



# Soham Town Council **REFERENDUM 2020** YOUR TOWN, YOUR SAY

Project 50 – a response to challenging times

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Annual Roundup

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Reply Form

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Please take a few moments to read the contents and to fill in and send back the response form at the back of this booklet.



*Pride in our Town*



## Annual Roundup

I think most Soham residents would agree that 2020 has been a very difficult year and I start by thanking 'Soham Handy Helpers', AAA Motorcycles members and Ms Sally Prior as well as the town council Office staff who provided emergency and basic essential services to socially and medically vulnerable residents in Soham, during Lockdown1 (March 2020).

STC, being a part of the Government's essential workforce, continued throughout this pandemic to operate, provide its services to the community and to undertake council's meetings albeit at a reduced frequency to normal. Unfortunately, STC had to close the Pavilion to community groups and the regular events and festivals held on the recreation ground this year due to COVID.

At its November 2020 full council meeting, it was agreed that annual rate demand (precept) for 2021-22 would remain the same as this year at £412,000, however this will generate a slight increase of £1.50 per year being added to a Band D dwelling (£111.30 per year instead of current £109.80-proportionately more or less for higher banded or lower banded properties, respectively). At this meeting, members welcomed Ms Sally Prior, to its ranks as one of your Central Ward representatives and continued its discussions on a number of key strategies to improve the towns amenities and to strengthen its profile, as one of the largest towns in the District.

STC has an opportunity to acquire a large High Street property (Project-50). If the town council proceeds it will be a substantial community investment which will need part funding from C&CPA, of up to half a million pounds. The decision to ultimately proceed or not requires careful consideration.

As a council, STC has been working with and for its community since 1895 and became a town in 1983. Forty years ago, the membership at that time chose not to adopt the style of 'Mayor/Mayoress' for its presiding Chairperson. Since then, the role and responsibilities of successive Chairpersons has increased significantly in representation and civic duties. Please be aware that there is no fiscal advantage or cost to whether the Leader of the town council is styled Chairman/woman or Mayor/Mayoress as the role, like that of a town Councillor, is voluntary. STC is therefore seeking residents' views as to whether it is now appropriate to acknowledge the commitment work and dedication, should they wish, to assume the title of Mayor or Mayoress.

This referendum leaflet has been delivered to residents and I would ask all to consider the matters and materials at hand, then complete and return the response form. Finally, I note that my two year appointment as Chairman of Soham Town Council ends in May 2021, and whilst I do intend to continue as a town Councillor, I take this opportunity to thank my colleagues and the staff for their support and wish the new Chairperson, Mayor or Mayoress well in this elected post.

I close my annual update by wishing all residents the Best Christmas possible in the hope of welcoming a brighter New Year and 2021.

**Cllr Charles Warner - Chairman Soham Town Council**

### **Privacy & Exclusion Notice-Personal information (For information only)**

STC only collects a limited amount of information about you that is necessary for correspondence, information and service provision. STC do not use profiling or sell your data to Third Parties. STC will not use your personal data for purposes other than those specified in this referendum. STC makes sure your data is stored securely. STC will delete all information deemed to be no longer necessary or at your request. STC constantly reviews its Privacy Policies to keep it up to date in protecting your data. For further information regarding personal information, data handling and compliance contact Information Commissioners Office (ICO).

# REPLY FORM

(please complete detach along perforations and return)

## PROJECT: 50

### “A place that connects people”

Soham Town Council may need to potentially raise £400 000 to match fund the financial offer from C&PCA to purchase no-50 for the community.

1. **Are you in FAVOUR** of Soham Town Council going ahead with the acquisition of the building “no 50” on the High Street for the purposes of a community investment? **YES / NO**

2. **Are you in FAVOUR** of Soham Town Council going ahead with the acquisition of the building “no 50” in the High Street, requiring finance up to £400,000.

a) **taking a loan** **YES / NO**  
(for example at current interest rates the repayment of the capital plus interest adds 10.2% to the town council's annual rate demand (precept) (an additional £11.40 a year charged on current Band D dwelling per year for next 10 years, proportionately more or less for higher or lower Bands respectively)

b) **and/or selling one of STC's existing land assets?** **YES / NO**

## MAYOR/RESS OR CHAIRMAN/WOMAN

### WHATS IN A NAME?

3. Soham is now one of the largest towns in the District and most town councils address their elected Leader (Chairperson) as Mayor/Mayoress. Do you have any concerns or objections to the Chairperson of Soham Town Council assuming a title, should they so wish, as 'Mayor/Mayoress'?

(There is no financial implication to this action)

**YES / NO**

<b>Any other comments</b>	
<b>Name</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Signed</b>	<b>Date</b> / /

Completed forms received after the deadline or without name and address information will be discounted. If you require more booklets/reply forms, please contact Soham Town Council. Please send or take your responses to Soham Town Council offices at Recreation Ground Fountain Lane Soham CB7 9PL, by – 12 noon 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021 (latest). Any survey forms received after the deadline or without name and address information will be disregarded. All your data will remain with STC and not be shared or passed on to any other party.

For more information please: Email: [info@soham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:info@soham-tc.gov.uk) or Telephone: 01353 723472.

**PRESS RELEASE**

Soham Town Council

Referendum results (January 2021)

No households canvassed	5000 (all within constituency as determined by Boundary Commission for England)
No electors reached (effective reach of referendum):	8722
No of votes received	221
% return	2.5%

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**QUESTION 1: Proposed Acquisition of no-50 High St Soham (Project-50)**

**Result**

- 62.2 % of those voting as residents were IN favour of acquiring no 50 for community benefit.

Total number of votes received & counted:	217
Spoilt votes (no name, address and/or indication for or against):	4

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**QUESTION 2A: Purchase of no-50 to be funded (up to £400 000) by obtaining a loan**

**Result**

- 52.8 % of those voting as Ratepayers were NOT in favour of obtaining a loan to purchase No-50.

Total number of votes received & counted:	214
Spoilt votes (no name, address and/or indication for or against):	7

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**QUESTION 2B: Purchase of no-50 to be funded (up to £400 000) by selling an existing STC asset.**

**Result**

- 51.4 % of those voting as Ratepayers were NOT in favour of selling an existing STC asset to purchase No-50.

Total number of votes received & counted:	212
Spoilt votes (no name, address and/or indication for or against):	9

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**QUESTION 3: Title of Chairperson Soham Town Council**

**Result**

- 55.6% had no concerns or objection to the duly elected Chairman of Soham Town Council assuming, should they wish to do so, the Title of Mayor.

Total number of votes received & counted:	212
Spoilt votes (no name, address and/or indication for or against):	9

Press release End