

SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Full Council Meeting

Date of meeting: Monday 14 October 2024 at 7.30pm

Present Councillors: Cllrs Abercrombie, Ahmed, Curtis, de Vries, Eke, Freeman, Hawke-Smith, Jones, McBirnie, Parker, Porch, Reeve and Shotropa

Officers: Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk

Public: None present

FC 165-24	<p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Asker, Coote, Gadd, McLellan and Meloy.</p>
FC 166-24	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>Cllrs Ahmed, Freeman, McBirnie and Reeve declared generic non-pecuniary interests as District Councillors for Uttlesford District Council (UDC).</p>
FC 167-24	<p>Public Speaking Time</p> <p>There were no questions arising.</p>
FC 168-24	<p>Updates from 3rd parties – for information only</p> <p>(a) Council noted and received the written update report from Cllr Gadd, Essex County Councillor, which was also provided to the planning and transport committee.</p> <p>(b) An update was not received from UDC Councillors on any matters which may be particularly pertinent to Saffron Walden.</p>
FC 169-24	<p>Mayor's Communications</p> <p>The Deputy Mayor noted his recent attendance at:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Specsavers opening of their new audio unit.Christmas Sponsorship photographs with McCarthy and Stone.
FC 170-24	<p>To verify the Minutes of the Town Council meetings 09.09.2024</p> <p>The 09.09.2024 Full Council minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meetings, subject to an amendment of adding Cllr Parker to the list of attendees. The minutes were approved and signed by the Mayor.</p>

FC 171-24	<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 12.09.2024 (approved) • Planning and Transport 23.09.2024 (draft) • Finance and Establishment 16.09.2024 (draft) • Assets and Services 23.09.2024 (draft)
FC 172-24	<p>Uttlesford District Council - Local Council Tax Support (LCTS)</p> <p>Council noted UDC is consulting on its proposed LCTS scheme for 2025/26 which proposes that the LCTS scheme for 2025/26 is maintained on the same basis as this year. No specific response was agreed to the consultation, noting the Town Council agreed with the LCTS proposals.</p>
FC 173-24	<p>Clerk's Update</p> <p>Council noted the Clerk's update report, attached to the agenda, being a summary of major and key activities and priorities in the past quarter.</p> <p>It was Resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Note and receive the report with thanks (b) Disband the speeding working group, acknowledging the membership of this group is duplicated within the membership of the P & T Committee. (c) Acknowledge speeding issues as a standing item within the P & T Committee meetings.
FC 174-24	<p>Climate Change & Environment Working Group Quarterly Update</p> <p>Council noted the update report, attached to the agenda, detailing the progress made on climate initiatives in the past quarter. The following matters were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) That Cllrs Parker and McLellan have joined the WG; (b) That no financial provision has been set aside for a Climate Change Officer within the 2025/26 budget and the CC&E WG will be administered through existing staffing levels; (c) Thanks was passed to former Working Group Deputy Chair Cllr Meloy. (d) The Working Group has prioritised areas of work identified within the adopted action plan; (e) The carbon calculation for SWTC venues and assets is completed, this work will be beneficial in years to come as a comparative base line.

FC 175-24	<p>Policies</p> <p>It was unanimously agreed to re-adopt of the Council's climate change policy with no changes.</p>
FC 176-24	<p>Road Traffic Accidents at Debden Road / Borough Lane junction</p> <p>Council noted there have been a series of road traffic collisions at the junction of Debden Road / Borough Lane, with 10 incidents reported by residents. Only two incidences have however been recorded by Essex Police in the past two years and the police and ECC Highways will only act on officially recorded data. Council noted the grave concerns already raised by SWTC Cllrs and Officers with ECC and Essex Police, requesting both/either party to take urgent action and to keep all informed of preventative measures.</p> <p>It was Resolved:</p> <p>To submit an open letter to Essex Highways, copying the Press and Police, seeking urgent action to ensure the safety of all users.</p>
FC 177-24	<p>Reports from other Meetings</p> <p>No meetings reported.</p>
FC 178-24	<p>Additional Forthcoming Meetings</p> <p>Council noted UDC is offering Standards Training.</p>
FC 179-24	<p>Urgent Items</p> <p>No matters raised.</p>
FC 180-24	<p>Date and time of Next meeting(s)</p> <p>The Mayor reminded all that the next meeting is scheduled for 11 November 2024 at 7.30pm</p>
FC 181-24	<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>

Tourist Information Centre

Cllr Curtis, Chair of the TIC Working Group (WG), introduced the report and spoke further to the findings and recommendations of the WG. The WG members noted the impact of recent staffing reductions, firmly recommending a reinstatement of 20 hours per week into the service to ensure sustainability of the service offering.

A series of questions and answers were posed and responded to. It was Resolved:

- (a) Unanimously to receive the report and update as provided by Officers and Members of the Working Group;
- (b) To reinstate 20 hours per week into the TIC service with immediate effect, noting this continued to represent an overall cost-saving on staffing costs from the 2024/25 budget and accords with the terms of reference of the TIC WG;
- (c) To note that the reinstatement of 20 hours per week should be guaranteed until 31.03.25 and that any future resourcing levels would form part of the overall budget discussions for 2025/26;
- (d) That a strong direction be given to the Budget WG to retain the 20 hours per week in the 2025/26 budget;
- (e) Unanimously to disband the TIC WG with immediate effect, recognising the WG has achieved its primary aim;
- (f) Unanimously that the Chair and Deputy Chair of the TIC WG (Cllrs Curtis and Porch), should continue to informally meet with TIC Officers as the interface between Cllrs and the TIC service;
- (g) That the recommendations regarding any future staffing reviews are fully endorsed and adopted.

The Mayor closed the meeting at 9.10pm