help guide Saxmundham's future. Regular Council meetings, targeted community surveys, and consultation events have enabled residents to raise concerns and contribute ideas.

Our support for cultural programmes and local festivals has strengthened community identity and pride, bringing people together and celebrating Saxmundham's distinct character.

Continued financial support for a range of community organisations has helped sustain essential activities across the town. Volunteer-led initiatives - including the Green Team, BlueSpaces~Saxmundham, IP17 GNS, the Community Fridge, the Saxmundham Judo Club and other local groups - have made an important contribution to environmental stewardship and community wellbeing.

## Energy Infrastructure Projects

Saxmundham remains a focal point for nationally significant energy infrastructure proposals. While these projects contribute to national sustainability goals, they raise serious local concerns about their impact on landscapes, the environment, and community wellbeing and identity.

The Town Council strongly opposes the siting of converter stations on the edge of Saxmundham, and our responses to the energy project developers have consistently reflected this position. At the same time, we are taking a pragmatic and constructive approach. Through our Empowering Nature initiative, we continue to advocate for proposals that, if consented, enhance rather than diminish local character and biodiversity. We believe infrastructure projects should contribute positively to nature recovery and deliver genuine community benefits.

## **South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood**

The Garden Neighbourhood, allocated in the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, will deliver around 800 new homes and an employment area west of the A12. A separate proposal for a new service area is also under consideration.

Key challenges include ensuring the new neighbourhood integrates seamlessly with the existing community and infrastructure, securing adequate provision for education, healthcare, and recreation, and promoting sustainability through green space, active travel, energy efficiency, and high-quality design. We have actively engaged with the site promoter, Pigeon, to influence the emerging masterplan. Our aim is to ensure the development delivers meaningful, long-lasting benefits for both current and future residents, while protecting and enhancing the character of our town.

## **Strategic Priorities 2025–2030**

The next five years will be pivotal as we manage population growth, evolving infrastructure needs, and a changing local government landscape. Our Strategic Plan 2025–2030 sets out a clear vision to meet these challenges and deliver tangible outcomes. Key priorities include:

- **Town Centre Regeneration:** revitalising the High Street and town centre, supporting local businesses, improving accessibility, and enhancing public spaces to encourage community use and economic vitality.
- **Population Growth and Community Development:** managing a projected 40% population increase linked to the Garden Neighbourhood, expanding essential services, and strengthening social cohesion through inclusive community initiatives.
- **Energy Projects and Environmental Sustainability:** promoting responsible onshore infrastructure, safeguarding landscapes and habitats, and investing in environmental projects that build climate resilience and support biodiversity.
- **Local Government Reorganisation:** preparing for the move to a new unitary authority, ensuring continuity of services, protecting local democratic representation, and building strong partnerships to advocate for Saxmundham's interests.

## **Conclusion**

I would like to thank all our Councillors, our Town Clerk and Officers, the volunteers and community organisations, and above all, our residents for their shared commitment to Saxmundham. Through continued collaboration, shared ambition, and a strong sense of community spirit, I am confident that Saxmundham will rise to future challenges and continue to thrive as a progressive and welcoming town.


**Cllr John Findlay**

**Chair - Saxmundham Town Council**

# The Three Tiers of Local Government

Local government in Suffolk is organised in three tiers - county, district/borough, and town/parish. Each is a democratically elected body with its own budget and legal powers. The County Council sets direction across the wider area; the District Council focuses on the locality; and the Town and Parish Councils are the most local, working closest to residents. They collaborate so services align, and responsibilities can be devolved by agreement. The infographic below summarises how responsibilities are shared across Suffolk County Council, East Suffolk Council, and the Town Council.


**1**



**Responsible for:**

- Benches and street furniture
- Chantry Road and Seaman Avenue play parks
- Delivery of civic events and community activities
- Christmas lights and celebration flags
- Community grants
- Implementing the Strategic Plan
- The Market Hall and Gannon Rooms
- The Memorial Field
- Markets
- Purchasing and siting litter and dog waste bins
- Tree maintenance
- Saxmundham Green Team
- Memorial Field Orchard
- The Wildlife Walk
- Town walking trails
- Local planning consultee
- Hanging baskets and planters
- Neighbourhood Plan
- Advocating for Saxmundham with principal authorities
- Monitoring and responding to NSIPs
- Supporting local voluntary groups and environment initiatives

**2**



**Responsible for:**

- Planning and building control
- Licensing
- Council tax and benefits administration
- Business rates
- Environmental health
- Domestic waste and recycling collection
- Street care and cleansing
- Sports and leisure facilities
- Housing and homelessness support
- Nuisance and abandoned vehicles
- Tree maintenance
- Tourism and the visitor economy
- Tree and hedge management
- Parking enforcement
- Footpath maintenance
- Local Planning
- Monitoring and responding to NSIPs
- Dog warden
- Fly-tipping
- Thurlow Close play park
- Fromus Green and play park

**3**



**Responsible for:**

- Highways maintenance
- Social services
- Public transport
- Education and school transport
- Blue badge scheme
- Recycling centres
- Trading standards
- Registration of births, marriages and deaths
- Libraries
- Fire and rescue services
- Bus passes
- Countryside conservation and public access
- Leisure and culture
- Emergency planning
- Public rights of way maintenance
- Inclusive growth
- Road safety
- Support for arts and museums
- Archives
- Monitoring and responding to NSIPs
- Adult education
- Youth clubs
- Higher education grants
- Mental health support

# Local Government Reorganisation

Suffolk has been fast-tracked by government to move from the current two principal authority system. The current district, borough and county councils will be abolished and a new single unitary authority will be created, alongside a new Norfolk and Suffolk Mayoral Combined County Authority.

## Competing Unitary Models

### One Suffolk

Suffolk County Council's model abolishes districts to create a single county-wide authority, simplifying accountability and integrating county/district services. Promises the largest, quickest efficiencies, with locality arrangements and partnership with town/parish councils to keep decisions close to communities.



### Three Councils for Suffolk

The District and Borough Councils' model creates three unitary authorities centred on Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich and Lowestoft. Emphasises community identity and responsiveness, aligning with travel-to-work areas. Seeks efficiencies through shared services while retaining strong local leadership and engagement.



Let's shape the future of  
Suffolk together



## Local Implications

Town and parish councils are not part of the reorganisation but are identified as key stakeholders. Under either unitary model, there may be opportunities to devolve local assets and services by agreement, alongside clearer routes to influence strategy through the new mayoral structure. Continued liaison will be essential so that local voice and place-based delivery are protected and strengthened.

The Town Council is monitoring both options to safeguard local voice, service quality and access; engaging with the principal authorities and the Suffolk Association of Local Councils during the proposal and consultation stages; and preparing a shortlist of assets/services suitable for local management, to enable the Town Council to act swiftly if devolution opportunities arise.

## Timeline

Government has confirmed a Norfolk and Suffolk Mayoral Combined County Authority with a May 2026 mayoral election, and has postponed the May 2025 county elections to May 2026. Suffolk councils must submit their final unitary business cases to the government by 26 September 2025.

# Culture and Community

## Town Council Events and Community Engagement

The Town Council delivers its own varied programme of events throughout the year, as well as supporting and participating in events led by others through grants, practical support, collaboration, and venue provision.

The Town Council is responsible for organising Saxmundham's popular Christmas Fayre. This is a major highlight of the town calendar, transforming the town centre for festive celebrations which support the local community, boost footfall, and showcase the town to crowds of visitors. The 2024 Christmas Fayre was subject to last-minute changes due to adverse weather, with the outdoor programme curtailed. Despite this, the Market Hall became the heart of the festivities, hosting stalls and performances, while the Fromus Centre became a community hub, with live music and children's activities on offer. The event highlighted the resilience and adaptability of all involved, ensuring the community could still come together to celebrate the festive season.

## Arts and Creative Identity

Saxmundham has a lively creative spirit and is home to artists, writers, photographers, and musicians. At its centre is The Art Station which hosts exhibitions, studios, workshops, and offers community projects such as photography groups, walks, and free family cooking sessions, making creativity part of everyday life. In June 2024, the Art Station, with support from the Town Council hosted Sax Arts Fest, a free community arts festival providing opportunities for residents and visitors to engage with a wide range of cultural activities.

Music and performance are also a big part of life in Saxmundham. The Market Hall regularly hosts Britten Pears Arts "Participate" sessions, relaxed music-making gatherings that bring people together over song, stories and a slice of cake. Meanwhile, Saxmundham Library is more than just a place for books – it runs writing groups, book clubs, craft sessions, and offers regular literary talks.

In August 2024, the Saxmundham Community Music Festival (Sax Fest) brought two days of free live music to the Memorial Field. The festival created opportunities for all ages to enjoy performances, participate in creative activities, and connect with local groups, while also supporting the town centre by drawing in visitors and increasing footfall. Beloved by residents of all ages, the festival fosters a friendly, relaxed atmosphere where people can dance, enjoy live music, and catch up with friends.

Together, these activities create a cultural scene that feels friendly, welcoming, and rooted in the town's identity – where arts and heritage sit alongside wellbeing, learning, and a genuine sense of community. Alongside these cultural activities, Saxmundham is supported by community groups and facilities that provide vital services and enhance wellbeing.

## **Saxmundham Judo Club**

Alongside their regular lessons at the Market Hall, Saxmundham Judo Club continues to contribute to community wellbeing. In partnership with the charity Legend on the Bench, the club installed a suicide-prevention bench on Memorial Field. They also spearheaded the installation of a publicly accessible defibrillator in the town centre. Additional initiatives, including a veterans' breakfast, highlight the club's commitment to supporting health, resilience, and community spirit.

## **Community Fridge**

Sax Community Fridge collects surplus food, which would otherwise go to waste, from local shops and growers and makes them freely available to anyone in the community. To date, the project has prevented nearly 12 tonnes of food from being discarded and served around 1,500 visitors. In addition to being a food-waste project, the twice-weekly sessions are open to all for coffee and conversation, helping to tackle loneliness and foster community bonds.

## **IP17 Good Neighbours Scheme**

IP17GNS has continued to provide vital support to Saxmundham and nearby villages through its network of volunteers providing a broad range of services for people facing financial instability, isolation or wellbeing challenges. The charity organises regular social and wellbeing activities - from dancing, baby and toddler groups, games, quiz nights and a warm hub in winter. Alongside this, volunteers have delivered initiatives such as Christmas meals for isolated residents, a family pantomime, and children's craft sessions.

## **Community Orchard**

Saxmundham's Community Orchard, which can be found on the Memorial Field, is a welcoming green space where residents are encouraged to pick and enjoy fresh, seasonal fruit free of charge. With 56 trees including quince, apple, pear, plum, and medlar, the orchard offers a simple way for the community to access fresh, locally grown produce. The trees are cared for by the Saxmundham Green Team, a volunteer group led by the Town Council, helping to support biodiversity and community wellbeing.

## **Children and Young People**

The CYDS Youth Booth on the Memorial Field provides a safe, welcoming space for young people to access support, guidance, and a range of engaging activities. Open and free to all, it offers opportunities to get involved in arts, crafts, music, and social projects, while giving young people a voice in shaping local youth initiatives. Saxmundham is home to a strong network of Scouts, Cubs, Beavers, Brownies, Guides, and Rainbows. Run by volunteers, these groups provide opportunities for young people to build confidence, learn skills, enjoy outdoor activities, and develop teamwork and resilience.

# The Environment

Saxmundham Town Council is committed to protecting the natural environment and balancing the needs of people and wildlife. We extend our thanks to the Green Team and Blue Spaces volunteers for their vital work in maintaining and enhancing Saxmundham's open spaces and waterways for the benefit of both the community and local biodiversity.



## An Update from the Town Council's Environment Coordinator:



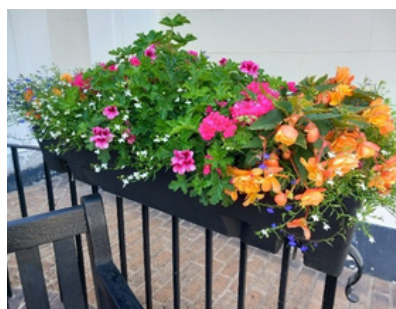
In the past year, Green Team volunteers contributed over 340 hours to projects across the town, including bulb planting at Chantry Road play park, maintenance and planting at the Memorial Garden and Memorial Field, care of the Community Orchard, litter picking, making bug boxes, and running the annual Seed and Plant Swap Stall at the Market. They also planted seasonal displays in the Town Council's planters, installed new planters with reclaimed materials (with help from the Men's Shed), and supported tree watering and the mural bed.

Collaborations have included working with Saxmundham Primary School Eco Team, the Saxmundham Mens Shed, Community Payback Service and IP17 Good Neighbours Scheme.

We always enjoy hearing feedback when we are out and about. If you would like to know more or get involved with the Green Team, just stop for a chat or email [environment@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:environment@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk).

As Environment Coordinator, leading working parties is just a fraction of my role. I have also worked on the Thermal Imaging Project, Volunteer and Biodiversity policy, green space maintenance schedules, seeking volunteer feedback, supporting Blue Spaces and contributing to the Sea Link DCO process.

Future projects in the pipeline will include working on rain harvesting solutions to make our flowering displays more environmentally sustainable.



# Blue Spaces Saxmundham

BlueSpaces Saxmundham is a citizen science and community action group operating independently. The Town Council is proud to offer financial and practical support to enable BlueSpaces to carry out their activities for the benefit of the town.



## **An Update from Laura Bonnett, BlueSpaces founder:**

Our aim since launching in March 2024 has been for the River Fromus to be a thriving habitat for wildlife, a natural safeguard against flooding, and a place of relaxation, recreation, and reflection for the Saxmundham community.

We have responded to community requests in many ways. A key priority has been improving access to the river while protecting the floodplain, both central to the Fromus Green Boardwalk proposal. We also promote rainwater storage and water butt use to help manage stormwater, and share advice on the correct disposal of fats, oils, and grease, which impact the efficiency of drainage systems. In addition, we raise awareness of how to report blocked drains and regularly monitor and report areas where drainage is compromised.

Over the past year, we have tackled two areas of persistent littering to reduce waste entering the River Fromus. We have also forged strong community links by speaking at public events and working with groups such as the local Scout troop and Saxmundham Primary School.

