

**MINUTES** of the **ORDINARY COUNCIL** meeting held at **Felixstowe Town Hall** on  
**Wednesday 8 November 2023 at 7.30pm**

**PRESENT:** Cllr S Bennett (Mayor)  
Cllr M Deacon (Deputy Mayor)      Cllr S Harkin  
Cllr D Aitchison                              Cllr M James  
Cllr N Barber                                    Cllr M Morris  
Cllr S Bird                                        Cllr B Price  
Cllr J Candy                                      Cllr D Rowe  
Cllr C Franklin                                  Cllr M Sharman  
Cllr A Folley                                      Cllr S Wiles

**OFFICERS:** Mr A Tadjrishi (Town Clerk)  
Mrs D Frost (Deputy Town Clerk)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** 4 members of the public  
2 members of the public (*via Zoom*).

**MOMENT OF REFLECTION**

The meeting was preceded by a moment of reflection from Mr Nick Barrett-White, National Coastwatch Initiative.

**266. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

None.

**267. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

**268. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following Other Registerable Interests, to which no matters on the agenda were directly related, were noted:

<b>Member(s)</b>	<b>Minute No.</b>	<b>Nature of Interest</b>
Cllr S Bird Cllr S Wiles Cllr S Bennett	All	Other registerable interest (as Members of Suffolk County Council)
Cllr S Bennett Cllr J Candy Cllr M Deacon Cllr A Folley	All	Other registerable interest (as Members of East Suffolk Council)

Members were advised that, should any matters arise in the meeting that directly relate to any of their interests, they should make appropriate declarations at that time.

## **269. QUESTIONS TO THE MAYOR**

None.

## **270. CONFIRMATION OF COUNCIL MINUTES**

**It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 6 September 2023 be signed by the Mayor as a true record and adopted by the Council.**

## **271. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor addressed the Council and spoke about the high number of engagements since the previous meeting. The Tour of Britain and Love Felixstowe Festival had been a great success. The Mayor attended the Felixstowe-Wesel Committee's meeting to plan events for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of twinning next year. Every month the Mayor will be speaking on Felixstowe Radio. Music in Felixstowe and Last Night of the Proms had been a special evening showcasing lots of talent. The BSE Multicultural Services evening at Trinity Park had been a particularly interesting evening celebrating good work in this area.

The Mayor was proud to attend the opening of the Poundstretcher store in the former M&S building. Another highlight was attending the maiden call of the OOCL Felixstowe to the Port of Felixstowe with the Deputy Mayor where they heard about the Port's plans to reach net zero by 2035.

Opening the Love to Work in Felixstowe job fair, was a great success for the Job Centre, Chamber and BID. The Mayor also attended the Walton Parish Nursing Annual Service with the Deputy Mayor who provide a great community service. Other highlights included the Ipswich Mayor's Civic Service and procession through the town centre; Travelwatch AGM, where the Mayor was struck by how well attended it was and how important those services are to a lot of people. The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Old Felixstowe Community Association was a great pleasure to attend. The Mayor also attended the opening of the new funeral directors on Undercliff Road West and the Homestart Group, which meets every Tuesdays and does a positive job to give families the extra support that they need. The Mayor also recently attend the BID Meeting and Ukraine 2 Felixstowe committee meeting.

The Mayor reflected on his first visit to Wesel, which was quite an experience. It was the first civic visit since the pandemic and coincided with the Hansefest, historic celebration of hanseatic towns and a site visit to a state of the art swimming facility being built on the banks of the Rheine. The Mayor paid tribute to the warm and respectful relationship between all three of the towns involved in twinning.

The Mayor highlighted the upcoming Remembrance events and the Mayor's Carol Service on 21<sup>st</sup> December.

It was RESOLVED that the Mayor's communications be noted.

