

MINUTES of the **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING** held at Felixstowe Academy on
Wednesday 8 May 2019 at 7pm

IN ATTENDANCE:

From Felixstowe Town Council: Cllr G Newman (Mayor), Cllr T Green (Deputy Mayor), Cllr D Aitchison, Cllr N Barber, Cllr S Bird, Cllr S Bennett, Cllr S Gallant, Cllr S Harkin, Cllr M Morris, Cllr G Newman, Cllr M Richardson, Cllr D Savage, Cllr S Wiles Cllr K Williams, Mr A Tadjrishi (Town Clerk), Mrs D Frost (Deputy Town Clerk), Mrs L Monsen (Mayor's Secretary), Mrs S Faversham (Cemetery & Allotments Officer), Mrs S Morrison (Administrative Assistant), Mr S Congi (Customer Services Apprentice).

Approximately 128 members of the public were also in attendance.

617. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Mayor of Felixstowe welcomed everyone and outlined the format of the meeting.

618. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS TOWN MEETING MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 9 May 2018 were confirmed as a true record by those present and the Mayor was authorised to sign them.

619. REPORT BY THE MAYOR OF FELIXSTOWE

The Mayor presented the following report:

As I found in my first stint as Mayor in 2014/15, the past twelve months seemed to have passed in a flash. It has again been a huge privilege to serve our town in the capacity of Mayor - to represent you at events all over Suffolk and beyond, and to have ultimate democratic responsibility for what happens in the Town Hall and for the services it delivers. Being Mayor also provides a fascinating insight to the life of the town: an opportunity to discover the vast array of community groups which operate and the huge range of activities they provide for residents. In that respect the year did not disappoint, but what really did come as a surprise were invitations to represent the town at two different events in south east Asia – one in Taiwan, followed shortly by another in Shanghai, China – surely a first for any Mayor of Felixstowe.

The year started with typical Mayoral events like the presentation evening at Bucklesham Grange Care Home, the civic service at Aldeburgh, the unveiling of a new mural created by the Level 2 Youth Group at Felixstowe station and their AGM.

Throughout the year there were many similar high-profile events, and a number of firm fixtures in the calendar. Our Civic Service was held in June at the River of Life Church on the Landguard peninsular. This was the first time this service has been held at this relatively new, and very popular Church. I'd like to thank

Revd Trevor Harris and all his team for their hospitality and for what for me was an entirely apposite worship – not least the fantastic contribution from the Felixstowe Children's Choir.

In July, the Mayor's Reception was held in the marquee at Felixstowe Ferry Golf Club. I believe this was another first for both a Felixstowe Mayor and the Golf Club itself – and the team there did not disappoint. The arrangements were exemplary, thanks to the Golf Club's manager David Spencer and their catering crew. This gave our numerous guests from all over Suffolk a memorable evening, and an opportunity to enjoy the glorious views of our true Links Golf Course (one of only 48 in the UK), the Suffolk coast and Deben estuary from this splendid vantage point. Many remarked to this effect and went home more than a little jealous!

Plans for an ever more ambitious Carnival in 2018 were sadly dashed by a break in the generally lovely weather we experienced in the summer of 2018. As a result, the capacity crowd at the Friday evening's Proms Concert – which started in brilliant sunshine - was effectively disbanded by a freak storm and downpour. Saturday's procession and entertainment proceeded without hitch, but sadly most of Sunday's events and the traditional fireworks display had to be cancelled due to the day-long rainfall and high winds. Once again, I commend to you our thanks to the small Carnival team for planning such a fantastic weekend, and our commiserations go out to them for the inescapable effects of the weather.

The following weekend, the Mayoress and I took the ferry across to the Hook of Holland and on (courtesy of the Wesel Fire Service) to our twin town of Wesel in north west Germany, to enjoy their 'PPP' and Rifle Club Festivals. The visit marked the 44th year of Felixstowe's twinning with Wesel. It was a fantastic weekend, including a spectacular firework display launched from the opposite side of the Rhine. During the year it was also my pleasure to chair both Wesel and Salzwedel twinning associations' AGMs and participate in their social functions – many thanks to their members for the warmth of their welcome.

The following weekend we had Proms on the Prom organised by Music in Felixstowe on the Spa Gardens. This event attracted a healthy crowd throughout the afternoon and evening, only marginally disturbed at the very end by a shower. August also brought us a trip from the Mayor of Cambridge entertaining a party of over 400 pensioners (on 9 coaches!) at the Spa Pavilion's summer show. Sadly, the Mayor passed away later in his Mayoral year. Later in August we opened the Felixstowe Photographic Society Exhibition at Trinity Church and joined in the launch – at the Ferry Sailing Club - of the excellent book by Graham Henderson & Elizabeth Setchim (both residents at The Ferry) entitled Felixstowe Ferry – Past Present & Future. And in time for the Bank Holiday weekend – another first, the launch of Felixstowe Ferry Fest – the curtain raiser for a weekend's entertainment, art and fun at The Ferry, thoroughly enjoyed by all who participated.