Health and safety is a priority for us. We take precautions against contamination (e.g. E. coli) by wearing protective PPE, changing out of it at the water's edge, and sanitising equipment after every working party. We also liaise with the Safer Communities police team when items found in the river or on the banks raise concern.



To keep residents informed, we publish a monthly newsletter called 'Dripfeed' which shares details of our twice-monthly working parties, photos, progress reports, and results from water testing (logged with the Freshwater Watch national database). It also provides updates on our activities, including culvert and outfall clearance, Himalayan balsam control, litter picks, species surveys, and invasive species management.

To sign up to Dripfeed, join a working party, or to find out more about BlueSpaces, please email [bluespaces@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:bluespaces@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk)

## Modified Neighbourhood Plan

Saxmundham's Neighbourhood Plan, originally 'made' in 2023, is currently being modified to address major changes affecting the town's future. The work is being led by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – a dedicated community-led body supported by the Town Council.

The primary reason for the modifications is to reflect the revised settlement boundary, which now includes land allocated for the proposed South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood. Although the development of this site for around 800 new homes is already designated in the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan and cannot be overturned through the Neighbourhood Plan, the modified Plan will give the town a stronger voice in shaping how the development is delivered.

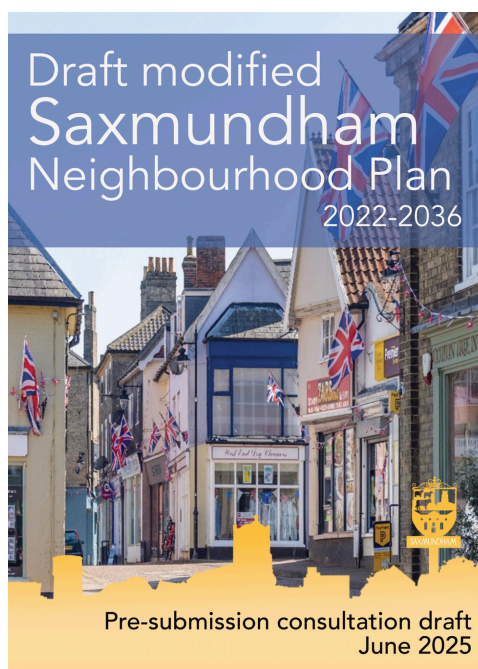
Incorporating the Garden Neighbourhood within the Neighbourhood Plan will enable the Steering Group to set more locally focused policies that influence the layout, design, sustainability, and infrastructure provision for the new community. Crucially, it will also ensure that Saxmundham receives a larger proportion of the Community Infrastructure Levy (from 15% to 25%) which can be used to support local improvements and services.

The modified Neighbourhood Plan also addresses other emerging developments – including the potential impacts of major energy infrastructure. New policies have been proposed to help reduce the adverse effects on the town in the event that the Sea Link and/or Lion Link converter stations receive development consent. The aim is to ensure any development brings with it meaningful mitigation and, where possible, long-term community benefit.

Public consultation on the draft modified Neighbourhood Plan took place during summer 2025. The Town Council invited all residents and stakeholders to review the draft policies and provide their views via an online consultation form or by collecting hard copies at Saxmundham Library or the Town House.

Following the close of consultation, the Steering Group will review all comments received and consider any necessary revisions. The final draft will then be submitted to East Suffolk Council for further statutory consultation and independent examination.

If successful, the modified Neighbourhood Plan may be subject to a local referendum before being formally adopted.



## South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood

The Town Council continues to engage constructively but critically with proposals for a major new development to the south of the town, known as the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood. The site is allocated for up to 800 homes, employment land, and supporting infrastructure in the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan.

The Town Council cannot override the site's allocation in the Local Plan. However, through its Neighbourhood Plan and sustained engagement with both the developers and East Suffolk Council planners, it is seeking to influence the design and delivery of the proposed Garden Neighbourhood.



The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, a dedicated community-led body supported by the Town Council, has participated in a series of meetings and workshops with the developer, Pigeon Investment Management, over the past two years, scrutinising emerging plans and advocating for a landscape-led, high-quality development that delivers long-term benefits for Saxmundham. While the Town Council cannot guarantee that all of the town's priorities will be reflected in the final plans, it continues to press for improvements and to represent the community's interests as the proposals evolve.

A key focus of the Town Council has been to influence the form, layout, and infrastructure of the new neighbourhood to reflect community needs. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has prepared a Modified Neighbourhood Plan which includes new policies specific to the Garden Neighbourhood. These cover sustainable transport, green infrastructure, connections, and community facilities.

During summer 2025, Pigeon held a public consultation at the Market Hall, presenting an emerging masterplan that includes new homes (including affordable housing and custom-build plots), a new primary school, community hub, employment space, and significant areas of open space. Around 200 people attended the exhibition to feedback their views to Pigeon. Residents can view further details about the proposed development at the developer's dedicated website: [www.saxmundhamsouth.co.uk](http://www.saxmundhamsouth.co.uk).

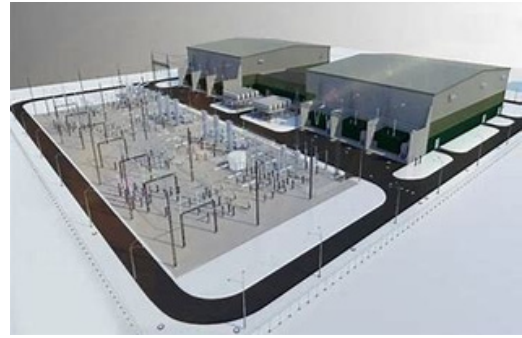
Alongside its engagement with the developers, the Town Council has held regular meetings with East Suffolk Council planning officers to ensure the proposed development supports the needs of both new and existing residents.

The next step will be for Pigeon to submit an outline planning application to East Suffolk Council, expected in autumn 2025. The Town Council will be a statutory consultee to the application and intends to make a detailed formal response once it has been submitted.

# Proposed Energy Projects

## Sea Link – Council Representation

The Sea Link project is a major proposal by National Grid Electricity Transmission to build a new high-voltage electricity transmission line between Suffolk and Kent, including a large converter station sited on the edge of Saxmundham, in the parish of Sternfield.



The Town Council is a statutory consultee in the planning process, therefore over the past year we have strengthened our technical capability - enabling us to interpret complex application documents and provide impartial, factual updates. As a result, we are a trusted source of information and actively support residents to understand the proposals, the process, and how to engage effectively.

We submitted a detailed Relevant Representation to register as an Interested Party in the Development Consent Order examination. The proposed development site lies close to residential areas, on high, open ground to the east. If consented, it would dominate views from across the town and surrounding countryside.

The Relevant Representation, published in full on our website, **strongly opposes the siting of the converter station** due to its severe and irreversible impacts on the town's environment, economy, and identity. The Town Council's submission identifies the following key areas of concern:

- **Proximity to a rural market town**, with lasting effects on landscape character and amenity.
- **Visual and landscape harm**, especially from elevated viewpoints and historic routes.
- **Traffic and construction disruption**, including a new permanent access road and bridge over the River Fromus.
- **Operational and construction-phase noise**, with limited mitigation detail to date.
- **Wellbeing and socio-economic impacts** on residents and local businesses.
- **Reputational damage** that could deter inward investment and tourism.
- **Environmental degradation**, including habitat fragmentation and species loss.
- **Cumulative impact** with other energy projects and the Garden Neighbourhood.
- **Lack of meaningful community benefit** or mitigation appropriate to the scale of harm.

Once the examination formally begins, the Town Council will continue to participate fully - making further written representations, attending hearings, and holding the developer to account. The examination process is expected to conclude in summer 2026, with a decision by the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero anticipated around September 2026.

## **Lion Link – A Second Converter Station Proposed for Saxmundham**

National Grid Ventures (NGV) is progressing proposals for Lion Link, a second major interconnector project that would bring further high-voltage electricity infrastructure to the outskirts of Saxmundham. Like Sea Link, Lion Link proposes to site a large converter station east of the town. The Town Council is a statutory consultee and will participate fully in the forthcoming public consultation, which is expected to take place in autumn 2025.

The Town Council is deeply concerned about the cumulative impact of multiple converter stations in close proximity to residential areas, landscapes, and habitats. We will work to ensure that local voices are heard and that Saxmundham is not subjected to disproportionate environmental, social, and economic harm. Further updates will be shared via our website and social media.



*A view of Viking Link converter station in Lincolnshire*

## **SizewellC: Night-Time Freight Trains Through Saxmundham**

With the final investment decision secured for SizewellC, the project is moving into full construction. Freight operations are expected to begin in early 2026, with up to four return freight trains per night (eight movements) passing along the East Suffolk Line through Saxmundham once the green rail route is fully operational

To reduce noise at source, continuous-welded rail has been installed on the Saxmundham–Leiston branch line, and a night-time speed limit of 10 mph is in place along the local sections through Woodbridge, Campsea Ashe, and Saxmundham.

While these measures are welcome, the Town Council remains vigilant and will continue to monitor noise levels and resident concerns. As a member of the Southern Transport Forum, the Town Council uses this platform to raise issues directly with Sizewell C representatives and advocate for additional noise mitigation where necessary.

# Empowering Nature - Protecting Saxmundham

The Empowering Nature initiative is a proactive, community-led vision designed to mitigate the impacts of the proposed converter stations and create lasting environmental and social benefits. It sets out ideas led and supported by the local community and would be subject to detailed design and ecological assessments. We call on National Grid companies to work with us to deliver infrastructure that enhances rather than damages the landscape. This aligns with CPRE's Greening the Great Grid Upgrade report, which advocates for infrastructure that balances energy needs with ecological and social priorities.

## Our Vision



- A green corridor from Saxmundham to the coast, with hedgerows, wildflower margins, and routes for walking and cycling.
- A Fromus boardwalk and nature trail, linking Fromus Green to the High Street to boost local footfall and sustainable tourism.
- A community fund providing wildlife-friendly improvements for households, such as bat boxes, ponds, and water butts.
- Community food projects, including allotments and a permaculture-based orchard near the converter station.
- Water harvesting and flood mitigation through landscaped ponds, swales, and bio-retention systems.
- Restoration of the Great Wood with native tree planting for biodiversity.
- Art, green walls, and solar panels on converter stations to create environmental and cultural benefits.
- Jobs and training for local people in conservation, project management, and green space maintenance.

Since its adoption, the Empowering Nature initiative has built strong momentum and is attracting support from principal authorities, planning experts, environmental groups, and political leaders. It has been promoted through targeted discussions with key figures including representatives from Suffolk County and East Suffolk Councils, the Campaign to Protect Rural England, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, local MPs, peers in the House of Lords, and neighbouring town and parish councils. National Grid Electricity Transmission and National Grid Ventures has met with the Town Council to discuss the proposals, and further engagement is planned with Scottish Power Renewables and Sizewell C to ensure the initiative is both deliverable and well-resourced.



# Community Buildings

## The Gannon Rooms

The distinctive cupolas have returned to the roof of the Gannon Rooms on Station Approach, beautifully recreated by Peggs of Aldeburgh using the original design.

These features are an important heritage asset in Saxmundham's Conservation Area and help restore the building's historic character, and strengthen its potential as a welcoming and versatile community space in the heart of the town centre.



The front flower bed has also been transformed with new planting thanks to the Green Team's efforts. Now passers-by on this key route between train station and town centre can enjoy a colourful display that changes with the seasons and brightens the space year-round.

## The Market Hall

Recently, the Town Council took the opportunity of support from the Community Payback team to repaint the railings and benches outside the Market Hall, giving the area a much-needed refresh. One bench was painted using materials kindly donated by a local resident, with a memorial plaque provided free of charge by the High Street jeweller, in honour of a much-missed local who loved to sit and watch the world go by.



Following a flood in the Market Hall earlier this year, a full flooring replacement has been recommended by the insurance loss adjuster. Due to this the Market Hall has undergone periods of closure while the damage has been assessed and repairs are made. The Town Council is liaising with contractors to swiftly and sympathetically complete repairs to this heritage asset.

**Hire the Market Hall for parties, performances, markets, exercise classes, clubs and community events**

- Generous main hall
- Large stage
- Meeting room
- Sound & lighting systems

  
**Market Hall**  
SAXMUNDHAM

[www.saxmarkethall.co.uk](http://www.saxmarkethall.co.uk)  
01728 604595  
[bookings@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:bookings@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk)

- Fully equipped kitchen
- Accessible
- Competitive local rates
- Central location



# Community Investment and Public Realm Improvements

## Saxon Road Allotments: Growing community, food, and wellbeing

The Town Council is exploring the delivery of a community allotment project at Saxon Road, transforming an unused parcel of land into a thriving community growing space.

The Town Council has successfully negotiated a provisional agreement with the plot's owner, Flagship Housing, subject to community consultation outcomes. The site may be leased to the Council at a peppercorn rent for at least 10 years, creating a long-term asset for local residents.



A targeted public consultation will help shape the project's design which will be supported by a grant from East Suffolk Council's Field to Fork fund. The project will deliver up to 23 growing plots, a communal shed with lockers for small tool storage, and a rainwater harvesting system to ensure environmental sustainability. This marks the first step in the Council's ambition to create more small, accessible growing spaces across Saxmundham for community use.

## Securing the Community Garden for future generations

The Town Council has agreed to lease the community garden at the former Fromus Centre site, protecting it as a valuable green space for residents. Run by local group Greener Sax, the garden supports local food growing and sustainability.

As part of the lease proposal from Suffolk County Council, an additional triangular piece of land will be included for future improvements. Once finalised, the land will be licensed to Greener Sax at a nominal rent, enabling the group to continue their excellent work without interruption. This commitment safeguards an important community asset and supports Saxmundham's ambitions for greener, more accessible shared spaces.

## New bridge improves access

The Town Council completed an exciting project to improve access between the Memorial Field and Seaman Avenue play park.

The new bridge replaces the old, narrow structure that was unsuitable for wheelchairs, pushchairs, and mobility aids.



Fabricated and installed by Saxmundham-based Dark Arc Engineering, the bridge mirrors the design of the Memorial Field entrance gates. At 2 metres wide, it provides a safe, welcoming, and accessible route for all visitors, reflecting the Town Council's commitment to inclusive public spaces.

