

SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of Annual (General) Council Meeting

Date of meeting: Monday 12 May 2025 at 19.10 in the Town Hall, Saffron Walden.

Present Councillors: Ahmed, Asker, Coote, de Vries, Eke, Freeman, Hawke-Smith, McBirnie, McLellan, Meloy, Parker, Porch and Reeve.

Officers: Deputy Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

Members of the Public: None

AM 01-25	<p>Election of Town Mayor In accordance with the Town Council’s Mayoral and Leadership Selection Policy, one valid nomination was received for Cllr Ahmed.</p> <p>Cllr Reeve nominated Cllr Ahmed, seconded by Cllr Asker. Cllr Ahmed accepted the nomination and there were no further nominations to the position of Mayor.</p> <p>It was unanimously agreed to appoint Cllr Ahmed as Mayor for the period 2025/26.</p> <p>Cllr Ahmed took the Chair and addressed Council in his capacity as newly elected Mayor.</p>
AM 02-25	<p>Declaration of Acceptance of Office – the Mayor Cllr Ahmed read and signed the declaration of office; this was witnessed by the Deputy Town Clerk and was formally received by Council.</p>
AM 03-25	<p>Apologies for absence Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Abercrombie, Curtis, Gadd, Jones and Shotropa.</p>
AM 04-25	<p>To receive any Declarations of Interest Cllrs Ahmed, Asker, Coote, Freeman, McBirnie and Reeve declared generic non-pecuniary interest as members of Uttlesford District Council.</p>
AM 05-25	<p>Mayor to address the Council The newly elected Mayor, Cllr Ahmed thanked fellow Councillors for their support, noting he is very honoured to be appointed the post of Mayor, having lived in Saffron Walden for 30 years raising his family and running his businesses.</p> <p>The Mayor advised, his chosen fundraising charity is Uttlesford Community Action Network (UCAN) and he looks forward to arranging fundraising activities.</p> <p>The Mayor thanked Council, officers and staff and looks forward to working with them all and the community in his Mayoral term.</p>
AM 06-25	<p>To receive thanks for the retiring Mayor The Mayor thanked Cllr Eke for his time as Mayor, who has been a role model, further extending his thanks and support to Cllr Eke’s wife Jan.</p>

	<p>Cllr Coote also thanked Cllr Eke for taking on the role of Mayor and Leader for 2024/25 and Council gave Cllr Eke a round of applause.</p>
AM 07-25	<p>Retiring Mayor to reply Cllr Eke thanked Councillors, staff and officers for their support as his time as Mayor, noting it has been a privilege to be the Mayor of Saffron Walden with several memorable highlights.</p>
AM 08-25	<p>Election of Deputy Town Mayor In accordance with the Town Council's Mayoral and Leadership Selection Policy, one valid nomination has been received.</p> <p>Cllr Coote nominated Cllr Curtis, seconded by Cllr Jones. Cllr Curtis accepted the nomination and there were no further nominations for the position of Deputy Town Mayor.</p> <p>It was unanimously agreed to appoint Cllr Curtis as Deputy Mayor for 2025/26.</p>
AM 09-25	<p>Declaration of Acceptance of Office – Deputy Mayor Noting the absence of Cllr Curtis, the Deputy Town Clerk explained the Deputy Mayor will sign the Declaration outside of this meeting and before the June Full Council meeting.</p>
AM 10-25	<p>Public Speaking Time There were no questions arising from any members of the public present.</p>
AM 11-25	<p>Election of Town Council Leader In accordance with the Town Council's Mayoral and Leadership Selection Policy, one valid nomination was received at the April 2025 Full Council meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Coote nominated Cllr Freeman, seconded by Cllr Eke. Cllr Freeman accepted the nomination.</p> <p>It was resolved: To appoint Cllr Freeman as Leader for 2025/26.</p>
AM 12-25	<p>Election of Town Council Deputy Leader In accordance with the Town Council's Mayoral and Leadership Selection Policy, one valid nomination was received at the April 2025 Full Council meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Porch nominated Cllr Hawke-Smith, seconded by Cllr Freeman. Cllr Hawke-Smith accepted the nomination.</p> <p>It was resolved: to appoint Cllr Hawke-Smith as Deputy Leader for 2025/26</p>
AM 13-25	<p>Appointment of Members to Committees Council noted the following information, as prescribed within existing standing orders and overarching policies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are both ex-officio members of each Committee, as per Standing Order 4d, xv11 and as detailed in the Council's Mayor/Leader Policy.

