



Seaford Town Council

Minutes of a Meeting of Seaford Town Council's Full Council on Thursday 23 October 2025

Held at The View, Seaford Head Golf Course, Southdown Road, Seaford, BN25 4JS at
7.00pm

Present:

Councillors M Wearmouth (Mayor) and L Stirton (Deputy Mayor)

Councillors S Adeniji, L Boorman, C Bristow, S Dubas, S Dunn, F Hoareau, O Honeyman,
J Lord, S Markwell, O Matthews, J Meek, G Rutland, R Stirton and I Taylor

Steve Quayle, Town Clerk

Darryl Keech, Deputy Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer

Peter Cousin, Head of Place

Georgia Raeburn, Senior Committee Clerk

There were 68 members of the public in attendance.

The Mayor advised that, due to the level of public attendance and substantial interest in two agenda items (items 12 and 14), there would be a revision to the order that the items of business are taken in. The minutes therefore reflect the order in the meeting itself, rather than the agenda order.

C58/10/25 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Buchanan, R Honeyman and L Wallraven.

C59/10/25 Disclosure of Interests

Councillor S Dubas disclosed that she was a member of the Seaford Town Football Club Working Group.

Councillor C Bristow made a statement following assertions on social media and by email that she has a possible conflict in relation to Seaford Town Football Club. Councillor Bristow confirmed that she stopped working with Crouch Concerns when elected.

Furthermore, she has sought guidance and advice from Lewes District Council's Monitoring Officer and does not believe she has a live conflict of interest.

C60/10/25 Petitions

There were no petitions presented at this meeting.

(The Mayor confirmed that public participation would be split into two sections – firstly relating to Seaford Town Football Club and secondly relating to any other items of business or Town Council activities)

C61/10/25 Public Participation on Seaford Town Football Club

Working Group Report

In advance of the public participation, the Town Clerk made a statement summarising; the Town Council's (STC) appreciation of the beneficial community role and activities of Seaford Town Football Club (STFC), the history of The Crouch as a recreation ground, and all activities onsite being subject to the discretionary permission of STC, the activities STFC carry out onsite that STC already facilitates and supports, an overview of the recommendations of the STFC Working Group in relation to advertising, gates closures and emergency exit solutions, and there being no proposed changes to the arrangements onsite with floodlights.

The Town Clerk stressed that there is no suggestion the Working Group wishes to 'damage' or 'close down' STFC as has been stated, and there is no suggestion that STC wants to 'sell off the land for housing' as has been suggested on social media. On the contrary, the Town Council is actively exploring designating the land under 'Fields in Trust' status, which would mean it would be legally barred from ever being built on in the future. STC has received many expressions of support for the 'balanced and proportionate proposals' being recommended by the Working Group. It has also received a significant number of expressions of dissatisfaction. Whatever the outcome of tonight's debate and decision, the Town Council will continue to work hard to balance the needs and wishes of STFC, the neighbours of the Crouch and the wider Seaford community.

In advance of welcoming public participation, the Mayor confirmed that councillors have received copies of all written submissions received relating to this agenda item and will be able to take these into consideration when discussing the item.

Speaker	Statement
<i>Resident A</i>	<i>Expressed their support for and recognition of what STFC does. Shared their concerns relating to STFC repeatedly taking more than they have been given permission for, as shown by the three items on tonight's agenda. Queried why,</i>

	<p><i>as a member of the public, they should have to look at the adverts on public land not owned by STFC and why the adverts cannot just be displayed during matches, and why they should have to find locked gates blocking rights of way and the gates not being manned as they should be.</i></p> <p><i>Confirmed their support of the floodlight proposals to have these used in line with planning permission. Expressed concerns around abusive social media comments received. Welcomed the working group's recommendations.</i></p>
<i>Resident B</i>	<p><i>Clarified the situation with the adverts, the retrospective planning permission and STC's right to not permit the adverts. Stated that STFC does do a great job in a number of areas but has breached planning laws, byelaws, licensing laws and failed to maintain the club's roof as they were required to do so. Shared concerns around behaviours witnessed and false accusations made. Stressed the importance of The Crouch being a public park, not owned by STFC. Confirmed that the Football Association had confirmed STFC having over £100,000 income per year. Supported the statement that STC had issued on this matter.</i></p>
Town Council Response	<p>The Mayor reminded public speakers to address the Mayor as Chair of the meeting and keep statements on point.</p>
<i>Resident C</i>	<p><i>Representing STFC's Committee, gave an over of the activities of STFC; providing a safe and supportive environment for vulnerable members of the community, volunteers dedicating countless hours to ensure the best possible for the youth of the town, leading the Walmer Road project (the lease for the pavilion, refurbished building and refreshments area) and the external funding achieved through collaborative working. Confirmed STC's mission statement and strategic objectives and queried how the proposals aligned with the mission statement and objectives, having not formally consulted with STFC. Shared concerns that the views of Crouch Concerns had influenced the</i></p>

