



9 am to 4 pm Mondays to Fridays

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE ASSETS & SERVICES COMMITTEE

Cllr N Barber (Chairman)	Cllr T Green
Cllr Jan Garfield (Vice Chairman)	Cllr G Newman
Cllr S Bird	Cllr A Smith
Cllr P Coleman	Cllr J Vartan
Cllr M Deacon	Cllr D Savage (Town Mayor, ex-officio)
Cllr Jon Garfield	

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the **ASSETS & SERVICES COMMITTEE** to be held at the **Town Hall, Felixstowe** on **Wednesday 3 June 2015** at **7.30pm** for the transaction of the following business:

A G E N D A

- 1. Apologies**
To receive apologies for absence.
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
Members and officers are invited to make any declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Local Non-Pecuniary Interests that they may have in relation to items on the Agenda and are also reminded to make any declarations at any stage during the meeting if it becomes apparent that this may be required when a particular item or issue is considered.
- 3. Requests for Dispensation**
Councillors with a pecuniary interest in an item on this agenda, who wish to remain, speak and/or vote during consideration of that item, may apply for a dispensation in writing to the Town Clerk prior to the meeting. Applications may also be considered at the meeting itself should the nature of the interest become apparent to a Councillor at the time of the meeting.
- 4. Introduction to Assets & Services Committee**
To receive an introduction on the work of the Assets & Services Committee and note its Terms of Reference (*Members have received these previously*).
- 5. Assets & Services Budget Report**
To receive the Assets & Services Budget report to 26 May 2015 and consider any actions deemed necessary. **(Page 3 & Appendix A)**
- 6. Report of the Estates Officer**
To receive a general report on the Town Council's assets and consider any actions deemed necessary. **(Pages 3-6)**

- 7. Town Hall Building Works**
To receive a report on ongoing building works at the Town Hall and consider any actions deemed necessary. **(Page 7)**
- 8. Allotments Update Report**
To receive a report on the Town Council's Allotments and consider any actions deemed necessary. **(Pages 8-9)**
- 9. Cemetery Update Report**
To receive a report on Felixstowe Cemetery and consider any actions deemed necessary. **(Pages 9-11)**
- 10. Closure**
To close proceedings and confirm the date of the next meeting scheduled for Wednesday 2 September 2015 at 7.30pm.



Ash Tadjrishi
Town Clerk
26 May 2015

For information (via email): All Town Councillors.
Local Press

AGENDA ITEM 5: ASSETS & SERVICES BUDGET REPORT

As part of its Terms of Reference, Committee is to regularly consider reports on the Assets & Services part of Council's budget. A summary of the position to 26 May 2015 is provided below with a detailed report at **Appendix A**.

Summary Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 26/05/2015

Month No : 2

Assets & Services Committee

		Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available
201 Town Hall	Expenditure	4,653	81,086	76,433		76,433
	Income	2,344	13,446	-11,102		
202 Walton	Expenditure	839	11,023	10,184		10,184
	Income	-757	7,500	-8,257		
203 Broadway House	Expenditure	747	13,539	12,792		12,792
	Income	0	1,360	-1,360		
204 Cemetery	Expenditure	10,970	128,126	117,156		117,156
	Income	3,888	73,565	-69,677		
205 Allotments	Expenditure	1,481	27,214	25,733		25,733
	Income	45	13,500	-13,455		
<u>INCOME - EXPENDITURE TOTALS</u>						
	Expenditure	18,689	260,988	242,299	0	242,299
	Income	5,521	109,371	-103,850		
	Net Expenditure over Income	13,169	151,617	138,448		

Committee is requested to consider the budget report to 26 May 2015 and decide any action it deems necessary.

AGENDA ITEM 6: REPORT OF THE ESTATES OFFICER

This Committee's authority encompasses the functions of three former Committees, now dissolved: Premises Committee, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee and the Town Members Committee.

This report aims to provide Members with a brief overview of the Town Council's small but varied portfolio of land and buildings assets. These comprise:

Broadway House, Orwell Road (completed in 2004).

