

MINUTES of the ORDINARY COUNCIL meeting held ONLINE on Wednesday 10 June 2020 at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Cllr M Jepson (Mayor)
 Cllr S Harkin (Deputy Mayor)
 Cllr D Aitchison
 Cllr S Bennett
 Cllr S Bird
 Cllr M Deacon
 Cllr S Gallant
 Cllr T Green

Cllr M Morris
 Cllr G Newman
 Cllr M Richardson
 Cllr D Savage
 Cllr A Smith
 Cllr S Wiles
 Cllr K Williams

OFFICERS: Mr A Tadjrishi (Town Clerk)
 Mrs L Monsen (Mayor's Secretary)
 Mrs D Frost (Deputy Town Clerk)
 Mrs S Faversham (Business Services Officer)
 Mr S Congi (Customer Services Apprentice)
 Mrs S Morrison (Planning Administration Assistant)

IN ATTENDANCE: 1 Member of the public
 1 Member of the press.
 Inspector Soraya Francis, South East Locality Acting Inspector.
 Ms Helen Greengrass, Felixstowe Forward Change Director

46. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A member of the public congratulated the Mayor on the Zoom interviews and the availability of them on the media. He suggested that the Mayor would like to invite local teachers and health workers on how the pandemic was affecting their daily work. The Mayor advised that the Deputy Mayor would be assisting with online community interviews and these would be arranged shortly.

47. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from **Cllr N Barber**.

48. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Member(s)	Minute No.	Nature of Interest
Cllr S Bird Cllr M Deacon Cllr S Gallant Cllr T Green Cllr M Jepson Cllr S Wiles	All	Local Non-Pecuniary (as Members of East Suffolk Council)
Cllr S Bird Cllr G Newman Cllr S Wiles	All	Local Non-Pecuniary (as Members of Suffolk County Council)

49. QUESTIONS TO THE MAYOR

There were none.

50. CONFIRMATION OF COUNCIL MINUTES

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 20 May 2020 be signed by the Mayor as a true record and adopted by the Council.

51. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor addressed the Council, highlighting the impact of Covid-19 on the commencement of his Mayoral year. The Mayor spoke about the interviews on Zoom organised by Visit Felixstowe which he had been having with the local shops and organisations and the inspiring ways they were adapting in this difficult time. He asked his fellow Cllrs if they would like to be included in these informal chats and all agreed to contribute to this.

The Mayor told the Council that he had been contacted by the local organisers of the campaign Black Lives Matter and the possibility of information posters displayed in the town. The Mayor and Town Clerk were in discussion with the organisers about this.

The Council thanked the Mayor for his dedication to the office during these very difficult times.

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

52. 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 27 May 2020**
- b) **Finance & Governance Committee 27 May 2020**

53. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were none.

54. WELCOME TO INSPECTOR SORAYA FRANCIS

The Mayor and Town Councillors welcomed Inspector Soraya Francis to the meeting and invited her to address the Council. Inspector Francis told the Council that there would be a renewed focus on illegal drug activities amongst other key priorities for Felixstowe in the forthcoming months. Inspector Francis confirmed that there would be an increase in police presence in the town. Inspector Francis advised that her colleague was in contact with the organisers of the Black Lives Matter march planned on 20 June in Felixstowe and it was

expected that they would adhere to the social distancing rules during the demonstration.

Councillors referred Inspector Francis to complaints received from members of the public concerning recent spates of antisocial behaviour in Allenby Park, along Langer/Sea Road, the Viewpoint area and the Duck Pond area in Gulpher Road. There had also been complaints about jet skis along the beach. Inspector Francis agreed to relay this information to her team.

Council thanked Inspector Soraya for her report.

It was RESOLVED that the report from Inspector Soraya be noted.

55. FELIXSTOWE FORWARD REPORT

Council received a verbal update from the Felixstowe Forward Change Director, Helen Greengrass.

Ms Greengrass reported that due to the current crisis she had been responding to several queries and anxieties within the local retail, hospitality and leisure establishments. This included guiding them through the application to get the grants available and helping with the application process. As the lockdown was easing and the government would be allowing non-essential shops to reopen in the next few days, Ms Greengrass was holding virtual meetings for the local businesses to discuss and advise them concerning social distancing and if they had any potential ideas or concerns they would like to discuss so that they could open safely. It was hoped to access the new Re-opening Safely Fund which would be administered by East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council to help with this.

