

SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of Annual (General) Council Meeting

Date of meeting: Tuesday 12 May 2026 at 7pm

Present Councillors: Abercrombie, Ahmed, Asker, Brett, Coote, Eke, Freeman, Hawke-Smith, McLellan and Porch

Officers: Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk

Members of the Public: One present observing only

AM 01-26	<p>Election of Town Mayor</p> <p>In accordance with the Town Council's Mayoral and Leadership Selection Policy, one valid nomination was received for Cllr Curtis.</p> <p>Cllr Coote nominated Cllr Curtis, seconded by Cllr Freeman. Whilst absent, Cllr Curtis accepted the nomination at the March Full Council Meeting.</p> <p>There were no further nominations to the position of Mayor.</p> <p>It was unanimously agreed to appoint Cllr Curtis as Mayor for the period 2026/27.</p> <p>Council agreed in the absence of the Mayor Cllr Curtis, that Cllr Ahmed would continue to chair this meeting until the 2026/27 Deputy Mayor is appointed.</p>
AM 02-26	<p>Declaration of Acceptance of Office – the Mayor</p> <p>Council noted that the newly elected Mayor, Cllr Curtis, would sign the declaration of acceptance of office outside this meeting in the presence of the Clerk and ahead of the Mayor Making Civic Service.</p>
AM 03-26	<p>Newly Elected Town Councillor for Audley Ward</p> <p>Council noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Council welcomed Cllr Brett, the successfully elected member of Audley Ward.b. That Cllr Brett has completed her acceptance of office prior to this Full Council meeting.c. At the June 2026 Council meeting, Council will be asked to appoint Cllr Brett's committee and working group membership. Visitor status is adopted for May meetings, with no voting entitlement.
AM 04-26	<p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies received from Cllrs Curtis, de Vries, McBirnie, Reeve and Parker. Absent Cllrs Fiddy, Jones and Shotropa.</p>

AM 05-26	<p>To receive any Declarations of Interest</p> <p>Cllrs Ahmed, Asker, Coote and Freeman declared non-pecuniary interests as members of Uttlesford District Council.</p>
AM 06-26	<p>Mayor to address the Council</p> <p>Council acknowledged apologies received from the newly elected Mayor Cllr Curtis.</p>
AM 07-26	<p>To receive thanks for the retiring Mayor</p> <p>Council thanked and congratulated Cllr Ahmed for his time as Mayor, members cited Cllr Ahmed's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Successful fundraising events for his chosen charity Uttlesford Community Action Network b. His Superb efforts with the community, supporting residents by attending several community activities <p>Council further thanked Cllr Ahmed with a round of applause.</p>
AM 08-26	<p>Retiring Mayor to reply</p> <p>Cllr Ahmed thanks fellow Councillors, staff and officers for their ongoing support during his time as Mayor, he further explained serving as the Mayor of Saffron Walden has been a great honour and privilege, highlights have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Attending and supporting the Town Council events and activities, most recently the Easter Crafts day b. The Town Meeting, providing opportunity to meet with local partners and organisations <p>The Mayor further thanked Cllr Curtis for her unwavering support whilst serving as his Deputy Mayor.</p>
AM 09-26	<p>Election of Deputy Town Mayor</p> <p>In accordance with the Town Council's Mayoral and Leadership Selection Policy, one valid nomination has been received for Cllr Abercrombie.</p> <p>Cllr Eke nominated Cllr Abercrombie, seconded by Cllr Freeman. Cllr Abercrombie accepted the nomination and there were no further nominations for the position of Deputy Town Mayor.</p> <p>It was unanimously agreed to appoint Cllr Abercrombie as Deputy Mayor for 2026/27.</p> <p>The Deputy Mayor thanked Council for its support as Deputy Mayor. The Deputy Mayor, Cllr Abercrombie, continued to Chair this meeting.</p>