## Memorial Garden roundel completes entrance

A new roundel has been installed at the centre of the Memorial Garden, marking the final piece in the refurbishment of the Memorial Field entrance. This beautifully crafted feature, funded by a private donation, enhances the garden's sense of place and provides a fitting welcome to this much-loved community space.



## Play park improvements guided by community

Revitalising Seaman Avenue Play Park remains a long-term priority. A community survey helped shape the final design, aiming to create a safe, inclusive, and exciting space.

A preferred design has been selected which includes climbing towers, a trim trail, a climbing net, an accessible roundabout and in-ground trampoline, and farmyard springers all designed to increase the play value for children of all ages.

The Town Council is ready to bring this project to life subject to funding approval.

## New benches support connection and wellbeing

The Town Council was proud to support Saxmundham Judo Club and charity Legend on the Bench by giving permission for a special new bench to be installed in the Memorial Field, featuring a QR code linking to mental health resources.

Following requests from residents, a new bench was also installed at the bus stop on Brook Farm Road and Heron Road.



## Tackling litter together: community clean-ups and new solutions



The Town Council led two successful community litter picks as part of Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean. Around 15 residents joined councillors and staff over two days, collecting 24 bags of rubbish.

Meanwhile, our Station Adopters successfully lobbied for new lidded bins at the station to prevent litter from being blown or scavenged, helping keep this important gateway clean and welcoming.

# Communication and Engagement

With nearly 5,000 residents, good communication and regular engagement are vital to ensuring the Town Council reflects local priorities and makes informed decisions. Residents are offered frequent opportunities to share their views through meetings, consultations, surveys, and informal conversations, while the Council stays connected with local news and community life. The Council also works to raise Saxmundham's profile, encourage civic pride, and promote parish activities across local, regional, and online platforms.



## Public Meetings

All Council and committee meetings are open to the public, with dates published annually on our website. Agendas and supporting papers are issued three days in advance of meetings and minutes uploaded afterwards. Each meeting includes a public forum for residents to ask questions, raise issues, or suggest topics for discussion, and local organisations may also share updates.

## Website

The Town Council's website ([www.saxmundham.org](http://www.saxmundham.org)) provides a trusted source of information, including:

- News and articles on local matters and initiatives
- Information on services, consultations, and Council activity
- An up-to-date calendar of events
- Visitor highlights such as walking trails, history, and directories

## News and Updates

Each month the Town Council contributes to Saxmundham News, which is delivered free to most households and available online. Articles provide clear updates on Council priorities and often cover complex topics such as NSIPs and energy proposals, presented in plain language to support resident participation. They also highlight local initiatives, events, and achievements. As well as publishing frequent articles and blogs on [saxmundham.org](http://saxmundham.org), the Council is also building an email mailing list to provide updates directly to residents' inboxes. Visit the [saxmundham.org](http://saxmundham.org) homepage to join.



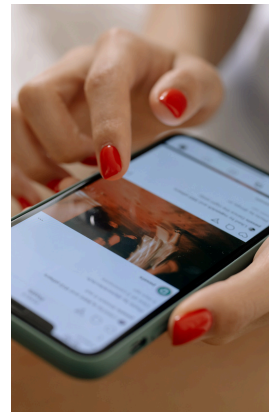
## Public Consultations

Residents have increasing opportunities to influence local decisions through consultations on projects such as Empowering Nature, Sea Link, Lion Link, Seaman Avenue Playpark, and the Saxon Road Allotment Garden. Using surveys, meet-and-greets, and formal meetings, the Council ensures people can engage in ways that suit them best. It also shares District and County consultations, encouraging residents to make full use of their right to be heard.

## Social Media

Social media provides a quick, accessible way to share news across a wide range of demographics. The Council's Facebook page is a well-established platform for local updates, event promotion, and highlighting community organisations. It also enables informal dialogue with residents and serves as a barometer of local priorities.

A new Instagram account broadens reach and showcases visual highlights of Saxmundham life.



## Media and Public Relations

The Council works with press, radio, and television to share information, raise awareness of local issues, and represent Saxmundham positively. These channels extend the town's voice beyond the parish and highlight community achievements.

## Noticeboards

Formal notices, agendas, and minutes are displayed outside the Town House and Market Hall, with community updates and event posters also shown at Fromus Square and the Memorial Field.

### Diary Dates

- **Town Council Meetings:** Second Monday of each month at 7:00pm at the Market Hall.
- **Committee meetings:** At the Town House, various dates and times published online.
- **Markets:** Every Wednesday (all year round) and the second Saturday of each month (April-November) in Fromus Square.
- **Christmas Fayre:** Saturday 6 December at 3:00pm to 7:00pm throughout the town centre.

We welcome residents to share their concerns, ideas, or feedback.

### Ways to keep in touch:



01728 604595



townclerk@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk

Our Office hours are:

**Monday - Thursday**  
**9:00 am - 4:00 pm**

📍 The Town House, Station Approach, Saxmundham, IP17 1BW

# Town Council Finances

## Budget and Council Tax

The Resources Committee is responsible for managing the Town Council's finances effectively and ensures that lawful financial practices are followed. Each year the Resources Committee prepares an annual budget for approval by the Town Council. Most of the budget is financed by the precept which is the Town Council element of Council Tax.

For the financial year 2025-2026, the precept is £278,037. The amount increased by 4.5% in recognition of the need to keep the figure as low as possible whilst still delivering essential services and community priorities.

The Town Council's element of Council Tax for a Band D property in 2025-2026 is £165.14 a year, just £3.18 a week which is an increase of 14p a week compared with last year.

## Community Infrastructure Levy

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge on developers administered by the District Council during the planning process. The purpose of CIL is to pay for infrastructure necessitated by new development.

A proportion of CIL goes to parish and town councils, this is normally 15%, but since July 2023 this rose to 25% for Saxmundham as it has an approved Neighbourhood Plan.

The Town Council's CIL pot at the end of the financial year 2024-2025 was £46,833. A further £9,799 was added in April 2025. These funds will be considered for eligible projects detailed in the Town Council's Strategic Plan.

## Governance and Audit

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 set out the responsibilities of all local councils in respect of their accounting and auditing procedures. Each year, the Town Council's financial accounts and statements are examined by an independent internal auditor appointed by the Town Council. For the year 2024-2025, this was the Suffolk Association of Local Councils.

The Town Council is also required to complete an Annual Governance and Accountability Return which includes the findings of the Internal Auditor, together with the Governance Statements and Financial Statements. The Return, which is available on the Town Council's website, is submitted to an independent external auditor appointed by the Audit Commission for examination.

The Income and Expenditure Account and the Balance Sheet are unaudited at the time of printing but represent fairly the financial position of the Town Council as at 31 March 2025.

## Budget 2025-2026

<b>Income</b>	
Precept	£278,037
Markets and Open Spaces	£2,403
Bank Interest	£4,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£284,440</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Staff Salaries and Related Costs	£128,634
Administration and Consultancy	£34,253
Community Grants	£34,500
Events	£16,700
Loan Repayments	£13,603
Communication and Promotion	£6,400
Maintenance	£3,550
Parks and Recreation	£26,100
Charitable Trusts' Contingency	£10,000
Transfer to General Reserves	£10,700
<b>Total</b>	<b>£284,440</b>

## Annual Accounts 2024-2025

<b>Income</b>	
Precept	£254,050
Markets and Open Spaces	£3,230
Bank Interest	£5,280
Grants	£10,000
Community Infrastructure Levy	£1,046
Transfer to General Reserves	£4,699
<b>Total</b>	<b>£278,305</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Staff Salaries and Related Costs	£114,873
Administration and Consultancy	£41,672
Community Grants	£50,776
Events	£14,954
Loan Repayments	£24,389
Communication and Promotion	£4,908
Maintenance	£3,042
Parks and Recreation	£18,347
<b>Total</b>	<b>£272,961</b>
<b>Opening Balance</b>	<b>£81,880</b>
Plus Income	£278,305
Less Expenditure	£272,961
<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>£87,224</b>

## Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2025

<b>Current Assets</b>	
Debtors	£160
VAT Control Account	£4,006
Prepayments	£3,589
Unity Trust Bank - Current	£9,762
Unity Trust Bank - Savings	£10,164
Cambridge Building Society	£85,000
CCLA - Public Sector Deposit Fund	£60,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£172,681</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>	
Charitable Trusts' VAT	£2,083
Creditors	£9,892
Accruals	£350
Receipts in Advance	£1,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£13,325</b>
<b>Total Assets Less Current Liabilities</b>	<b>£159,356</b>
<b>Represented By</b>	
General Reserves	£87,222
Earmarked Reserves	£72,134
<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>£159,356</b>

## Community Grants 2024-2025

Market Hall Trust	£16,000
IP17 Good Neighbours Scheme	£7,500
Saxmundham Community Fest	£5,000
Young People Taking Action	£5,000
Citizens Advice Service	£2,000
The Art Station	£1,500
Saxmundham Museum	£1,250
Britten Pears Arts	£1,000
Communities Together	£500
Suffolk Accident Rescue Service	£500
Saxmundham Sports Bowls Club	£445
Alde Valley Family History Society	£250
Saxon Running Club	£250
East Suffolk Travel Association	£120
Saxmundham Judo Club	£100
French Dance Music Club	£61
	<b>£41,476</b>

## Town Councillors



### **Cllr John Findlay – elected in May 2023**

I have lived in Saxmundham since 2016. With extensive experience in local government at national level and 30 years' service as a magistrate. I am Chair of the Town Council and of the Charitable Trusts. I am particularly interested in developing the town centre and making the High Street more welcoming for pedestrians.  
Contact: [john.findlay@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:john.findlay@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk)



### **Cllr Geraldine Barker – co-opted in Dec 2023**

I have lived in Saxmundham for 28 years. After a career in finance, administration and health and safety, I now focus on community volunteering. As Vice-Chair of the Town Council and Lead on Energy Projects, I am passionate about the town's development for the benefit of everyone.  
Contact: [geraldine.barker@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:geraldine.barker@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk)



### **Cllr Tim Lock – elected in May 2023**

I have lived in Saxmundham for over 6 years. As Chair of the Amenities and Services Committee, I have led improvements to the Memorial Field. I am passionate about making Saxmundham a better place to live and work. I hope to encourage new businesses and create a welcoming café culture by reducing traffic in the town centre.  
Contact: [tim.lock@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:tim.lock@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk)



### **Cllr Elizabeth Clark – elected in May 2023**

I moved to Saxmundham over 20 years ago after holidaying in the area since childhood. Although I travelled widely for work, my heart always belonged to Saxmundham. I am Chair of the Resources Committee and became a Town Councillor to give back to the community that has always made me feel welcome.  
Contact: [elizabeth@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:elizabeth@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk)



**Cllr John Fisher – elected in May 2023**

I grew up above Fishers Ironmongers, my family's business, and went to school locally before studying in London and working abroad. I returned to Saxmundham in 1990 and joined the Town Council in 1994, serving now as Chair of the Planning and Development Control Committee. I have also been a District Councillor since 2015.

Contact: [john.fisher@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:john.fisher@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk)



**Cllr Georgina Burns – co-opted in Mar 2025**

I have lived here since 2015 and absolutely love our town. I previously ran a retail business before founding and running a performing arts school. I hope my skills as a business owner and my dedication to working with children can help me make a positive contribution to our community.

Contact: [georgina.burns@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:georgina.burns@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk)



**Cllr Jeremy Smith – elected in May 2023**

An Essex/Suffolk boy, I have lived here since 2001. As Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, I want to help Saxmundham grow well, strengthen the town centre, and secure better services for all, drawing on over 30 years' local government experience.

Contact: [jeremy.smith@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:jeremy.smith@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk)



**Cllr Laura Purina – co-opted in Mar 2025**

After 15 years living across East Suffolk, I adore the area and want to help make the grass even greener for us all. Coming from an immigrant Latvian working-class background, I bring strong values of resourcefulness and supporting one another. My diverse life experiences and broad interests help me take an inclusive, community-minded approach to everything I do.

Contact: [laura.purina@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:laura.purina@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk)



### **Cllr James Sandbach – elected in May 2023**

I moved here in 2012. With its excellent transport links and vibrant community, I see real potential for Saxmundham to become a hub for local business and services. A Town Councillor since 2015, I am politically engaged and work in the voluntary sector as Director of a national charity.

Contact: [james.sandbach@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:james.sandbach@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk)



### **Cllr Marianne Kiff – elected in May 2023**

I moved from Essex to Saxmundham in 2020 and quickly felt at home. I became active in the community and now volunteer with the Community Fridge and Homestart Suffolk, supporting families in need. I am particularly interested in education, child welfare, and helping to strengthen local connections.


Contact: [marianne.kiff@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:marianne.kiff@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk)



### **Cllr David Humphreys – co-opted in Oct 2024**

A regular visitor since the 1970s, I am now delighted to be settled here. After a career as a Headteacher, and Chief Executive of a national Schools Trust, I hope to use my passion for education and community life to help enhance the town. I currently serve as Chair of the Staffing Committee, where I ensure our staff structure is effective and well-supported.

Contact: [david.humphries@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:david.humphries@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk)



**MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

**Could you:**  
Represent the needs and wishes of local people?  
Vote and contribute ideas in a few meetings per month?  
Help to shape the character, services and amenities of Saxmundham, now and for the future?

**To find out more, Email:**  
[townclerk@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk)

**Become a Town Councillor**

### **Councillor Vacancy:**

Thinking about how you can give back to your community? Becoming a councillor is a great way to get involved and help shape the future of your town. It's your chance to make a real difference, support the things that matter most to residents, and play an active role in building a stronger community.

The Town Council has a vacancy - to find out more, email [townclerk@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk)

# Strategic Plan 2025-2030

Following consultation with residents, the Town Council's Strategic Plan was formally adopted in May 2025. It sets out our clear vision and core priorities for the next five years.

## Our Vision and Values

**Serving Our Community:** We are dedicated to making Saxmundham a place where everyone feels they belong, fostering inclusivity and a strong sense of community pride.

