

MINUTES of the **ORDINARY COUNCIL** meeting held at **Felixstowe Town Hall** on **Wednesday 10 January 2024** at **7.30pm**

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

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

IN ATTENDANCE: 3 members of the public (*in person*)
3 members of the public (*via Zoom*)

MOMENT OF REFLECTION

The meeting was preceded by a moment of reflection from Ms Caroline Sturman, Founder and Director of Breast Friends CIC.

355. COUNCILLOR'S DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

Council noted that in accordance with Section 83 (3) of the Local Government Act 1972, Cllr Cherrie MacGregor, who was elected to Felixstowe Town Council following the South Ward byelection on 23rd November, has made their Declaration of Acceptance of Office before the Town Clerk.

356. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

None.

357. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from **Cllr N Barber** and **Cllr C MacGregor**.

358. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Member(s)	Minute No.	Nature of Interest
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	All	Other registerable interest (as Members of East Suffolk Council)

Cllr M Deacon Cllr A Folley		
Cllr D Rowe	367 & 369	Other registerable interest (as Director of the Level Two Youth Project)

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.

359. QUESTIONS TO THE MAYOR

None.

360. CONFIRMATION OF COUNCIL MINUTES

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 8 November 2023 be signed by the Mayor as a true record and adopted by the Council.

361. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor addressed the Council and spoke about engagements since the previous meeting. The Mayor paid tribute to the Felixstowe Branch of the Royal British Legion for the variety of well-organised and poignant Remembrance events. The Felixstowe Environment Awards from Litter Free Felixstowe had been an inspiring event, highlighting the efforts of people of all ages from age 9 – 90. The Rotary Kids Kitchen Awards were a highlight where local children were given the opportunity to be 'Junior Masterchef' and put their cooking skills to the test.

Felixstowe in Flower took place at the Town Hall Chamber in the rearranged format and had been a successful evening celebrating the efforts of the community in keeping Felixstowe in floral colour during the summer.

It had been a privilege to switch on the lights for the town and the Mayor gave thanks to the Lions Club of Felixstowe, for their dedication and imagination that goes into the display every year.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor attended an interesting meeting with the CEO of Freeport East about the links between Felixstowe and Harwich. A briefing for all Councillors would be arranged as a follow up.

The Mayor had attended a total of 27 Christmas events, all of which were inspiring, moving, educational and memorable. It was insightful to hear about all that goes on in the town.

The Mayor also participated in the Christmas Day Dip alongside hundreds of others braving the cold sea, before supporting the Salvation Army and Cuppa in providing Christmas Dinner to the community.

The Mayor had recently returned from a personally funded trip to Wesel to participate in a half-marathon event alongside entrants from Felixstowe Road Runners. Whilst there, the Mayor participated in a civic tree planting as part of the town's celebrations of the 50th anniversary of twinning with Felixstowe, and attended the National Journalism Awards, discovering that Wesel is the birthplace of a very important linguist.

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

362. 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 15 November 2023**
- b) Assets & Services Committee 22 November 2023**
- c) Planning & Environment Committee 29 November 2023**
- d) Finance & Governance Committee 6 December 2023**
- e) Planning & Environment Committee 13 December 2023**
- f) Civic & Community Committee 13 December 2023**

363. REPORT FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

None.

364. INVITATION TO APPOINT A CHAIR AND REPRESENTATIVE TO THE NFGN STAKEHOLDER FORUM

Council considered the invitation from East Suffolk Council to appoint a Chairman and Representative from the Town Council to sit on the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood Stakeholder Folder.

It was proposed by Cllr M Sharman, seconded by Cllr M James, that Cllr M Deacon be appointed as the Chairman.

It was proposed by Cllr S Bird, seconded by Cllr S Harkin, that Cllr S Wiles be appointed as the Town Council Representative.

It was proposed by Cllr M Deacon, seconded by Cllr J Candy as an amendment, that Cllr S Bennett be appointed as the Town Council Representative.

Following a debate and a vote, it was RESOLVED that Cllr M Deacon be appointed as the Chairman, and Cllr S Bennet be appointed as the Town Council Representative to the NFGN Stakeholder Forum.

365. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

Council reviewed its Committees following the vacancy that necessitated the Felixstowe South Ward Byelection.

It was RESOLVED that the following appointments be made:

Finance & Governance Committee:	Cllr C MacGregor
Assets & Services Committee:	Cllr B Price
Planning & Environment Committee:	Cllr B Price

366. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Council reviewed the appointments to outside bodies following the Felixstowe South Ward Byelection.

It was RESOLVED that the following are made representatives to the outside bodies as follows:

Felixstowe Travel Watch:	Cllr S Bennett
Fairtrade Forum:	Cllr B Price
Felixstowe Chamber of Trade:	Cllr B Price
ESC/FTC Joint Forum:	Cllr S Harkin
Felixstowe Community Partnership:	Cllr C Franklin

367. BUDGET, RESERVES AND PRECEPT 2024/25

Council received the finalised version of the 2024/25 Budget and Precept. It was noted that the budget had been prepared and presented in accordance with the recommendations of the Finance & Governance Committee meeting of 6 December 2023 (Minute #324 of 2023/24 refers).

Members discussed the Cost-of-Living crisis and commended the Council's officers for their prudent management of Council's finances during a period of 0% increase to the Council tax over the previous four years. Members considered the option brought forward by the Finance & Governance Committee and the contribution of £15,972 from Council's General Fund required to balance the budget. The increased cost of all items of expenditure, including energy and staff costs was acknowledged, as were potential cost cutting measures, reduction of service provision and the availability of grants to local organisations. Council also received a graph to understand how the Town Council's income, expenditure and precept has affected its overall balance over time and this was considered.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. the Felixstowe Town Council Budget for 2024/25, as set out in the report, be adopted and approved as follows:**

Total Budgeted Expenditure:	£843,383
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Total Budgeted Income: £178,656

- ii. **the 2024/25 Precept demand to East Suffolk Council of £664,727 (representing a 5.54% increase cost to Band D equivalent Council Tax payer), be made on the following basis:**

Band D rate		£74.80
Multiplied by tax base	x	8,887.28
Thus a Precept demand of:		£664,727

- iii. **and, the Clerk be delegated the authority to take any necessary action due and instructed to submit any information required by East Suffolk Council in this matter.**

368. MEETING SCHEDULE 2024/25

Council received the draft meeting schedule for 2024/25.

It was proposed that the start time of Planning & Environment Committee meetings move to 9.30am from 9.15am, with immediate effect, to accommodate Committee Members' attendance.

Members discussed trialling a change from the regular 7.30pm start time of Ordinary Council and Committees to 7pm but agreed that, Personnel, Annual Town and Annual Council meetings aside, evening meeting times should remain at 7.30pm.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. the Meetings calendar for 2024/25 be adopted as per the schedule presented; and,**
- ii. the start time for Council's Planning & Environment Committee be changed to 9.30am with immediate effect.**

369. EARMARKED RESERVES EXPENDITURE

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

It was RESOLVED that the Earmarked Reserve Expenditure be noted.

370. COUNCIL CHAMBER CEILING REPAIR

The Deputy Town Clerk presented a report to Council on repairs to the Town Hall Council Chamber ceiling above the bay window.

It was RESOLVED that Company B be instructed to carry out the remedial work at the cost of £4,110+VAT to be funded from the Town Hall Earmarked Reserve.

371. DATA RETENTION AND DISPOSAL POLICY

Council considered the Data Retention and Disposal Policy as presented. An amendment was put forward to include Health and Safety documents including anything in connection with RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013) including building reports regarding asbestos be kept indefinitely.

It was RESOLVED that pending the changes as described above, that the Data Retention and Disposal Policy for the period 2023-2026 be adopted.

372. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

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

Date	Voucher Nos.	Total Payment
10/11/2023	288 - 311	£14,395.02
30/11/2023	312 - 327	£82,941.81
13/12/2023	328 - 344	£6,785.97
20/12/2023	345 - 374	£77,985.36
	TOTAL	£182,108.16

373. CLOSURE

The meeting was closed at 9.18pm. It was noted that the next Ordinary Meeting was scheduled for 6 March 2024 at 7.30pm.

Date: _____

Town Mayor: _____