This building is on the site of the former timber Sailor's Reading Room adjacent to Highfield Road Car Park exit. The site was redeveloped in partnership with Orwell Housing Association to produce the existing Broadway House scheme. In the new building, a community facility was re-provided on the ground floor and four new social housing flats provided on the upper floors. The Council owns the freehold of the new building and Orwell Housing Association has a 65 year lease from 2004 at a

peppercorn rent for the flats which it sub-lets to its own tenants. Orwell Housing Association is responsible for the external decorations at the entire premises and Felixstowe Old People's Welfare Association (FOPWA) hires the community hall from the Town Council as a Drop-in centre for the elderly for an index-linked current annual fee of £1,356. They also have a management agreement with the Council to be responsible for internal repairs and decorations. The Charity is entitled to keep the receipts from hiring out the venue out of core daytime hours. All of the Council's expenditure of circa £13,500, can be attributed to the cost of cleaning/caretaking these premises.

Walton Community Hall – High Street Walton (refurbished in 2007)

This Victorian building was originally built for the Ancient Order of Foresters and it had for many years been let on a Fully Repairing and Insuring lease to the Walton Community Association. The building developed some structural problems which the tenant could not afford to rectify and it needed major refurbishment to comply with modern regulations, so the WCA surrendered its lease to the Council.

The Council was able to enter into another partnership arrangement with Orwell Housing Association to secure the future of the premises by remodelling the Community Hall and adding three social housing flats within the envelope. Eventually after resolving many complicated site issues, the building was let once more to Orwell Housing Association on a 65 year lease where they were able to sub-let the housing units to their own tenants. Due to the unforeseen costs absorbed by Orwell Housing Association in the scheme, the Council is now responsible for external repairs on the building although OHA is still responsible for repairing the roof for the first 30 years of the lease and contributes to the cost of external decorations.

The Council currently manages the hiring out of the community hall which is regularly used as their base by the Felixstowe Scout Group and several dance groups amongst other casual hirers. This facility is relatively low cost to run and was budgeted to achieve a modest surplus (c£3,400) in 2014-15. However, due to ongoing challenges in understanding and potentially reducing the electricity bill for these premises, the outturn position was slightly under breakeven for the year at a cost of £144. For 2015/16 a proportion of the salaries budget is recharged to this cost centre for the cost of cleaning/caretaking the hall. This should give a fairer representation of the overall costs associated with this facility which is expected to outturn at a cost of around £3,500 for the year.

Felixstowe Town Hall (refurbished 2008)

The Town Hall had been transferred to the newly formed Suffolk Coastal District Council in 1974 but it had subsequently become rather neglected. The Council occupied the Town Hall by virtue of its user rights and made contributions to the outgoings.

SCDC had tried to impose a modern rent on the Council and they had failed to implement a programme of refurbishment works to provide disabled access to the building required by the October 2004 Disabled Discrimination Act deadline.

With this background, it was decided to re-acquire the building. Accordingly the Town Council borrowed sufficient finance from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB)

to cover the purchase at the District Valuer's valuation and to cover the cost of the refurbishment. Despite some complicated legal issues, in September 2007, Council became the freehold owner of Felixstowe Town Hall.

The refurbishment programme commenced in January 2008 which included the building being re-roofed, re-plumbed, heated, re-wired, modernised and made entirely accessible. The re-opening ceremony took place on 28th November 2008 and since then the building has become an increasingly popular venue for weddings, meetings and exhibitions providing an essential income stream.

As the home and civic base of Felixstowe Town Council, the Town Hall costs a reasonable sum to maintain and provide serviced accommodation for the Council and its staff. Ongoing costs include a PWLB loan (or mortgage) of £34,000 per year over 25 years, maturing in 2032. Some of the overall cost is mitigated through room hire and weddings as well as renting out two offices to SCDC – for the Resort Team and Felixstowe Forward – and one office to Suffolk County Council's Registrar.

A report on the current repair work is given under a separate item to this agenda.

Felixstowe Cemetery, Langley Avenue

This site amounts to approximately 2.6 ha (6.5ac) and the internal roadways were extended in 2006 for £40,195 to enable the Cemetery Extension land to be used for further burial space.

Cemetery Buildings (refurbished 2007)

The Cemetery toilets were totally refurbished and made accessible providing one male, one female and one disabled cubicle all within the existing shell.

The Council took this opportunity to improve the facilities for the staff and visitors at the cemetery by converting the old mortuary building into a staff rest room and office.

