

**MINUTES of the ANNUAL TOWN MEETING held at Felixstowe Town Hall on
Wednesday 11 May 2016 at 7pm**

PRESENT: Cllr D Savage (Town Mayor) Cllr M Deacon
Cllr Jan Garfield (Deputy Mayor) Cllr Jon Garfield
Cllr N Barber Cllr T Green
Cllr S Bird Cllr G Newman
Cllr S Bloomfield Cllr J Vartan
Cllr A Smith Cllr S Wiles
Cllr P Coleman Cllr K Williams

OFFICERS: Mr A Tadjirishi (Town Clerk)
Mrs L Monsen (Mayor's Secretary)
Mrs D Frost (Finance Administration Officer)
Mrs S Faversham (Cemetery & Allotments Officer)
Mrs S Morrison (Administrative Assistant)

IN ATTENDANCE: 17 members of the Public, 1 member of the Press.

607. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS TOWN MEETING MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 20 May 2015 were confirmed as a true record by those present and the Mayor was authorised to sign them.

608. REPORT BY THE MAYOR OF FELIXSTOWE

The Mayor drew Members attendance to the Inter-Trophy Sports Challenge which is between Felixstowe and Woodbridge and is organised every year by Felixstowe and District Council for Sport and Recreation. This year Felixstowe has won and the Mayor congratulated everyone involved.

The Mayor presented the following report:

Looking back through the file of engagements for the past year has evoked some delightful memories. Composing this Annual Report also makes you realise that you are looking back on a year of your life – and how quickly that has passed.

It is a privilege to enact the role of Mayor of our lovely Town and every event that is attended in that capacity is special. However, to comment on the 160 odd engagements that I have attended would keep us here for a long time, so I have picked out particularly important moments of the past year upon which to report.

There have been many anniversaries that have been celebrated during the year. These have included the 50th anniversary of Peewit Caravan Park. For those of you who may be unfamiliar with this caravan site, let me tell you that it is, in my view, one of the most delightful venues providing holiday accommodation in Felixstowe. FACTS, Felixstowe Area Community Transport

provide transport for elderly and infirm residents in the area and celebrated 25 years of this much needed service. Felixstowe Port, that vital lifeline to the economy of the Town and the country celebrated the opening of berths 8 and 9 at a windswept ceremony on the quay. Standing beside one of the largest container ships berthed alongside is a reality check on just how large these vessels are. Another momentous 50th anniversary at the Port was the celebration of the Roll on/Roll Off service provided by DFDS. This event included a visit on board one of the ships and meeting members of the crew. Bombay Nite celebrated 25 years of business in the town with a wonderful evening at Felixstowe Academy attended by over 300 people. Felixstowe ATC cadet corps had its 75th birthday and included a parade and church service as well as a Dinner which many of the Cadets attended. And finally on the anniversary list is Felixstowe Library which only very recently had its 50th birthday. The library is a multi-faceted resource in the Town and it is great to see its continuing success thanks to the dedicated staff and volunteers who work there.

The past year also saw a series of very special openings. The long awaited removal of the boarding over the windows of the Spa Pavilion heralded a very welcome re-opening of the theatre and restaurant. Four years of trying to find a new owner culminated in the handing over of the theatre to the new owners in July 2015. I was delighted to be at the opening show and to unveil a plaque in the foyer commemorating the occasion. I am sure we all wish the owners great success with the theatre and restaurant in the future. The long awaited opening ceremony denoting the end of the work to restore the Seafront Gardens to their original splendour took place in August last year. The weather was appalling for the occasion, but the significance of the event outweighed the discomfort of the wind and rain. The Gardens are magnificent and hardly a day goes by without someone commenting on how lovely they are now. Breheny the company who carried out the work have done a magnificent job and the Gardens are proving to be a great attraction for visitors and residents alike. Speaking of magnificent workmanship brings me to the Bartlett. What a wonderful transformation has been wrought with the development there. Gipping Homes have created homes and a vista that is a pleasure to behold and it was a great moment for me when I was asked to be part of the topping out ceremony at Cautley House. Along with the Chairman of the County Council and Heather Blemings, a director of Gipping Homes I was raised to the chimney level of the building where I placed some cement on the chimney to mark the occasion. It was an additional pleasure to perform the opening ceremony at Cautley House recently to mark the completion of the building work there.

Another very special opening was that of the new Premier Inn. This hotel is a much needed and welcome addition to the facilities here in Felixstowe and I, along with everyone else, watched the development of the building with great interest. The hotel opened for business in February, but the official opening ceremony took place in March and I was thrilled to be part of that occasion. It was good to see a contingent of children from Langer School at the opening and they thoroughly enjoyed the occasion and the lunch provided.

Finally in this section, I must mention The Laydens Community Centre in Langley Avenue. After a restructure in the management and some refurbishment work to enhance the facilities at the Centre a re-opening ceremony took place in March. I must pay tribute to the volunteers who man the Centre and provide excellent food at very reasonable prices for the customers who use The Laydens. There has been support from many Town Councillors for this venture and I hope this will continue in the future. Landguard Rotary also work closely with ABLE the overarching organisation for the Centre and have contributed physical as well as financial help to ABLE to create the welcoming environment that is now being enjoyed.

