

SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of Full Council Meeting

Date of meeting: Monday 13th April 2026 at 7.30pm

Present Councillors: Cllrs Abercrombie, Ahmed (Mayor), Asker (at 7.35pm), Curtis, Freeman, Hawke-Smith, Jones, McBirnie, McLellan, Parker and Reeve

Officers: Deputy Town Clerk

Public: None present

FC 068-26	<p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Coote, de Vries, Eke, Fiddy and Porph. Absent Cllr Shotropa.</p>
FC 069-26	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>Cllrs Ahmed, Freeman, McBirnie and Reeve declared generic non-pecuniary interests as District Councillors for Uttlesford District Council (UDC).</p>
FC 070-26	<p>Public Speaking Time</p> <p>There were no questions arising.</p>
FC 071-26	<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. (b) District Councillors noted the recent adoption of the Uttlesford Local Plan.</p>
FC 072-26	<p>Mayor's Communications</p> <p>The Mayor presented his update report, noting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. His recent fundraising Quiz night was sold out and raised funds for his chosen charity Uttlesford Community Action Network (UCAN).b. Attendance at the HMS Lapwing Service and other community events.c. He thanked the Deputy Mayor for her continued support. Both enjoyed SWTC's Easter Craft activity noting the high attendance. <p>Cllr Asker arrived at 7.35pm</p>
FC 073-26	<p>To verify the Minutes of the Town Council meetings</p> <p>The 10.03.2026 Full Council minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meetings and signed by the Mayor.</p>

FC 074-26	<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 12.03.2026 (draft minutes) • Finance and Establishment 16.03.2026 (draft minutes) • Assets and Services 23.03.2026 (draft minutes)
FC 075-26	<p>Alderman’s House Charity</p> <p>Council noted that the charity’s constitution notes that Trustees of this charity should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The Mayor of the Town Council (currently Cllr Ahmed, will be Mayor elect) (b) Two Town Councillors (one already appointed at the AGM May 2025, Cllr Freeman) (c) Two further co-opted Trustees (not Councillors) <p>Whilst this matter would ordinarily be considered as part of the AGM process (appointments and representatives to 3rd party organisations); it would be advantageous to appoint a Trustee at the earliest opportunity so a meeting can be called.</p> <p>Unanimously resolved: To nominate Cllr Hawke-Smith as a Trustee on this charity alongside the Town Mayor (ex-officio) and Cllr Freeman. Officers will progress this by calling a meeting in due course.</p>
FC 076-26	<p>Tourist Information Centre</p> <p>Council noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. At the March 2026 F&E meeting, Committee received an update report relating to financial business and activities at the TIC. b. The F&E Committee unanimously resolved to make the following recommendation to Full Council (as recorded under Min Ref F&E045-26) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To no longer progress with the option to create a CiC - To no longer progress with the option to co-locate with a third party <p>The recommendation for cessation of both due to the limited financial benefit derived from either option</p> <p>Council received and noted a copy of the written report and discussed the report and Committee recommendations.</p> <p>Unanimously agreed: To no longer progress with the option to create a CiC or co-locate with a third party, as recommended by the F&E Committee.</p>

FC 077-26	<p>Budget Setting – Survey Results (26-27) and forthcoming process (27-28)</p> <p>Council received and discussed the following reports:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Budget setting (26-27) survey results b. Officer report on proposed amendments to the budget-setting process for 2027–28, including a recommendation to establish a Budget Committee (not a sub-committee), based on the outcomes of the 2026–27 survey. c. Copies of the previous Terms of Reference and the proposed 27-28 Terms of Reference, should Council be minded to establish a Budget Committee. <p>Unanimously Resolved: For the 27-28 budget period, to continue with the current 26-27 budget setting practices by appointing a Budget Sub-Committee</p> <p>It was noted, that at the 12 May 2026 Annual (General) Meeting, Council will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Appoint the budget sub-committee membership ii. Adopt the Terms of Reference (to replicate the existing ToR for the 26/27 budget)
FC 078-26	<p>Former Friends School - Asset Transfer Opportunity</p> <p>Council received and considered the written update report regarding the opportunity to lease the Sports Pitches, Clubhouse & Woodland at the Former Friends School playing field site.</p> <p>Council noted (as detailed in the report):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A lease has not been provided by the developer. The Developer has explained that a lease will only begin to be negotiated once they receive a steer as to whether SWTC will adopt the maintenance responsibilities. b. The options available to Council including, leasing all or some of the facilities – alternatively to decline the offer and maintenance would refer to a management company. These options included the estimated annual running costs (provided from suppliers and based off of existing SWTC facilities). <p>Unanimously resolved: In principle and subject to the lease negotiations to accept the lease of the sports pitches, clubhouse and woodland, with the intention to re-let the facilities to local clubs/organisations who would be responsible for the upkeep.</p> <p>Officers will progress with the lease negotiations directly with the developer.</p>
FC 079-26	<p>Internal Audit Report – Interim Findings</p> <p>Council received and noted the internal audit report as presented to the March 2026 F&E Committee meeting.</p>

FC 080-26	<p>Audley Ward By Election</p> <p>Council noted a By-Election will take place alongside the Essex County Council election on Thursday 7 May 2026.</p>
FC 081-26	<p>Reports from other Meetings</p> <p>No meetings reported.</p>
FC 082-26	<p>Additional Forthcoming Meetings</p> <p>No meetings reported.</p>
FC 083-26	<p>Urgent Items</p> <p>No matters raised.</p>
FC 084-26	<p>Date and time of Next meeting(s)</p> <p>The Mayor reminded all that the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 12th May at 7pm being the Annual (General) Meeting, followed by the usual Full Council meeting.</p>

The Mayor closed the meeting at 8.25pm