## **272. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the following meetings be received and, subject to their accuracy being confirmed by those committees, adopted:

- a) Planning & Environment Committee 6 September 2023
- b) Civic & Community Committee 13 September 2023
- c) Planning & Environment Committee 20 September 2023
- d) Assets & Services 20 September 2023
- e) Planning & Environment Committee 4 October 2023
- f) Civic & Community Committee 11 October 2023
- g) Personnel Committee 17 October 2023
- h) Planning & Environment Committee 18 October 2023
- i) Finance & Governance Committee 25 October 2023
- j) Planning & Environment Committee 1 November 2023

## **273. REPORT FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

The following reports were received from Cllr J Candy:

### **Friends of Felixstowe Library**

I have met with the Chair of the friends and had an on site meeting in the Library. It was decided that I would assist, as much as I could, in the creation of a quiet corner . During our discussion we decided to invite the late Cllr David Underwood to see if we could expand the notion of a quiet corner into one which included a safe and productive space for visually impaired folk to once again enjoy the ambience of a Library. Cllr Underwood joined us for a meeting and was extremely helpful in advising ways in which the space could assist the visually impaired. The next meeting is to be held soon when we will discuss David's ideas and move forward with the quiet and safe space corner.

### **Felixstowe Travel Watch**

This is a really thriving group who delight in the use of and watching of our public transport. They are also station adopters who successfully lobbied for increased bin capacity at the station and they keep an eye on all things travel related in and out of our town . Aside from meetings I have had many communications from the group about the lack of a regular bus service to the Ipswich hospital and the poor and no-existent service to Old Felixstowe. I gave a talk at their AGM and was pleased to receive many emails asking for the return of a coastal service up to Lowestoft.

The following two reports were received from Cllr Seamus Bennett:

**Ukraine 2 Felixstowe Committee notes 05.11.23**

Currently 72 Ukrainian guests in Felixstowe. Of these, 23 are living with 14 hosts, another 49 living in (16) private rented accommodation (PRA). U2F support has helped ensure that among one of the highest clusters of Ukrainians in Suffolk, none have become homeless, even temporarily. Current government policy is that monthly ‘thank you’ payments to hosts will cease two years after guests’ arrival in UK which means Spring 2024 for many. This means more will be looking for PRA.

English Language classes are well attended (2 x classes of 20) Tues eves at Felixstowe School, funded by Suffolk County Council through West Suffolk College. Other nationalities are welcome – currently 2-3 non-Ukrainians. U2F’s monthly Coffee, Cake, Crafts & Chat evenings are well attended – for all guests, hosts & supporters. Town Council Members are welcome – next is Sunday 12th November 6-7.30pm, United Reformed Church, Tomline Road.

**BID (Business Improvement District) exec meeting notes 01.11.23**

Significant footfall increase: up 46% Jan-Sept versus the same period 2022. Love Felixstowe Festival & Love to Work in Felixstowe both successful events in Sept / Oct. Hostile Explore Suffolk BID attempt by Ipswich BID (which could have subsumed Felixstowe BID) failed to gain votes needed which is good news for Felixstowe BID.

December: 9-10<sup>th</sup> Makers Market (Great Eastern Square) and 16-17<sup>th</sup> music at Triangle. Ice Rink 20-23<sup>rd</sup> December

2024 plans: Love Felixstowe & Art on Prom 31.08 - 02.09.24;  
Love Green Felixstowe launch February 2024.

**274. EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL RESPONSE TO FELIXSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL’S MOTIONS**

Council noted the formal response from East Suffolk Council to the motions submitted by the Town Council following the previous meeting.

Members welcomed the response and noted the constructive proposals from East Suffolk Council, although it was noted that more prompt action was needed to address the immediate needs of the town’s streets.

There will be a quarterly contact meeting to pick up on any concerns with East Suffolk Services and look at things on the horizon that might impact services ie future events.

Cllr James confirmed that action is required now.

Cllr Folley had recently contacted a company that had put fly posters in many places over the town removed by contacting them and asking them to supply their licence.

The Clerk advised that he would discuss the format of the quarterly contact meeting and keep Members updated.

East Suffolk Members present expressed their optimism that services would improve.

**It was RESOLVED that the response from East Suffolk Council to Felixstowe Town Council's motions be noted.**

**275. EARMARKED RESERVES EXPENDITURE**

Council noted the report on Council's Committees approved Earmarked Reserve spending.

**It was RESOLVED that the report on Earmarked Reserve Expenditure be noted.**

**276. NOTICE OF ELECTION FOR FELIXSTOWE SOUTH WARD**

Council noted the Notice of Election for one Town Councillor to the Felixstowe South Ward had been published on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and the election will take place on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023.