Two new businesses were opening in the town, though one business had confirmed closure with a possibility of another two closing in the near future. Ms Greengrass reported that the Mayor had held over 20 informal chats with local businesses which had been extremely well received. It was hoped that the Deputy Mayor would be able to have similar chats with the local schools and key workers in the town.

The Visit Felixstowe beach hut was being readied to reopen and a risk assessment was being prepared. The event booking system currently suspended due to COVID 19.

Mrs Greengrass advised that the BID draft plan would be completed by the end of the month and would then potentially go to the East Suffolk Council by March next year.

Members thanked Ms Greengrass for her comprehensive report and noted the recent report provided by East Suffolk Council's Communities Officer

It was RESOLVED that the Felixstowe Forward update report be noted as received.

56. REOPENING HIGH STREETS SAFETY FUND

Council considered the draft Reopening Safely Action Plan for Felixstowe which would form the basis for seeking support from East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council to implement measures to safely reopen the town centre.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. the Reopening Safely Action Plan be approved and submitted to East Suffolk Council; and,**
- ii. the Community Emergency Plan Group be authorised to utilise the £10,000 emergency fund to assist in the delivery of local measures to support safe reopening in the town which may not be covered by the ERDF funding.**

57. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT: FULL YEAR 2019/20

Council considered the final Internal Audit Report for the year 1 April – 31 March 2020 as presented.

It was RESOLVED to:

- i. note that there were no significant actions arising from the final Internal Audit Report for the Financial Year 2019-20 and, therefore, no action plan is required to be submitted with the Annual Return 2019/20 to the External Auditor.**

58. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT AND ANNUAL RETURN 2019-20

Council considered the Accounts, Annual Governance Statement and Annual Return for the Financial Year 2019/20 as presented. The Clerk paid thanks to the Deputy Town Clerk and the Customer Services Apprentice for their hard work and advised that the Notice of Audit would be displayed on the Town Hall noticeboard in accordance with the statutory requirements.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. It be confirmed that the Council has considered the potential financial impact of the coronavirus on the authority's budget;**
- ii. the Annual Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2020 (Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement) be approved and the Mayor and Town Clerk be authorised to sign the declaration on behalf of Felixstowe Town Council;**
- iii. the Annual Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2020 (Section 2 – Accounting Statements) as signed by the Town Clerk, as the Council's Responsible Finance Officer be approved, and**

the Mayor be authorised to sign the declaration on behalf of Felixstowe Town Council; and,

- iv. it be noted that there were no actions arising from the final Internal Audit Report for the Financial Year 2019-20 and, therefore, no action plan was required to be submitted with the Annual Return 2019/20 to the External Auditor.**

59. IT SYSTEMS AND SUPPORT

Members considered the recommendation of the Finance & Governance Committee (*Minute #35 of 2020/21 refers*).

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. £40,000 be transferred from the General Fund into the IT Earmarked Reserve to enable Council to upgrade its IT provision;**
- ii. expenditure of up to £8,000 be approved from the IT Earmarked Reserve for the purchase of business IT equipment for staff on the Dell government framework; and,**
- iii. authority be delegated to the Finance & Governance Committee to commit expenditure from the IT Earmarked Reserve for the purposes of upgrading Council's IT hardware, software, and support.**

60. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL 2020/21

Council considered the Statement of Internal Control for the year end 31 March 2021, as recommended by the Finance & Governance Committee on 27 May 2020 (*Minute #33 of 2020/21 refers*).

It was RESOLVED that the Internal Control Statement for the year 2020/21 be adopted.

61. REVIEW OF INTERNAL AUDIT EFFECTIVENESS

Council reviewed the effectiveness of its internal audit arrangements, as recommended by the Finance & Governance Committee on 27 May 2020. (*Minute #29 of 2020/21 refers*).

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. having reviewed the effectiveness of its internal audit, it be recorded that Council considers the arrangements to be effective; and,**
- ii. in being satisfied of the independence and competence of its internal auditor, both Mr Colin Poole and Mrs Vicky Waples of the**

Suffolk Association of Local Councils, be appointed to continue as the Council's internal auditor, undertaking a half-yearly and year-end audit on the basis of paras 4.14-4.17 of the "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioner's Guide 2019".

62. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

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

Date	Voucher Nos.	Total Payment
15/05/2020	46 – 64	£13,148.49
31/05/2020	65 - 83	£42,168.58
	TOTAL	£ 55,317.07

63. CLOSURE

The meeting was closed at 9.42pm. It was noted that the next Ordinary Meeting was scheduled for 8 July 2020 at 7.30pm.

Date: _____

Town Mayor: _____