

SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Full Council Meeting

Date of meeting: Monday 13 January 2025 at 7.30pm

Present Councillors: Cllrs Ahmed, Asker (at 7.32pm), Coote, Curtis, de Vries, Eke (Mayor), Freeman, Gadd, Hawke-Smith, Jones, McLellan, Meloy, Parker (at 7.33pm) and Reeve.

Officers: Town Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), Deputy Town Clerk and Operations Manager

Public: None present

FC 001-25	Apologies for absence Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Abercrombie, McBirnie, Porch and Shotropa.
FC 002-25	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 003-25	Public Speaking Time There were no questions arising.
FC 004-25	Updates from 3rd parties – for information only (a) A written report from Cllr P Gadd as the Essex County Councillor was presented at the 09.01.2025 Planning and Transport Committee. (b) Cllr Coote as Uttlesford District Councillor noted the impact of any changes of council tiers remains unknown.
FC 005-25	Mayor's Communications The Mayor noted he attended: a. Saffron Walden County High School Choral Concert b. Saffron Walden Town Councils Carols in the Market Square with the Building Society Choir c. St Mary's Church Services over Christmas d. Visiting Care Homes on Christmas Day e. Hosted his Mayoral Fundraising Tombola at the Saturday Market

FC 006-25	<p>To verify the Minutes of the Town Council meetings</p> <p>The 02.12.2025 Full Council minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meetings and signed by the Mayor.</p>
FC 007-25	<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"> a. Planning and Transport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. 14.11.2024 (approved) ii. 28.11.2024 (approved) iii. 05.12.2024 (draft minutes) b. Finance and Establishment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. 18.11.2024 (agreed) ii. 09.12.2024 (agreed) iii. 20.12.2024 (agreed) c. Assets and Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. 25.11.2024 (draft minutes)
FC 008-25	<p>Budget 2025/26</p> <p>Council received and considered the budget reports for 2025/26, as recommended by the finance and establishment committee (at its extraordinary meeting held on the 08.01.2024), as presented by Cllr de Vries, the Finance and Establishment Committee Chair.</p> <p>It was resolved to adopt the proposed budget, recognising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A total budget of £1,768,109 b. Less anticipated income of £358,265 c. Total expenditure budget of £1,409,844 d. Precept of £1,442,316 (difference using balances from ear-marked reserves) e. Represented by a 5.32% increase on Band D f. The 2025/26 precept request form was signed by the Mayor and RFO, acknowledging an increase of 5.32%
FC 009-25	<p>Accounts and Accounting Statements</p> <p>In accordance with Standing Orders, the following documents were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Receipts and payments for 3rd quarter b. Aggregate receipts and payments year to date c. Balances held at the end of the current quarter d. <i>The RFO left the meeting at 7.50pm.</i>

FC 010-25	<p>Terms of Reference for the Corporate Peer Review Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Council received the written report attached to the agenda and the draft terms of reference recommended by the working group. b. In considering the draft terms of reference Cllr Gadd proposed re-considering progression of the peer review. To do so, Cllr Gadd proposed suspension of Standing Orders and this was seconded by Cllr Meloy. c. It was resolved: To suspend standing orders 25a, 10xv and 7a; allowing Council to discuss continuation of the Corporate Peer Review. d. Council discussed the positives and negatives of conducting a peer review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Those against the review cited SWTC has won several awards and is already delivering a high quality service. ii. Those in favour noted the review is commendable and will identify possible areas for improvement. iii. Discussion was had around whether the benefits outweigh the resourcing requirement. e. Cllr Gadd proposed to cease continuation of the Corporate Peer Review, this was seconded by Cllr Meloy. f. It was resolved: To cease continuation of the Corporate Peer Review and not to adopt the Terms of Reference.
FC 011-25	<p>Code of Conduct Consultation</p> <p>Council noted the Government has launched a consultation, seeking views on introducing a mandatory minimum code of conduct for local authorities in England; closing on 26.02.25.</p> <p>Council Resolved: To delegate the Town Clerk, Mayor and Deputy Town Clerk to draft a response to the consultation for consideration at the February Full Council meeting for review. Should other councillors wish to submit their views ahead of the meeting to send these via email to officers.</p>
FC 012-25	<p>Polices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. It was resolved: To re-adopt the Code of Conduct as presented. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. In addition, to incorporate a flow chart of the code of conduct procedure for consideration at a future F&E Committee and Full Council meeting. b. It was resolved: To re-adopt Standing Orders as presented.
FC 013-25	Reports from other Meetings - No meetings reported.
FC 014-25	Additional Forthcoming Meetings - No meetings reported.
FC 015-25	Urgent Items - No matters raised.
FC 016-25	<p>Date and time of Next meeting(s)</p> <p>The next meeting is scheduled for 10th February 2024 at 7.30pm in The Town Hall.</p>

The Mayor closed the meeting at 8.30pm