	<p><i>proposals more than the wider public that STFC represent.</i></p> <p><i>Took the meeting through the individual proposals in an attempt to show the impact on STFC – appreciating the floodlight proposal, but having concerns around the adverts and the financial implications of the 37 adverts being required to be removed between matches and the impact of this on a community-based, grassroots club.</i></p> <p><i>(the four minute time limit was met)</i></p>
<i>Resident D</i>	<p><i>As a line of generations of youth coaches since World War Two, confirmed that STFC must be the largest youth organisation in Seaford, something that must be borne in mind when weighing up interests, in particular when impacting young people. Urged STC to remember the demand that coaching and volunteering with STFC places on those individuals, and hopes that more energy isn't going to be demanded.</i></p>
<i>Resident E</i>	<p><i>Representing STFC's Committee, confirmed that the working group's recommendations have a serious and lasting financial impact on STFC and young people. As a non-profit volunteer run organisation with 600 players, confirmed that every pound raised is reinvested directly into the community. Confirmed that the sponsorship received from the pitch side adverts helps to keep football affordable and ensure that children are not priced out. Confirmed that STC having previously only allowed 37 adverts despite planning permission being given for 50, is already a reduction of 26% potential sponsorship revenue. The offer to sponsors of only advertising during matches is commercially less attractive than that of other clubs and would create an immediate funding gap for STFC. Confirmed that the intercom proposal would only add more pressure due to ongoing maintenance and the risk of vandalism. From an accounting perspective, this proposal would be financially irresponsible, unnecessary and unsustainable. Feels that the question is whether STC</i></p>

	<i>wants to support grassroots sports and, if so, urged STC to pause the process and work with STFC.</i>
<i>Resident F</i>	<p><i>As Vice Chair of STFC, queried when STC would stop treating STFC as a problem and start celebrating STFC – its youth and all inclusive teams, and over 500 players playing multiple times per week. Explained why the proposals are so damaging to STFC and serious concerns around the procedural issues in the process and the lack of consultation with STFC. Confirmed that following a complaint from STFC to STC about the lack of engagement with the working group, STC promised that STFC would be involved but this has not happened. Raised concerns about a member of the working group having campaigned against STFC and queried who on the group was representing the interests of STFC.</i></p> <p><i>Summarised the points that STFC would have made, had they been consulted with. Gates - the intercom proposal would be a significant unbudgeted expense and at risk of vandalism. STFC has only received two requests for the gates to be opened to date. Adverts – these are higher in value if advertised generally and therefore STFC would have to put player fees up by £50 per year to offset this.</i></p> <p><i>Queried what has happened to the £350,000 S106 monies from the Newlands development. Urged STC to stop treating STFC like a naughty child and reject the recommendations from the working group.</i></p>
<i>Resident G</i>	<p><i>As Chair of STFC and speaking on behalf of a club that has supported the community for decades, not just with sport but with wellbeing, inclusion and opportunities for all ages and abilities. Explained the benefits that playing for STFC has on younger people, including her own children, with confidence growth, staying active, making friends, feeling a part of something, and having a sense of purpose, pride and inclusion. Similarly, for all players, the sessions provide mental health, physical wellbeing and social inclusion. For</i></p>

