

Swaffham Town Council

Minutes of the Assets & Open Spaces Committee meeting held on Wednesday 28 January 2026 in the Town Hall

Councillors:	L Beech, P Darby (Chairman), G Eves (from 1pm), J Mander, J Skinner (until 14.00pm) and J Zielinski
Non-Committee Councillors:	B Couzins (until 13.27pm)
Deputy Town Clerk:	L Jarrett
Minute Taker:	H Duggan
Works Team Leader:	C Gunner
Public:	Two

AO66/25 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received in advance from C Ellerbeck.

AO67/25 Declarations of interest

None

AO68/25 Public Forum

A member of the public raised concerns regarding the locks on the gates to the Shouldham Lane Allotments via Shoemakers Lane which were proving difficult to open. The Deputy Clerk agreed to advise the Works Manager to investigate and resolve.

A member of the public raised concerns regarding the road by the Water Tower and the deep potholes which were causing concern to Allotment holders.

The Deputy Clerk advised the road had been attended to by NCC Highways however it was confirmed that the potholed area was part of the unadopted road.

ACTION: It was agreed to report to Highway again and consider contacting the local developer to assist with any maintenance costs.

A member of the public felt there were some allotments in an untidy and unkempt state. The Deputy Clerk confirmed that following the regular allotment inspections four allotment plots were recently reallocated, one was empty and two were in the process of being made good, using deposit funding for waste clearance. The next allotment inspection was due at the end of February 26.

AO69/25 Minutes of the Assets & Open Spaces Committee held on 26 November 2025

ACTION: The minutes of the Assets & Open Spaces Committee held on 26 November 2025 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as an accurate record.

AO70/25 Outstanding actions

70.1 Northwell Pool – as requested at the last meeting, it was confirmed by the Deputy Clerk that the restricted road is unregistered.

70.2 Recreation Ground track – The Deputy Clerk agreed to circulate an update following the meeting.

AO71/25 Assets & Open spaces related issues from non-councillors

There were no Assets and Open Spaces issues raised from non-councillors.

The Deputy Clerk advised that a TPO application for 83 Market Place has been received, for information purposes only. It was noted that, if approval was granted by Breckland, the resident would then need to request permission from Swaffham Town Council, which would in turn require a faculty from the Dioceses.

AO72/25 Allotments

72.1 Management report from Deputy Town Clerk

The Deputy Clerk confirmed the last available allotment plot at Shouldham Lane was being allocated. The Tumbler Hill Allotments are now full and there is a waiting list of fourteen applications, eleven of whom are from existing allotment holders asking for additional plots.

72.2 Dogs on leads signage

A request from an allotment holder was received asking for signage to remind the public that the Allotments were 'Private land – for allotment holders only' and to consider additional signage advising 'Dogs to be kept on lead in communal areas'.

ACTION: It was unanimously agreed to obtain quotes for signage 'Private land – for allotment holders only' and 'Dogs to be kept on lead in communal areas'. In the meantime, the office to make signs to put up.

72.3 Report from SCALGA/ Tumbler Hill representative

SCALGA representative not in attendance, no report provided.

72.4 Report from ESCAPE Project representative

The Tumbler Hill representative and Family Action Manager raised a number of queries:

ESCAPE project – Concerns had been received that the ESCAPE Project was closing. The Family Action manager confirmed that ESCAPE will not be closing and that a new manager has been recruited by Family Action. He currently manages the Discovery Garden in Kings Lynn, and he will now also be managing the ESCAPE Project. It will be challenging managing two sites however with the help of the volunteers and service users they will continue to offer the same service including the Horticulture Diploma. The next student cohort is in March 2026.

New National Lottery funding has been applied for however this will take some time to come through. Family Action have successfully been awarded funds to support Autistic Adults across both sites, and a new support worker is being recruited. Family Action are keen to join forces with the Council and community groups to support people in Swaffham and Kings Lynn and, once the new ESCAPE manager has settled into his new role, they would like to open discussions on how they can support the Swaffham Orchard, as there is a pruning section within the Horticulture Diploma.

Concerns were raised regarding the new gate being installed to The Tumber Hill Hub community group.

ACTION: It was agreed the Deputy Clerk and Mayor would meet with the Tumber Hill Hub coordinator to discuss the concerns raised.

Pathways – the track leading to the ESCAPE plot needs levelling.

ACTION: It was agreed to add the levelling of the track down to the ESCAPE project to the Outside Team list which requires hire of a digger.

Car Parking – Concerns were received regarding members of the public using the car park.