The cost is currently unknown, however, Council has an Election Earmarked Reserve to cover 1 full election and 1 by-election every 4 years. Once the new Councillor has been elected, the Committee appointments and Outside Bodies Representative will be brought to Council in January.

**It was RESOLVED that the by-election details for the Town Councillor vacancy be noted.**

**277. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2022/23**

Council received the report on the Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2022/23 and noted that the notice of conclusion of audit had been displayed on the noticeboard and on the website.

Council gave thanks to the staff for their hard work in achieving an unqualified audit.

**It was RESOLVED that the Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2022/23 is approved by Council.**

**278. INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2023/24**

Council noted a report on the Interim Internal Audit Report 2023/24.

Council gave thanks to the staff for their hard work in achieving another positive audit report.

**It was RESOLVED that the Interim Internal Audit Report 2023/24 was approved by Council.**

**279. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES AND EXPENSES POLICY 2023-27**

The Town Clerk provided an update following the Council's request that the Finance & Governance Committee consider a broader Members' Allowances and Expenses Policy. Members were reminded a Parish Basic Allowance had not been agreed but wanted to ensure that Members were not out of pocket, so allowances for subsistence and dependent care had now been added to the policy.

Members noted that the Clerk had referred the matter, of the Independent Remuneration Panel having not made any recommendations on a Parish Basic Allowance for parish councils within East Suffolk, to SALC and would update mMembers as soon as this has been received.

Following further discussion and a debate on the potential loss of earnings and mileage concerns the Policy was approved with the following corrections:

Members noted the quoted wording from the LGA1972 and asked that the policy be updated to make the wording gender neutral.

That the Policy runs for one year from 2023 – 24 and is reviewed again next year.

The policy will go to Council's Finance & Governance Committee in a year's time and Members asked that this be highlighted to all Councillors so they can attend the Committee if they so wish.

**It was RESOLVED that the Member's Allowances and Expenses Policy 2023-24 be approved.**

**280. EAST SUFFOLK – POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACES REVIEW 2023**

Members considered East Suffolk's consultation on the review of Parliamentary polling districts and polling places.

**It was RESOLVED that the Town Clerk responds by the 30 November deadline to say that Council welcomes the proposal.**

**281. REMEMBRANCE EVENTS 2023**

Cllr Aitchison as Chairman of the Royal British Legion spoke about the forthcoming remembrance events at the weekend.

**It was RESOLVED that the report on events taking place for Remembrance 2023 be noted.**

## **282. FTC/ESC JOINT LIAISON GROUP MEETING**

The Town Clerk updated Council on the meeting that had taken place the previous day. The Liaison Group meeting is an informal briefing session which aids good working relationships between the Councils and they discuss significant infrastructure.

The meetings are held quarterly, there are standing items and they discuss future projects that affect Felixstowe.

The minutes will be circulated as soon as they are received and the Town Clerk will report back to Council on the new set format for these meetings. There had been three representative but it would be good to expand to all East Suffolk Felixstowe Councillors. It was noted that no decisions are made at these meetings.

**It was RESOLVED that the update on the FTC/ESC Joint Liaison Group Meeting be noted.**

## **283. STAFF ANNUAL LEAVE**

Council considered the recommendation of the Personnel Committee to award all staff two days additional leave during the 2024/25 leave period only.

**It was RESOLVED that all staff are awarded two days additional leave (pro rata) during the 2024/25 leave period as a way of saying thank you for the excellent service provided to the residents of Felixstowe and to Councillors over the past few years, in at times very challenging circumstances.**

## **284. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

**It was RESOLVED that the schedule and payment of accounts be received and approved as follows:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Voucher Nos.</b>	<b>Total Payment</b>
15/09/2023	218 - 238	£8,741.49
31/09/2023	239 - 256	£76,520.93
15/10/2023	257 - 270	£34,806.55
31/10/2023	271 - 287	£46,928.30
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£166,997.27</b>

## **CLOSURE**

The meeting was closed at 9.35 pm. It was noted that the next Ordinary Meeting was scheduled for 10 January 2024 at 7.30pm.

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Town Mayor: \_\_\_\_\_