The first Sunday in September brought us Art on the Prom, another fantastic event attracting a crowd of over 20,000 residents and visitors. We thank Stephen and Mary Wyatt for their ten years of leadership of the event - now a firmly

established date on the Felixstowe events calendar - and wish the new organisers the very best of good fortune as they take on this demanding role.

Towards the end of September, one of the highlights of my term of office – a trip to Kaohsiung, Taiwan, to participate in the Global Harbour Cities Forum – took place. The Port of Kaohsiung handles about 2½ times the 4 million container units that pass through Felixstowe each year, but on the back of a city with a population of 2¾ million compared with our 25,000! The Town Clerk accompanied me, with our air fare and hotel funded by the Kaohsiung City Government – so no expense to the Felixstowe taxpayer – and I was able to actively participate on the theme of Here and Beyond: A New Horizon for Harbours, covering technological developments, environmental consequences and effects on the rest of a town or city's economic activities.

Then to October/November, when I had the privilege of launching the Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal, followed by a two week long programme of events commemorating the 100th anniversary of the cessation of hostilities in the First World War. This culminated in a very moving Remembrance Service in St John's Church, the traditional sea front parade around the War Memorial, and in the evening the Battle's Over parade of lighted beacons along the sea front. The Town Council fully supported this event with a printed programme containing details of all the official events which took place over this fortnight, and this can still be viewed on the Town Council's website.

At the end of November came the second – and even more remarkable – visit to South East Asia, this time to participate in the Golden Keys International Alliance Annual Meeting in the Kunshan district of Shang-hai, to give a presentation about Felixstowe's Culture and Leisure. As this organisation has no presence in the UK, and very little in Western Europe, this was a real privilege and can only lead to raising Felixstowe's and the UK's profile higher on the international stage. Again, the travel costs were met by the host organisation, so created no expense for the Felixstowe taxpayer.

The Christmas Season was a busy but most enjoyable and informative time. The Deputy Mayor was left with the privilege of switching on the Christmas Lights in the town, as I was flying out to China at the time. Thanks as ever to the Lions for so faithfully providing Christmas Lights for the town. There followed the traditional Mayor's Visits to Care Homes – thanks to every one of the 16 homes the Mayoress and I visited, for your hospitality. May I say here a special "thank you" to for the all the staff at our care homes, who do their very best to provide a happy and comfortable Christmas for all their residents.

Just before Christmas, we held a Civic Christmas Carol Service at St Andrews Church. Thanks to Revd Chris Hood and his team for a very fitting service of worship, and for the hospitality which followed. In the run-up to Christmas, we had the temporary Skating Rink at Great Eastern Square, organised by the Town Council but sponsored by the East of England Co-op. Then on Christmas Day itself, I thoroughly enjoyed participating in the St Elizabeth Hospice's Annual Christmas Dip – I managed to get in as far as my midriff before the chill of the water made a swift reversal inevitable! The Mayoress and I went on to wish Happy Christmas to all the in-patients in Felixstowe Community Hospital,

followed by welcoming guests to Christmas Lunch at the Salvation Army with 60+ people who would have otherwise had nobody with whom to share their Christmas.

The Mayor's Ball was held on 22nd March this year. We had a wonderful evening, with over 150 guests packing into the Orwell Hotel, all in support of my two charities for the year – BASIC Life and The Laydens Community Cafe. Thanks to Richard & Jenny Bugg's generous sponsorship of the band for the night – Solid Gold – we were able to keep the ticket prices to well below the £40-mark. Thanks too to all the individuals and traders who generously provided a wonderful array of raffle prizes and some unique items to auction, as well as support from the Town Hall staff and the charities themselves in preparing for the event.

During the year, numerous other events have been held to raise money for my nominated charities. Not least of these was my 60-Miles on the Prom cycle ride, which kicked off the fundraising on September 1st, raising around £1000 in sponsorship. Thanks to them both for arranging refreshments at the Tourist Information Hut and collecting donations on the Prom on the day.

Other events included a Fashion Show at the Orwell Hotel on 7th September, a Quiz Night in the St Mary's Walton Church Hall in October – thanks to Mrs Gill Hadwen for acting as Quiz Mistress; an excellent Christmas Concert in St John's Church on 1st December, and a Curry Night at Walton's Bombay Nite restaurant on 4th February which attracted a capacity crowd. Thanks to Shami and his team for putting on an excellent evening, Annette for her tantalising quizzes, and Barry for his fun-filled horserace game!

Turning now to the Town Hall itself, I must first thank the staff for their support during the year, especially the Mayor's Secretary, Lorna Monsen. It has been a good year for the Town Council, having been one of the first to be awarded the prestigious Local Government Gold Award... all down to our excellent Town Clerk Ash Tadjrishi, his deputy Debbie Frost, and the rest of the team. Thanks too to Sue Faversham for her "above and beyond" efforts in arranging Felixstowe in Flower; Mrs Sarah Morrison for mastering the Planning & Environment brief and our newly recruited apprentice Mr Shaun Congi. The hard work of Elaine Wiggins and her team has continued to transform the Cemetery – which must surely qualify as one of the best kept Gardens of Rest in Suffolk.

