

**SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Full Council Meeting**

**Date of meeting:** Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 7.30pm in the Town Hall Saffron Walden.

**Present Councillors:** Cllrs Asker, de Vries, Eke, Frost, Freeman, Gadd, Hawke-Smith, and Porch.

**Officers:** Lisa Courtney (Town Clerk), Terry Frostick (Operations Manager)

**Public:** None present

FC 068-24	<b>Apologies for absence</b> Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Abercrombie, Ahmed, Coote, Curtis, Jones, McBirnie, McLellan, Meloy, Reeve, Shotropa
FC 069-24	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> Cllrs Asker and Freeman 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 070-24	<b>Public Speaking Time</b> There were no questions arising
FC 071-24	<b>Updates from 3<sup>rd</sup> parties – for information only</b> (a) Cllr Gadd (ECC County Councillor), noted the bus operator delivering services across Uttlesford has ceased the service and Essex Highways have found a new temporary operator; the disruption caused to local residents was noted. (b) No update was received from the UDC councillors.
FC 072-24	<b>Mayor's Communications</b> The Mayor noted: a) the recent SWTC Easter Craft event was very successful and well attended. b) A Mayoral fundraising Rock and Roll Bingo event will take place at Fairycroft house on 9 May 2024.
FC 073-24	<b>To verify the Minutes of the Town Council meetings</b> The 11.03.2024 and 25.03.2024 Full Council minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meetings and signed by the Mayor.

FC 074-24	<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 14.03.2024</li> <li>• Planning and Transport 28.03.2024</li> <li>• Finance and Establishment 18.03.2024</li> <li>• Assets and Services 25.03.2024</li> </ul>
FC 075-24	<p><b>Former Council Chamber Furniture</b></p> <p>Members noted that a member of the public had submitted a motion for consideration at the Annual Parish meeting regarding the former Council Chamber furniture, which is currently in storage. Council noted the written report attached to the agenda, and that Council was not obligated to review or discuss this motion further but in representing the request from the Annual Parish Meeting, Members considered the matter further. Council reviewed the report as presented, which detailed opportunities and recommendations for its future usage.</p> <p>It was <b>Resolved</b>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) That the Council continues to use the Court Room or the Assembly Hall for Council Meetings, unless there are good reasons otherwise, recognising that they can be set up in a considerably more welcoming and audience-friendly way than the Council Chamber, and that, with the growth in size of the Council, the Council Chamber is too small for the conduct of Council meetings efficiently;</li> <li>b) That the Council renew their efforts to find a suitable home for the chairs and table previously used in the Council Chamber, for example Saffron Walden Museum, and that in the meantime they remain in Council storage;</li> <li>c) That Council seek to optimise the use by, and revenue from, third parties of the Council Chamber</li> </ol> <p>Staff to therefore consider and review the opportunities for future letting of the Council Chamber and storage options for the table.</p>
FC 076-24	<p><b>Number 5 Market Street (former Natwest Bank)</b></p> <p>Council noted the completed refurbishment of the former Nat West Bank and formally thanked the Operations Manager and all the Operations Team for their wonderful efforts in completing the refurbishment.</p>
FC 077-24	<p><b>Increasing Awareness of Roles and Responsibilities</b></p> <p>Council considered the proposal to introduce a 'buddy' system where Councillors and staff spend time together to further understand one another's role/responsibilities.</p> <p>It was <b>Resolved</b>:</p>

	To introduce a group buddy system between Councillors and staff in the summer months, plans and arrangements to be progressed during summer 2024.
FC 078-24	<p><b>By-Election for Castle Ward</b></p> <p>It was noted that a valid request has been made by the local electorate, for a by-election in Castle Ward, following the resignation of former Cllr Kirstie Frost. The timetable detailing the election process and further information as below was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) SWTC will meet 100% of the election cost, anticipated at approximately £5,000 (TBC). This cost will be met from the existing EMR budget for election costs, with a current balance of £7,600. To ensure balances are available for the next full Town Council election in May 2027 (budget year 2027/28), Council is required to set aside a total of £20,000/3 years = £6,666 pa. Note this assumes no further by-elections during the current term of office (to May 2027);</li> <li>(b) SWTC will promote and advertise the vacancy both online and via noticeboards, press releases etc;</li> <li>(c) SWTC will follow all legislative requirements regarding advertisement, promotion and management of the elections process (note UDC is the Election Body);</li> <li>(d) There will be three polling stations at Little Walden Village Hall, Community Church in Castle Street and Committee Room, Town Hall;</li> </ul> <p>It was unanimously <b>Resolved</b>: to request the issuance of polling cards.</p> <p>In the event that the election is not contested, the nominated person would be duly elected to SWTC.</p>
FC 079-24	<p><b>Tourist Information Centre Working Group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) It was <b>Resolved</b>: To formally appoint Cllrs Asker and de Vries to the working group, acknowledging their support and attendance since the formation of the working group.</li> <li>(b) It was agreed to defer adoption of the Terms of Reference for the May Council meeting, allowing the working group to further and review the terms.</li> </ul>
FC 080-24	<b>Reports from other Meetings</b> - No meetings reported.
FC 081-24	<b>Additional Forthcoming Meetings</b> - No meetings reported.
FC 082-24	<b>Urgent Items</b> - No matters raised.
FC 083-24	<p><b>Date and time of Next meeting(s)</b></p> <p>The Mayor reminded all that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May at 7pm in the Town Hall being the Annual Council meeting, to be followed by the ordinary Full Council meeting at 7.30pm. The Annual meeting would be preceded at 6pm with an small celebration event to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of SWTC and former Councillors have been invited to this.</p>

FC 084-24	<p><b>Confidential Item – Exclusion of Press and Public (Part II meeting)</b></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> <p><i>This item is confidential because it involves details of employee contracts, publishing this information would breach data protection and GDPR matters.</i></p>
FC 085-24	<p><b>Tourist Information Centre Update Report</b></p> <p>It was <b>Resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) To receive and note the minutes from the TIC Working Group (WG) meetings of 14.03.24 and 4.4.24;</li> <li>(b) To receive and approve the confidential report as submitted by the Town Clerk, bringing together the recommendations from the WG;</li> <li>(c) To unanimously adopt option C of the confidential report with the inclusion of casual cover (574 hours pa) to cover holiday leave;</li> <li>(d) That the changes would be reviewed in 6-months' time to consider and understand the impact of revised practices/hours.</li> </ul>

The Mayor closed the meeting at 8.40pm