

SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of Full Council Meeting

Date of meeting: Monday 8 September 2025 at 7.30pm in the Town Hall, Saffron Walden

Present Councillors: Cllrs Abercrombie, Coote, Curtis (Chair), de Vries, Freeman, Hawke-Smith, Jones, McBirnie, McLellan, Parker, Porch, Reeve and Shotropa.

Officers: Town Clerk, Operations Manager and Administration Officer

Public: 15-20 members of the public present

In the absence of the Town Mayor, the Deputy Town Mayor, Cllr Curtis chaired the meeting	
FC 127-25	<p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Ahmed, Asker, Eke and Meloy. Absent, Cllr Gadd.</p>
FC 128-25	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>Cllrs Coote, Freeman, McBirnie and Reeve declared generic non-pecuniary interests as District Councillors for Uttlesford District Council (UDC).</p>
FC 129-25	<p>It was agreed to bring forward agenda item 8, F&E Sub-Committee (TIC)</p>
FC 130-25	<p>F&E Sub-Committee (TIC)</p> <p>Council received the written report and recommendations from the F&E Sub-Committee regarding the proposed service levels and location of the TIC, including responses from the recent public TIC consultation; the report was introduced by the sub-committee chair, Cllr Parker who spoke further to the recommendations from the sub-committee.</p> <p>Residents asked several questions and the following was confirmed by Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) Casual staff hours are included within the recommended 74 weekly hours(b) Visitor numbers are collated from a step counter and or tally maintained by TIC staff(c) There are currently two contracted employees plus casual workers(d) The premises could be utilised to accommodate a third party to share the space(e) A tourism strategy is being prepared by a third party working with SWTC and local partners <p>It was unanimously resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) Progress Option A as per the report presented to Council from the TIC sub-Committee, affording the greatest stability to staff and to the service delivery. In adopting Option A, the following principles were further agreed:

- (b) That the TIC staffing hours are firmly established at a maximum of 74 hours per week and that Officers are delegated with responsibility to determine the most appropriate distribution of staffing hours and shop operating hours.
- (c) In considering (b) above, that existing staffing hours awarded to permanent staff are protected, whilst acknowledged that some staff may be able and willing to change their current working patterns
- (d) That the TIC service firmly remains at No 1 Market Place
- (e) That Officers consider opportunities to create a CiC for the TIC service and that a report on this opportunity is brought forward to a future F&E Committee meeting within 6-months
- (f) In considering (e) above, any future report to acknowledge a potential reduction in staffing hours to a minimum of 60 hours per week, subject to any co-location partnership and/or use of volunteers (see (g) below).
- (g) That volunteers who have come forward from the public consultation, will be contacted to ascertain interest and availability to work. These volunteers will be asked to support the service with specific tasks and activities as opposed to general operating business. Examples provided were for volunteers to support with stock take, window dressing, analysis of statistics, website (this is not an exhaustive list)
- (h) That the name of the service remains as Tourist Information Centre (TIC) as opposed to Information Centre (IC)
- (i) Note that opportunities provided under Option B (co-location with a 3rd party) will be further reviewed by Officers, notwithstanding this must not create any changes to the proposed staffing hours and TIC location. Any 3rd party should offer a complementary service. Further that a report on this opportunity is brought forward to a future F&E Committee meeting within 6-months.
- (j) To discount Option C, retaining the service at No 1 Market Place
- (k) To cease the operation and work of the TIC sub-committee in recognition that the work of the sub-committee and this review is concluded;
- (l) That the TIC service should continue reporting into the F&E Committee and that quarterly reports should be reinstated upon implementation of Option A (subject to review of these reports by the F&E Committee)
- (m) From this point forward and until May 2027 (ie the lifespan of the current administration), that no further reviews would be undertaken of the TIC or its service provision or service delivery model, and Council would continue to monitor opportunities for the more effective operational delivery of that service in the present location.