	<p>women and girls, STFC provides a safe empowering space in a male-dominated environment.</p> <p>Raised serious concerns about the formation of the working group without any consultation with STFC and her alarm at the recommendations being considered in such a formal setting that will directly influence STFC's future. Confirmed that STFC is not against scrutiny but expects fairness, transparency and inclusion in decisions that affects the people STFC serves. Urged STC to halt any further action from the working group until proper consultation is carried out with all relevant stakeholders at the table including STFC.</p>
Resident H	<p>Confirmed that without STFC and their all-inclusive teams, his great-grandchildren wouldn't be where they are now. Read aloud an extract from STC's website relating to its approach to partnership working. Invited councillors to visit The Crouch on match days and get a feel for the style of STFC and the positive impact it has on the community. Offered to share presentations outlining STFC's future ambitions, for which the S106 contribution would be a valuable resource for the football community. Requested that councillors ensure collaboration with STFC and asked how Crouch Concerns, a minority group, has been able to influence these proposals.</p>
Town Council Response	<p>The Mayor thanked all speakers for their input, which provided a true feeling of value for STFC and their role played in community, balanced with the need to be fair to other parts of community.</p>

(The Mayor confirmed that agenda item 14 would be brought forward)

C62/10/25 Seaford Town Football Club Working Group

Recommendations – Gates, Floodlights & Adverts

Full Council considered report 87/25 presenting the recommendations of the Seaford Town Football Club Working Group in relation to the use of the floodlights, closure/locking of the gates and display of adverts by the Football Club within The Crouch.

The Chair of the Working Group (WG) introduced the report, thanking those councillors on the group for their attendance, discussion and debate to reach the recommendations put in front of Full Council.

Members discussed; allowing a gap at the end of the season to review the fence/adverts, any thoughts around the logistics and impact of removing adverts after games, separate conversations about a new fence to be installed, positive outside body meetings with STFC, why STFC has not been staffing the gates during matches including during last weekend's match, an opportunity to utilise the S106 monies and find alternative land for a football pitch, finding a balance between the law and supporting STFC, the importance of listening to both sides, urging STFC to utilise its ward councillors as points of contact, and concerns around the financial implications for STFC and more time needed to prepare for this. Councillor C Bristow made a statement in relation to claims that she has a conflict in this item.

The Town Clerk confirmed the situation with the S106 monies, which are held by Lewes District Council (LDC). STC has no decision-making power over this money; it is entirely up to LDC. For the first five years these were set aside for the provision of a 'new' sports pitch in Seaford. For the next two years these can also be used on a 'new' sports pitch in the LDC coastal strip.

After this, the funds can be used to improve football pitches in The Salts and The Crouch. Over the past summer, STC officers requested LDC consider using its discretion to expedite the process to this stage so it can now be used for improving facilities at The Salts and The Crouch, and are currently awaiting a response.

C62.1 It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the contents of the report.

C62.2 It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** Seaford Town Football Club's continued use of the floodlights in accordance with the planning permission LW/22/0739, subject to STFC informing STC in advance when the lights are to be used.

C62.3 It was **RESOLVED** that, in accordance with Seaford Town Football Club's lease and subject to advertising consent LW/22/0740, the Town Council **APPROVES** the continued display of adverts on the football stand until 7 August 2028.

C62.4 It was **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** that the Town Council's Inspector (or suitable other officer, as required) will undertake a weekly inspection of the adverts fixed to the pitch side barriers and metal infill barriers and, where any areas are deemed to represent a health and safety risk, the Town Council will require Seaford Town Football Club to remove the danger within 24 hours. If the removal is not undertaken within 24 hours, the Town Council will arrange for the

work to be carried out themselves and will recharge Seaford Town Football Club for the cost of this action.

C62.5 It was **PROPOSED** to delegate to officers to consult with Seaford Town Football Club on implementing recommendation 2b3 of report 87/25 and then report back to Full Council with a set of proposals; this **MOTION** was **CARRIED**.

C62.6 It was **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** that the Town Council understands that gates have to be shut during matches to comply with Football Association rules and are content to allow this to continue, only during the period of matches where the gates are required to be locked closed by the football league.

C62.7 It was **PROPOSED** to include the arrangements of recommendations 2c2, 2c3, 2c4, 5.1 and 5.2 of report 87/25 in the consultation with Seaford Town Football Club (as above for 2b3) and then report back to Full Council with a set of proposals; this **MOTION** was **CARRIED**.