**Openness and Transparency:** We are committed to clear, accessible decision-making and open dialogue.

**A Strong and Respected Voice:** We will continue to champion Saxmundham's priorities and protect its unique character.

**Delivering Quality and Value:** We strive to provide high-quality services that represent good value for money and careful use of public funds.

**Collaboration and Partnerships:** We believe in working with local groups, authorities, and volunteers to achieve shared goals.

**Creativity and Innovation:** We celebrate our town's heritage and embrace new ideas to build a vibrant, future-ready community.

## Our Strategic Themes

### A Thriving and Prosperous Town

We will foster economic growth and support local businesses through better infrastructure, strong promotion, and a welcoming town centre environment. Our plans include creating a more pedestrian-friendly High Street, improving connectivity between the train station, Market Place, and Fromus Square, and making the town more accessible for everyone. By revitalising Fromus Green and encouraging a mix of independent shops, services, and cultural venues, we aim to increase footfall and make the town centre a more inviting destination.

We will form a collaborative stakeholder group to strengthen partnerships with local businesses, community organisations, and statutory authorities. Partnerships with supermarkets and other major retailers will be explored to encourage shoppers to explore beyond the main retail areas and support smaller, independent businesses. Investment in marketing Saxmundham's strengths will help build a strong local identity and attract visitors, new businesses, and future investment.



## **A Safe and Healthy Town**

We are committed to improving health and wellbeing for all. We will advocate for high-quality healthcare services, improved community facilities, and access to well-maintained outdoor spaces that encourage active, healthy lifestyles.

Developing safe, accessible walking and cycling routes, including wider footpaths, improved signage, and safe connections to neighbouring parishes, will encourage active travel and help reduce car dependency.

We will support traffic-calming measures, promote road safety, and work with partners to address congestion in the town centre. Our approach to community safety will include enhanced street lighting, support for neighbourhood watch initiatives, and partnerships with emergency services to improve preparedness and resilience.

We want Saxmundham to be a town where people feel safe, connected, and supported at all stages of life.

## **An Attractive and Distinctive Town**

Celebrating and protecting Saxmundham's unique character and heritage is central to our vision. We will restore and enhance historic buildings such as the Market Hall, transforming it into a vibrant cultural and community hub. Continuing improvements to the Gannon Rooms will further strengthen its role as a welcoming, multi-purpose space in Station Approach which is a key route connecting the train station with town centre.

We will work to ensure the new Garden Neighbourhood integrates seamlessly with the existing town, creating a cohesive and inclusive community that reflects Saxmundham's character and values.



Investing in high-quality public spaces and supporting creative and cultural initiatives will help strengthen community identity and provide opportunities for social interaction and expression. We will continue to protect Conservation Area aesthetics, promote high-quality urban design, and turn potential challenges into opportunities that enhance community pride and resilience.

## **A Biodiverse and Sustainable Town**

Environmental sustainability lies at the heart of our plan. We will protect and expand green spaces and waterways to support biodiversity and offer accessible nature-rich areas for recreation and relaxation.

Promoting environmentally responsible building practices and energy-efficient development will help ensure that future growth respects the environment. We will encourage sustainable transport choices through expanded cycling and walking infrastructure and the installation of electric vehicle charging points.

We are committed to improving waste reduction, circular economy practices, and encouraging sustainable event management.

Community involvement will be central to these efforts, with opportunities for residents, schools, and local groups to engage in conservation and local sustainability projects. Strengthening flood resilience, water management, and climate adaptation measures will ensure Saxmundham remains robust in the face of future environmental challenges.

## **Delivering the Plan**

The Strategic Plan will be delivered through clear, measurable annual delivery plans that set priorities and allocate responsibilities. Committees and working groups will monitor progress, report transparently to the community, and adjust plans as needed to address new challenges and opportunities.

Community engagement remains at the heart of our approach. We will maintain regular communication through public consultations, newsletters, social media, and public meetings to keep residents informed and involved.

Funding will be secured through a mix of Town Council budgets, external grants, and collaboration with partners and volunteers to ensure projects are both achievable and sustainable. We will remain flexible and committed to continuous improvement, allowing us to adapt as Saxmundham grows and evolves while staying true to our core values and vision.

# The Staffing Team



## **Town Clerk - Sharon Smith**

The Town Council's full-time qualified Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer. Responsible for corporate governance, strategy, finance, personnel, energy projects, and operational oversight. Provides clerical support to the Town Council, Resources Committee, and Gannon Institute Trust.



## **Deputy Town Clerk - Lisa Hamon**

Part time with responsibility for the public realm and the Market Hall. Provides clerical support to the Amenities and Services Committee, the Planning and Development Control Committee, and the Market Hall Trust. Deputises for the Town Clerk.



## **Community Officer - Jess Palmer**

Part time with responsibility for strategic and operational delivery of events, communication using all forms of media and community liaison. Provides clerical support to the Civic and Community Committee.



## **Environment Coordinator - Amy Rayner**

Part time with responsibility for improving the Town Council's open spaces and meeting its biodiversity duty. Leads the Green Team and supports the Blue Spaces Team volunteers.



## **Assistant Town Clerk - Michelle Allen**

Part time with responsibility for finance administration, markets' administration and Market Hall bookings.



## **Maintenance Officer - Robert Ross**

Part time with responsibility for health and safety and maintaining the Town Council's and Charitable Trusts' land and property portfolio.



## Market Hall Trust

### Income and Expenditure Account for year ended 31 March 2025

#### Income

Hall Hire	£11,790
Town Council Grant	£16,000
Bank Interest	£222
	<b>£28,012</b>

#### Expenditure

Cleaning	£3,941
Sanitary Disposal	£1,637
Utilities	£6,151
Bank Charges	£144
Broadband	£762
Insurance	£1,672
Planning Fees	£83
General Materials	£349
General Maintenance	£8,232
Equipment	£89
Financial Software	£803
Website Support	£163
Licence Fees	£360
	<b>£24,386</b>

#### General Fund Analysis

Opening Balance	£9,865
Plus: Total Income	£28,012
Less: Total Expenditure	£24,386
<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>£13,491</b>



Unit 1 & 2  
Hill View Business Park  
Claydon  
IP6 0AJ

Tel: 01473 833713  
Email: [admin@salc.org.uk](mailto:admin@salc.org.uk)  
Website: [www.salc.org.uk](http://www.salc.org.uk)  
VAT number: 825023265

The Trustee  
The Market Hall  
c/o Saxmundham Town Council  
Station Approach  
Saxmundham  
Suffolk  
IP17 1AF

22<sup>nd</sup> April 2025

Dear Trustee,

**Independent examination – The Market Hall, Charity No 235072**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity (“the Trust”) for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

The Market Hall is a charity set up with the objective:

“A market hall to be used for such useful or benevolent purposes in connection with the town or district of Saxmundham as the Trustees sanction including the user thereof as a courthouse for magistrates meetings and the county council.”

The Charity’s governing documents are:

- Indenture dated 16 January 1893
- Charity Commission Scheme dated 12 October 1920

The Charity has a sole Trustee, Saxmundham Town Council. Councillors sit in charity meetings as the corporate body. The Market Hall Management Committee is appointed to oversee the operation of the Market Hall and associated refurbishment works and has met regularly during the year. Annual Accounts are presented to the Town Council as sole Trustee.

The 2023-2024 Annual Return and accounts were submitted to the charity commission on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2024, within the deadline for filing.

The trustees’ annual report and Annual Income and Expenditure Accounts and the Balance Sheet for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 were submitted to and accepted by the Town Council as sole trustee at its meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> September 2024. The same meeting resolved to note the Internal Auditor Independent Examination Report for 2023-2024.

For the year 2024-2025 the accounts are summarised below:

Income £28,012 arising from hall hire (£11,790); bank interest (£222) and grants (£16,000).

Expenditure £24,386 arising from running costs (£15,805) and marketing and events costs (£8,581).

Reserves £15,990.91 split between General Reserves of £13,490.91 and Earmarked Reserves (Renovation Fund) of £2,500.

Bank balance as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 was £15,737.62 across the two bank accounts operated by the Trust.

The asset register of the Town Hall Trust, at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, is valued at £25,581.89 and takes into account acquisitions and disposals during the year under review. The duty to protect charity property extends to the building as well as the contents of a building such as furniture, equipment and cash. The trust is aware that adequate insurance is vital for the charity to ensure that it protects against all identifiable risks and liabilities and that the Trustee Act gives a specific power to unincorporated charities to insure their property. Currently the Trust's assets are covered under the Town Council's insurance with cross charges being applied as appropriate.

The year-end accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 were examined, and all found to be in order. It is confirmed that the charities income does not meet the threshold set for an audit but is above the gross income level of £25,000 and therefore subject to external scrutiny.

From my examination of the accounting records, I therefore confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

There are no matters which give me cause to believe that in, any material respect, the Trustees have not met the requirements of the Charity Act 2011.

*Victoria & Waples*

Mrs. Victoria Waples

On Behalf of Suffolk Association of Local Councils

**THE MARKET HALL**

England & Wales - Charity number 235072

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# Accounts

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# Saxmundham Town Council



## Annual Report 2023 - 2024

# Chair's Report

My second year as Chair of Saxmundham Town Council started on an optimistic note following the [Coronation of King Charles III](#).

This air of optimism was demonstrated just a month later, on a warm and sunny Saturday when the inaugural [Saxmundham Arts Festival](#) took place in the town, organised by the Art Station and supported by the Town Council. It was great to see so many people enjoying the sunshine whilst partaking in the wide variety of artistic workshops on offer,



listening to music, strolling round the market, or simply having a long cold drink and a bite to eat at the numerous refreshment outlets. The Art Festival will take place again this year on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June.



## Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan and the Garden Neighbourhood

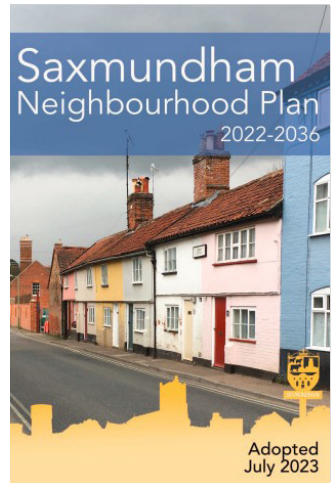
The [Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan](#) was approved and formally made by East Suffolk Council on 26<sup>th</sup> July. It does require modification to incorporate land in the [South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood](#), which was in Benhall, but is now in Saxmundham following a boundary change. The existence of a Neighbourhood Plan brings with it a significant financial benefit to the town.

As part of the Local Plan, adopted by East Suffolk Council, an 800-home Garden Neighbourhood on a parcel of land to the south of the town between the A12 and the railway line was proposed. Over the last four months, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, which has expanded to include two new resident representatives and two additional Councillors, has been meeting regularly with Pigeon, the developers, to draft a [Masterplan](#) to

ensure that the new Garden Neighbourhood is properly planned to meet the requirements of the town.

There has also been communication with the County Council over the future of the **Secondary School** site which is of strategic importance to the Town Council as it links the existing town with the new South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood.

I would like to thank Cllr Jeremy Smith for his excellent stewardship in both completing the Neighbourhood Plan and leading the sessions with Pigeon and East Suffolk Council planners, which are hugely important to the successful integration of the new Garden Neighbourhood with the existing town.



## Energy Projects

During the course of the year, it became very evident that, as Chair of the Council, I needed to take a far greater interest in the **numerous energy projects** which, if approved, will have a significant impact on Saxmundham.

Besides Sizewell C, there is a possibility of, not just one, but **three convertor stations** being built on land to the east of the town and into Sternfield parish to convert electricity from the wind farms in the North Sea so that it can be used to power homes and businesses in the UK.

I recognise the concern that residents have, and I will ensure that the Town Council continues to respond diligently and effectively to the numerous rounds of consultations that have and will continue to take place in the months ahead, whilst also strengthening ties with **neighbouring parishes** and campaign groups in ensuring our voice is heard and concerns addressed.

My thanks to the Town Clerk and Cllr Geraldine Barker who have largely been responsible for drafting the Town Council's responses, which take countless hours of absorbing lengthy and sometimes quite technical documentation, and for attending the numerous meetings and webinars that have been and continue to be held on the subject. I also intend to attend as many of these communication exercises as I can.

## Gannon Rooms Refurbishment

Following the transfer of ownership from the original charitable trust to the Town Council, the **Gannon Rooms** in Station Approach required a programme of work to be undertaken to enable the building to become a **safe and usable community space** again. The most recent improvement, which required the Town Council to take out a loan with the Public Works Loan Board, has seen the installation of a new WC with disabled access. The remaining monies from the loan will be spent on repairing the roof cupolas which are a unique feature of the building. ABC Radio and IP17 Good Neighbours Scheme currently license the two rooms of the hall.

## Blue Spaces Team

Saxmundham **Green Team** has been established for a couple of years now under the excellent leadership of our Environment Coordinator. The team continues to meet regularly to keep our green spaces in good order. To add to the Green Team, a **Blue Spaces Team** has now been established and led by a Saxmundham resident, Laura Bonnett, which the Town Council is delighted to support. As the name might suggest, the Blue Spaces Team's main purpose is to keep the **River Fromus** clean and free of unwanted debris but will also keep an eye on the **Gull Stream** which runs through the Brook Farm estate and flows into the Fromus at the North Entrance culvert.



The year would not be complete if I didn't mention the **Saxmundham Christmas Fayre**, which has become such a **popular event** and an opportunity for the whole town to come together at this special time of year. Everyone enjoyed themselves and I don't think anyone will ever forget meeting Polar Pip the Polar Bear or the Christmas Ducks.

Unfortunately, they won't be joining us this year, but we will welcome back Fireflow, the extraordinary fire dancers, and a **very special lion**. We will also welcome back Diddy Long Legs, our amazing stilt-walkers, musical performers, choirs, street market traders, walkabout elves, our **special event train** courtesy of Greater Anglia, and, of course, **Father Christmas** in his Grotto.



This year, the Christmas Fayre will be on **Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December** in the High Street, Market Hall and Fromus Square.



## **Thank You**

My thanks to all the Councillors for their support over the last year and to the staff at the Town House, very capably led by our Town Clerk, Sharon Smith, without whom the Council's plans would not come to fruition.

