

## SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN COUNCIL

### Minutes of Full Council Meeting

**Date of meeting:** Monday 11 November 2024 at 7.30pm in the Town Hall Saffron Walden

**Present Councillors:** Cllrs Coote, Curtis, Eke (Chair), Freeman, Hawke-Smith, McBirnie, Meloy, Parker, Reeve and Shotropa.

**Officers:** Town Clerk

**Public:** None present

FC 183-24	<p><b>Apologies for absence</b></p> <p>Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Abercrombie, Ahmed, Asker, de Vries, Gadd, Jones, McLellan and Porch.</p>
FC 184-24	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>Cllrs Coote, Freeman, McBirnie and Reeve declared generic non-pecuniary interests as District Councillors for Uttlesford District Council (UDC).</p>
FC 185-24	<p><b>Public Speaking Time</b></p> <p>There were no questions arising.</p>
FC 186-24	<p><b>Updates from 3<sup>rd</sup> parties – for information only</b></p> <p>(a) No update or advice was received from Cllr Gadd, Essex County Councillor (b) Cllr Coote as a UDC councillor noted the Local Plan works is progressing positively and in 2025 the external management contract for social housing works may change.</p>
FC 187-24	<p><b>Mayor's Communications</b></p> <p>The Mayor recently attended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Saffron Hall promotional photo shoot with the panto cast.</li><li>b. SWTC's Lantern Making Workshops.</li><li>c. Remembrance Parade and the Little Walden service, noting thanks has been received from the Deputy Lieutenant who attended the Saffron Walden Parade.</li></ul>
FC 188-24	<p><b>To verify the Minutes of the Town Council meetings</b></p> <p>(a) The 14.10.2024 Full Council minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Mayor.</p> <p>Regarding minute reference FC 182-24(b-d), which reads:</p>

Signed as a true and accurate record .....  
Minutes of Full Council Meeting 11 November 2024

	<p><i>“ It was resolved...</i></p> <p><i>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;</i></p> <p><i>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;</i></p> <p><i>d) That a strong direction be given to the Budget WG to retain the 20 hours per week in the 2025/26 budget;”</i></p> <p>It was queried whether Council can or should form recommendations to the Budget Working Group and it was reiterated Council is the determining body, not a Working Group. At the October Full Council meeting, Council provided a strong direction to the Budget WG to retain an additional 20 hours per week for the TIC service, reinstating some of the lost hours; aligning with the confidential report provided and discussed at the September Full Council meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Coote raised further queries regarding the process at the October Full Council meeting and agreed that he would meet further with the Town Clerk to address any outstanding concerns.</p> <p>(b) The last set of notes from the TIC working group (03.10.2024) were received and signed by Cllr Curtis, as the WG Chair.</p>
FC 189-24	<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 10.10.2024 (approved minutes)</li> <li>• Planning and Transport 24.10.2024 (draft minutes)</li> <li>• Finance and Establishment 21.10.2024 (draft minutes)</li> <li>• Assets and Services 28.10.2024 (draft minutes)</li> </ul>
FC 190-24	<p><b>Annual Governance Review 2023/24</b></p> <p>Council noted the accounts for 2023/24 have been signed off by the external auditor and the attached reports as presented to the Finance and Establishment committee.</p>
FC 191-24	<p><b>Accounts and Accounting Statements</b></p> <p>The following was noted in accordance with Standing Orders.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Receipts and payments for 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter</li> <li>b) Aggregate receipts and payments year to date</li> <li>c) Balances held at the end of the current quarter (to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024)</li> <li>d) That these details are already provided to the Finance and Establishment Committee monthly.</li> </ol>

FC 192-24	<p><b>Consultation on Remote/Hybrid Attendance and Proxy Voting</b></p> <p>Council noted the government has launched a consultation on the detail and practical implications of allowing remote and hybrid attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings in England. A number of thoughts were raised including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The positive and negative impact of online meetings;</li> <li>• Increased reliance on IT;</li> <li>• The opportunities to attended online meetings for those with other commitments;</li> <li>• The loss of some communication (body language) if attending remote meetings;</li> <li>• There was a general support for Committee meetings to be hosted online, with Council meetings to be face-to-face;</li> <li>• Concerns were expressed regarding proxy voting, including the risk of pre-determination.</li> </ul> <p>It was agreed The Town Clerk and Mayor would draft a response to the consultation, based upon the guidance and thoughts as above for consideration at the December Full Council meeting.</p>
FC 193-24	<p><b>Little Walden Play Area Working Group</b></p> <p>Council noted the decision at the May 2024 Annual Meeting, to appoint to the LWR play area working group membership in December 2024. Subsequent to this agreement, SWTC has successfully gained grant funding of £10k from UDC under the Shared Prosperity Fund towards the play area refurbishment programme, which must be spent by 31.03.2025, hence the matter was being considered slightly ahead of schedule.</p> <p>It was unanimously resolved to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Appoint the following LWR Play Area Working Group, Cllrs: Freeman, Curtis and Parker. Additionally subject to her acceptance Cllr Asker, if not, Cllr Coote.</li> <li>b. To adopt the proposed Terms of Reference.</li> </ol>
FC 194-24	<p><b>Splash Park Working Group</b></p> <p>It was unanimously agreed to expand the Terms of Reference and remit of the Splash Park Working Group to incorporate a review of works required to the One Minit Skatepark and to assess the validity of using S106 monies for either/or both projects.</p> <p>It was unanimously resolved to adopt the revised TOR as proposed.</p>
FC 195-24	<p><b>Local Government Peer Review Working Group</b></p> <p>Council noted the following update, as stipulated on the agenda:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The WG held its first meeting which was focussed on the purpose, attributes and benefit of the peer review.</li> <li>b. The WG's recommendation to increase its membership.</li> </ol>

	<p>The following was further discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Resourcing is required to enact any review, noting a benefit could be revised working practices to increase efficiency.</li> <li>d. That draft Terms of Reference will be recommended by the WG to a future Full Council meeting (either December 2024 or January 2025).</li> <li>e. Cllrs Parker and McBirnie would endeavour to attend the next working group meeting.</li> </ul> <p>It was <b>Resolved</b>:</p> <p>To appoint Cllr Hawke-Smith as an additional member of the WG and to note the update as provided.</p>
FC 196-24	<p><b>Community Safety in Uttlesford</b></p> <p>It was noted UDC is hosting a consultation on crime and safety in Uttlesford to which councillors were encouraged to respond to as individuals.</p>
FC 197-24	<p><b>Reports from other Meetings</b></p> <p>It was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Saffron Walden Heritage Development Group is progressing with the 1647 debates statue to be located outside of St Marys Church.</li> <li>b. A Skate Park meeting recently took place with partners, officers and councillors to discuss the required works, an update will be presented at a future Assets and Services Committee.</li> </ul>
FC 198-24	<p><b>Additional Forthcoming Meetings</b></p> <p>Council noted the upcoming standards training available at UDC.</p>
FC 199-24	<p><b>Urgent Items</b></p> <p>No matters raised.</p>
FC 200-24	<p><b>Date and time of Next meeting(s)</b></p> <p>The Mayor reminded all that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December at 7.30pm.</p>

The Mayor closed the meeting at 9.25pm