

SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Full Council Meeting

Date of meeting: Monday 4th December 2023 at 7.30pm in the Town Hall Saffron Walden

Present Councillors: Cllrs Abercrombie, Ahmed, Asker (Chair), Coote, Curtis, Eke, Freeman, Gadd, Hawke-Smith, Jones, McLellan, Meloy and Reeve.

Officers: Lisa Courtney (Town Clerk), David Broomfield (Financial Officer)

Public: None present

FC 187-23	<p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs de Vries, Frost, McBirnie, Porch and Shotropa.</p>
FC 188-23	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>Cllrs Ahmed, Asker, Coote, Freeman and Reeve declared generic non-pecuniary interests as District Councillors for Uttlesford District Council (UDC).</p> <p>Cllr Gadd declared a generic non-pecuniary interest as County Councillor for Essex County Council.</p>
FC 189-23	<p>Public Speaking Time - There were no questions arising.</p>
FC 190-23	<p>Updates from 3rd parties – for information only</p> <p>(a) Council noted the written update (attached to the agenda) received from County Cllr Gadd.</p> <p>(b) Council received a verbal update from UDC Cllr Coote who noted the Local Plan consultation is still ongoing</p>
FC 191-23	<p>Mayor's Communications</p> <p>The Mayor provided a verbal update on the following engagements she recently attended:</p> <p>(a) Along with Cllr Curtis, the funeral for former Councillor Dilip Shah.</p> <p>(b) Monies have been raised for chosen charities Faircroft House and Youth Outreach Project from hosting a Christmas tombola stall and the Rolling Clones gig.</p> <p>(c) Charity Late Night Shopping and thanks was passed to Saffron Walden Initiative for hosting the event.</p> <p>Additionally, the following are due to take place:</p> <p>(d) 16 December Faircroft House Rock Band</p> <p>(e) Christmas Day the Mayor will visit the Church and Care Homes</p>

FC 192-23	<p>To verify the Minutes of the Town Council meetings</p> <p>The 13 November 2023 Full Council minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meetings and signed by the Mayor.</p>
FC 193-23	<p>To receive the Minutes of the Previous Meetings</p> <p>Council received and noted the minutes from the following Committee meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and Transport 09.11.2023 • Planning and Transport 23.11.2023 • Finance and Establishment 28.11.2023 • Assets and Services 27.11.2023
FC 194-23	<p>Internal Auditor's Report</p> <p>Council received and accepted the following documents as previously presented to the Finance & Establishment Committee on 28.11.23.</p> <p>a) A copy of the internal auditor's report</p> <p>It was noted F&E would receive an update at the February 2024 committee meeting regarding the transparency act and publication of contracts over £5,000.</p>
FC 195-23	<p>Proposed Budget 2024/25</p> <p>It was unanimously resolved to adopt the proposed draft budget as presented, noting the following:</p> <p>(a) The final budget cannot be adopted until the confirmed band D figures are received from UDC in January.</p> <p>(b) The proposed budget assumes: 5% salary increase (according to any nationally negotiated salary review); 6% precept increase and carry forward monies from 2023/24.</p>
FC 196-23	<p>Local Plan Reg 18 Consultation</p> <p>Council noted the report attached to the agenda as a draft response to the Reg18 Local Plan consultation. Cllr Meloy had additional comments to the draft response, regarding sustainable growth and potential developments sites.</p> <p>It was agreed Cllr Meloy would submit these additions to Officers for forwarding to the Working Group and, subject to their approval, the additions would be further submitted to all Councillors for review and approval prior to any submission to UDC.</p>

