

SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of Full Council Meeting

Date of meeting: Monday 9th February 2026 at 7.30pm

Present Councillors: Cllrs Ahmed, Asker (at 7.43pm), Curtis, de Vries (at 7.32pm), Eke, Freeman, Fiddy, Hawke-Smith, Jones, McBirnie (at 7.35pm), McLellan, Parker and Porch

Officers: Town Clerk and Operations Manager

Public: Three members of the public regarding Min Ref FC026/028-26 Bus Services
Mr Tofield, Ms Rodden re Min Ref FC033-26 Town of Culture bid

FC 024-26	Apologies for absence Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Abercrombie and Shotropa. Absent Cllrs Coote, Gadd and Reeve.
FC 025-26	Declarations of Interest Cllrs Ahmed, Fiddy and Freeman declared generic non-pecuniary interests as District Councillors for Uttlesford District Council (UDC).
FC 026-26	Public Speaking Time A Radwinter resident spoke regarding the Outcome of the Local Bus Consultation from Essex County Council (agenda item 16), the resident spoke in opposition to the ECC proposals noting: (a) Residents will not be able to travel to and from neighbouring villages into Saffron Walden or Audley End train station, causing additional vehicular traffic. (b) The flaws within the consultation statistics.
	Cllr de Vries arrived 7.32pm Cllr McBirnie arrived 7.35pm
FC 027-26	Council agreed to bring forward agenda item 16. Cllr Asker arrived 7.43pm
FC 028-26	Outcome of the Local Bus Consultation 2025 Council noted the outcome of the Local Bus Consultation 2025 has now been finalised and published. The results propose removal of the 59/590/320/321 services subject to a second consultation. Unanimously resolved: To object to the proposed removal due to the impact of losing the services on the local economy, environment and wellbeing of residents, taking the following action:

	(a) SWTC to submit its own response to the proposed service cut, referencing information as presented by the member of the public (b) To support Radwinter Parish Council in opposing proposed service removals (c) To promote the consultation and proposed service changes across social media and with the BID
FC 029-26	Updates from 3rd parties – for information only (a) Council received the written update and report from Cllr P Gadd as the Essex County Councillor (b) UDC Cllr Asker noted recent attendance at a meeting with Carver Barracks, CB passed on their thanks to SWTC, for supporting events and activities.
FC 030-26	Mayor's Communications Council received the written update from the Mayor.
FC 031-26	To verify the Minutes of the Town Council meetings The 08.01.26 and 12.01.2026 Full Council minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meetings and signed by the Mayor.
FC 032-26	To receive the Minutes of the Previous Meetings Council received and noted the minutes from the following Committee meetings: • Planning and Transport 08.01.2026 (approved) • Planning and Transport 22.01.2026 (draft) • Finance and Establishment 19.01.2026 (draft) • Assets and Services 26.01.2026 (draft)
FC 033-26	UK Town of Culture 2028 Expression of Interest The Town Clerk and Giles Tofield presented details to Council; Council noted the following information: (a) The UK Town of Culture is a brand-new Department for Culture, Media & Sport competition. For the first time, DCMS is inviting towns across the UK to enter the competition to showcase original storytelling, and empowering, accessible culture. The competition is targeted at all towns, whether small, medium or large. (b) In addition to the £3 million main prize and £250,000 finalist prizes, it is anticipated that winning will lead to significant, demonstrable outcomes,

	including a boost in civic pride, greater participation in cultural activities, and the formation of enduring community partnerships. (c) There is a simple Expression of Interest phase initially; the benefits of applying and that it would be most appropriate for SWTC to be the lead body in any submission, although a partnership approach would be taken calling upon wide range of skills and experience found in SW. Unanimously Resolved: To progress with the application, with the Town Council adopting the leading role in any submission.
FC 034-26	Accounts and Accounting Statements In accordance with Standing Orders, each Councillor is to be supplied with the following documents as attached: (a) Receipts and payments for 3rd quarter (October-December) (b) Aggregate receipts and payments year to date (c) Balances held at the end of the current quarter Council received and noted the details as attached.
FC 035-26	Policies (a) Roles of Mayor and Leader Unanimously resolved: To re-adopt the policy with no changes. (b) Mayoral (& Leadership) Selection Policy Unanimously resolved: To re-adopt the policy with no changes. Council noted nominations to the positions of Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Leader and Deputy Leader will be presented at the March 2026 Full Council meeting. Nomination forms will be emailed to Members and completed forms must be submitted to the Town Clerk by 10am on Wednesday 4th March. (c) Standing Orders Council discussed the distribution of part two confidential reports to committee members and the following additions to Standing Orders were unanimously agreed: i. Committee members will automatically receive the committees' confidential reports. ii. Non-Committee members will not receive confidential committee reports. iii. Non-committee members may be temporarily seconded by the committee where the members' expertise could add value to a project.

	iv. The Committee will determine the merits and benefit of any temporary secondment to a committee, thereby determining whether the temporary member will receive any confidential report.
FC 036-26	Chase New Homes – Former Friends School Playing Fields – POS & Sports Provision Council received an update report regarding any interest expressed by local sporting organisations to use the site at the former Friends School. Council requested further information to be presented at a future Council meeting before determining whether to adopt the land or not, this information to include: (a) Any T&Cs on the proposed lease / any break clauses (b) Details of potential commercial rent which could be charged (c) Potential income opportunities and/or potential losses (d) Costed options for all opportunities (e) Pros and cons of the area being transferred to a Management Company
FC 037-26	Clerks Update Report (Three Times Annually – Last presented October 2025) Council received the attached update report for information.
FC 038-26	Cllr Training Council noted as an integral part of the Council's 'Continuous Improvement Programme' (CIP) further Councillor training is recommended to cover the following topics, it was agreed to: (a) Not pursue further training on Cllr protocols and expectations (of being a Cllr), Speaking at meetings / Standing Orders training at the present time, given the maturity of existing Cllrs (b) After the May 2026 AGM to re-conduct Chairman, Planning, Financial training. (c) Offer site tours for councillors, avoiding Tuesdays and Thursdays.
FC 039-26	Budget Setting 2026/27 Council was reminded to complete the budget setting survey – noting responses will inform any changes to the 2027/28 budget setting process.
FC 040-26	Uttlesford District Council – Local Plan Update Council noted the update on the Local Plan, as listed on the agenda.

FC 041-26	Safer Streets Project and Funding Council received and noted the written report regarding the proposed Safer Streets project funding opportunity, working alongside Uttlesford District Council. Unanimously Resolved: To support continuance of the project.
FC 042-26	Reports from other Meetings No meetings reported.
FC 043-26	Additional Forthcoming Meetings No meetings reported.
FC 044-26	Urgent Items No matters raised.
FC 045-26	Date and time of Next meeting(s) The Mayor reminded all that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday 9th March
FC 046-26	Confidential Item – Exclusion of Press and Public (Part II meeting) 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.
FC 047-26	Catons Lane Football Club Council received the attached written report, provided for information purposes only

The Mayor closed the meeting at 9.30pm