



# The City That Walks on Water

## The Vote



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## The Vote

**The Cast returns to the stage, all arguing that their bid is the best. As they settle, COUNCILLOR MIDAS strides towards the podium again.**

**OFFICER BOSWORTH:** Everybody knows that according to subsection B, the con-

**COUNCILLOR MIDAS:** Subsection B? Does everybody know about subsection B? Who understands? I don't.

**OFFICER BOSWORTH:** This Pier belongs to the people of Southend. There must be full and proper community consultation and we haven't finished the process-

**COUNCILLOR:** Ah, yes. A process! A process so confusing that only the person that writes it can understand it and then gets paid pretty well to do so.

Tell me, would you like to share how much Southend Alternative Authority paid you last year?

Yes. Let's cut through to reality should we?

Um, who believes in rules apart from the people who write them?

Why don't we just cut through to reality? Who these days believes in the rules apart from people like you who's in charge of running them?

**(Talking to the audience)** Do you believe in the process?

**OFFICER BOSWORTH:** Councillor Midas we must all believe in the rules and the process – they are so important!

**(Turns to the Audience)** If you, the people don't believe that these rules matter, then who protects the most vulnerable in our society?

Please, you must tell the Councillor that you want to vote.

What you think matters, surely?

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This is your home; this is your town-

**COUNCILLOR:** City! See what does she know? She can't even call it by the right name!

**OFFICER BOSWORTH:** Oh, what does it matter what it's called? This is your community – your legacy-

**COUNCILLOR:** (To the audience) So, do you want to vote or do you want me to decide? **(Far too fast)** Brilliant, I knew I could trust you Scrap for Southend is declared the-

**SPIRIT OF THE PIER stops time but it costs her. She is deflated, out of energy. She sinks to the floor. She hasn't got long.**

**SPIRIT OF THE PIER:** Is he right?

People will always matter more than things like me.

Perhaps you do need the money in your pockets more than an icon that makes no sense for you any more.

Once I let go he can land that gavel and I'll walk away back into impossibility. You'll be free.

It's beautiful out there in the sea. I'll become part of the tides, just another wreck under the surf. I'm ready – do whatever you think is best.

I'm afraid, the truth is that something like me is only ever as ever strong as the people who take care of me – and just to make it crystal clear in case you've missed this point – that's all of you.

**The Spirit of the Pier looks sadly at the Councillor and Entrepreneurs, and claps her hands.**

**(THUNDER CLAP)**



**OFFICER BOSWORTH:** So legally we have to adhere to subsection B. We have to vote.

**COUNCILLOR:** Alright. You know I was only joking.

I'm very glad you are engaging with the consultation process.

So let's remind you of our five bids, though let's be honest, there's only one that makes any clear financial sense.

**OFFICER BOSWORTH:** I will declare this process null and void if you continue to show preferential treatment.

**COUNCILLOR: (smiling broadly but covering a snarl)** Making a decision before the vote. Me? Never!

For all of those who need a recap here's Bid Number 1.

**ENTREPRENEUR #1 :** Ride the waves on the world's greatest sea rollercoaster, right at the end of this very great Pier. Screaming, dipping, making the Pier part of a greater adventure! What could possibly go wrong?

**COUNCILLOR:** Indeed. Ah, here we go – here is our most sensible and thoughtful bid, Bid Number 2 – Scrap the Pier!

**ENTREPRENEUR #2:** Thank you. Remember I promise to do everything I can to scrap the entirety of the Pier and turn it into a big pile of scrap metal that we sell for cash. After all we can recycle everything as stupidly large four-wheel drive vehicles!

**COUNCILLOR:** Love a four wheel drive, myself. So where were we, ah yes, bid number 3 – the most luxurious of Care Homes for the discerning septuagenarian or Octogenarian...

**ENTREPRENEUR #3:** I must remind you before you vote, that our residents, for a small fee, would qualify for the diamond standard interment package! Yes, for only 50% of your remaining assets, you could have your very own Viking Burial At Sea!



This is your eternity, don't give it up for a cheap thrill, or an expensive slice of tuna!

The Viking longship of your choice, a bard to honour your life, the archer to shoot the flaming arrow to seal your journey to the halls of Valhalla!

**COUNCILLOR:** Yes, thank you, again one or two people I could think of recommending for that treat, but moving on, Bid Number 4: The Longest Sushi Bar in the World.