Licence to O2 for Telecoms Mast

In 2007 a 15 year Licence agreement was reached with O2 to let approx.100m² of the Cemetery extension site for a telecoms mast. The initial rental for this was £4,000 p.a., the first three years of which were rolled up at the start of the agreement and contributed to the cost of refurbishing the Cemetery Buildings.

This facility was subsequently shared with Vodafone and the current index-linked rental income generates £5,315 pa.

There is also a Wayleave Agreement in place with BT at this location to support the equipment cabins but no rental is paid for this. The equipment on the mast has been upgraded by the operator this year.

Langley Avenue (lower part from the field gate to Mill Lane re-surfaced in 2008 and the main stretch from the field gate up to the adopted section of Langley Avenue/rear of Selvale Way re-surfaced in 2011).

In 2007 EDF energy implemented a major refurbishment of its sub-station located in the corner of the Cemetery site in front of the allotments. The Council managed to negotiate the re-surfacing of the bottom part of Langley Avenue in lieu of a licence

fee for temporary EDF site huts occupying our grass verges and a permanent easement for a sewage connection to the foul sewer which runs along Langley Avenue to the mains in Mill Lane.

Flood Memorial, Langer Road (completed 2004)

The memorial for the victims of the 1953 floods is located on a small piece of land which the Town Council rents from Suffolk County Council in the corner of Langer School playing field with access from the highway. This structure is maintained by the Town Council with the help of some local volunteers.

Allotment Sites

Cowpasture – Candlet Road – Site Area Formerly 3.8 ha (9.5 ac) but now a portion alongside Grove Road donated to the Woodland Trust as part of the Millennium Wood.

Ferry Road – 1.7 ha (4.24 ac)

Taunton Road – 0.55ha (1.369 ac)

Cemetery Allotments – 0.82 ha (2.02ac)

Railway Hill – Coronation Drive – 0.78 ha (1.96 ac)

Peewit Hill Woodland

0.216 ha (0.54 ac) Felixstowe Town Council owns a small area of woodland off Peewit Hill between Dock Gate 1 roundabout near the Mcdonald's and the housing on Dovedale and Coronation Drive on the higher land behind.

The site is intended as a green buffer between the commercial operations of the Port and the residential properties as a haven for the local flora and fauna. It is a popular route for walkers and cyclists connecting two distinctly different areas of the town. The footpath link is maintained by Suffolk County Council.

Committee is requested to note the report of the Estates Officer and consider arrangements for visiting key Council sites in the forthcoming months.

AGENDA ITEM 7: TOWN HALL BUILDING WORKS

At its meeting of 1 April 2015, Council approved the Premises Committee's recommendation to let a contract for refurbishment works involving repairs to the brickwork and windows on the front elevation at the Town Hall to R. G. Carter (Southern) Ltd.

There was a major refurbishment project to modernise the building in 2007/8 when the Town Council bought the Town Hall back from SCDC but due to budget restrictions and the relative soundness of the wooden windows, priority works at that time were considered to be re-modelling of the internal space, the roof, re-wiring, heating, plumbing and accessibility issues.

In the years since then, there have been some problems with dampness on the front elevation and lack of adequate natural ventilation as most of the windows had historically been painted shut. Due to the exposed setting of the Town Hall, the brickwork on the decorative front façade has deteriorated and although piecemeal repairs, pointing and water repellent treatments have been applied over a number of years, it appeared that more repair works had become necessary. It was decided to try and address these issues this year.

The contract was let for a period of 10 weeks starting on 5th May until 10th July. These dates had been selected partly due to practical benefits of working during better weather conditions and to fit the works in between pre-booked wedding ceremonies. The Town Hall was scheduled to be fully open during this time and all the occupants of the Town Hall had all been notified of the programme of works.

The refurbishment of the windows has proceeded according to plan however the works to the brickwork have become more complicated. The contractors have discovered that the top half of the front façade is a cavity wall (not solid as previously thought) and when breaking out bricks for replacement, found that the pointing and early wall ties have disintegrated internally, making the wall somewhat unstable. A structural engineer was called to site on 22nd May to assess the situation and a further update will be provided to Committee at the meeting.

Committee is requested to consider and decide any action it deems necessary in this matter.

