

Swaffham Town Council

Minutes of the Assets & Open Spaces Committee meeting held on Wednesday 27 May 2026 in the Town Hall

Councillors:	K Alford, B Couzins (from 1.25pm), P Darby, G Eves, J Mander (Chairman), J Skinner and J Zielinski
Deputy Town Clerk:	L Jarrett
Minute Taker:	H Duggan
Works Team Leader:	C Gunner
Public:	None

AO1/26 Elect a Chairman

Cllr Skinner proposed Cllr Mander, seconded by Cllr Zielinski and agreed by all.

ACTION: It was agreed that Cllr Mander be appointed chair of the Assets and Open Spaces Committee for the coming year.

AO2/26 Elect a Vice-Chairman

Cllr Skinner proposed Cllr Alford, seconded by Cllr Mander and agreed by all.

ACTION: It was agreed that Cllr Alford be appointed vice-chair of the Assets and Open Spaces Committee for the coming year.

AO3/26 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received in advance from Cllr Couzins however he was able to attend the meeting from 1.25pm

AO4/26 Declarations of interest

Cllr Alford registered an interest in agenda item AO9 as an allotment holder.

AO5/26 Public Forum

No members of the public were present.

AO6/26 Minutes of the Assets & Open Spaces Committee held on 25 March 2026

ACTION: The minutes of the Assets & Open Spaces Committee held on 25 March 2026 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as an accurate record.

AO7/26 Outstanding actions

Allotment Tree

An additional quote is required for the tree at Four Acres allotment site.

Town Planters

This is on the agenda for discussion.

Cemetery

TTSR plans for the cemetery have been placed on hold for the time being.

AO8/26 Assets & Open spaces related issues from non-member councillors

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

AO9/26 Allotments9.1. Management report from Deputy Town Clerk

The Deputy Clerk reported the waiting list is currently six at Shouldham Lane, six at Tumbler Hill and three with no site preference. Some were looking for second plots.

9.2. Plot Holder letter regarding rats

A notice to quit had been received from an allotment plot holder regarding the resurgence of rats. It was acknowledged that poor housekeeping of chickens played a significant part in encouraging the rats.

ACTION: It was agreed to reissue the allotment housekeeping rules for the upkeep of birds and to minimise rat infestations.

9.3. Report from SCALGA representative

SCALGA representative not in attendance, no report provided.

9.4. Report from Tumbler Hill representative

The Tumbler Hill representative was not in attendance, however provided the following report in advance: "I can report that I think our site is doing really well. There's lots of new plot holders who are working hard and making neglected plots into good growing spaces. It's lovely to see lots busy and plots being used to grow in many different ways. I believe since you have kept on top of those who are not working plots there's been a big change. Escape I hear is doing great. Unfortunately, I haven't had time to see Gary much, but it looks very tidy and hear great things about singing and laughter coming from there."

9.5. Report from ESCAPE Project representative

ESCAPE Project representative not in attendance, no report provided.

AO10/26 Town Centre10.1. Buttercross 2D survey results

The results showed a flat ground level with no movement which was good.

The painting of the columns was recognised as a next step to maintaining the Buttercross.

ACTION: It was agreed to add the painting of the Buttercross columns to the programme of works.

10.2. Quotes received for self-watering planters and lamp post planters

Cllr Alford gave a brief update on her plans to engage community groups to work together to enter Swaffham in Bloom in 2027.

The quotes were discussed and as long as the planters would be charged as capital expenditure it was proposed to proceed with the quotes given.

ACTION: It was agreed to issue the poster to local businesses for sponsorship.

ACTION: It was agreed to proceed with the quote to purchase eight Pagoda hanging baskets at £133.18 each and four Tower Planters at £434.40 each.

- 10.3. Tender for Public Toilet renovation – planning approval dependent
The Deputy Clerk gave a brief outline of the tender process timeline advising that the September Asset & Open Spaces meeting would be the earliest meeting in which to discuss and agree the tenders received.

ACTION: It was agreed to prepare a running cost and income analysis of the Public Toilets for information.

ACTION: It was agreed to proceed with the Tender process and to receive tenders back to discuss at the September meeting.

- 10.4. Additional Vehicle Activated Sign
Committee members were keen on the potential of a new sign at a cost of £3,487 using possible Parish Partnership Funding, which would reduce the cost to the council by 50%.

ACTION: It was agreed to defer the decision until the opening of the Parish Partnership Bids later in the year.

AO11/26 Open Spaces & Play Areas

- 11.1 Play Area Safety Inspection reports
No major issues, a couple of incidents had been reported including the tyre swing which the works team would be looking to rectify.