(8.32pm to 8.43pm – a short break was held, 55 members of the public left)

C63/10/25 Public Participation on any other items of business

Speaker	Statement
<i>Resident I</i>	<i>In relation to agenda item 17, thanked the councillors that had supported the request for an exception to the pause on the Memorials Policy. Confirmed that her father, Jon Freeman, had spent 40 years in the town – serving on the town, district and county councils, as Mayor of Seaford, as a governor for schools, raising funds for mental health charities, campaigning for youth facilities, and chairing local groups. Shared that her father had always wanted a bench in the town as Seaford was his passion – this would be a lasting memory for the family of something that he loved so much.</i>
Town Council Response	Thanked the resident for this contribution.
<i>Resident J</i>	<i>In relation to item 12, expressed their disappointment at the proposals for Hope Gap Steps, which form an essential part of the landscape. Posed that whilst the Coastguard said there is no requirement for the steps for public safety, that is not to say that there's no benefit especially in light of the ever-increasing number of visitors. Read aloud a quote from</i>

	<p><i>the report. Pointed to examples of similar rescues that have featured on TV programmes, including in Seaford. Believes it is a spurious argument to say that the special ecological nature severely limits what can be done onsite. Highlighted that the University of Sussex's report on the platform erosion at Hope Gap Steps shows machinery being used onsite and this not causing irreversible damage to nature. Expressed concerns that the report suggests an aggressive collapse scenario soon and the risks that this would pose to beach users. Queried that Option C of the report must include demolition of the steps and therefore there is a cost, and why there is no option to explore external funding. Confirmed that a resident had started a petition on this yesterday and that 1,200 people had signed in 24 hours. Urged the Town Council to vote to defer the decision and instruct officers to actively explore other solutions.</i></p>
Resident K	<p><i>In relation to item 12, urged the Town Council to defer the decision on Hope Gap Steps and look at a much cheaper, less impactful option with less need for hard engineering, as seen at Birling Gap. Offered to submit proposals with photos and an engineers input to back this up. Urged the Town Council to consider a new Option D – defer.</i></p>
Resident L	<p><i>In relation to item 13, shared their confusion with regards to the revised strategy and the perception of this as a list of projects for the next two years. Expressed concerns about the lack of recognition of major challenges that lie ahead for Seaford in the coming years. Felt that the previous strategy sought to preserve the character of Seaford and develop it. Shared three challenges that they have identified – firstly, the emerging Lewes Local Plan and knock on effect on access to services, traffic congestion, increased pollution but no increase on infrastructure. Linked to this is the Seaford Neighbourhood Plan that needs amendment but has no mention in the strategy. Secondly, the huge increase in</i></p>

	<p><i>tourism but with no mention in the strategy to suggest how the town benefits. Thirdly, Local Government Reorganisation and the strategy having no mention of how this could affect the town. Expressed concerns that local democracy is likely to wither away and STC must be prepared to lobby on the town's behalf and be its local champion. Urged that the strategy must have provision to identify risk to the town, allow flexibility to react and be able to identify opportunities.</i></p>
Resident M	<p><i>In relation to item 12, stressed that education is paramount with the local primary and secondary schools. Hope Gap Steps has got rock pools and marine life second to none. Agrees that there should be another option to defer and not lose the steps – option H for hope.</i></p>
Resident N	<p><i>In relation to item 13, offered to read aloud the remainder of resident L's statement. Shared their dismay that some of the previous strategy was deemed to be outside of the Town Council's ability or competency. Reminded that the Town Council is not a rural parish, it serves a medium town, with a population of 27,000, over £2million in its bank account and is the largest landowner within Seaford.</i></p> <p><i>In relation to item 11, and linked to a Freedom of Information request handled, queried if the terms of reference for South Hill Barn Working Group could be better published. Queried if a change in terms of reference would have any impact on the new strategy programme.</i></p> <p><i>In relation to item 13, queried how much levy would be paid to the County Council if a trial of pay and display was run at South Hill Barn. Requested that the traffic survey also include Chyngton Way as this is also impacted by the parking issues onsite, as well as including an ancient bridleway, national cycle route and L'Avenue Verte Paris to London bike ride. Queried if the weekend cover for the seafront in the strategy programme could also cover South Hill Barn and the Seaford Head Estate/Nature Reserve. Confirmed that there is a duty</i></p>

	<i>of care to visitors in the area, as shown by the coroner's verdict of death by misadventure following a student falling to their death from the cliffs in June 2017.</i>
Town Council Response	The Mayor thanked all speakers for their contributions.

(The Mayor confirmed that agenda item 12 would be brought forward)

C64/10/25 Options for Hope Gap Steps

Full Council considered report 93/25 presenting the options for Hope Gap Steps and setting out the recommended option for consideration by Full Council.