AGENDA ITEM 8: ALLOTMENTS

The Town Council owns 5 sites of allotment plots at various locations throughout the town as indicated in the table below:

SITE	LOCATION	NUMBER OF PLOTS
Cowpasture	Candleet Road, IP11 9AZ	247
Ferry Road	Ferry Road, IP11 9TP	84
Railway Hill	Coronation Drive, IP11 2NU	39
Cemetery Field	Langley Avenue, IP11 2ND	34
Taunton Road	Taunton Road, IP11 9AX	16

The former Cemeteries & Allotments Committee was responsible for setting the rental levels for these which are worked out on a metric area basis, but previously using the historic measurement of 'rods'. Some tenants are entitled to discounts on the basis of certain qualifying criteria and they pay a charge for the use of metered water at the sites. The allotments are managed and let by the Town Council with some practical assistance from FSALG (Felixstowe Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners). The Town Council meets with these representatives on a regular basis – most recently on Tuesday 26 May 2015.

The provision of the allotment plots is a highly valued service which the Town Council provides. The management of this service is both labour and administratively intensive and although Council's Allotments were budgeted to achieve a small surplus of £5,646 in 2014/15, the budget for 2015/16 has been reappropriated to reflect staff costs and vehicle/tool hire more accurately. As such, this is projected to show an overall subsidy by the Council of £13,714 for the year.

There are currently a number of issues concerning the management of the allotment sites which include; the amalgamation of plots as tenants who rented more than one plot cultivated them together, the distinct delineations between plots have become eroded and some plots have become too big for the tenants and subsequently have not been adequately cultivated. Sometimes there are far too many structures erected on the plots and many are of a somewhat dilapidated condition. There has also been an issue of clearing asbestos, particularly from Cowpasture where tenants have used old panels to fence in compost heaps etc.

These issues have led to a stricter approach of enforcing the terms of the Tenancy Agreements and plots have been sub-divided to make them more manageable and affordable This coincides with a recent computerisation of the billing and record system at the Town Hall.

As a way of assisting with more efficient management of the sites, it has been recommended that several smaller scale projects are put in place. These are;

- Renumbering of plots – there have been numbering systems in place at each site but as plots are sub-divided and boundaries obscured, these have been

more difficult to identify. Physical numbering plaques have been attached to each plot but these do tend to disappear. It is proposed to re-draw the site maps with both digital and physical markers.

- At the larger sites, there are some vehicular accesses and roadways. Due to the nature of the surrounding terrain and the use of the land, the tracks deteriorate quickly. So it is proposed to use hardcore or similar material where appropriate to give these areas a longer life.
- It is hoped that a better standard of map can be displayed at site and used to accompany the Tenancy Agreements. This coincides with the Town Council's desire to install a fully functioning digital mapping system which can be reproduced at various scales depending on the requirement.
- Legal Security – The Town Council has the Title Deeds to each of its Allotment sites but not all of them are registered with the Land Registry. This has been delayed in the past partly due to the cost of the necessary legal fees and partly due to the need for accurate surveying of the areas concerns.
- Boundaries – In the light of the issue above and as Ferry Road and Cowpasture have both been cited in planning applications lodged on adjacent sites, it is considered necessary to legally define and protect FTC's ownership.

Committee is requested to consider the allotment report and any further update, and decide on any action it deems necessary.

AGENDA ITEM 9: CEMETERY

The fenced area of the cemetery extends to about 6.5 acres of land lying south of the railway line between Mill Lane and Grange Road. Langley Avenue can be considered as being divided into 3 sections:

1. from Mill Lane to the field gate giving access to private houses, the former Deben High School sports field and the EDF sub-station, this is owned privately by the Council;
2. from the field gate to up to the start of metalled roadway near The Laydens Community Centre running in front of the Cemetery itself. The 3 main access gates to the cemetery lie along this section which is also privately owned by the Council; and,
3. the short metalled section from near the Laydens up to the junction with Grange Road, this is adopted as public highway and is not the responsibility of the Council.

The section of Langley Avenue running in front of the cemetery is a tarmac surface with wide grass verges, the sports field chainlink fence borders one side and the distinctive wrought iron gates and railings denoting the edge of the

burial grounds the other. The most easterly set of gates near Mill Lane give access through the Cemetery to the Cemetery allotments.

