

Minutes of the Saffron Walden Annual Town Meeting 2024

Date of meeting: Tuesday 6 May 2025

Present Councillors: Asker, de Vries, Eke (Mayor), Hawke-Smith, McLellan, Meloy and Parker.

Officers: Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and Administration Officer.

Public: 10 members of the public and 7 representatives of local organisations.

AM 01-25	Apologies for absence, received from: Cllrs Abercrombie, Ahmed, Coote, Curtis, Freeman, Gadd, Jones, McBirnie, Porch, Reeve and Shotropa. Representatives of: Saffron Walden Youth Outreach Project and Saffron Screen.
AM 02-25	Minutes 08.04.2024 The minutes of the 8 April 2024 Annual Town Meeting were approved and signed by the Mayor.
AM 03-25	Mayor's Annual Report The Mayor's written report was presented and received, noting: - The increase in Town Council revenue derived from weddings, bookings and increased grants and sponsorship being awarded. The Mayor congratulated officers for the continued efforts. - Several civic events have taken place during his mayoral term including: The Freedom Parade, D-Day and the upcoming VE Day celebrations. - The Mayor thanked fellow councillors for their support noting it has been an honour to serve as Mayor for the Best Place to Live in the UK – as recently awarded by The Times.
AM 04-25	Annual Reports by Chairs of Committees The Committee chair reports were received and each Chair spoke further: Assets & Services Cllr Hawke-Smith thanked the committee members and all of the officers for their continued support, noting the successful: Refurbishment of the SWTC Offices (No 5), continued support for the local youth services offering and the Little Walden play area refurbishment. Finance & Establishment Cllr de Vries noted there has been an increase in hirings, sales and sponsorship and grants which are greatly appreciated, Cllr de Vries thanked officers for their continued diligence. Cllr De Vries further noted, that the Committee is pleased to

	continue supporting local organisations by offering small grants and free of charge hire for Town Council venues. c) Planning & Transport Cllr McLellan noted the committee meets twice monthly, explaining SWTC is a consultee with Uttlesford District Council as the Local Planning Authority. The most significant applications this past year include: Construction of the former Printpak site and the former Friends School. Progress with Highway matters continues to be slow however have seen several drainage issues being fixed and widening George Street pavement to support pedestrians.
AM 05-25	Community Reports Representatives of the following groups spoke and summarised their written reports: a) Jubilee Hub partnership (UCAN, Enterprise East and SWTC) The Town Clerk explained Jubilee Hub has been offering free of charge community services for a couple of years now and the offering continues to thrive, with the support of Uttlesford Community Action Network (UCAN) and Enterprise East CIC who support service delivery with SWTC as the lease holder. b) Uttlesford Community Travel Thanks was passed to SWTC for their continued support and grant funding, it was noted: UCT fortunately received Lottery Funding, allowing UCT to continue offering its reduced rate transportation services for appointments / trips etc. Obtaining regular volunteers is becoming a struggle with long-standing volunteers beginning to step away from the service, requiring UCT to think smarter as to how they offer service delivery. c) Citizens Advice The representative thanked SWTC for the continued support and grant funding; additionally thanks and appreciation was passed onto the Mayor for choosing CA as their chosen fundraising charity in 2024/25. It was explained Saffron Walden has c700 regular clients and obtaining and training regular volunteers is becoming increasingly difficult. d) Saffron Hall It was explained SWTC and SH established a partnership agreement this year, which has been mutually beneficial and well supported, noting the 2024 Christmas Panto fundraised for the Mayor's chosen charity and raised £1k. SH thanked SWTC and looks forward to continuing this partnership work into 2025/26. e) Saffron Walden Arts Trust It was noted, the fourth Fete de la Musique was hosted in Saffron Walden last Summer – with the next scheduled for 2027. Thanks was passed onto the volunteers who supported the weekend activities and SWTC for the free of charge venue hire. f) Saffron Walden Initiative

	Thanked SWTC Officers and Councillors for their continued support in delivering their events including: Dance in the Square, Late Night Shopping. g) Saffron Walden Youth Outreach Project – apologies received and report noted. h) Saffron Screen – apologies received and report noted. i) Accuro Spoke and thanked residents for their continued support with their fundraising activities, including the annual Santa Dash, which has moved to the Common due to the increase in people taking part, the representative also thanked SWTC for the recent free of charge venue hire grant. The Mayor thanked all of the representatives noting their continued efforts is admirable.
AM 06-25	Questions from Electors The Mayor opened questions from electors. a. Two pre-submitted questions from Mr Pretious was answered prior to the meeting in writing and further discussed during the meeting as follows: i. Why the Sainsbury's proposal at the now Aldi site was refused – the proposal would have included a much needed petrol station. ii. What is to happen at the former Homebase site. iii. The Mayor explained SWTC is a planning consultee and not the determining body – UDC is and could advise of the full reasons for refusal of the Sainsburys shop and petrol station proposal. It was further noted the Homebase site is within the draft Local Plan as employment land. b. A pre-submitted question from Mr Gilyead was answered prior to the meeting in writing and further discussed during the meeting as follows: i. What measures have been taken by SWTC to enforce 20mph zones and has Essex Police made any commitments to enforce the speed limits. ii. The Mayor explained the P&T Committee considers areas of speeding concern as a standing item at each meeting. These areas of concern are relayed to Essex Police and/or Essex County Council, requesting action, for example the Borough Lane/Debden Road junction. iii. The Town Clerk noted historically there was a volunteer Community Speed Watch Group, which disbanded due to the limited volunteer numbers. SWTC could advertise CSW opportunity and promote it to residents. c. Mr Bartlett asked whether the Civic Council furniture was considered by Council, as requested at the 2024 Town Meeting. i. The Mayor confirmed this was considered at the April 2024 Full Council Meeting and the furniture remains in storage. The Mayor noted: The table was historically used for 16 councillors, there are now 18; additionally, the table was located in the Council Chamber, which is regularly used for wedding ceremonies, increasing revenue. d. Mr Ellis asked whether benches could be located at Audley End Park for walkers.

	i. The Mayor explained, this would be within the gift of Audley End Estate and SWTC would relay this request to the landowners. e. Ms Rodden noted several complaints are received regarding weeds and rubbish around Saffron Walden, asking what can be done to reduce the mess. i. The Mayor explained SWTC works closely with the BID, encouraging business owners to manage their shop fronts and ECC is responsible for public paths. ii. The Town Clerk explained SWTC collects Town Centre bins and UDC is the waste authority. SWTC and UDC are due to meet this week regarding litter collections to identify ways for improvement. f. Mr Motttram thanked SWTC for the excellent maintenance of the Common.
AM 07-25	Closing from the Mayor The Mayor thanked everyone in attendance for their time, presentations and questions and closed the meeting.

The Town Mayor closed the meeting at 8.45pm