

**SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Full Council Meeting**

**Date of meeting:** Monday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2023 at 7.30pm

**Present Councillors:** Cllrs Abercrombie (Walker), Ahmed, Asker (Mayor), Coote, Curtis, Eke, Freeman, Gadd, Hawke-Smith, McBirnie, McLellan, Meloy, Porch and Reeve.

**Officers:** Lisa Courtney (Town Clerk), Georgia Arnold (Deputy Town Clerk) and Terry Frostick (Operations Manager)

**Public:** None present

FC 025-24	<b>Apologies for absence</b>  Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs de Vries, Frost, Jones and Shotropa.
FC 026-24	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>  Cllrs Ahmed, Asker, Coote, Freeman, McBirnie 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 027-24	<b>Public Speaking Time</b>  There were no questions arising.
FC 028-24	<b>Updates from 3<sup>rd</sup> parties – for information only</b>  a) Council noted the written update report received from Cllr P Gadd as the Essex County Councillor b) Council received the following verbal updates from District Councillor Coote: b.1) The Uttlesford waste collections should be back on track in the next two weeks. He noted the need for all to gain perspective on this problem, and to note that a mistake had occurred which has been acknowledged and must be addressed but UDC Officers have endured some unnecessary criticism and whilst lessons must be learnt, we are all fallible and mistakes happen. b.2) UDC officers and councillors have been involved with the former Printpak site development, due to the debris on the road and issues with the temporary traffic lights not working. It was noted SWTC P&T recently objected to the recent advertising consent application for the site. b.3) Cllr Coote noted the ongoing UDC car park consultation

FC 029-24	<p><b>Mayor's Communications</b></p> <p>a) The Mayor passed on special thanks to the Bookings Officer for arranging the successful Young Traders pop up market last weekend, it was noted the successful event utilised awarded grant monies from the Shared Prosperity Fund. The event hosted several new traders with a variety of goods and services on offer.</p> <p>b) The mayor's raffle raised over £800; an Ibanez guitar was the prize.</p>
FC 030-24	<p><b>To verify the Minutes of the Town Council meetings</b></p> <p>The 15.01.2024 Full Council minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meetings and signed by the Mayor.</p> <p>Cllr Gadd restated the Council had been discontent in approving the budget for 2024/25 as it did not include the cost savings for the TIC service as anticipated. Cllr Porch queried this statement, noting that the budget presented and approved at the January 2024 had been based on professional advice regarding employment matters and Council should not act outside of that advice. Whilst this matter was not reconciled, the minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting</p>
FC 031-24	<p><b>To receive the Minutes of the Previous Meetings</b></p> <p>Council received and noted the minutes from the following Committee meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and Transport 11.01.2024</li> <li>• Planning and Transport 25.01.2024</li> <li>• Finance and Establishment 22.01.2024</li> <li>• Assets and Services 29.01.2024</li> </ul>
FC 032-24	<p><b>Accounts and Accounting Statements</b></p> <p>Council noted, in accordance with Standing Orders, receipt of the following documents:</p> <p>a) Receipts and payments for 3rd quarter</p> <p>b) Aggregate receipts and payments year to date (to 31st December 2023)</p> <p>c) Balances held at the end of the current quarter (to 31st December 2023)</p>
FC 033-24	<p><b>Well Green Close</b></p> <p>Council approved signing and sealing of the transfer document of land at Well Green Close to SWTC. Thanks again was passed to District Cllr Fiddy for her involvement.</p> <p>A verbal update on the public open space and public right of way working group was noted, explaining some administrative work is required in the first instance to identify any areas not managed by a local authority prior to the working group meeting.</p>