	<p>b. The Leader and Deputy Leader are not ex-officio members of each Committee, aligning with the Council's Mayoral/Leader policy.</p> <p>c. Council considered whether to re-affirm the above (a-b) or to amend current practices.</p> <p>d. It was unanimously resolved: To amend current practices, in removing the ex-officio status from the Deputy Town Mayor in favour of making the Leader an ex-officio member of each Committee. It was noted, officers will amend overarching policies to reflect this change.</p> <p>e. It was resolved: To appoint the following committee members:</p> <p>A & S Committee (9 Members): Cllrs Abercrombie, Asker, Ahmed (Mayor), Curtis, Freeman (Leader), Reeve, Jones, Shotropa and Porch.</p> <p>F & E Committee (10 Members) Cllrs Ahmed (Mayor), Coote, de Vries, Eke , Freeman (Leader), McBirnie, Meloy, Hawke-Smith, Parker and McLellan.</p> <p>P & T Committee (8 Members): Cllrs Ahmed (Mayor), Curtis, Jones, Freeman (Leader), Gadd, Hawke-Smith, McLellan and Meloy.</p>
<p>AM 14-25</p>	<p>Standing Orders</p> <p>Paragraph 4dv of standing orders currently permit substitution, noting <i>“Members who cannot be present at a Committee meeting to substitute another Councillor to attend in their capacity as a Committee Member, provided such notification is provided to the Proper Officer at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting”</i>.</p> <p>It was unanimously agreed to amend Standing Orders and overarching policies with immediate effect, as follows:</p> <p>(a) To delete the requirement for 24 hours' notice to act as a substitute (for any Councillor).</p> <p>(b) To add that any substitutions are no more than 1/3 of the Committee members present. For example: if 4 Councillors are present, only 1 can be a substitute. Quorum for A&S and F&E = 4. Quorum for P&T = 3, so at least two of them would need to be Committee members. Limiting the number of substitutes at any meeting, ensures there is continuity and experience on the Committee.</p> <p>Council acknowledged these changes would aid proceedings, ensuring all meetings meet quorum.</p>
<p>AM 15-25</p>	<p>Committee Terms of Reference</p> <p>It was resolved: To re-adopt the Committee Terms of Reference, with no changes, being:</p> <p>a) Assets & Services (A & S); b) Finance & Establishment (F & E); c) Planning & Transport (P & T)</p>

<p>AM 16-25</p>	<p>Appointment of Members to Working Groups Council noted the following:</p> <p>(a) At their respective May Committee meetings, each 'parent' Committee will be requested to review the terms of reference of any sub-Committees and/or Working Groups with a view to recommending same to the June FC meeting. The purpose of this process is for each sub-Committee/Working Group to 'own' the Terms of Reference, subject to agreement and adoption by Council.</p> <p>(b) To note that proposed membership and terms of reference for any sub-Committees / Working Groups will be presented to the June 2025 Full Council meeting for Council's consideration. Membership to existing sub-Committees, Working Groups and the like therefore remains as existing, until the matter is further considered at the June Full Council meeting.</p>
<p>AM 17-25</p>	<p>Calendar of future meetings It was unanimously resolved: To adopt the calendar of Council and Committee meetings.</p>
<p>AM 18-25</p>	<p>To consider representation or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back It was resolved, to make the following appointments:</p> <p>Alderman's House – Mayor (ex-officio), Freeman Essex County Council Passenger Transport - Cllr McLellan Uttlesford Community Transport - Cllr McLellan Stansted Watch - Cllr Eke Friends of Bridge End Garden - Cllr Gadd Little Walden Village Hall - Cllr Curtis Business Improvement District - Cllr Eke and Cllr Porch Uttlesford Association Local Councils - Mayor and Leader Citizen's Advice - Cllr Freeman Youth Outreach Project- Cllr Porch Saffron Walden Cricket Club - Cllr Porch Saffron Walden Organisation for Sport - Cllr de Vries and McBirnie Saffron Walden Arts Trust – Cllr Hawke-Smith Heritage Development Group - Cllr Eke and Porch</p>
<p>AM 19-25</p>	<p>Annual review of policies and practices It was resolved to note:</p> <p>(a) In accordance with Standing Orders and best practice, several policies and procedures are recommended for annual review. The Annual Meeting is requested to note this requirement and that the polices / procedures etc will come forward to the appropriate Committee meetings and/or Full Council meetings in due course and according to the policy review period.</p> <p>(b) Civility and Respect Pledge, in October 2022, Council adopted the Civility and Respect Pledge. Whilst this pledge is not time-bound (unlike other policies which</p>

	<p>require an annual/regular review) it is appropriate for Council to remind itself of this previous commitment</p> <p>It was unanimously resolved: To re-adopt the Civility and Respect Pledge.</p>
AM 20-25	<p>Year-end accounts</p> <p>It was Resolved: To note that the year-end accounts, including a review of the inventory of land and other assets will be submitted to the June 2025 Full Council as part of the year end procedures.</p>
AM 21-25	<p>Insurance cover</p> <p>It was Resolved: To note arrangements for insurance cover will be reviewed in June when the policies become due for renewal.</p>
AM 22-25	<p>Date and time of Next Meeting(s)</p> <p>The next Full Council meeting will take place on Monday 10th June at 7.30pm in the Town Hall Saffron Walden</p>

Meeting closed 7.33pm