The numerous organisations and groups that make up the fabric of our Town once again provided a series of events that could be enjoyed by everyone. One of these includes Felixstowe Carnival. Despite a wet start to the event last year, the parade was huge and provided great pleasure to all onlookers. The Wesel visitors were a great hit with the crowds in their donkey costumes and I am pleased to say there will be a large contingent coming over again this year. The sun came out in the afternoon and the air display was enjoyed by thousands. In fact, the Saturday was a great success. Sunday, however, was a different story. The wind blew a gale, the rain lashed down and the Committee bravely took the decision to cancel all events including the fireworks. This was a huge blow to the organisation and I hope that this year the story will be completely different.

Art on the Prom as always a resounding success with again thousands of visitors and over 80 artists exhibiting their work, and the weather was good. Remembrance Day in November saw a large turnout of residents at the War Memorial but also a large number of young people were in attendance. The Army, Air Force and Navy were all represented by the three Cadet forces we have in the Town along with students from the Academy and some of the primary schools also playing their part. It is essential that we have young people committed to this particular event to continue the tradition of remembrance and all it signifies. Over this last Bank Holiday weekend Peggy and I have attended the Historic Vehicle Rally and the Rotary Fun Run. There were over 600 vehicles on display this year for the Vehicle Rally and it took hours for them all to get to Felixstowe and onto the promenade. Thousands of people were out on the prom enjoying the spectacle of all these lovely cars. The fun run had 525 entrants many of whom were children and they ran for an hour on a chilly Sunday morning raising funds for the Rotarians chosen charity – FACTS – as well as raising money for the charity or organisation they chose to support. Again, there were hundreds of supporters in attendance cheering everyone on.

The Lions once again created a winter wonderland in the Town for lighting up day at the end of November last year. Switching on the lights is a lovely moment and you can feel the bated breath as everyone waits to see if all the lights come on after the switch is thrown! Praise of the Lions for their continuing dedication to this event is huge, but we should never forget the hard work and commitment that goes into putting up, maintaining and repairing the lights that goes on all year.

2015 saw the introduction of an ice rink at Great Eastern Square for 5 days immediately preceding the Christmas break. That this was a welcome success goes without saying and it was a great pleasure to see so many young people and families enjoying this free facility. Funding to pay for the ice rink came from District and County Councillors enabling budgets, The Co-op also contributed a large sum towards the rink as did the Felixstowe Youth Forum. It is hoped that this event will become an annual one – and I can tell you that it has been booked to return in December this year!

The Rotary Clubs, the Lions, Scouts, Guides, Churches, Clubs and other organisations that contribute to the life of the Town are numerous, but without them and the hundreds of volunteers who give their time the many events we all enjoy would not take place.

On to some special occasions around the civic role of Mayor. These include the Civic Service which last year was held at the Salvation Army Hall and attended by over 150 people. This service marks the beginning of the civic year and seeks to bless the Mayor and the Council for the coming year. The next event is the Civic reception which I held at Felixstowe Academy following on from the success of Councillor Graham Newman's similar event the year before. I cannot praise highly enough the Academy and its staff for all the help and support that was provided to ensure the reception was a success. I am pleased to say it was.

I have a close association with Felixstowe International College and it was whilst attending prize giving and the Concert that followed that the idea of holding my Civic Concert at the College was born. Again the staff and students provided an audience of some 120 people with an enchanting evening of entertainment and the sum of £1000 was raised that evening for my chosen charities.

The civic visit to our twin town of Wesel took place at the end of October and it was especially enjoyable last year as our Town Clerk and his wife were part of the visiting party and it was their first visit to Wesel and they both enjoyed their visit very much. A reciprocal visit from the Burgermeisterien Ulrika Westkamp and her colleague Hannah Eckhardt took place in April when along with other visitors from Wesel they came to Felixstowe on an exchange visit. The twinning with Wesel continues very successfully as does the partnership with Salzwedel. Sadly, because of civic problems in Salzwedel there has been no official visit to Felixstowe this year. However, I must pay tribute to the two Associations Wesel and Salzwedel and the members of those two organisations who keep the spirit of twinning very much alive.

There was the usual Charity Curry Night at Bombay Nite and in addition for the first time we had a Mayor's Charity Quiz night at the Half Moon public house. This, too, was a great success and thanks to everyone who helped with both those events and made them such a success

The final big civic occasion was the Mayor's Ball in April. I made the decision to move the venue from the Orwell Hotel to the Academy earlier in the civic year based on the success of the Bombay Nite event I have already mentioned. Once again the staff and students transformed the atrium area into a glittering scenario and 152 people attended the Ball and had a great evening. The businesses in the Town along with individuals and organisations donated 180 prizes for the tombola and the sum of £1500 was raised on the night. I cannot thank the staff and students at the Academy enough for their support and help with this event. Thanks also to all my colleagues who have attended any of these events for their support. It is very welcome.