Langley Avenue itself is used as a footpath link from Mill Lane to Grange Road by pedestrians and cyclists although it has no definitive status as such. The roadway is not built to adoptable standards and until its most recent round of re-surfacing, was in constant need of costly maintenance. The greensward areas in this location are often used as overspill parking by people attending football matches at the Deben Field but this use is not sanctioned. Sometimes the cemetery roadways themselves are used as overspill parking too and some allotment holders use the roadway near their plots to park.

The Cemetery area itself is divided up by a series of internal roadways and paths roughly along a gridwork pattern comprising the original consecrated ground to the west and beyond the large yew hedge to the east lies the newly extended cemetery section which is not consecrated ground. The telecoms mast lies in this section. The burial grounds are divided up into several distinct sections which include the war graves sections.

The Memorial Wall is located within this central area. The wall was in a very poor state of repair so was remodelled and repaired approximately 4 years ago. As the Wall is very near to its capacity for memorial plaques, a replacement memorial facility has been approved for creation on the area near the telecoms mast plot.

Beyond the cemetery extension lie the Cemetery Allotments and a small parcel of land occupied for the Scout Hut. A high voltage underground electricity cable runs from the EDF sub-station through that part of the site. This area has always been intended as further expansion of the burial grounds.

The Cemetery is both labour and maintenance intensive and the administration associated with this service is of a particularly detailed and specific nature. In recent years, due to the establishment of the Seven Hills Crematorium near Ipswich, our Cemetery has not been as busy but there is still high demand for burial and urn plots and it achieved close to estimated outturn for 2014/15 at a net cost of £49,757 for the year.

Of all the Council's assets, the Cemetery is likely to need the most attention and investment over the next 1-5 years and the following matters have become projects for consideration:

- The provision of a new area for memorials as the existing Memorial Wall reaches its capacity. The cemetery staff members have spent a great deal of time and effort researching an alternative memorial facility at the cemetery. Currently, the suggestion is to create a memorial garden area near the telecoms mast providing a variety of ways in which memorials can be provided. These include, metal memorial trees with leaves suitable for inscription, bricks in the pathways, memorial roses, another wall structure for plaques, a potential central summer house type of shelter for contemplation and appropriate delineating landscaping

- The main roadways and footpaths in the original part of the cemetery are in need of attention and a ball park estimate to re-surface these was in estimated at £100,000.
- Part of the front footpath area is now compromised by the root systems of the significant Plane trees on the Langley Avenue frontage. Committee may wish to review the issue of the trees at the cemetery which, whilst providing a great deal of amenity value, are also causing maintenance issues in some parts of the site.
- The metal boundary fences and original ornate gates are all badly in need of renovation. A recent visit by a local metal fabricator and restorer has estimated that a whole refurbishment of these features may cost in the region of £250,000 to restore them to their original condition. The gates in particular are considered to be of historical and cultural value.
- Cemetery extension. Within the next few years the existing cemetery will be at capacity. Prior to this, Council will need to consider all the works needed to set out the extension area. This will include any planning consents which may be necessary, the vacation of the current allotment plots and any re-provision, the laying of new roadways, landscaping and the Scout Hut. The location of the electricity cable in this part of the site will undoubtedly affect the eventual layout and the method by which this land is reclaimed.
- The Scout Hut – The scouts approached the Town Council within the last 2 years to seek landlord’s permission to extend and improve their facilities which currently lack vehicular access and mains drainage. FTC was not in a position to grant consent for major improvements due to its requirement for future use of the plot.
- Parking- As described above, parking for both permitted and non-permitted users in and around the cemetery has become an issue in recent times.
- Drainage- There is currently a problem in periods of heavy rain with surface water collecting on Langley Avenue near the sub-station and allotment entrance to the cemetery.
Improved drainage should be considered as part of the roadways and parking issue.

By maximising the potential of the whole site, specifically that of the cemetery extension, there may be some scope to consider a larger project to provide new facilities for the Scouts and other community groups which would address the drainage, parking and roadways together as part of the scheme. Though not known at this stage, there may be grant aid available from various sources and organisations to help achieve a more holistic and beneficial outcome.

Committee is requested to consider the cemetery report and any further update, and decide on any action it deems necessary.