The Deputy Clerk stressed this was a case of misinformation and false rumour and would arrange to speak with the previous manager to minimise any further misinformation.

AO73/25 Town Centre

73.1 Public Toilet Working Group update

The Public Toilets Working Group had agreed a draft layout of the proposed toilets. A suggestion was put forward regarding the empty shop – incorporating this into a disabled changing facility. Other ideas included a partition wall to create a base and storage for the new Town Warden. Additionally, it could be used for community use or the market.

Once an agreed layout is given to the architect and drawings created these would then be presented to Full Council.

ACTION: It was agreed the Public Toilets Working Group would reconvene to discuss in full all the suggestions and come up with a final plan that could be given to the architect.

73.2 Buttercross Next Steps report

ACTION: It was unanimously agreed to proceed with the quote to provide a set of 2D plans and 2D elevations of the Buttercross to establish the need for further repairs.

73.3 Town Centre Businesses

ACTION: It was unanimously agreed to circulate the proposed letter to all businesses in town calling for support to keep the town tidy by cleaning litter, cigarette butts and weeds from the front of their businesses.

AO74/25 Open Spaces & Play Areas

74.1 Open spaces, amenity land or buildings to take to Breckland for land transfer

It was noted the Town Clerk would be attending a meeting at Breckland to look at the proposed sites that Breckland would be willing to offer to the Council to purchase. An update would be given following the meeting.

74.2 Play Area Inspections report

Following the recent play area inspections a number of repairs were highlighted that were being completed by the Outside Team. Some repairs were being held up with delivery dates. The S106 funds for the under 8's area was still awaited.

74.3 Orford Road Orchard Charity

Swaffham Orchard - it was noted that there was an Orchard Charity account set up many years ago with Breckland as a Trustee. The Town Clerk completed an annual return to the Charity Commission and would now be contacting Breckland to determine what the charity was established for and whether to continue with it. This would be added to a future agenda.

74.4 Tree Works/Felling of Allotment and Campingland tree

A quote was still expected which will now go to the next meeting for review and agreement.

74.5 Norwich Road Bus Stops

It was noted that Parish Partnership Scheme and Norfolk County Council funding has been agreed to cover the cost of the two new bus stops on the Norwich Road.

AO75/25 Cemetery and Churchyard

75.1 Cemetery Road

After discussing the quote and proposed road repairs, it was acknowledged that a longer-term solution for the cemetery road was needed, as well as additional quotes for comparison.

ACTION: It was agreed to share the initial quote with the NCC Highways engineer for thoughts on the suggested work and how long it may last.

ACTION: It was agreed to continue discussions over the next three months to look at a longer-term solution for the cemetery roads.

ACTION: It was agreed that once a specification was decided upon three quotes would be sought for comparison and agreement at a future meeting.

AO76/25 Defibrillators within Swaffham

The map of defibrillators in Swaffham was shared with the meeting papers, and it was noted that it was not the Council's responsibility to maintain them.

ACTION: It was agreed to add the link to the National Defibrillator Circuit <https://thecircuit.uk/> to the council website.

AO77/25 The Chapel and Town Hall building asset inspection visit

The maintenance work will commence in the spring. The contents of the Chapel are being emptied and moved to the storage unit.

AO78/25 Museum of Swaffham Annual Asset Inspection

A report was circulated prior to the meeting. It was noted the fire doors were now being done, a number of small ceiling cracks had been identified, and these were being monitored. The Deputy Clerk suggested contacting Gressenhall Museum to investigate how they calculate the beam weight allowance.

AO79/25 Goodrick Place request for additional street lighting

It was acknowledged the council no longer held a policy to take on street lighting in the town. and so, the request would be politely declined.

AO80/25 Fountain of Life defibrillator

ACTION: It was unanimously agreed to approve the request from the Fountain of Life to put a new defibrillator at the Barn.

AO81/25 Cllr Ellerbeck feedback regarding disabled toilet regulations

Cllr Ellerbeck was unable to attend the meeting however had circulated information prior to the meeting.

It was noted that the papers did not contain any new information that had not been made available to the council before.

AO82/25 Procurement Policy and Procedures referred from Full Council

Several suggestions were put forward including recommendations by the Town Clerk and a request for works schedules as well as works specifications per project.

It was proposed that each project be managed on a case-by-case basis as each project is different.

ACTION: It was agreed to amend the policy to state that all projects would be managed on a case-by-case basis.

AO83/25 Date of the next meeting

Wednesday 25 March 2026 at 12.30pm to be held in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall.

Meeting closed at 2.08pm

Chairman: _____

Date: _____