- 11.2 Quote for replacement parts Hurricane Swing – Recreation Ground

ACTION: It was agreed to purchase the replacement parts for the Hurricane Swing at the Recreation Ground at a cost of £550.52.

- 11.3 Quote for replacement roundabout – Merryweather

ACTION: It was agreed, with one abstention, to purchase a new roundabout for Merryweather Road playing area at a cost of £2,200.

- 11.4 Tree work quote relating to the annual Tree Report

ACTION: It was agreed to obtain another comparative quote before taking to full council for review and decision

- 11.5 Request from Fountain of Life to use open spaces during August for family fun days

ACTION: It was agreed to allow Fountain of Life to use Orford Road playing area on 4 Aug 26 and Swans Nest on 25 Aug 26 for family fun days

- 11.6 Swaffham Footpath 62

ACTION: It was agreed to remove some of the gate to improve access for pushchairs and disability vehicles.

AO12/26 Cemetery and Churchyard

- 12.1 Chapel and Town Hall building asset inspection visit and related works
The painting and maintenance to the chapel doors is now completed. The Town Clerk is now looking to get the chapel roof checked as there may be a leak. The windows at the Town Hall are due to be painted and the carpets are being laid this week.

- 12.2 Cemetery Chapel rental for wake/service in light of non-domestic rate advice

Confirmation has been received that renting out the Chapel would not adversely affect the rates. The proposal is to engage the local Funeral Directors to offer the Chapel for hire for wakes, non-denominational services etc.

ACTION: It was unanimously agreed to advertise the Chapel for hire to create a new revenue stream for the council.

12.3 Internal decoration of the Chapel

With agreement to hire out the Chapel it was proposed that some internal decoration, repainting and cleaning is needed first.

ACTION: It was unanimously agreed to undertake some internal decoration of the Chapel before offering it out for hire.

12.4 New noticeboard at the Cemetery

The proposal is to replace the existing noticeboard at the cemetery with a similar noticeboard to the one in the town, powder coated metal with ornate filigree, to be sited by the new pathway at the entrance to the cemetery.

ACTION: It was unanimously agreed to purchase an A1 size aluminium noticeboard with metal not wooden posts for longevity at a cost of £595.

12.5 Reports of rats in St Peter and St Paul's Churchyard

It was noted that last year the council put up posters asking people not to feed the ducks as this encouraged the rats.

ACTION: It was agreed to update the posters about not feeding the ducks which in turn encourage the rats.

AO13/26 The Chapel and Town Hall building asset inspection visit

The maintenance work will commence in early April when the weather improves. This will include clearing out the guttering and repainting the windows. It was also noted that there were two front windows and the porch columns were in need of repair and repainting.

ACTION: It was agreed to obtain a quote for the repairs and repainting to the windows at the museum.

AO14/26 Commercial Land

ACTION: It was agreed to defer this item to Full Council in June 26.

AO15/26 Proposed Crocus development (planning app. 3PL/2023/0441/F) off Sporle Road.

It was noted that the planning consent is date 27 Feb 2026 This means that the long stop date for commencing the development is 26 Feb 2029. The implication for the play areas money.

It was recognised that S106 agreements and the lengthy timeline involved for receipt of monies was perhaps not fully understood.

Crocus Homes met with the council three years ago at the early approval stages of the planning process and the council were asked to stipulate what they would like to use S106 monies for and where. The U8's play area at the Recreation Ground was chosen.

The planning application was approved on 27 February 2026, giving the developers a further three year window (to 26 February 2029) to start the development.

S106 monies are only released when a certain percentage of the development has been completed and sold.

ACTION: It was agreed to ask Crocus Homes to meet with the council to discuss the S106 monies and the U8's play area and to see what could be worked out.

2.00pm Cllr Eves left the meeting.

AO16/26 Swimming Pool land off Turbine Way in light of the statement by the Breckland Planning Officer, Simon Wood, that Breckland Council would not be carrying forward any sports and leisure development of this land within the 2023 agreement period

There was debate around who actually owns the land - Swaffham Town Council or Breckland District Council.

ACTION: It was agreed to confirm the ownership of the land before further discussions could be held on what to do with it.

2.10pm Cllr Eves rejoined the meeting.

AO17/26 Former Sacred Heart School swimming pool

ACTION: It was agreed to prepare costings to refurbish and operate the swimming pool for before further discussions could be held on the future of the swimming pool.

AO18/26 Correspondence

18.1. Email regarding "No Mow May"

ACTION: It was agreed to review areas around the town to leave to rewild.

AO19/26 Date of the next meeting

Wednesday 29 July 2026 at 12.30pm to be held in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall.

Meeting closed at 2.20pm

Chairman: _____

Date: _____