AM 10-26	<p>Declaration of Acceptance of Office – Deputy Mayor</p> <p>The Deputy Mayor signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office for Deputy Mayor.</p>
AM 11-26	<p>Public Speaking Time</p> <p>There were no questions arising from any members of the public present.</p>
AM 12-26	<p>Election of Leader</p> <p>In accordance with the Town Council’s Mayoral and Leadership Selection Policy, one valid nomination for Leader was received at the March 2026 Full Council meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Coote nominated Cllr Freeman, seconded by Cllr Porch. Cllr Freeman accepted the nomination.</p> <p>It was resolved: To appoint Cllr Freeman as Leader for 2026/27.</p>
AM 13-26	<p>Election of Deputy Leader</p> <p>In accordance with the Town Council’s Mayoral and Leadership Selection Policy, one valid nomination for Deputy Leader was received at the March 2026 Full Council meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Ahmed nominated Cllr Hawke-Smith, seconded by Cllr Porch. Cllr Hawke-Smith accepted the nomination.</p> <p>It was resolved: To appoint Cllr Hawke-Smith as Deputy Leader for 2026/27.</p>
AM 14-26	<p>Appointment of Members to Committees</p> <p>It was unanimously resolved: To appoint the following committee members:</p> <p>A & S Committee (8 Members): Cllrs Abercrombie, Asker, Curtis (Mayor), Freeman (Leader), Reeve, Jones, Shotropa and Porch</p> <p>F & E Committee (12 Members) Cllrs Asker, Ahmed, Coote, Curtis (Mayor), de Vries, Eke , Fiddy, Freeman (Leader), McBirnie, Hawke-Smith, Parker and McLellan</p> <p>P & T Committee (7 Members): Cllrs Curtis (Mayor), Eke, Freeman (Leader), Hawke-Smith, Jones, McLellan, Parker</p> <p>F&E Sub-Committee (Budget Setting 27-28) Cllrs Abercrombie, Asker, Coote, Curtis (Mayor), de Vries, Eke, Freeman (Leader), McLellan (Deputy Chair) and Porch</p> <p>It was further noted that Cllr Brett’s membership will be determined at the June Council meeting.</p>

AM 15-26	<p>Committee Terms of Reference</p> <p>a. Council and Committee ToR It was unanimously resolved to re-adopt these TOR as presented with the recommended changes.</p> <p>b. F&E Sub-Committee (Budget Setting 27-28) It was unanimously resolved to re-adopt these TOR as presented with the recommended changes. It was further noted that the suggested budget percentage increase would be considered at the June Full Council meeting.</p>
AM 16-26	<p>Appointment of Members to Working Groups</p> <p>It was unanimously resolved: To appoint the following Working Group members:</p> <p>Climate Change & Environment WG Cllrs Asker, Freeman, Hawke-Smith (WG Chair), McLellan, Porch and Parker (Deputy WG Chair) (& one member of the public Mr Gildea)</p> <p>Strategic POS / Skate Park Project WG Cllrs Abercrombie, Asker, Freeman (WG Deputy Chair), McBirnie (WG Chair) and Reeve</p>
AM 17-26	<p>Working Group Terms of Reference</p> <p>a. Climate Change & Environment WG TOR It was unanimously resolved to re-adopt these TOR as presented.</p> <p>b. Strategic POS / Skate Park Project WG It was unanimously resolved to re-adopt these TOR as presented with the recommended changes.</p>
AM 18-26	<p>Calendar of future meetings</p> <p>It was unanimously resolved to adopt the calendar of meetings as presented.</p>
AM 19-26	<p>To consider representation or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back</p> <p>It was unanimously resolved to adopt the third-party representations as follows:</p> <p>Alderman’s House - Cllr Freeman and Cllr Hawke-Smith Essex County Council Passenger Transport - Cllr McLellan Uttlesford Community Travel - Cllr McLellan Stansted Watch - Cllr Eke Friends of Bridge End Garden - Cllr Freeman Little Walden Village Hall - Cllr Curtis Business Improvement District - Cllr Porch (to Sept 2026) and Cllr Ahmed from Sept 2026 Uttlesford Association of Local Councils - Cllrs Curtis (Mayor) and Freeman (Leader)</p>

	<p>Uttlesford Citizens' Advice - Cllr Freeman Youth Outreach Project - Cllr Porch Saffron Walden Cricket Club - Cllr Porch SW Organisation for Sport - Cllrs de Vries and McBirnie SW Arts Trust - Cllr Hawke-Smith Heritage Development Group - Cllr Eke and Porch Carver Barracks Liaison Group – Cllr Asker</p>
AM 20-26	<p>Annual review of policies and practices.</p> <p>a. Council noted, in accordance with Standing Orders and best practice, several policies and procedures are recommended for annual review - polices / procedures will come forward to the appropriate Committee meetings and/or Full Council meetings in due course.</p> <p>b. Civility and Respect Pledge It was unanimously resolved to re-adopt the Civility and Respect Pledge.</p>
AM 21-26	<p>Year-end accounts</p> <p>Council noted the year-end accounts, including a review of the inventory of land and other assets will be submitted to the June 2026 Full Council as part of the year end procedures.</p>
AM 22-26	<p>Insurance cover</p> <p>Council noted arrangements for insurance cover will be reviewed in June when the policies become due for renewal.</p>
AM 23-26	<p>Date and time of Next Meeting(s)</p> <p>Council noted that the next Full Council meeting will take place on Monday 8 June 2026 at 7.30pm in the Town Hall Saffron Walden.</p>

Meeting closed at 7.33pm