

ASSET & SERVICES COMMITTEE
SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the ASSETS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING in the Town Hall, Saffron Walden.

Date of meeting: Monday 25th November 2024 at 7.30pm

Present: Councillors Abercrombie, Asker, Curtis, Eke, Hawke-Smith (Chair), Parker and Porch.

Officers: Town Clerk and Operations Manager

A & S 110-24	Apologies for absence Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Ahmed, Freeman, Jones and McLellan.
A & S 111-24	Declarations of Interest Cllrs Asker and Reeve declared non-pecuniary interests as District Councillors for Uttlesford District Council
A & S 112-24	Minutes of the last meeting of the Assets & Services Committee 28.10.2024 The minutes of the 28.10.2024 Assets & Services Committee meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.
A & S 113-24	Public Speaking Time There were no questions or matters arising from the public.
A & S 114-24	Grant Monitoring Form - Writers Room Committee received and noted the completed grant monitoring form from the Writer's Room concluding their grant request. Cllr Asker noted the positivity of this activity, noting the wider benefits to be derived.
A & S 115-24	SWTC Testimonials Committee noted the testimonials recently received and as detailed on the agenda
A & S 116-24	Skate Park Update The Town Clerk confirmed changes made to the Terms of Reference at the November Full Council meeting which expand the remit of the Splash Park Working Group – now renamed to the Strategic Public Open Space (Linden Homes) S106 Monies Working Group, to capture the full remit of this WG. The Operations Manager explained several upgrade works are required on the skate park and the Working Group will be reconvened at the earliest opportunity to progress the Council's anticipated project(s) at the skate park and/or splash park.

<p>A & S 117-24</p>	<p>Cemetery Burial Land Consultation Committee noted a government consultation is taking place as The Law Commission is reviewing the burial in England and Wales legislation closing 9 January 2025. It was</p> <p>Resolved: To delegate a response to Officers with specific experience and knowledge on matters relating to burial matters.</p>
<p>A & S 118-24</p>	<p>Land at Harris Yard Committee noted a written report will be presented to a future committee meeting, to consider the opportunity for SWTC to take on the land at Harris Yard from the developer. Officers were thanked for their persistent progression of this matter, albeit the developer had failed to respond. It was</p> <p>Resolved: That further correspondence be sent to the developer (Vistry Homes), as a firm letter from the Town Mayor and this be sent to senior Executives at Vistry Homes.</p>
<p>A & S 119-24</p>	<p>Youth Services Committee noted the Essex County Council Youth and Community Worker for Saffron Walden will attend the January 2025 committee meeting. The following was further noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) That a series of questions had already been relayed to the ECC Youth Services in anticipation that positive progress could be made at the January Committee meeting; (b) That there may be opportunities to work differently / more creatively with ECC in delivering a local youth programme; (c) That the recently announced news of potential unification of Councils in Essex would impact across a number of services, potentially affecting youth services to a greater extent given it is not a statutory service; (d) That SWTC had been awarded £10k from UDC in their 2024/25 budget and that Cllr Porch continued to press UDC for any longer-term commitment from 2025/26 onwards.
<p>A & S 120-24</p>	<p>Saffron Walden 1647 Statue Project Committee noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The Saffron Walden Heritage Development Group (SWHDG) is progressing its works on the proposed statue to be erected at St Marys Church. The proposed statue will represent Saffron Walden's role in the evolution of democracy in England. (b) SWHDG has asked whether SWTC would be minded owning the statue once built. (c) In-principle support was offered to the project, at the October 2023 Council meeting. <p>Following considerable discussion on this matter, it was Resolved:</p>

	<p>(d) To offer in-principle support for future ownership by SWTC (although notably this was not a firm commitment) and that this in-principle support was dependant on a number of caveats, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) That formal confirmation from St Mary’s Church (or the Church Diocese as appropriate) was received confirming their consent to the statue being erected at the front of the church; (ii) That any consent regarding location is in writing in the form of a licence to occupy (or similar) providing in perpetuity rights for the statue to remain in the stated location; (iii) A better understanding of why St Mary’s could not own the statue; (iv) That it would be appropriate for the statue to be owned by SWTC but located in land owned by St Mary’s and that any legal permissions were firmly established prior to any transfer to SWTC; (v) That SWTC would require specific permission from its insurers (noted that an indicative insurance premium would be in the region of £20 - £30 pa); (vi) That appropriate permissions were obtained by the HDG for installing in St Mary’s (for example the Committee was unsure if listed building consent was required, or permission from Historic England, DEFRA (as a closed churchyard) or any other statutory body as necessary); (vii) That the HDG would need to ascertain the appropriateness of installing the statue in St Mary’s and they would undertake any land surveys or the like as required to ensure the statue was suitably installed and that a search of the land (utilities, burial ground etc) had been conducted to ensure the suitability of the location (it was further noted the site is a closed church yard and it is therefore possible that historic graves lay under the proposed location); (viii) That the HDG (or similar) would be the lead body on progressing further with this project and that SWTC’s commitment would only be invoked once the statue was installed with full permission and subject to the caveats/queries as noted above. It was confirmed that SWTC would not be the lead body on this project; (ix) Confirmation regarding the precise timing in the project when ownership may potentially transfer to SWTC; (x) Further details of the project plan, including proposals which ensure sustained recognition of the statue (for example, would the HDG project include historical teaching, inclusion on a historical map/town trail, details of promotional materials for the project?) <p>In summarising its position, the Committee reaffirmed its ‘in principle’ support to be the future owners of the proposed statue but that further information and details were necessary to reach a fully informed decision.</p>
<p>A & S 121-24</p>	<p>Urgent Information Items The Team was thanked for the very successful Christmas Lights Switch on, noting the hard work of Officers in managing and co-ordinating the event, along with specific volunteer support from Councillors. It was noted the SWTC Santa’s Grotto will take place in the Town Hall on 7 and 8 December.</p>
<p>A & S 122-24</p>	<p>Date and time of Next Meeting Noted as Monday 16th December at 7.30pm in the Town Hall, Saffron Walden</p>

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.45pm