**Cllr Diana Eastman, Saxmundham Town Council Chair**

# Amenities and Services

The Amenities and Services Committee has responsibilities for:

- maintaining and improving the open spaces and play equipment at the Memorial Field, Seaman Avenue and Chantry Road;
- ensuring sufficient provision of street furniture such as litter, dog and grit bins, benches and planters;
- providing seasonal lighting, hanging baskets, bunting and flags to decorate the High Street;
- providing informational signage and noticeboards;
- maintaining the Town Council's office building and environs;
- oversight of the Green Team and Blue Spaces Team;
- ensuring the success and sustainability of the markets.

## Memorial Field



The field was purchased by public subscription for the benefit of the townspeople as a permanent memorial for those that lost their lives in the Great War.

The subscribers decided that the land should be vested in the trustees as an **open space for recreational activities**.

In 1974, the trusteeship of the land was transferred to the Town Council and since then we have endeavoured to maintain this objective.

To this end, the Town Council are pleased to welcome **Stocks Fun Fair** during the first weekend of June and **Sax Music Fest** during the second weekend of August.

In addition to providing a safe open space, various **young people's activities** are also offered at the Memorial Field:

**CYDS Youth Booth** is a drop-in centre, open on Tuesdays and Fridays, offering free confidential and non-judgmental advice and support on any issues that may affect young



people. CYDS also have various organised activities and outings such as cooking, art and crafts, photography, computers, music, and sports. The regular users of CYDS are currently designing a mural for the exterior gable of the Youth Booth.

**1<sup>st</sup> Saxmundham Scouts** girls and boys meet in the evenings at the Scout Hut at the Memorial Field. The Scouts meet on Wednesdays, the Cubs on Thursdays, and the Beavers on Fridays.



During the year, the Town Council repaired the surface of the **skate park** and replaced the cradle swing set at Seaman Avenue **play park** and repaired the ziplines. New cradle swing seats were also fitted at Chantry Road play park.

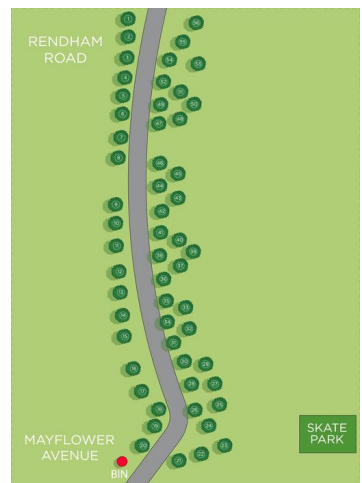
Further improvements are scheduled for the Memorial Field in 2024:

Cllr Charlotte Hawkins is leading an initiative to complete the **Memorial Garden** by installing a centre roundel. Cllr Tim Lock is liaising with a local fabricator to design a new **Memorial Bridge** between the Memorial Field and Seaman Avenue playpark. The railings at Seaman Avenue will enjoy a free rub down and a fresh lick of paint courtesy of HM Prisons Community Payback Team!

## Community Orchard

Have you taken a stroll through the Community Orchard? It is located at the far end of the Memorial Field and, as well as areas of native hedging, grasses and wildflower, the Community Orchard is home to a variety of 56 fruit and nut trees.

It was planted by Greener Sax and is now maintained by the Saxmundham Green Team. In the autumn, we encourage people to help themselves to what they can eat on their walk through. To find out more about the varieties of trees planted there, visit [saxmundham.org](http://saxmundham.org).



## Saxmundham Station Adopters

Grateful thanks to our Station Adopters who lovingly tend the garden and keep a general eye on the train station environs in all weathers!

Our Environment Coordinator and Cllr Charlotte Hawkins are keen for others to join the group and enjoy the reward of free local rail travel, courtesy of Greater Anglia. Contact [townclerk@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk) for more information.



## High Street – Fromus Green Walkway

The Town Council has acquired a strip of land between 32 High Street and the bridge over the River Fromus leading to Fromus Green, to secure permanent rights of access for the public. This acquisition supports a key objective of the Neighbourhood Plan; to seek opportunities to make the town safer and more accessible through improved provision of pedestrian and cycle routes linking housing areas to the town centre. The Town Council will shortly consult the community with options for lighting this new walkway.

## Traffic Calming

Cllr Geraldine Barker was researching in the Town Council's archives held in The Suffolk Hold and, in the minute books for 1939, she came across concerns raised about **speeding** in the town. Some things never change as speeding rightly continues to be a concern for many residents.

During the year, the Committee instructed Suffolk County Council Highways to undertake **speed surveys** at all four entrances to the town. The data showed that almost half of all vehicles entering the town exceed the 30mph speed limit.

To make Saxmundham safer, the Town Council has initiated a **Community Speed Watch Team**. Following police checks and training, the volunteers will be equipped with safety gear and a **calibrated speed radar gun**, and they will soon be deployed throughout the town's hotspots to deter motorists from speeding. The Town Council is also considering the provision of two **portable speed indicator devices** (which are proven methods of reducing speed) to be rotated at the four town entrances. Further speed surveys will be taken next year to evaluate the effectiveness of both these traffic calming measures.

## Markets

Suffolk towns with regular, thriving markets aren't quite as commonplace now as they were back in 1272, when Saxmundham was granted **Market Town** status by Royal Charter.

The market is an important asset for the town; therefore, the Town Council reinstated the **monthly artisan markets** on the second Saturday of each month from April to November. These markets continue to be popular with residents and visitors with their friendly atmosphere, wonderful locations in the Market Hall and Fromus Square, and fabulous varied fare.



The Town Council has over a long period sought to support the **weekly markets** held each Wednesday in Fromus Square, and to that end, has for the last five years charged no fees to stall holders with the aim to safeguard the market. Our further efforts to improve and expand the market have not been successful therefore we invite residents to join our newly formed **'Friends of the Wednesday Market'** group to work with the Town Council to identify ways to ensure its future viability and sustainability. Contact [townclerk@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk) for more information.

## Crime

The Town Council continues to regularly engage with the local Community Policing Team and the multi-agency **Anti-Social Behaviour Forum** hosted by the District Council. Local reported crime statistics are monitored by the Town Council at its monthly meetings.

Saxmundham residents may have noticed an increased presence of the **Community Policing Team**, accompanied by the Constabulary's **Kestrel Team**, out on foot patrol in Saxmundham undertaking community outreach work. Cllr Di Eastman's pets were certainly pleased to meet them!



**Cllr Tim Lock**  
**Amenities and Services Committee Chair**

# The Environment

## Green Team – Report from Amy Rayner, Environment Coordinator

Many thanks to our **Green Team** who, in the last year, have spent more than **two hundred and eighty voluntary hours** working on projects to benefit the environment, improve the town's green spaces and help to meet the biodiversity duty.

The Green Team work on all sorts of projects including thermal imaging local buildings, bulb planting at Seaman Avenue play park, improvements to our tool shed, maintenance at the Memorial Garden, raking arisings at the Memorial Field, pruning at the Community Orchard, litter picking around town, planting at the Gannon Rooms and making bat boxes.

Cllr Charlotte Hawkins assisted at the Green Team's popular **annual pop-up seed and plant swap** stall at the weekly market.



Green Team collaborated with a number of local community groups including the Eco Team at Saxmundham Primary School, the **Saxmundham Men's Shed**, IP17 Good Neighbours Scheme and HM Probation Community Payback Service. Copies of the new **'Recycling in Saxmundham' poster**, a collaborative project with the **Eco Team at Saxmundham Primary School**, are available from the Town House.

If you would like to get involved, find out more and join the Green Team please visit [www.saxmundham.org/saxmundham-green-team](http://www.saxmundham.org/saxmundham-green-team).

## Blue Spaces Team – Report from Laura Bonnett, Lead Volunteer

Dr Jane Goodall, conservationist and primatologist turned 90, shared one of the nine life lessons that she has learnt from nine decades on the planet; **"Everyone can have an impact.** [I wish] everybody understood that every day they live on the planet, they make some impact. And they can choose the kind of impact they make."

Her words were still resonating with me and shaped my thinking when, as a resident concerned about the River Fromus, I started a community action and citizen science initiative in Saxmundham to improve the river.



In March this year, supported by Saxmundham Town Council, Blue Spaces Saxmundham was launched with a threefold aim - to ensure that the blue spaces of Saxmundham (including the River Fromus and its tributaries) provide **habitats for a range of wildlife**, to protect against **flooding**, and to provide **beautiful places** for recreation and reflection.

The inaugural meeting gathered over 40 members of the community with over half signing up to lead or participate in parts of the project. My research to date has involved meeting with the **Environment Agency** and the **Rivers Trust** to discuss the current poor ecological status of the River Fromus and scoping projects we can run in the local community to make improvements.

Our first **river clean-up** happened in April thanks to the fabulous volunteers who donned waders and climbed into the River Fromus as well as those who (sensibly) stayed on dry land, supporting the waders and clearing the banks. Working together we removed nine large sacks of litter and cleared three seriously blocked out falls. A curious muntjac came trotting towards us to see what we were up to. Since the clean-up, mallards with ducklings on their back and nesting grey wagtails have been reported on the Fromus.

Blue Spacers have attended courses and webinars on rivers by the **Suffolk Wildlife Trust**, invested in water butts to slow the flow of storm water into the surface drains and volunteered for the **Riverfly Monitoring Initiative**.

To get involved with Blue Spaces Saxmundham and to find out what kind of impact you can make, contact [bluespaces@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:bluespaces@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk).



# Wildlife Walk

For many years a large proportion of the **Seaman Avenue play area** has been overgrown, unmaintained, and locked; rendering it unusable. The Town Council accepted Cllr Benjamin Gulliford's proposal to **redevelop the area** to turn it into a positive asset. The intention was to maintain its wildness but **encourage fauna and flora** to support biodiversity whilst also ensuring the green space was accessible to encourage education about the environment.

The Town Council commissioned Suffolk Wildlife Trust to undertake an ecological survey. They reported that the woodland provided opportunities for **bat roosting** and an **excellent habitat** for common bird species, invertebrates, butterflies and moths. Blackbird, robin, house sparrow, starling and blue tit were observed during their site visit. Slow worms, hedgehogs, mice, voles and shrews have been recorded close to the site and, within 2km, there are great crested newts, badgers, hares, and hazel dormice. SWT recommended improving the area by installing **bird and bat boxes**, a bug hotel, and providing **informational signage** to help inform the public about the wildlife present in the area.



To keep costs low, we collaborated with **HM Prisons Community Payback Scheme** who provided free labour. They were enthusiastic about the project and undertook groundwork for many weeks to clear the dense shrubbery and brambles to **build a pathway** and create **bug hotels** and bird boxes.



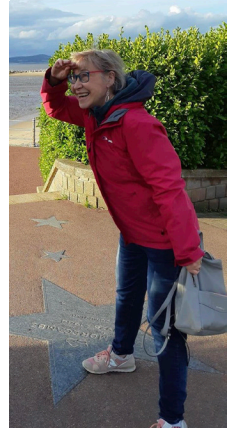
**EDF's Sizewell C** has offered to donate **tons of mulch** to ensure that the entire pathway is walkable in all weather conditions. A **willow dome** and willow arches have been created. Reclaimed raised planters have

been made to accommodate **pollinator-friendly flowers**. Timber, donated by local businesses, enabled two natural log benches to be made for visitors to **sit and enjoy nature** and the local wildlife.

# Reflections From Our Newest Councillor

I'm Geraldine Barker. I was co-opted in December 2023 to help with the Town Council's response to the energy projects. More about that later, but for the moment, I will address what being a Councillor entails.

Firstly, Town Councillors are **unpaid and are often elected unopposed** as so few people put themselves forward for the role. Secondly, on Saxmundham Town Council, we are not politically biased. Thirdly, we act in an **advisory role** and whilst the Council may have a degree of influence, it has **little powers or control**. Finally, we do the job as we feel a **sense of duty** and wish to get the best value and outcomes for the town. In this I know that we cannot please everyone all of the time, however I will strive to heed the townsfolk's concerns.



All the work of a Councillor is **voluntary** but at times it feels as if I have taken on a full-time job as there are so many issues that need attention. The Town Council is responsible for the Market Hall, the Gannon Rooms, the recreation parks at the Memorial Field, Seaman Avenue and Chantry Road, the Youth Booth, markets, events, communications, community grants, and amenities including litter and dog bins. Moreover, the Town Council is consulted about planning application in the town.

In addition, the Town Council **acts as a link** between the District and County Councils. Your concerns are relayed to the appropriate departments in respect of street lighting, flooding, watercourses, refuse, hedgerows, roads etc. We have no control of these services.

As you are aware, preliminary works for **Sizewell C** have commenced, and our Councillors attend meetings as Saxmundham's representative. The town is currently threatened with two converter stations - **Sealink and Lionlink**. Working on a response to a major infrastructure project is mind blowing as it takes hours of reading, writing and anguish. Thankfully the skills of the Town Clerk and Councillors made the documents worthy of submission. We cannot influence governmental policy, but we endeavour to get the **best outcomes** for the town.

I hope this explains a little bit about being a Councillor and I would encourage more people to become a town representative. Our group of councillors have years of life and work experience and at times it feels a little daunting to be the 'newbie' of the group, but I am glad I accepted the invitation to become a Councillor. It's **hard, interesting, and rewarding work**.

# Events and Communications

The Events and Communications Committee is responsible for overseeing not just Saxmundham's **high-profile events**, but also how the Town Council presents itself and **communicates with our community** and the wider world.

Saxmundham continues to offer residents and visitors a rich schedule of events throughout the year. The Town Council organises its own events, as well as supporting other local groups to host their own.

## Christmas Fayre



The **Christmas Fayre** drew in the crowds, providing **spectacular entertainment** with performers on the stage and wandering through the streets. The **street market** was our biggest yet, with over 70 stalls across our indoor and outdoor areas.

We also coordinated with East Suffolk Lines to provide a **special 'Christmas event train,'** bringing over 75 people into the fayre, greeted by Father Christmas. The event, whilst providing a **free evening** out for locals, also attracts many people from around the region, boosting our town's reputation and supporting our independent High Street businesses with increased footfall.



## Communication

The last year has seen some improvements in how the Town Council communicates with residents. The Committee approved **new designs** for our official letterhead, email signatures and our markets.

