

## Minutes of MEC meeting with Caroline Topping held on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at The Mayfly

**Present:** Caroline, Christine (chair), Andy Beale (co-chair), Tess Gandy and Janet Craig (ESC Councillors), John Ellerby, Harry Grainger, Kinsey, Stevie Sheppard, Liz, Sarah McGeady, Rachael Solomon, Susan (note-taker), Joe

**Apologies for absence:** Debbie Ray

Minutes	Action
Andy introduced - people came into his shop saying 'what a wonderful high st' but lots of issues, need to have a flourishing High St when the Town Hall is finished.	
Tess: need to have introductions - need to know who we are working with.	
Caroline Topping: leader of ESCouncil. Came to meet a small number of people, then did a street walk with other councillors "I haven't got a magic wand but I can perhaps help direct you" Really appreciate being invited to talk to you,	
Open up to questions  Rachael Solomon: Resident - parking exemptions, no longer available. Told only in place because of Covid. No parking exemptions now. Copy of email Why were they stopped? No consultation, only came into place recently and parking has been restricted. We want residents' parking and one-way enforced. Stevie: historically it was looked at but SCC said that too many  Tess Gandy: SCC is responsible and so you need to raise this with your Suffolk CCouncillors. Need to report on the SCC too, East Suffolk enforce the parking and the markings.  Caroline - take Rachael's email and will respond ESC have taken away the exemptions and Caroline will find out why. Liz: why can't we have residents' parking? SCC - responsible for markings and traffic regulations; residents' parking permits and Road traffic order costs £10K  John: MEC is the organisation that could take this up on behalf of residents A SCC councillor does come to meetings.	

Susan: cycle stands - SCC James Reeder and Ryan have not responded when corresponded with over cycle stands. We always fall through the middle in terms of shared responsibilities of two councils.

Andy: would be better if there was a manager who represented the High St who we could go to as the first point of call.

Caroline: We used to have the HAZ manager who could respond - maybe we could have an alternative or replacement.

John: it is not about councils or councillors - it is the question of bringing together interested parties

MEC came out of the HAZ - it was their remit to bring about a local group.

Work with councils - group of really interested people: members of the community and councillors and officers

Andy: wholehearted support for John

Susan: HAZ officer was really successful - 2-way communication

Caroline: remit sent by MEC

Caroline gave out numbers of contacts for different issues

Christine: Crown Hotel minutes not received

Jess checked with Jess who said "what notes?" - seems like a circular argument

Caroline: illegal properties

Caroline not aware of Bayfields, Light bulb shop

Harry: highlights what goes on with the High Street - Police broke in and now only a small padlock and a dilapidated building - 'broken windows'

Susan: how come ESC don't know about the Bayfield and what's gone on and what might be done? It will be another derelict property on the High Street with owners absent. Plus, Police not taking responsibility - back open but no-one cares.

Jess: Police response has been good but only in LRN and not here on the High Street. Supposed to be doing patrols.

John Sheaf proposals - Peterborough people did not consult. Total waste of money. Pls don't pursue.

Caroline - you know the street, you need to tell us what you want and not tell you. We need to come together with different people and different views

John: Big ideas but don't know what people think this 'vibrant' high street means nor how it should be take forward. We need a unified vision/perspective. We want to support you and you to support this

Andy: important that the council are on board and support us. How to engage with landlords? Council has more clout.

Harry: landlords - some local and some distant (from 1500 onwards), problem with who owns what (they live away or are absent). Properties not properly maintained; landlords not interested.

Tess: if we want to improve the High Street, we have to improve the Town

Stevie: we get a huge number of people coming to look at buildings - now a high street with few shops

Tourist office - huge potential but ESC got rid of the tourist office and don't support the volunteers in the station. We need literature and promotional material for the High Street and Scores (new leaflets),

Andy: Bungay festival really good, but why not here?

Christine - who to talk to and the structure.

Rachael: tourism has to work for people who live here and live around it.

Christine: if we have an idea then put it down and see if we can progress it

Andy: the working group - needs to do an audit of the High Street and its issues,

Andy: Make the high street a better place to live, work and visit

Joe: Ghost sign on Devereux building - got a visual, found someone to do it. Went to LTC to get money to talk to Building Control but then we went into treacle.

Joe to send to Caroline who will ask Building Control.

If we take this as an example as to how LTC and ESC can work together.

John - Use It All data - need data on recycling.

Christine

Action points - need an officer to be the point of contact. Has a list of 'to do's', and will send the list of contacts

Need transparency, and to see what's happening. Feasibility study.

Caroline - happy to come back again.

Thank you to Caroline. Moving forward - sharing information and working together. Need to coalesce around an idea.

**Next Meeting: tbc**

LTC - Lowestoft Town Council

ESC - East Suffolk Council