

SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Full Council Meeting

Date of meeting: Monday 15 January 2024 at 7.30pm

Present Councillors: Cllrs Abercrombie (Walker), Ahmed, Asker, Coote, Curtis, de Vries, Eke (from minute reference FC 004-24 (b)), Freeman, Gadd, Hawke-Smith, Jones, McLellan, Meloy and Reeve.

Officers: Georgia Arnold (Deputy Town Clerk) and David Broomfield (Financial Officer)

Public: None present

FC 001-24	Apologies for absence Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Frost, McBirnie, Porch and Shotropa.
FC 002-24	Declarations of Interest Cllrs Ahmed, Asker, Coote, Freeman and Reeve declared generic non-pecuniary interests as District Councillors for Uttlesford District Council (UDC). Cllr Gadd declared a generic non-pecuniary interest as County Councillor for Essex County Council.
FC 003-24	Public Speaking Time There were no questions arising.
FC 004-24	Updates from 3rd parties – for information only (a) Council received a written update from Cllr Gadd as the Essex County Council- lor detailing updates from ECC. (b) <i>Cllr Eke arrived.</i> (c) UDC Councillors did not provide an update.
FC 005-24	Mayor's Communications The Mayor noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Christmas period was very busy including visits to care homes on Christmas day and Cornell Court, which had 90 attendees for their Christmas day dinner.• Fundraising is going particularly well, and her raffle will close on 31.01.2024 with a chance to win an Ibanez guitar and amp.

FC 006-24	<p>To verify the Minutes of the Town Council meetings</p> <p>The 04.12.2024 Full Council minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meetings and signed by the Mayor.</p> <p>Cllrs reiterated the importance of convening the Climate Change working group as soon as possible to progress with Climate Change initiatives.</p>
FC 007-24	<p>To receive the Minutes of the Previous Meetings</p> <p>Council received and noted the draft minutes from the following Committee meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and Transport 14.12.2023 • Finance and Establishment 11.12.2023 • Assets and Services 18.12.2023
FC 008-24	<p>UDC Parking Review</p> <p>Council noted UDC's car parking consultation has launched, closing on 2 February.</p> <p>Cllr Asker declared a generic nonpecuniary interest as a resident of Little Walden Road, near Catons Lane.</p> <p>Councillors discussed concern with abolishing the free of charge 30-minute limit but noted most residents live within walking distance, supporting sustainable transport methods.</p> <p>Councillors also noted at the December 2023 meeting Council had already supported charging at Catons Lane car park.</p> <p>It was resolved to respond to the consultation in support of the proposals.</p>
FC 009-24	<p>Approved Parish changes under the Interim Community Governance Review</p> <p>Council noted the Uttlesford District Council the Audit and Standards Committee agreed to formally alter the parish boundary for Saffron Walden and Swards End (as requested) and additionally Great and Little Chesterford.</p>
FC 010-24	<p>Consultation on draft recommendations for Essex division borders</p> <p>Council considered the officers report and noted Essex County Council has launched its second phase of consultation regarding the electoral borders, closing on 19 February 2024.</p> <p>It was resolved to support the officer recommendation and respond to the consultation in support of the ECC proposals.</p>

FC 011-24	<p>Emergency Plan</p> <p>Council noted under the Environment Act 2021 and government guidance, councils are required to prepare and consider their actions in conserving biodiversity and adoption of an emergency plan.</p> <p>Council considered the change in biodiversity requirements and noted this will need to be discussed by the climate working group. Members noted some biodiversity studies have already taken place by volunteer groups and these should be obtained.</p> <p>It was resolved to adopt the proposed emergency plan.</p>
FC 012-24	<p>Standing Orders</p> <p>It was resolved to re-adopt the standing orders, with the proposed changes under section 23 Execution and Sealing of Legal Deeds, item b as recommended.</p>
FC 013-24	<p>SWTC Leases</p> <p>Council noted the written report detailing the progress regarding outstanding leases with third parties.</p>
FC 014-24	<p>2024/25 Budget</p> <p>The RFO provided the final budget proposals which was reviewed by members.</p> <p>The RFO explained at the December 2023 Full Council meeting it was unanimously resolved to adopt the proposed draft budget and it was noted the Band D equivalent figure has now been received from UDC, enabling completion of the 2024/25 budget.</p>
FC 015-24	<p>Proposal: Part II Confidential</p> <p>It was unanimously resolved to go into further discussion under part two.</p> <p>This was to allow further discussion from the working group appointed at the November 2023 meeting.</p>
FC 016-24	<p>Confidential Item – Exclusion of Press and Public (Part II meeting)</p> <p>Resolved 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 017-24	<p>2024/25 Budget</p> <p>Further to the November 2023 meeting where the working group was appointed to discuss proposed service changes, further discussion was had regarding updates and advice received from third party advisor and how the findings impact the budget.</p>

	It was agreed the working group must reconvene as soon as possible and that a primary remit is to consider potential and further cost savings on the service. It was also agreed that a revised budget reflecting the further cost savings should be brought back to Council as soon as practicable.
FC 018-24	It was unanimously resolved to close the part II discussion and to revert back to the public meeting.
FC 019-24	<p>2024/25 Budget</p> <p>It was unanimously resolved to, adopt the budget for 2024/25 as proposed, recognising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A total budget of £2,619,174.91 • Less anticipated income of £384,364 • Total expenditure budget of £2,231,811 • Precept of £1,369,838 (difference using balances from ear-marked reserves) • Represented by a 6% increase on Band D to £194.29 (against a tax base of 7,050.41)
FC 020-24	<p>2024/25 Precept</p> <p>Council formally agreed to a 6% increase in the precept for 2024/25 and the papers as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) 2024/25 precept form and the Mayor and RFO signed the precept request form. b) Precept setting form for parish c) Precept setting form for council tax bands
FC 021-24	Reports from other Meetings - No meetings reported.
FC 022-24	<p>Additional Forthcoming Meetings</p> <p>Council noted the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Follow up councillor training session on 4th March 2024 (being a Monday evening with no SWTC evening meetings). Availability and preferred timings would be arranged with the Deputy Town Clerk outside the meeting. b) Annual General Meeting of Uttlesford Citizens Advice Wednesday 17th January 2024
FC 023-24	Urgent Items - No urgent items were raised.
FC 024-24	<p>Date and time of Next meeting(s)</p> <p>The Mayor reminded all that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday 12th February 2024 at 7.30pm in The Town Hall Saffron Walden.</p>

The Mayor closed the meeting at 9pm