### Saxmundham Town Council

The Town House, Station Approach, Saxmundham,  
Suffolk, IP17 1BW. Tel: 01728 604595.  
Email: townclerk@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk



We have implemented **regular e-newsletters**, sharing the latest news and information with our subscribers (sign up on saxmundham.org), **Facebook** is being used more widely to **share information, promotion and news**, and **Sax News** continues to host a monthly column.

**Saxmundham.org** and **saxmarkethall.co.uk**, the Town Council's two websites, require regular maintenance and updating. The Committee has also overseen improvements to their design, making them **easier to navigate** and including some additional pages.

The **Market Hall website** was rebuilt, and it is now easier to find out information about the hall and **how to book**, boasting an **integrated calendar** allowing visitors to see the hall's availability and the full schedule of classes and activities.



## Free Wi-Fi



Courtesy of East Suffolk Council, **free to use public Wi-Fi** is now available in Saxmundham which was the eleventh and final town to benefit from the Digital Roll Out. The Wi-Fi zone is in **Fromus Square** encouraging residents and visitors to **linger longer enjoying refreshments** from local businesses and perhaps spot the waxwings in the trees.

## Plans for 2024

These include another spectacular Christmas Fayre delivered by the Town Council. We are also **supporting Sax Arts Fest** and **Sax Community Music Festival**, creating a new Town Council logo, and considering ways to further **improve consultation** between the Town Council and the community.

**Cllr James Sandbach, Events and Communications Chair**

# Neighbourhood Plan

Saxmundham's Neighbourhood Plan was made in July 2023 following a **successful referendum** held on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

The Neighbourhood Plan offers:

- more say on the **design and location of development** within Saxmundham,
- **more funding** for local community projects and infrastructure,
- more protection for Saxmundham's **local character**, green spaces, and environment.

Further information about the Neighbourhood Plan policies, and opportunity zones, is available at [www.saxplan.org](http://www.saxplan.org).

## Neighbourhood Plan Modification

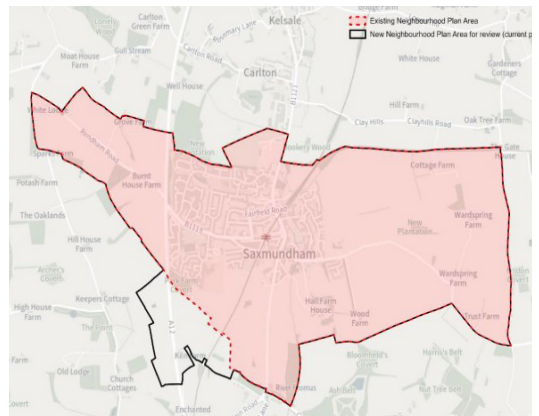
The **boundary of Saxmundham parish was extended**, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023, following a Community Governance Review. The current Plan therefore does not cover the entire parish.

The Town Council designated a **new Neighbourhood Plan area** which covers the entire parish. East Suffolk Council undertook **consultation** on the proposed new area for six weeks from February to April 2024. There were no objections, and the new area was formally designated.

The new Neighbourhood Plan Area will replace the currently designated area, but the 2023 Neighbourhood Plan will continue to form part of the Development Plan for the area until such time as it is replaced.

The **modification to the Neighbourhood Plan** area offers the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group the opportunity to update the Plan and **add policies** which address the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood and the proposed energy converter stations.

**Cllr Jeremy Smith, Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Chair**



# South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood

During the year, members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group ('NPSG') which comprises Town Councillors and residents, held a series of sessions with Pigeon, the developer that is seeking planning consent for:

- a **new 800 dwelling 'garden neighbourhood'** to the south of Saxmundham.
- an **employment area, service station and hotel** to the west of the A12.

The purpose of the meetings is to contribute to the '**masterplan**' with an aim to **influence the shape of the future development** of the site, which will then lead to planning applications for determination by East Suffolk Council. Most of the development, which will **add almost 40% to the town's population**, is in line with the policies of East Suffolk Council's Local Plan, except for the additional site to the west of the A12. The Neighbourhood Plan cannot lawfully overturn nor contradict Local Plan policy.

The NPSG considers that the **integration** of the new garden neighbourhood with the existing community of Saxmundham and Benhall is critical to the success of the masterplan. The NPSG wants a development that lives up to its name through **good design, attractiveness, connectivity** and is supportive of people's health and well-being. The NPSG has advocated for the focus of the main site to **prioritise cyclists and pedestrians**, while providing motor access.

Another factor is the **future of the secondary school site**, which closes in its present form later this year. It is likely that part of the site will be used in future for Special Educational Needs but that may leave the remainder available for other uses. Since a large part of the site is playing fields, the NPSG believes that recreational uses should continue. The NPSG proposes, whether on the school site or elsewhere in the development, for the **creation of an indoor sports and fitness centre** which will serve residents of both the new houses and those of the existing town. The first need is to identify the site, which the NPSG believes the developer should provide, especially as their proposals for the service area go beyond the Local Plan's policy. The large-scale **household survey** carried out by the NPSG indicated that an indoor sports provision was, after improved health provision, the highest priority choice.

Pigeon plans to hold **public exhibitions** in Saxmundham in **June 2024** and provide a **website on the proposals** for those who wish to engage digitally. The NPSG considers that it is not yet able to give definitive views on the proposals, since there needs to be more involvement of East Suffolk Council planners, who may have specific points from a planning perspective which need to be taken account of.

# The Market Hall

The Town Council is the Sole Corporate Trustee of the Market Hall registered charity, and Councillors meet separately in their capacity as Trustee. The ongoing management of the Market Hall is delegated to a Management Committee of Councillors and community volunteers.



The Trust receives an annual grant from the Town Council, which helps to cover maintenance and repairs as well as day to day costs.

## Monthly Markets

The Market Hall continues to act as a **key central point** for activities, which bring the Saxmundham community together.

This year our **Saturday markets** have gone from strength to strength, with the Market Hall acting as a venue for makers and crafters with tables, while stall holders with gazebos set up in Fromus Square.



## Community Groups



IP17 Good Neighbours Scheme continue to use the Hall for a range of **community activities** aimed at promoting well-being and social interaction, including Funky Fridays for children in the school holidays and Gather and Grow for toddlers and their carers. Exercise teachers, Britten Pears Arts Participate, Line Dancing, Saxmundham Bowls Club and Saxmundham Judo Club are all **regular users** of the Market Hall.

## Events

The Market Hall hosts a range of **community social events**, including Sax Quiz to raise funds for Sax Music Fest, Sax Rocks featuring Doctor and the Epics, Sax Cabaret featuring Opera-Lele, Sax Jazz featuring Swing Machine Big Band, On y Va French Bals, and Loddon Band, Evening of Brass.

We also host exhibitions, forums, **private parties** and are one of the **town's two polling stations**. To book your event, contact [assttownclerk@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:assttownclerk@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk).

## Weddings

The Market Hall is **licensed to perform wedding ceremonies** and we were pleased to host two weddings this year. We look forward to welcoming more wedding bookings which we offer at a competitive rate.

We are also **working in partnership** with the Bell Hotel, to promote the Market Hall as a venue for wedding receptions and evening parties, following on from the ceremony and wedding breakfast at the hotel.



## Community Consultation and Exhibitions



During the year, the Town Council held a **public meeting** at the Market Hall to hear the residents' views about the Sea Link proposals to shape its response to the developer's statutory consultation on behalf of the town.

National Grid also held **two public exhibitions**, which over 500 people attended to view their plans. Cllr Geraldine Barker and the Town Clerk were in attendance both days to **receive feedback** from the public to further inform the Town Council's response.

**Cllr Di Eastman, Market Hall Trust Chair**

**Cllr Jeremy Smith, Market Hall Management Committee Chair**

# The Gannon Institute

The Town Council is now the sole Charitable Trustee of the Gannon Institute, and the Town Council is responsible for the decision making with the operations delegated to a Management Committee.

## The Gannon Rooms



The only building of the Institute is **located in Station Approach** and many long-time residents of the town have fond memories of community events there. Before committing to take over responsibility for the Trust, the Town Council conducted a **community survey** to gauge support for the continued provision of the Gannon

Rooms as a community facility. Results showed that 87% of respondents supported the Town Council becoming Trustee and keeping the facility open as a **community asset**.

## Refurbishment

When the Town Council agreed to take on this new responsibility, it was made clear that the Gannon Rooms required **considerable work** to bring the building up to the required standard for community use. This work began in 2022 and has continued throughout 2023 and into 2024.

Significant progress has been made to transform the Gannon Rooms into a **wonderful facility for our community**. Work has been carried out to improve the main hall and reception area, including the installation of an accessible WC. Further work will improve the reception area including a new front door.



Necessary repairs to the **heritage roof cupolas** will be undertaken during the next year. As the Town Council could not finance all this capital expenditure from its current resources, it borrowed £20,000 from the Government's Public Works Loan Board.

## Community Use

**Alde and Blyth Community Radio** moved into their new space at the front of the Gannon Rooms following their hard work to transform the room and old kitchen into spacious and **soundproof recording studios**. We are grateful for all their hard work and expense.



**IP17 Good Neighbour Scheme** have also relocated from the Town House into the Gannon Rooms and, as they now have the benefit of a larger space, they are able to **diversify their service offering** which will enable them to provide even **greater support** to the community.

Their **Social Supermarket** is available every Tuesday between 9:30am and 11:00am. Users can now queue under cover and enjoy a cup of tea and a natter with the volunteers and other users in comfort.



**New volunteers** at IP17 GNS are always welcome so if you can offer your time and/or expertise, contact them at [volunteer@ip17gns.com](mailto:volunteer@ip17gns.com).

## Landscaping

The Town Council's Green Team have started their project to **redevelop the planted areas** at the Gannon Rooms, which will include edge of woodland/shade loving plants, installing bug hotels, and adding lots of seasonal colours by planting bulbs for interest throughout the year.



Depending on availability of space, the Town Council's Environment Coordinator is also considering herb and edible planting at the Gannon Rooms to supplement the fresh offering from IP17 GNS's social supermarket.

**Cllr Di Eastman, Gannon Institute Trust Chair**

**Cllr Jeremy Smith, Gannon Institute Management Committee Chair**

# Planning and Development Control

The Town Council is a **statutory consultee** for planning applications for development within the parish. The Planning Committee comments on each application received and discusses other planning related issues. All our meetings are open to the public and we welcome input from Saxmundham residents to inform our decision making.

The Planning Committee aims to **preserve the general amenity and character** of Saxmundham without unduly hindering residents' wishes to **improve and modernise** their homes. The Committee also collaborated with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to help develop the Neighbourhood Plan which gives us more influence over planning decisions.



The Committee considered twenty-one applications during the year. Most of the applications received were for improvements to existing properties and outbuildings, with one or two property conversions, as well as works to trees. Included in the applications was the **redevelopment of the former site of the Fromus Centre**. The plans involve the demolition of the old centre and the construction of 30 dwellings. The Committee advocated for the **Sax Community Garden** to remain, for the **proposed cycleway to connect** with the existing street network, and for the existing footpaths bordering the site to be adequately upgraded.

**Cllr John Fisher, Planning and Development Control Committee Chair**

# The Town Council's Finances

The Resources Committee is responsible for **managing** the Town Council's **finances effectively** and ensures that **lawful financial practices** are followed. The Committee is also responsible for **staffing matters**.

Each year, the Resources Committee prepares an **annual budget** for approval by the Town Council. Most of the budget is financed by the **precept** which is the **Town Council element of Council Tax**.

This year we had to **raise our precept by 4.99%**, recognising the need to keep the increase as low as possible whilst managing our expected levels of expenditure which have increased **due to rising inflation**.

Our element of Council Tax for a Band D property will therefore be £158.03 a year, just £3.04 a week, which represents an increase of 15p a week compared with last year.

## Budget 2024-2025

### Income

Precept	£254,050
Markets, Interest, Leases	£3,500

**Total Income** **£257,550**

### Expenditure

Community Grants	£38,000
Christmas, Arts Fest, Music Fest Events	£20,000
Town Improvements	£14,000
Staff Salaries and Related Costs	£113,500
Councillor Development and Expenses	£700
Office and Administration	£27,529
Loan Repayments	£24,412
Communication and Promotion	£3,000
Neighbourhood Plan	£2,000
Maintenance	£10,600
Transfer to General Reserves	£3,809

**Total Expenditure** **£257,550**

## Community Infrastructure Levy

The **Community Infrastructure Levy**, known generally as CIL, is a charge on developers administered by the District Council during the planning process. The purpose of CIL is to pay for infrastructure necessitated by new development.

A proportion of CIL goes to parish and town councils, this is normally 15%, but since July 2023 this **rose to 25% for Saxmundham** as it has an approved Neighbourhood Plan.

A **community consultation** will soon be issued for projects to be considered for the expenditure of the Town Council's current CIL pot of £46,833.

## Community Grants

In the financial year 2023-2024, the Town Council made **financial contributions** of £16,000 to the Market Hall Trust, £10,000 to IP17 Good Neighbours Scheme, £3,434 to Young People Taking Action (CYDS), and £2,400 and a commitment for a further £5,000 in the following financial year to Saxmundham Music and Arts CIC (Sax Music Fest). The Mens Shed and CYDS also **benefit indirectly** as they lease their premises from the Town Council for a peppercorn rent of £1 per annum.