FC 131-25	<p>Public Speaking Time There were no further questions arising, members of the public left the meeting.</p>
FC 132-25	<p>Updates from 3rd parties – for information only</p> <p>(a) An update was not received from Cllr P Gadd as the Essex County Councillor Cllr Porch requested SWTC to contact Cllr Gadd to query the road markings around Church Street – agreed</p> <p>(b) An update was not received from UDC Councillors on any matters which may be particularly pertinent to Saffron Walden</p>
FC 133-25	<p>Mayor’s Communications</p> <p>Council received the Mayor’s written report on recent community activities including the SWRT Carnival Procession, opening the Beach on the Common and SWTC VJ Day activities.</p>
FC 134-25	<p>To verify the Minutes of the Town Council meetings</p> <p>The 14.07.2025 Full Council minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meetings and signed by the Deputy Mayor.</p>
FC 135-25	<p>To receive the Minutes of the Previous Meetings</p> <p>Council received and noted the minutes from the following Committee meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and Transport 10.07.2025, 24.07.2025 and 14.08.2025 (Approved minutes) • Planning and Transport 28.08.2025 (draft minutes) • Finance and Establishment 21.07.2025 (draft minutes) • Assets and Services 28.08.2025 (draft minutes) • F&E Sub-Committee (TIC) 13.08.25 (approved minutes) • F&E Sub-Committee (TIC) 27.08.25 (draft minutes) • F&E Sub-Committee (Budget) 30.07.25 (draft minutes)
FC 136-25	<p>Accounts and Accounting Statements</p> <p>In accordance with Standing Orders, Council received and noted the following documents:</p> <p>(a) Receipts and payments for 1st quarter (April-June) (b) Aggregate receipts and payments year to date (c) Balances held at the end of the current quarter</p> <p>Council further noted documents for the 2nd quarter covering the period July – September 2025 will be presented to the October Full Council meeting</p>

FC 137-25	<p>Standing Orders</p> <p>Council considered the following amendment to the current Standing Orders, as follows with proposed new text shown in yellow highlight:</p> <p><i>4dv: shall permit, subject to Standing Orders 4(b) and (c), Members who cannot be present at a Committee meeting to substitute another Councillor to attend in their capacity as a Committee Member, provided any substitution is no greater than 1/3 of the those present and provided any such substitution has been approved by the absent member. Approval to substitute must be expressly given by the absent Member who must nominate any proposed substitution(s). The approval to substitute must be conveyed by the absent Member to an Officer of the Council in the form of an email, text message or phone call.</i></p> <p><i>4dvi: Shall permit a substitute Councillor the full and same rights as an ordinary Member of the Committee, including voting rights;</i></p> <p>It was unanimously Resolved: To amend Standing Order 4dv as proposed above, acknowledging this places specific responsibility on the absent member to communicate substitution details to an Officer and ensures the absent member approves the substitution.</p>
FC 138-25	<p>S106 Contributions</p> <p>Council received the S106 report, evidencing details of highways money held under S106 contributions, noting officers are awaiting verification from ECC.</p>
FC 139-25	<p>List of Policies</p> <p>Council received the list of SWTC current policies, copies of which are available on line and/or on request.</p>
FC 140-25	<p>Committee Membership</p> <p>Council noted Cllr Meloy's resignation from both the Planning and Transport Committee and Finance and Establishment Committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Planning & Transport Committee Cllr Hawke-Smith nominated Cllr Reeve as a P&T member, this was seconded by Cllr Cote and accepted by Cllr Reeve. It was resolved: To appoint Cllr Reeve as a P&T Member. b. Finance and Establishment Committee It was resolved: Not to appoint any additional committee members.
FC 141-25	<p>Reports from other Meetings</p> <p>No meetings reported.</p>

FC 142-25	<p>Additional Forthcoming Meetings</p> <p>Council received the following information:</p> <p>(a) EALC AGM on Thursday 25th September 2025 from 6.30pm – 9.00pm. It was noted Cllr Parker would attend.</p> <p>(b) Market Square Pedestrianisation Scheme: To note SWTC is arranging for Uttlesford District Council and Essex County Council Officers to meet with Council to provide an update on the DEFRA scheme and progress of the Market Square pedestrianization. It was noted an update was anticipated for this meeting, but unfortunately ECC Officers are not available. A date/time will be notified to all Councillors once available from ECC/UDC (note this may be an informal meeting, as opposed to the October Full Council meeting).</p> <p>(c) UDC Parish Forum on Monday 29th September from 19:00 to 21:00 at UDC Offices. It was noted Cllr Freeman would attend.</p>
FC 143-25	<p>Urgent Information Items</p> <p>Council noted:</p> <p>(a) UDC has extended the submission period for applications to the Community Awards to 18.09.25. The Town Council's submissions have been made as agreed at the July Full Council meeting</p> <p>(b) Any graffiti on third party assets is reported to the relevant authority. Any graffiti on SWTC assets will be removed.</p>
FC 144-25	<p>Date and time of Next Meeting</p> <p>Scheduled for Monday 13 October 2025 at 7.30pm in the Town Hall Saffron Walden.</p>
FC 145-25	<p>Confidential Item – Exclusion of Press and Public (Part II meeting)</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>This item is confidential on the following grounds:</p> <p>(a) It Involves employee personal information, publishing would breach data protection</p> <p>(b) It contains information of a commercially sensitive nature</p>

FC 146-25	Devolution Council received and noted the written update report on assets/services for potential transfer to SWTC under devolution/Local Government Reorganisation as recommended and to progress table items 1 and 7 as a priority.
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The Mayor closed the meeting at 8.20pm