**ENTREPRENEUR #4:** Remember the Longest Sushi Bar in the World!

Don't forget the benefits of healthy food, sea air, earth shattering backdrops for your selfie, tiktok, meme, reel or story!

**(Kneels down and holds hands as if in prayer)** Think of the entitled young so easily parted from their money, I beg of you!

**COUNCILLOR:** Bid 5 – let's all hear it for the Cath-sea-dral!

**ENTREPRENEUR #5:** The Minecraft equivalent of Westminster Abbey with a unique address amongst the waves!

Please vote for this greatest addition to the spiritual centre of our new city!

**COUNCILLOR:** So, the time has come...

**SPIRIT OF THE PIER:** Ahem. Excuse me!

**COUNCILLOR:** (Sighs) Yes, what is it now?

**SPIRIT OF THE PIER:** Well I think you may have forgotten one last possibility.

**COUNCILLOR:** (sarcastically) Well it's such a good job you're here then obviously!

**SPIRIT OF THE PIER:** (Deadpan) You have no idea. Now, my final...



**COUNCILLOR:** Look, we haven't got time for this.

**OFFICER BOSWORTH:** Just let her speak!

**SPIRIT OF THE PIER:** Now my final option to you is to keep the pier pure and pristine, and for the public benefit.

For everyone who lives in our great city or visits our never-ending shores.

They come for the Pier, they stay for the wonder that is Southend.

I say we need to love the Pier as she is!

**COUNCILLOR:** Fine! So, Bid 6 (**says the words while writing them down**) is to love the Pier as she is.

That's it, we are out of time. No more bids. That is it. So without further ado,

you have to vote on which bid you want to be what happens to the pier. So I'm gonna tell you what the bid is, I'm gonna tell you what to do and then it's down to you.

So who wants the pier to be the biggest rollercoaster in the world?  
Raise both your hands and scream now!

**ENTREPRENEUR #1: Woooo!**

**Councillor makes actions to count the votes.**

**COUNCILLOR:** There you go. For those of you who would like the pier scrapped, hold up your hand, now! Scrapped? Anyone?

**Councillor makes actions to count the votes.**

**COUNCILLOR:** For those who want a Retirement Home, please get someone, I said (**shouts**) PLEASE GET SOMEONE TO RAISE YOUR HAND NOW.

**Councillor makes actions to count the votes.**

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**COUNCILLOR:** If you want the world's longest and most expensive sushi bar and selfie booth, raise your mobile phone now!

**Councillor makes actions to count the votes.**

**COUNCILLOR:** If you want the ca-sea-dral praying across the waves, raise your hands to the Lord.

**Councillor makes actions to count the votes.**

**COUNCILLOR:** And finally, if you would like Southend Pier to remain exactly as it is and render this whole exercise and 3 million pound consultation process entirely pointless – the clap your hands now!

(The **COUNCILLOR**, marshals, bidders and spirit of the pier come together in a huddle and rhubarb for 20 seconds occasionally looking at the audience)

**COUNCILLOR:** I would like to thank everyone who took part in today's proceedings, even those who weren't supposed to be here.

Now the moment of truth arrives, and I can announce that Southend Pier - will become:

**(INSERT YOU CHOISE OF OUTCOMES HERE)**

**COUNCILLOR:** Time I was out of here.

**OFFICER BOSWORTH:** Please give our winning bid a round of applause!

**WINNINGBID:** I can't believe it – thank you so much. Thank you Mum, Dad for all those times that you had faith in me.

**The HAWKER enters the stage.**

**HAWKER:** Roll Up, Roll Up Come to Southend Pier:

**(Depending on choice)**

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- 1: The Beast From The East, the greatest roller coaster ever built.
- 2: The largest pile of scape ever created, peace, quiet and a pristine waterfront.
- 3: The Viking Retirement and Funeral Home, with the most beautiful Views across the estuary.
- 4: The Longest Sushi Bar in the World. Come for the backgrounds to your selfie, meme, ticktok or Story.
- 5: See the Ca-sea-dral, pray for the future of Southend!
- 6: Which will be kept pure and pristine and for the public benefit.

**HAWKER:** Come to Southend, for the time of your lives.

SCENE ENDS.

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**Music, celebrating to a famous Southend song? Or to something upbeat.  
SPIRIT OF THE PIER leaves quietly and unnoticed if possible.  
BOWS.**

**END.**