Members discussed the project at Birling Gap and the option of a feasibility study for a smaller solution, the current need to keep the steps closed for health and safety reasons, the metal steps installed at Cow Gap, possible constructive and collaborative conversations the Town Council can have once within the National Nature Reserve, any benefits of the Town Council putting a brief on Find a Tender and reviewing what is received, the logistical concerns of physically carrying out the work onsite, the need to look at external funding available, the impact of the significant number of visitors on the ecology and the value of the biodiversity on the foreshore, the balance getting people into nature with preserving nature, the lack of costings for a pile structure within the report, the requirement for permission to undertake work, the estimated costs to get an engineer's survey with a fully costed option, the need to think about the coastal strip in its entirety, and the strength of public opinion to maintain the search for solutions.

C71.1 It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the contents of the report.

C71.2 It was **PROPOSED** to agree that Hope Gap Steps remain closed and officers produce a brief on the steps which is put out to tender to receive quotes from competent consultant engineers to identify costed options, and bring this back to Full Council within six months; the **MOTION** was **CARRIED**.

(9.37pm to 9.50pm - a short break was held, 13 members of the public left)

*(9.50pm – it was **PROPOSED** to **SUSPEND** Standing Order 3q to allow the meeting to extend beyond three hours; the **MOTION** was **CARRIED**. Recognising that the remainder of the agenda could not be covered given the lateness of the hour, the Mayor would work with the Town Clerk to identify those priority items of business that needed to be carried out)*

(The Mayor confirmed that agenda item 17 would be brought forward)

C65/10/25 Memorial Policy - Exception to Pause Request October 2025

Full Council considered report 88/25 seeking approval from Full Council for an exception to be made to the hold on the Memorial Policy.

Members thanked the public for their contribution on this matter.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** an exception to the pause on the Memorial Policy to allow a memorial bench in recognition of the late Jon Freeman's contribution to the town of Seaford.

(The Mayor confirmed that agenda item 16 would be brought forward)

C66/10/25 Chyngton Brooks – New Path and Associated Bench and Planting

Full Council considered report 89/25 seeking approval, in principle, from the Town Council for a new path and associated furniture and planting on Seaford Town Council land.

Members discussed whether a bird hide had been requested noting that the planning application has been submitted. Members were reminded of the impact of non-resolution actions on officer time.

C66.1 It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE**, subject to planning permission, the new path and associated bench and planting across Seaford Town Council land.

C66.2 It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Town Council adopting ownership of the new bench, fences and gates.

(The Mayor confirmed that agenda item 5 would be considered)

C67/10/25 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the following minutes:

C64.1	Assets & Facilities	16 July 2025
C64.2	Extraordinary Full Council	11 September 2025
C64.3	Finance & General Purposes	19 March 2025
		25 September 2025
C64.4	Golf, Open Spaces & Climate Action	18 September 2025
C64.5	Planning & Highways	4 September 2025

		2 October 2025
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(The Mayor confirmed that agenda item 13 would be brought forward)

C68/10/25 Strategic Plan Refresh – Draft STC Strategy Programme 2025 - 2027

Full Council considered report 95/25 seeking approval from Full Council to replace the Strategic Plan 2023 - 2027 with a newly created draft STC Strategy Programme 2025 – 2027.

Members discussed the process for individual approvals of the goals, how to handle where there is a crossover of committees, and the presence of tourism throughout the plan.

Members raised possible inclusions in future iterations of the strategy including long term management of The Crouch, health facilities in the town, the option of working towards green flag status within the Town Council's parks, and any need for a new management framework for urban open spaces to ensure parity and consistency across policies and operationally.

(10.19pm - Councillor S Adeniji exited the meeting)

C68.1 It was **RESOLVED** to **RELINQUISH** the existing Strategic Plan 2023 – 2027.

C68.2 It was **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** the draft STC Strategy Programme 2025 – 2027.

(10.22pm – Councillor S Adeniji rejoined the meeting)

The Mayor confirmed that the remainder of the agenda items would be adjourned to an Extraordinary Full Council meeting to be arranged.

The meeting closed at 10.22pm.

Councillor M Wearmouth

Mayor of Seaford

POST MEETING NOTE: An Extraordinary Full Council meeting has now been arranged for Tuesday 25 November to consider the items of business that Full Council did not have time to consider during this meeting.