



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 8th June.



Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan and the Garden Neighbourhood

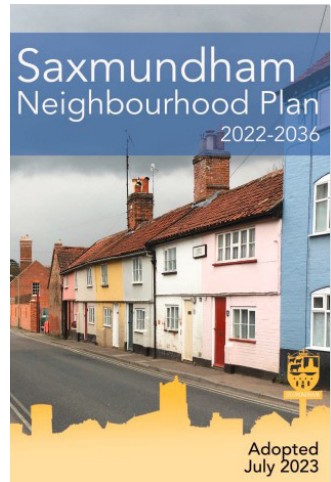
The [Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan](#) was approved and formally made by East Suffolk Council on 26th July. It does require modification to incorporate land in the [South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood](#), which was in Benhall, but is now in Saxmundham following a boundary change. The existence of 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 7th 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.

1st 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.

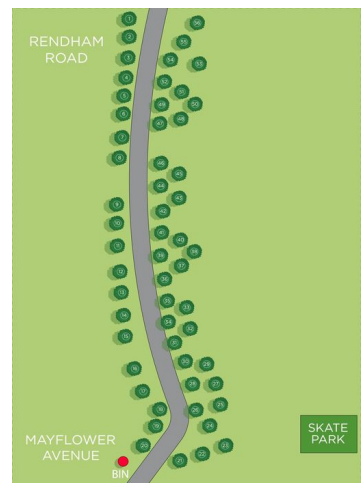
Further improvements are scheduled for the Memorial Field in 2024:

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.



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 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 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.

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.

Town House Archives

During an archiving session, the Town Clerk uncovered a fascinating record from **World War Two** hidden amongst the Town Council's papers.

The **bomb damage record collection** covers the years 1940-1944. Poignantly the records reveal the extensive but minor damage to property incurred due to the extremely dangerous and ill-fated mission of Lt. Joseph Kennedy, elder brother of John F. Kennedy, on 12 August 1944. Kennedy's Liberator aircraft exploded at 2,000 feet, causing widespread damage to properties in Blythburgh, Hinton, Thorington, Walberswick and Wenham.

There are records of damage caused by  mainly crashed United States Airforce (USAF) aircraft, British land mines, Barrage Balloons and the enormous USAF Metfield bomb dump explosion on 15 July 1944 that affected over a hundred properties in Linstead Parva, Chediston, Cookley, Wenhaston and Walpole. The sizeable archive includes details of damage from the feared flying bombs and the major attacks of 25th and 26th August 1942 on Marlesford, Hacheston, Parham and Framlingham.

EASTERN CIVIL DEFENCE REGION
 OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONER
 Telephone No. CAMBRIDGE 3437
 Telegrams: EPRUSSCO; CAMBRIDGE
 REGIS.
 MONTAGUE ROAD,
 CAMBRIDGE.
 Your letter, No. 6/P.
 Your Ref. _____
 The enclosed communication contains
 information regarding the
 22nd October, 1944.
 Dear Sir,
 With reference to the aircraft which
 exploded at 1850 hours on the 12th August,
 causing damage at Blythburgh, Walberwade,
 Bolesey and Thorington, I have to inform
 you that this is to be considered as war
 damage.
 Yours faithfully,
 J. A. Pacey
 Mr. Clerk,
 Blyth Rural District Council,
 Council Offices,
 Newhouse Road,
 BRAMPTONHEATH,
 SUFFOLK.

Local Authority

BATH & NORTH
GLISTON

Form W.D.F. 1 (Part 1)

Part III—Details of War Damaged Properties.

A. Under headings C and D in Part I of summary number 68

(Sheet No. 1.)

Description of Property	Address	Owner's Name	Owner's Name	Estimated Value	Indications of Extent of Damage					Grounds
					Roof	Walls	Floors	Contents	Other	
828. Swilling's house Wentley		L. Freeman.	L. Freeman.	12.						Windows.
829. do do	Hill Top	P. Thomas.	A. Thomas.	7.						Celling.
830. Miller's Shoreham		A. Cuthbert.	A. Cuthbert.	15.						Shoreham.
831. Swilling's Swilling's		P. Cuthbert.	P. Cuthbert.	7.						Celling.
832. do do		R. Kiplinger.	R. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
833. do do		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
834. do do		A. Kiplinger.	A. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
835. do do	St. Michael's.	A. Kiplinger.	A. Kiplinger.	7.						Windows.
836. do do		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
837. do do	Blackthorn.	W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
838. do do		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
839. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
840. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
841. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
842. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
843. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
844. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
845. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
846. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
847. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
848. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
849. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
850. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
851. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
852. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
853. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
854. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
855. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
856. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
857. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
858. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
859. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
860. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
861. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
862. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
863. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
864. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
865. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
866. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
867. Parish Parish		W. Kiplinger.	W. Kiplinger.	7.						Celling.
868. do do										
869. do do										
870. do do										

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10

Comprising two large record books and two boxes of supporting paperwork, the archive provide a **comprehensive record of damaged properties** as well as highlighting another facet of the totality of the war.

Not only were people affected by the loss of loved ones, rationing, shortages, blackouts and travel restrictions, but also the loss and damage to their homes; their place of security in troubled times.

Undoubtedly the archive will be of great interest to family, local, house, and military historians. Documents that relate to villages adjacent to Saxmundham were copied for reference for **Saxmundham Museum** and the archive was deposited with The Hold in Ipswich.

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

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.

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.

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
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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
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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 31st 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
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Current Liabilities

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

Total Liabilities	£4,884
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Total Assets Less Current Liabilities	£158,713
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Represented By

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

Total	£158,713
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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 23rd 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 8th 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 6th to Sunday 9th 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 9th and Saturday 10th August at the Memorial Field Noon to 11:00pm.

Remembrance Events

Sunday 10th November - venue and time to be confirmed.

Road closures will be in effect.

Monday 11th November ceremony at the War Memorial, Fromus Square.

Christmas Fayre

Saturday 7th 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 th	13 th	13 th	7 th	16 th	28 th	20 th	20 th	2 nd
JUNE	10 th	10 th		4 th	20 th				6 th
JULY	8 th		8 th	2 nd	18 th		15 th	15 th	4 th
AUGUST									
SEPTEMBER	9 th	9 th	9 th	3 rd	19 th	10 th	16 th	16 th	5 th
OCTOBER	14 th	14 th		1 st	17 th				3 rd
NOVEMBER	11 th		11 th	5 th	21 st	26 th	18 th	18 th	7 th
DECEMBER	9 th	9 th		3 rd	19 th				5 th
JANUARY	13 th		13 th	7 th	16 th		20 th	20 th	
FEBRUARY	10 th	10 th		4 th	20 th	25 th			6 th
MARCH	10 th		10 th	4 th	20 th		17 th	17 th	6 th
APRIL	14 th	14 th		1 st	17 th				3 rd

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 23rd 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

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 as well as regular news, updates and events information. Send community events' notices to 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 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.





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Website: www.salc.org.uk
VAT number: 825023265

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

18th 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 31st 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