FC 197-23	<p>Mission Statement and associated statements</p> <p>Council noted its current mission statement and the series of supporting documents on how the Council delivers value for money, leadership in planning, community engagement (particularly regarding climate change) and manages its performance.</p> <p>It was agreed to re-adopt the statements with no proposed changes and the mission statement with one change in bold below:</p> <p><i>“The Town Council is a service provider for the Saffron Walden community, an influencer and conduit for local views, working effectively and efficiently in partnership with many organisations within the Community it represents.</i></p> <p><i>Our priorities are:</i></p> <p><i>To be an efficient and effective Council.</i> <i>To improve the physical environment.</i> <i>To raise the standards of recreational facilities.</i> <i>To help represent the needs of the community.</i> <i>To encourage deliver good governance.</i> <i>To promote the cultural and economic well-being of Saffron Walden”</i></p>
FC 198-23	<p>SWTC Priorities</p> <p>Council considered the attached report and scheduling of its priorities (as adopted in September 2023) for the action plan period of 2023-2027 and the following was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To note the inclusion of £20k in the budget to complete works on Jubilee House and that this should be added to the priority list • To prioritise the projects as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Completion of the former Nat West Bank (2) Splash Park review (re-establishment of WG to progress) (3) Little Walden Play Area <p>Further, to establish a Working Group to oversee the Council’s commitment to climate change initiatives. Membership was agreed as Cllrs Freeman, Gadd, Hawke-Smith, Meloy, Reeve. Whilst the Climate Change commitment is shown separately as a priority, it is a priority commitment which is at the heart of all current and future decision making.</p> <p>The need to refresh the 4-year plan to align with the above was noted.</p>
FC 199-23	<p>Mayoral Chain Policy</p> <p>It was agreed to re-adopt the policy with no changes with a five-year review date.</p>

FC 200-23	<p>UDC Parking Review</p> <p>Council considered the attached report and noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) UDC has issued details of the parking review conducted in 2022/23. The review raises a series of opportunities for UDC and will be fully considered at a future Town Council P & T Committee meeting; b) UDC will further be reviewing and considering its parking charges for public car parks in the Uttlesford area. It is anticipated that UDC Officers will present proposals to a UDC Cabinet meeting in December 2023, followed by a formal 21 day public consultation; c) Notably the car park review identified that Catons Lane (owned freehold by SWTC) sits outside of any parking regime or charging mechanism and the opportunity presents for this car park to be included in the UDC parking review, as noted in (b) above; d) Further details were explained in an accompanying report and Council considered whether Catons Lane car park should be included in the public consultation on charging, enabling this car park to be later included in a service level agreement and charging process between SWTC and UDC. <p>It was Resolved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) To include Catons Lane car park in the imminent car parking tariff consultation being conducted by UDC; (b) To adopt a charging and enforcement regime for the Catons Lane car park, in accordance with that already established by UDC in management of their own car parks; (c) That the charging regime is based on UDC's car park review and associated recommendations from the consultant and the consultation process (note these details are not currently in the public domain but anticipated will be comparable to the Swan Meadow charges); (d) To enter into a service level agreement with UDC regarding future management and maintenance of the car park.
FC 201-23	<p>Reports from other Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Cllr Reeve noted Turpins Bowls club is keen to work within the community. (b) Cllr Reeve noted the Heritage Development Group is considering fundraising opportunities for the installation of new art work. (c) Cllr Asker noted the Horticultural Society is encouraging new members.
FC 202-23	<p>Additional Forthcoming Meetings</p> <p>No meetings reported.</p>
FC 203-23	<p>Urgent Items</p> <p>The following road closures were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) George Street/ Hill Street for the pavement widening scheme, which will likely cause queues. (b) South Road to carry out works to prevent flooding.

FC 204-23	<p>Date and time of Next meeting(s)</p> <p>The Mayor reminded all that the next meeting is scheduled for 15 January 2024.</p> <p>Council was wished a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.</p>
FC 205-23	<p>Confidential Item – Exclusion of Press and Public (Part II meeting)</p> <p>It was resolved that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by s.100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the public and accredited representatives of newspapers be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.</p>
FC 206-23	<p>Public Open Space Transfer - This is a confidential item as it is commercially sensitive</p> <p>Council considered the attached report regarding a transfer in public open space.</p> <p>It was Resolved: To progress with Option D within the attached report, as recommended by the Assets and Services Committee at the 27.11.23 meeting.</p>
FC 207-23	<p>Occupancy / Lease Agreement for Nos 3/5 Market Place (former Nat West Bank building)</p> <p>The motion for this item was removed subsequent to the agenda being published and was not discussed.</p>

The Mayor closed the meeting at 9.20pm.