The events Peggy and I attended were wide ranging – but some highlights included Felixstowe in Flower awards evening; this event is the culmination of a combined effort across the town of gardeners and allotment holders, schools and traders in making Felixstowe a floral delight during the summer months. A huge thank you to Sue Faversham here at the Town Council for her hard work and commitment to this event.

Visits to all the Nursing/residential Homes in the Town were a large part of the run up to Christmas. The care given to all the residents in the homes we visited is exceptional, although some of the visits were highly emotional for us both for varying reasons. The staff who work in all the homes are to be complimented on their devotion and care in their roles. We attended an Awards night recently at Bucklesham Grange Care Home where staff are recognised and recommended for various awards by the residents and other staff. It was good to see this form of recognition being given to devoted staff members.

A visit from a Kenyan Fairtrade farmer to Felixstowe in March marked a highlight in the history of the Felixstowe Fairtrade Forum. It was a pleasure to host a breakfast meeting in this Council Chamber for some 50 people who came to meet and listen to Patrick the Kenyan farmer and hear about his work and the benefits of being part of Fairtrade for his community.

Amidst all the enjoyment have been moments of sadness. The sudden death of Phil Hadwen sent shock waves through our community. However, at the end of April his widow Jill unveiled a memorial plaque to Phil in the lovely shelter in the Town Hall gardens. This is a lasting tribute to a man who contributed so much to the life of the Town which he loved.

The final civic event is the Mayor's Awards ceremony. This took place last week and after a very difficult selection process 6 people were chosen to receive the award this year. It was a great pleasure for me to host this event and to be able to publicly acknowledge the work of the award winners in their community. It was also the evening when I was able to hand over cheques to my chosen charities for the year which were Felixstowe CAB and TS Landguard Sea Cadet unit. These cheques represented the efforts of many people in fund raising over the foregoing year.

There have been so many highlights during the year and I am sorry I cannot mention them all in this report. However, I must praise once again all the

organisations that make up the fabric of the Town, the volunteers, helpers and supporters who are involved with these groups. Felixstowe would be a sorry place without them all.

The Town Council is very lucky to have our Town Clerk Ash Tadjrishi who has transformed the way in which the Council works. Our partnership working with Felixstowe Forward, Landguard Partnership and the District and County Councils is enhanced by his commitment and ideas. Ash is supported by a devoted and loyal staff in Lorna Monsen, Debbie Frost, Sue Faversham, Rosemary Jones and Sarah Morrison.. I am sure you will join me in thanking them all for their hard work on our behalf.

Lorna Monsen acts as the Mayor's Secretary and my personal thanks go to her for her never ending optimism and good humour as well as her organisational skills. Mayors past and in the future have and will benefit from the care Lorna provides in her role. My loving thanks to her for this past year.

Finally, my thanks to my Escort Peggy Osborne. Peggy has been in this role on 4 occasions over a number of years and has carried out her duties in a dignified and diligent manner. It is not easy playing second fiddle to someone – but she does so in her own inimitable way and I and the Town should be very grateful to her for her dedication. My loving thanks to “my bag lady”.

To my Deputy Mayor, Jan Garfield my grateful thanks for her support in that role. Jan will, I know, carry on the role as Mayor in the coming year in her own way, but will do so using her leadership skills and knowledge.

It has been a pleasure to lead a new Council. The new members who have joined the Council have brought with them varied and different skills and experience. I wish you all well in the coming years and look forward to seeing some of you in the role of Mayor in the future.

I am sure you will join with me in the commitment that as members of Felixstowe Town Council we continue to build upon our present success and work towards an even more successful future.

609. PUBLIC SESSION

The Mayor reminded the meeting that this was the Annual Town Meeting for the civil parish of Felixstowe at which local electors could speak on any issue that they wished. The Mayor enquired whether any member of the public wished to raise any matters.

A resident asked if it was possible to look at the problems with congestion at Manor Road and Manor Terrace especially at the weekends when Felixstowe receives a lot of visitors to the town. Cars were often parked on both sides of the road and long delays were being experienced. The resident asked whether it would be possible to have residents only parking at weekends. In response to this question Cllr Savage advised that she was aware of the problem and would be contacting Suffolk County Council Highways about the issue as the

responsible authority. Cllr Barber advised the he also would take up the matter with Suffolk County Council as well and suggested that the problem was exacerbated by the timing of the traffic lights on Langer Road. Once he had had head from Suffolk County Council he would report back to Council.

A resident enquired about ongoing maintenance arrangements for the newly refurbished Spa Gardens. In response to the question Cllr Savage advised that there was a 10 year maintenance programme built in to the project which would be undertaken by Suffolk Coastal Norse.

610. CLOSURE

There being no other questions or comments the meeting was closed at 7.29pm.

Date: _____

Chairman: _____