The Town Council also has a budget for **small community grants** which has increased to £9,500 this financial year to enable wider community support. Guidance and an application form can be downloaded from the Town Council's website and submitted to the Town Clerk for consideration by the Resources Committee,

Those who benefitted from small grants during 2023-2024 were:

The Art Station	£1,500
Saxmundham Museum	£1,250
Saxmundham and District CIC	£1,000
Britten Pears Arts	£1,000
Saxmundham Adventure Playground	£1,000
Smile Community Café	£450
Saxmundham Station Adopters	£380
Greener Sax Community Garden	£300
Saxmundham Carpet Bowls Club	£250
School Uniform Event	£100
On y Va French Dance Club	£72

## Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 March 2024

### Income

Precept	£241,975
Bank Interest	£1,898
Land, Property and Markets	£3,708
Grants and Donations	£5,525
Community Infrastructure Levy	£1,106
Public Works Loan	£19,975

**Total Income** **£274,187**

### Expenditure

Community Grants	£39,338
Coronation, Christmas, Arts Fest, Music Fest Events	£19,989
Town Improvements	£24,066
Gannon Rooms Refurbishment	£20,000
Staff Salaries and Related Costs	£108,372
Councillor Development and Expenses	£325
Office and Administration	£29,437
Loan Repayments	£22,903
Communication and Promotion	£3,075
Neighbourhood Plan	£1,355
Maintenance	£19,270

**Total Expenditure** **£288,130**

### General Fund Analysis

Opening Balance	£81,213
Plus Income	£274,187
Less Expenditure	£288,130
Plus Transfer from Reserves	£14,610

**Closing Balance** **£81,880**

### Governance and Audit

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 set out the responsibilities of all local councils in respect of their accounting and auditing procedures. Each year, the Council's financial accounts and statements are **examined by an independent internal auditor**

appointed by the Council. For the year 2023-2024, this was the Suffolk Association of Local Councils.

The Council is also required to complete an Annual Governance and Accountability Return which includes the findings of the Internal Auditor, together with the Governance Statements and Financial Statements. The Return is submitted to an **independent external auditor** appointed by the Audit Commission for examination.

The Income and Expenditure Account and the Balance Sheet are unaudited at the time of printing but represent fairly the financial position of Saxmundham Town Council as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

## **Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024**

### **Current Assets**

Current Account	£67,798
Savings Account	£82,510
Prepayments	£4,768
VAT Control	£8,331
Debtors	£190

**Total Assets** **£163,597**

### **Current Liabilities**

Creditors	£802
Accruals	£270
Charitable Trusts VAT Control	£3,812

**Total Liabilities** **£4,884**

**Total Assets Less Current Liabilities** **£158,713**

### **Represented By**

General Reserves	£81,880
Capital Replacement Fund	£25,000
Project Improvement Fund	£5,000
Community Infrastructure Levy	£46,833

**Total** **£158,713**

## Registered Assets

The Town Council maintains an **up-to-date register of all assets** owned and maintained on behalf of the community.

The land and buildings element of the asset register includes the Town House, the Memorial Field (including the Skate Park and Youth Booth), and the playgrounds at Seaman Avenue and Chantry Road.

The remainder of the asset register includes the War Memorial in Fromus Square, numerous litter, dog and grit bins, play equipment, noticeboards, signage, two bus shelters, several benches, the South Entrance and North Entrance town signs, hanging baskets, planters, office furniture and equipment, gazebos, Green Team shed and tools, and Chair's regalia. A silver inkstand is on loan to Saxmundham Museum. The Christmas lights are hired each year.



The value of the asset register as at 31 March 2024 was £486,203.

The Market Hall and the Gannon Rooms are held separately by Charitable Trusts of which the Town Council is the Sole Trustee. The Trusts maintain separate asset registers.

**Cllr John Findlay**  
**Resources Committee Chair**

## Staffing

The Town Council is **staffed by a team of six professionals** who are line managed by the Town Clerk. Staffing matters, and the management of the Town Clerk, are delegated by the Resources Committee to the Staffing Sub-Committee which comprises four Councillors.

The Staffing Sub-Committee meets quarterly to consider training and development, performance appraisals, recruitment, and any staffing issues arising. The meetings are lawfully closed to the public for reasons of confidentiality.

**Cllr Elizabeth Clark**  
**Staffing Sub-Committee Chair**

# The Three Tiers of Local Government

## Saxmundham Town Council

The Town Council is the first tier and is therefore closest to Saxmundham's circa 4,800 residents. The Town Council is **responsible for local matters** but has few powers or duties and is not politically controlled.

Councillors meet at full **Council meetings** to democratically ratify, or reconsider, decisions made by its Committees and to consider matters not delegated to Committees. District and County Councillors often attend full Council meetings to report on regional government matters. All Council and Committee meetings are **open to the public** and time is set aside for public participation.

The Town Clerk carries out the instructions of the Council and its Committees, but she also has certain statutory duties as the Proper Officer.

## East Suffolk Council

The District Council is the second tier and has offices in Melton and Lowestoft. It is run by a coalition of the Green Party, Liberal Democrat Party and an Independent Councillor who is none other than Saxmundham's Ward Member, Cllr John Fisher.

The District Council provides a **range of regulatory and community services** and has responsibilities for licensing, business rates, council tax and benefits administration, environmental health and protection, housing and the homeless, nuisance and abandoned vehicles, planning and building control, parking enforcement, sports and leisure facilities, street care and cleaning, tourism, trees and hedges, and the collection of waste.

## Suffolk County Council

The County Council is the third tier and has offices in Ipswich. The Council is under Conservative Party control and Saxmundham is represented by Cllr Richard Smith who is responsible for the Blything Division.

The County Council provides **large, strategic, and county wide services** with responsibilities for highways, public rights of way, public transport, social services, waste and recycling centres, trading standards, registry of births, marriages and deaths, education and school transport, libraries, fire and rescue services, bus passes and disabled parking permits.



# Town Councillors

The Town Councillors were **elected unopposed** for a **four-year term** in an uncontested election held in May 2023. All Town Councillors **live and/or work in Saxmundham** and offer their service **voluntarily and unpaid**.



## **Cllr Di Eastman**

Chair of the Town Council and of the Charitable Trusts. Di is active in the community and is currently Chair of the Friends of Saxmundham Library, Chair of Saxmundham Bowls Club, and a Volunteer Director of SADCIC, who run the Fromus Centre. Di helped to set up IP17 GNS in response to the Covid-19 pandemic in April 2020 and was Chair of Trustees for two years, stepping down from the charity last autumn.



## **Cllr John Findlay**

Vice-Chair of the Town Council and Chair of the Resources Committee. John has extensive experience of local government at national level and served as a magistrate in Hertfordshire and Suffolk for 30 years.



## **Cllr Jeremy Smith**

Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, and of the Market Hall and Gannon Institute Management Committees. Jeremy has years of experience in local government which he is keen to put to good use to improve the town and its amenities for the benefit of the community.



## **Cllr James Sandbach**

Chair of the Events and Communications Committee. James enjoys living in Saxmundham due to its great transport links and vibrant community. He is politically engaged and works professionally in the voluntary sector.



## **Cllr Charlotte Hawkins**

Charlotte joined the Town Council as she is keen to make a positive contribution to the wellbeing of the local community and the long-term development of the area. She volunteers with Station Adopters and the Green Team.

# Town Councillors



## **Cllr Marianne Kiff**

Marianne is active in the Saxmundham community and volunteers with the Community Fridge and Homestart Suffolk supporting families in need. She is particularly interested in education and child welfare.



## **Cllr Tim Lock**

Chair of the Amenities and Services Committee. Tim joined the Town Council as he is passionate about working to make Saxmundham a better place to live and work. He has a lead role in developing the Memorial Field.



## **Cllr Benjamin Gulliford**

Benjamin has had a passion for politics and local democracy from a young age. He supports encouraging young people to be involved in good causes, campaigns, and local decisions that will affect them and their future.



## **Cllr John Fisher**

Chair of the Planning and Development Control Committee. John has served the Town Council for 30 years and has been a District Councillor for almost 10 years. He is concerned with environmental issues and supported leaving The Layers alone to ensure nothing was built on this special area.



## **Cllr Geraldine Barker**

Geraldine was co-opted in December 2023 and has taken a lead role with energy projects. A keen historian, she volunteers with Saxmundham Museum, the local Poppy Appeal and she created the Saxmundham Memorial Trail.



## **Cllr Elizabeth Clark**

Chair of the Staffing Sub-Committee. Elizabeth joined the Town Council as her heart has always been in Saxmundham and she wants to contribute to a community that always made her feel welcome and continues to do.

# The Staffing Team



## **Sharon Smith - Town Clerk/RFO**

The Town Council's qualified Proper Officer with responsibilities for governance, finance, personnel, energy projects, strategy, and oversight. Provides clerical support to the Town Council, Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, and the Resources Committee.



## **Lisa Hamon - Deputy Town Clerk**

Responsible for all aspects of the Town Council's Charitable Trusts – the Market Hall and the Gannon Institute. Assists the Town Clerk and provides clerical support to the Amenities and Services Committee.



## **Jess Palmer - Community Officer**

Responsible for events, communication, markets and community liaison. Provides clerical support to the Events and Communications Committee.



## **Amy Rayner - Environment Coordinator**

Responsible for improving the Town Council's open spaces and meeting its biodiversity duty. Leads the Green Team and the Blue Spaces Team volunteers.



## **Michelle Allen - Assistant Town Clerk**

Responsible for finance administration, Market Hall bookings, and assisting the Town Clerk. Provides clerical support to the Planning and Development Control Committee.



## **Colin Hathway – Caretaker**

General factotum with responsibilities for health and safety and maintaining the Town Council's and Charitable Trust's land and buildings.

# Diary Dates 2024

## **Town Council Meetings**

Second Monday of each month at 7:00pm at the Market Hall.

## **Annual Town Meeting**

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> May at 6:00pm at the Market Hall.

## **Town Council Committee Meetings**

Various dates and times published on the Town House and Market Hall noticeboards, the Town Council website and in this Annual Report.

Meetings are held at the Town House, Station Approach

## **Markets**

Every Wednesday in Fromus Square.

Second Saturday of April to November in Market Hall and Fromus Square.

## **Sax Arts Fest**

Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June at 11:00am to 8:00pm in High Street and Fromus Green.  
High Street road closure in effect from 8:00am to 6:00pm.

## **Stocks Fun Fair**

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June at the Memorial Field.

## **South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood Masterplan**

Public exhibition by the developer expected in June.

Date, time and venue to be confirmed.

## **Sax Music Fest**

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> August at the Memorial Field Noon to 11:00pm.

## **Remembrance Events**

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> November - venue and time to be confirmed.

Road closures will be in effect.

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> November ceremony at the War Memorial, Fromus Square.

## **Christmas Fayre**

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December at 3:00pm to 7:00pm throughout the town centre.

Special event train and Father Christmas arriving at 2:55pm.

Christmas Lights switch-on at 3:45pm.

High Street road closure in effect from Noon to 8:00pm.

Information is correct at the time of printing but may change due to unforeseen circumstances.



## SAXMUNDHAM TOWN COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE 2024/2025

Committee	Town Council	Market Hall Trust	Gannon Institute Trust	Resources Committee	Amenities and Services Committee	Staffing Sub-Committee	Market Hall Management Committee	Gannon Institute Management Committee	Events and Communications Committee
Frequency	Monthly	Bi-Monthly	Bi-Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	Quarterly	Bi-Monthly	Bi-Monthly	Monthly
Schedule	Second Monday at 7:00pm	Second Monday at 9:00pm	Second Monday at 9:00pm	First Tuesday at 12 noon	Third Thursday at 5:30pm	Last Tuesday at 12:30pm	Third Monday at 2:00pm	Third Monday at 3:00pm	First Thursday at 11:30am
MAY	13 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>	28 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>
JUNE	10 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>		4 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>				6 <sup>th</sup>
JULY	8 <sup>th</sup>		8 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	18 <sup>th</sup>		15 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>
AUGUST									
SEPTEMBER	9 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	19 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>
OCTOBER	14 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>		1 <sup>st</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>				3 <sup>rd</sup>
NOVEMBER	11 <sup>th</sup>		11 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	21 <sup>st</sup>	26 <sup>th</sup>	18 <sup>th</sup>	18 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>
DECEMBER	9 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>		3 <sup>rd</sup>	19 <sup>th</sup>				5 <sup>th</sup>
JANUARY	13 <sup>th</sup>		13 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>		20 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>	
FEBRUARY	10 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>		4 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>	25 <sup>th</sup>			6 <sup>th</sup>
MARCH	10 <sup>th</sup>		10 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>		17 <sup>th</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>
APRIL	14 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>		1 <sup>st</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>				3 <sup>rd</sup>

The Town Council and Trust meetings are held in the Market Hall. Committee meetings are held in the Town House.  
The Annual Town Meeting will be held on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024 at 6:00pm at the Market Hall.

## Ways To Keep In Touch

We are conscious of how important it is to **engage with residents** and communicate the work we are carrying out for the benefit of the town.

**Residents are encouraged to contact the Town Council via the following:**

**Email:** [townclerk@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk)

**Phone:** 01728 604595 or 07920 864343

**Post:** The Town House, Station Approach, Saxmundham, IP17 1BW

**Keep up to date with Town Council and Community activities:**

**Website:** Agendas and minutes of all Council and Committee meetings are posted on [saxmundham.org](http://saxmundham.org) as well as regular news, updates and events information. Send community events' notices to [community@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:community@saxmundham-tc.gov.uk) for posting.

**Facebook:** 'Saxmundham Town Council' is a public page. Receive notifications by 'following' us. We also post news to the Facebook group 'Saxmundham – What's Happening?'. 'Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan' also posts regular updates on their Facebook page.

**E-Newsletters:** visit [saxmundham.org](http://saxmundham.org) to sign-up to our regular publication.

**Sax News:** We post articles to this monthly publication which is delivered to most households in Saxmundham. Copies, including back numbers, are also available at the Town House.

**Noticeboards:** Located outside the Town House and the Market Hall.

## Town Councillor Vacancy

If this Annual Report has **inspired you to join** the Town Council to be part of the **democratic process** and **serve your town and community**, there is currently a vacancy for a Town Councillor. The Town Council may co-opt an **eligible candidate** before the next election in May 2027.

Contact the Town Clerk who will explain the process and the eligibility criteria or speak to any Town Councillor. They are a **friendly bunch** who will be happy to discuss the **work and commitment** of a Town Councillor.

## Internship



During the year, the average age of the Town Councillors and staff plummeted for two weeks when we welcomed a local teenager, Alfie, to join us for a two-week **work placement**.

The Town Council was pleased to assist The Prince's Trust and Inspire Suffolk who work with **young people** to help them find their purpose, uncover what they're passionate about, and lead them onto a pathway supporting greater well-being, professional development and personal growth.

Alfie was amazing! He was always willing and cheerful, and performed all his tasks accurately. He demonstrated an interest in, and a surprising depth of understanding about, local government governance.