We have of course just been through an "all-out" election for the town council. We thank Cllrs Christina Barham, Peter Coleman and Jon & Jan Garfield - who did not stand for re-election this time - for their years of service to the town, and former Councillor Steve Bloomfield – who was not re-elected this time - for his contribution over the past four years. We welcome returning Councillor Mrs Margaret Morris, and newly elected Cllrs Aitchison, Bennett, Harkin and Richardson.

Many thanks to Deputy Mayor Tracey Green for her support during the year, and for fulfilling appointments which I couldn't attend because of "double-booking" or other commitments. Thanks too to my dear wife Janet for supporting me as Mayoress throughout the year, and my daughter Rebecca for coping with all sorts

of last-minute changes to routine and some long, lonely nights indoors whilst Janet and I have been out enjoying fulfilling the role of Mayor & Mayoress.

In closing, may I just reiterate, every one of us who has the privilege of living in Felixstowe has much for which to be grateful. To those who fill the various social media channels with negativity I say – look around you at many similar coastal towns. Felixstowe and its community are vibrant and economically strong; we enjoy low unemployment; we're host to the UK's largest container port - responsible for more than one in every ten jobs in Suffolk; and a plethora of multi-national companies want to invest here. We are promised significant investment in a new Leisure Centre and the south sea front area. Let's work together to make our town even more fantastic!

620. CIVIC AWARDS

Awards were presented to the following individuals and organisations for their contribution to supporting and enriching the town, its residents, and visitors:

a) Mayor's Awards 2019

Bev Boyce, for her work with the Felixstowe Society which included helping to produce last year's Poppy Trail and exhibition at Old Felixstowe Parish Church. Bev is a talented archivist and helps to produce many local books on various historical events in the town.

John Brinkley, for his work as a volunteer to the Felixstowe CCTV team since 2009, co-ordinating between the Town Pastors, the police control room and officers on patrol.

Caroline Hazell, for her dedicated work with Felixstowe Area Community Transport (FACTS) as a driver, in the office and as a Trustee.

Barry Twomey, for his outstanding contribution to the Felixstowe Coastal Rescue Team, attending more than 430 emergency call outs over his many years of service.

David Webb, as a founder member of Felixstowe Lions Club who continue to raise significant sums of money for local organisations in the community.

b) Felixstowe Community Award 2019

Felixstowe Community Hospital League of Friends, for their fundraising work in support of the local community hospital which has enabled the purchase of an X-Ray machine and televisions for each patient room. They recently supported the hospital to become a dementia friendly site and continue to support patient comfort.

c) HMS Ganges Youth Trophy

Sam Wash, recognised for his hard work as a Felixstowe Academy Peer Mentor, supporting younger students who may be going through some challenges and need a listening ear. He has also just learnt that he has been selected for the England under 16 Hockey Team.

A special award was also presented to Nathan Upson who, at just 6 years old, showed incredible courage and determination to seek help when his mother fell suddenly ill at home.

d) NHS Award 2019

Felixstowe Community Nursing Team, for the group of dedicated community nurses who provide nursing care to patients in and around Felixstowe whatever the weather.

e) Visit Felixstowe Tourism Award 2019

parkrun Felixstowe, winner of the Visit Felixstowe Tourism Award 2019 by public vote.

f) Felixstowe Photo Competition 2019

Sue Reynold, for her photo taken at Felixstowe Ferry entered in to the 'Undiscovered Felixstowe' category of the photo competition.

621. REPORTS FROM COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

The following reports were noted as received:

- Art on the Prom
- Boost
- BSEVC Creative Moments
- Citizens Advice (Felixstowe & District)
- Felixstowe Area Community Transport Ltd. (FACTS)
- Felixstowe & Corinthians Cricket Club
- Felixstowe Carnival Association
- Felixstowe District Council for Sport and Recreation
- Felixstowe Forward
- Felixstowe Mens Shed
- Felixstowe Opportunity Group
- Felixstowe Parkrun
- Felixstowe Radio
- Felixstowe Sea Angling Society
- Felixstowe Volunteer Coast Patrol Rescue Service (FVCPRS)
- Felixstowe Wesel Association
- Landguard Fort
- Level Two Youth Project
- Majestic Voices
- Music in Felixstowe

- PCSO
- Peninsular Pyrates
- Plastic Free Felixstowe
- Revitalise
- Salzwedel Partnership Association
- Suffolk Accident Rescue Service (SARS)
- Suffolk County Council
- Thérèse Coffey MP

622. PRESENTATION TO MAYOR'S CHARITIES

The Mayor announced that a total of £7,000 had been raised in support of his two chosen charities: The Basic Life Charity and The Laydens Community Café. Each charity was presented with a cheque for £3,500.00.

623. 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.

624. CLOSURE

There being no other questions or comments the meeting was closed at 8.25pm. The Mayor invited all attendees for refreshments in the Atrium where there would be an opportunity to browse stalls by number of local community organisations.

Date: _____

Chairman: _____