FC 034-24	<p><b>Local Government Association (LGA) and National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Peer Review</b></p> <p>Council noted at the October FC meeting it was unanimously agreed, the LGA and NALC will conduct a peer review for SWTC.</p> <p>In progressing this work, council noted the following schedule:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) 21st February 2024 AM: Scoping report meeting with LGA and NALC. The purpose of this meeting is to determine the core elements of the review which commonly focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Leadership and governance</li> <li>ii. Capacity and future proofing</li> <li>iii. Organisational culture</li> <li>iv. Financial planning and strategy</li> </ul> </li> <li>(b) March 2024: SWTC to issue a position statement, being an honest reflection of where Council sees itself now and where it wants to be;</li> <li>(c) March / April 2024: SWTC to provide peer review group with background reading and information about SWTC.</li> </ul> <p>In noting the above Council agreed the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(d) Scoping Group membership to include: Cllrs Asker, Eke, Gadd, Curtis and Cllr Reeve with the Town Clerk.</li> <li>(e) The core elements of the review as identified above (ai-iv)</li> <li>(f) Progress positively with this review.</li> </ul>
FC 035-24	<p><b>Update Report</b></p> <p>Council received an update report presented by the Town Clerk on activities and events since May 2023. It was specifically noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) That future working groups must have clearly defined and agreed terms of reference to ensure clarity and certainty on their remit</li> <li>b) The splash park working group is due to meet in March. Council agreed Cllr Abercrombie is to be added to the working group, making membership Cllrs: Abercrombie, Frost, Reeve, Shotropa, Freeman and Porch. Council appointed Cllr Abercrombie as the chair of the splash park working group. The first meeting must also consider terms of reference for Council to review and adopt at the March Council meeting. The date and time of any future meeting to be mutually agreed amongst the membership.</li> <li>c) The Climate Change working group has been appointed and due to meet on 20.02.2024. Council agreed Terms of Reference should be prepared and agreed to give a clear steer and direction for the group, which will be adopted at the March Council meeting. The TOR should include reference to <i>overseeing the formulation of the council's climate change and environmental strategy, actions and implementation.</i></li> <li>d) Cllr Hawke-Smith was appointed Chair of the Climate Change Working Group.</li> </ul>

	<p>e) It was noted that the update didn't give a fair representation of the Council's progress towards the objectives set out in the Climate Action Plan, and that officers be requested to ensure that future Updates did so."</p> <p>The Clerk confirmed the delay was due to an historic lack of resourcing which was remedied (in the appointment to additional posts) in November 2023. It was agreed that future updates should include details of any missed milestones, providing details of the delay and/or challenges in meeting the target.</p> <p>Council thanked the Clerk for the update and it was Resolved: To provide the update report on a regular basis, being three times per year and to alternate with the priority reports.</p>
FC 036-24	<b>Reports from other Meetings</b> - No meetings reported.
	<b>Additional Forthcoming Meetings</b>
FC 037-24	<p>a) May Annual General Meeting – 50th Anniversary of SWTC Council noted May 2024 marks the 50th anniversary of Saffron Walden Town Council being established. It was agreed to mark the occasion by inviting past mayors, councillors and former Town Clerk Malcom White to celebrate the occasion as part of the Annual (General) meeting to be held on Monday 13th May 2024.</p>
FC 038-24	<b>Urgent Items</b> - No matters raised.
	<b>Date and time of Next meeting(s)</b>
FC 039-24	The Mayor reminded all that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 7.30pm and The Jubilee Hub Partnership (SWTC, UCAN and Enterprise East CIC) will present to Council at this meeting as a way of update of the service this past year.
	<b>Confidential Item – Exclusion of Press and Public (Part II meeting)</b>
FC 040-24	<p>It was 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> <p>This item is confidential because it is commercially sensitive.</p>
	<b>Service Changes</b>
FC 041-24	<p>Council noted:</p> <p>a) At the November 2023 Council meeting a working group was established including Cllrs Gadd, Abercrombie, Meloy, Curtis and Reeve with officers. Their primary remit was to focus on the matters as raised within the presented written report (Min ref FC 186-23) to Council November 2023.</p>

- b) At the January 2024 meeting, Council focused the remit of the working group on potential and further cost savings on the TIC service.

Officers presented an updated confidential report to Council, which had due regard to the mandate as agreed at the January Full Council meeting. The report contained a series of recommendations. Following consideration and debate of these matters, it was resolved:

- c) To relocate the TIC service from No 1 Market Place to the former Council Chamber in the Town Hall. The move should be carried out in conjunction with the reduction to 2.5FTE (inclusive of holiday or other cover) staffing.
- d) To authorise Officers to negotiate with and appoint a local agent to market No 1 market Place
- e) To set aside monies of £10,000 to be used in creating a new and safe shop-type environment for the relocated service and £5,000 towards legal and professional fees to carry out these works
- f) To note the contents of this report and that the WG will reconvene to consider other recommendations and in particular how best to implement the resolution of council of January 2024 to achieve significant savings in the net costs of the TIC service including significant staffing cost savings.

The Mayor closed the meeting at 10.25pm