The Town Council benefited from his up-to-date aptitude for digital technology, he increased diversity in the staffing team, he informed our understanding of the needs of school-leavers entering the workplace, and providing this opportunity for a young local resident gave the Town Council a **sense of well-being**.

The Town Council hopes to have another chance to support Inspire Suffolk to provide another young resident with an opportunity to experience an office environment, learn new skills and knowledge, increase their confidence, and receive a good reference.





Unit 1 & 2  
Hill View Business Park  
Claydon  
IP6 0AJ

Tel: 01473 833713  
Email: [admin@salc.org.uk](mailto:admin@salc.org.uk)  
Website: [www.salc.org.uk](http://www.salc.org.uk)  
VAT number: 825023265

The Trustee  
The Market Hall  
c/o Saxmundham Town Council  
Station Approach  
Saxmundham  
Suffolk  
IP17 1AF

18<sup>th</sup> May 2024

Dear Trustee,

**Independent examination – The Market Hall, Charity No 235072**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity (“the Trust”) for the year ended 31/03/2024.

The Market Hall is a charity set up with the objective:

“A market hall to be used for such useful or benevolent purposes in connection with the town or district of Saxmundham as the Trustees sanction including the user thereof as a court house for magistrates meetings and the county council.”

The Charity’s governing documents are:

- Indenture dated 16 January 1893
- Charity Commission Scheme dated 12 October 1920

The Charity has a sole Trustee, Saxmundham Town Council. Councillors sit in charity meetings as the corporate body. The Market Hall Management Committee is appointed to oversee the operation of the Market Hall and associated refurbishment works and has met regularly during the year. Annual Accounts are presented to the Town Council as sole Trustee.

For the year 2023-2024 the accounts are summarised below:

Income £29,430

Expenditure = £32,907.

Reserves £9,865 (General Reserves £3,644 and Earmarked Reserves £5,688).

Bank balance as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 was £11,392.76.

The 2022/23 Annual Return and accounts were submitted to the charity commission on 29/01/2024, within the deadline for filing.

During the year under review, assets were transferred from the Town Hall into the remit of the Town Hall Trust. Its asset register currently is valued at £21,768.70. The duty to protect charity property extends to the contents of a building such as furniture, equipment and cash, and the charity should have a suitable policy in place to ensure that appropriate insurance is in place to cover the newly “acquired” assets.

*Comment: professional advice should be undertaken prior to the Trust deciding what insurance would be reasonable and what would be in the interests of their charity.*

The Town Council cross charges notional administration charges for the clerking and administration of the trust and management committee.

*Comment: council might wish to review the support costs incurred in the general running of the organisation such as administrative costs which cannot be allocated to the projects supported by the Trust and ensure that they are shared (apportioned) across the town council and trust to ensure longer-term financial sustainability.*

The year-end accounts were examined, and all found to be in order.

I therefore confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a ‘true and fair’ view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

There are no matters which give me cause to believe that in, any material respect, the Trustees have not met the requirements of the Charity Act 2011.

Mrs. Victoria Waples

On Behalf of Suffolk Association of Local Councils

**THE MARKET HALL**

England & Wales - Charity number 235072

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# Accounts

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**Market Hall**  
**SAXMUNDHAM**

# **Market Hall Trust End of Year Report 2021 -2022**



## **Report on the Activities of the Market Hall**

### **Hall Users**

For the first month of the year the Market Hall became the Covid 19 Testing Centre for the Town. In the Spring and Summer of 2021 as restrictions were lifted hirers gradually returned to the Hall. The Trust were pleased to welcome Alde and Blythe Community Radio who took a licence for the Webster room and had a successful year broadcasting to the Town and surrounding areas. Over the year the following organisations used the hall:

- Public Health Suffolk Covid19 Testing Centre
- Saxmundham Horticultural Society
- Alde and Blyth Community Radio
- Sax Jazz
- Elections East Suffolk Council
- Saxmundham Town Council
- East Suffolk U3A
- ESTA
- Active Adults
- IP17 Good Neighbours Scheme
- Keep Fit
- Saxmundham carpet bowls club
- East Suffolk Lib Dems
- Suffolk Coastal Conservative Association
- Mid Wales Geology Club
- The Art Station
- Reed in Partnership
- Snape Maltings
- AA
- Saxmundham Library
- Greener Sax
- Saxmundham PPG
- Access Community Trust
- Creative Core Movement
- Saxmundham Judo Club
- Saxmundham Museum
- East Suffolk Council
- Green Team
- 2 Funeral Services
- 6 Private Parties

In the Autumn Rosie Hoare organised 3 well attended music events and a new makers market was launched at the Christmas shopping event in December. The website was revamped to promote the venue and allow people to book events online.

In January, the Market Hall Trustees improved the kitchen facilities. This would not have been possible without the work of the trustees and the contractor DBS projects. Jen Morcom, the Assistant Clerk worked hard to ensure the venue could reopen safely by creating coronavirus cleaning stations and guidance for users. Judy Chesterfield continued doing an excellent job of cleaning the hall.

The Trust would like to say a particular thank you to the Trustees who gave their considerable expertise for free.

## Below shows the balance sheet for 2021-22.

09/05/2022

Market Hall

13:26

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2022

31st March 2021

31st March 2022

31st March 2021		31st March 2022	
<b>Current Assets</b>			
3,328	VAT Control A/c	3,422	
12,293	Current Bank A/c	9,610	
<u>15,622</u>		<u>13,032</u>	
<b>15,622</b>	<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>13,032</b>	
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
<u>0</u>		<u>0</u>	
<b>15,622</b>	<b>Total Assets Less Current Liabilities</b>	<b>13,032</b>	
<b>Represented By</b>			
15,622	General Reserves	13,032	
<u>15,622</u>		<u>13,032</u>	

The above statement represents fairly the financial position of the authority as at 31 st March 2022 and reflects its Income and Expenditure during the year.

Signed :

Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

Signed :

Responsible  
Financial

\_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

**Below shows the income and expenditure for 2021-22.**

**Market Hall**

**Income and Expenditure Account for Year Ended 31st March 2022**

31st March 2021		31st March 2022
	<b>Operating Income</b>	
46,472	Income	41,397
<u>46,472</u>	Total Income	<u>41,397</u>
	<b>Running Costs</b>	
3,003	Salaries & Staff Expenses	345
8,113	Admin Costs	8,105
31,907	Building Maintenance	25,641
626	Marketing, Events & Publicity	917
<u>43,649</u>	Total Expenditure	<u>35,007</u>
	<b>General Fund Analysis</b>	
6,408	Opening Balance	9,232
46,472	Plus : Income for Year	41,397
52,881		50,629
43,649	Less : Expenditure for Year	35,007
9,232		15,622
0	Transfers TO / FROM Reserves	0
<u>9,232</u>	<b>Closing Balance</b>	<u>15,622</u>

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**Market Hall****Income and Expenditure Account for Year Ended 31st March 2022**

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31st March 2021		31st March 2022
	<b>Operating Income</b>	
46,472	Income	41,397
<u>46,472</u>	Total Income	<u>41,397</u>
	<b>Running Costs</b>	
3,003	Salaries & Staff Expenses	345
8,113	Admin Costs	8,105
31,907	Building Maintenance	25,641
626	Marketing, Events & Publicity	917
<u>43,649</u>	Total Expenditure	<u>35,007</u>
	<b>General Fund Analysis</b>	
6,408	Opening Balance	9,232
46,472	Plus : Income for Year	41,397
<u>52,881</u>		<u>50,629</u>
43,649	Less : Expenditure for Year	35,007
<u>9,232</u>		<u>15,622</u>
0	Transfers TO / FROM Reserves	0
<u>9,232</u>	<b>Closing Balance</b>	<u>15,622</u>



Unit 11a  
Hill View Business Park  
Old Ipswich Road  
Claydon  
Ipswich  
Suffolk  
IP6 0AJ

Tel: 01473 833713  
Email: [admin@salc.org.uk](mailto:admin@salc.org.uk)  
Website: [www.salc.org.uk](http://www.salc.org.uk)  
VAT number: 825023265

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The Trustee  
The Market Hall  
c/o Saxmundham Town Council  
Station Approach  
Saxmundham  
Suffolk  
IP17 1AF

12<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Dear Trustee,

**Independent examination – The Market Hall, Charity No 235072**

2021-22 Income £41,397; expenditure = £35,007; Reserves £15,622

Bank balance as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 was £12,293.17

The Market Hall is a charity set up with the objective:

“A market hall to be used for such useful or benevolent purposes in connection with the town or district of Saxmundham as the Trustees sanction including the user thereof as a court house for magistrates meetings and the county council.”

The Charity’s governing documents are:

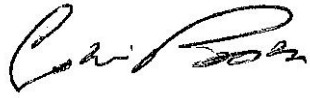
- Indenture dated 16 January 1893
- Charity Commission Scheme dated 12 October 1920

The Charity has a sole Trustee, Saxmundham Town Council. Councillors sit in charity meetings as the corporate body. Two sub groups, the Market Hall Development Group and the Market Hall management Committee work to oversee the operation of the market Hall and refurbishment works.

The 2020/21 Annual Return was submitted 14<sup>th</sup> October 2021, well within the deadline for filing. Note the latest filing date for the accounts for 2021/22 is 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022.

The Town Council provide administration without charge and Annual accounts are presented to the Town Council as sole Trustee.

The year-end accounts were examined and all found to be in order. There are no matters which give me cause to believe that in, any material respect, the Trustees have not met the requirements of the Charity Act 2011.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colin Poole', written in a cursive style.

**Colin Poole**

On Behalf of Suffolk Association of Local Councils

**THE MARKET HALL**

England & Wales - Charity number 235072

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# Accounts

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# Market Hall Trust End of Year Report 2020 -2021



## Report on the Activities of the Market Hall

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of March 2020 the coronavirus restrictions came into place and the hall was closed. During the period of closure, the Market Hall Trustees used this opportunity to improve the facilities and redecorate the main hall and foyer. The electrics were upgraded, the boiler replaced, the floor restored, stage lighting and a new projector were installed. This would not have been possible without the work of the trustees and excellent local tradesman. The Trust would like to say a particular thank you to Rosie Hoare, Ian Scott, Claire Lyth and Carol Cecil who gave their considerable expertise for free as well as Karen Foster and Tim Lock who project managed the works.

Jen Morcom, the Assistant Clerk worked hard to ensure the venue could reopen safely by creating coronavirus cleaning stations and guidance for users. The website was revamped to promote the venue and enable users to make a booking online

The Market Hall was reopened in March as a hub for the coronavirus testing in Saxmundham. This was a welcome boost to funds at a time when other indoor activities were severely restricted. A locally accessible testing centre was helpful to businesses in the Town before lateral flow testing was widely available.



**The Newly Refurbished Hall**



## Market Hall

### Income and Expenditure Account for Year Ended 31st March 2021

31st March 2020		31st March 2021
	<b>Operating Income</b>	
0	Income	46,472
<u>0</u>	<b>Total Income</b>	<u>46,472</u>
	<b>Running Costs</b>	
0	Salaries & Staff Expenses	3,003
0	Admin Costs	8,113
0	Building Maintenance	31,907
0	Marketing, Events & Publicity	626
<u>0</u>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<u>43,649</u>
	<b>General Fund Analysis</b>	
0	Opening Balance	6,408
0	Plus : Income for Year	46,472
0		<u>52,881</u>
0	Less : Expenditure for Year	43,649
0		<u>9,232</u>
0	Transfers TO / FROM Reserves	0
<u>0</u>	<b>Closing Balance</b>	<u>9,232</u>

**The income for 2020-21 included Covid-19 related grants of £12500 from East Suffolk District Council. Grant funding from Saxmundham Town Council of £20,500 and a CIL grant of £7000.**

3 June 2021

Dear Trustee,

**Independent examination – The Market Hall, Charity No 235072**

2020-21 Income £46,472; expenditure = £43,649 Reserves £9,232

Bank balance as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 was £3,739.86

The Market Hall is a charity set up with the objective:

“A market hall to be used for such useful or benevolent purposes in connection with the town or district of Saxmundham as the Trustees sanction including the user thereof as a court house for magistrates meetings and the county council.”

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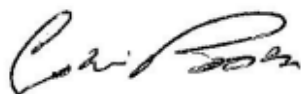
The Charity has a sole Trustee, Saxmundham Town Council. Councillors sit in charity meetings as the corporate body. Two sub groups, the Market Hall Development Group and the Market Hall management Committee work to oversee the operation of the market Hall and refurbishment works.

In 2019/21 income was above the Charity Commission filing threshold for annual accounts and therefore accounts will again need to be submitted. The 2019/20 Annual Return was submitted 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021, which was 31 days past the deadline for filing. Note the latest filing date for the accounts for 2020/21 is 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022.

The Charity had one employee during the year, a Caretaker. All the HMRC requirements have been met with regards to Tax/Ni and pension. The employment terminated at 30/11/2020.

The Town Council provide administration without charge and Annual accounts are presented to the Town Council as sole Trustee.

The year-end accounts were examined and all found to be in order. Except for the late filing, there were no other matters which give me cause to believe that in, any material respect, the Trustees have not met the requirements of the Charity Act 2011.



**Colin Poole**

On Behalf of Suffolk Association of Local Councils

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**Market Hall**

**Income and Expenditure Account for Year Ended 31st March 2021**

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31st March 2020		31st March 2021
	<b>Operating Income</b>	
0	Income	46,472
<u>0</u>	Total Income	<u>46,472</u>
	<b>Running Costs</b>	
0	Salaries & Staff Expenses	3,003
0	Admin Costs	8,113
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0	Less : Expenditure for Year	43,649
<u>0</u>		<u>9,232</u>
0	Transfers TO / FROM Reserves	0
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The Trustee  
The Market Hall  
c/o Saxmundham Town Council  
Station Approach  
Saxmundham  
Suffolk  
IP17 1AF

11a Hill View Business Park  
Claydon  
Ipswich  
Suffolk  
IP6 0AJ

Our ref:  
Your ref:

3 June 2021

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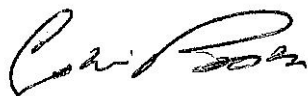
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