

MINUTES of the **ORDINARY COUNCIL** meeting held at **Felixstowe Town Hall** on **Wednesday 07 September 2022** at **7.30pm**

PRESENT: Cllr S Harkin (Mayor) Cllr M Jepson
 Cllr M Richardson (Deputy Mayor) Cllr G Newman
 Cllr S Bennett Cllr M Morris
 Cllr S Bird Cllr D Savage
 Cllr M Deacon Cllr A Smith
 Cllr S Gallant Cllr S Wiles
 Cllr T Green

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

IN ATTENDANCE: 2 Members of the public
 1 Member of the public (*via Zoom*)
 Ms H Miles (Communications Apprentice) (*via Zoom*)
 Ms Nicole Rickard, Head of Communities, East Suffolk Council
 (*via Zoom*)

MOMENT OF REFLECTION

The meeting was preceded by a moment of reflection from Captain Paul Williams, Felixstowe Salvation Army.

159. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

None.

160. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from **Cllr D Aitchison, Cllr N Barber** and **Cllr K Williams**.

161. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

162. QUESTIONS TO THE MAYOR

None.

163. CONFIRMATION OF COUNCIL MINUTES

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 22 June 2022 be signed by the Mayor as a true record and adopted by the Council.

164. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor addressed the Council, highlighting her engagements so far, which included a visit to the Felixstowe School Summer Concert which was particularly poignant as the Head of Music, Mr Wren was leaving. The Mayor was made most welcome at a formal reception for RAF Honington's Sunset Parade and had been treated to a virtual training session. The Ukrainian Independence Day on the 24th August at the Triangle was very moving and included a candlelit vigil in the evening, where they sang the Ukraine national anthem. The Mayor reported that over 400 people participated in the second Felixstowe triathlon on the 28th August. Other highlights included the Ranelagh Road 'Street Supper' and the Mayor's charity afternoon tea event.

The Mayor thanked the Deputy Mayor who relayed his attendance at the Mayor of Ipswich Civic Reception at the Transport Museum and the Stowmarket Civic Service.

The Mayor gave thanks to all who attended her Mayor's Civic Service. Thanks was also given to those who hosted the carnival guests from Wesel, Germany.

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

165. 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 22 June 2022**
- b) Planning & Environment Committee 6 July 2022**
- c) Assets & Services 6 July 2022**
- d) Finance & Governance Committee 13 July 2022**
- e) Planning & Environment Committee 20 July 2022**
- f) Personnel Committee 20 July 2022**
- g) Planning & Environment Committee 3 August 2022**
- h) Planning & Environment Committee 17 August 2022**

At the instruction of the Mayor the following agenda item was brought forward due to the attendance of Ms Rickard.

166. COST OF LIVING CRISIS

Ms Nicole Rickard, Head of Communities, East Suffolk Council gave an overview of the 'Ease the Squeeze' campaign which had recently been launched. Members of the public were able to access all the relevant information on the ESC website, with help available for individuals required assistance. In the first week, 30 enquiries had been received from people seeking help.

To develop the program, a series of workshops had been held, prompting 70 ideas which were distilled down to the 12 on the programme handout which was tabled for Members. The programme included 'Warm Rooms' - places in the local community, where people can go and receive tea and coffee and keep warm. Businesses and venues which could provide a 'Warm Room' would be co-ordinated by East Suffolk Council.

ESC was recruiting a Food Network Coordinator to help establish a food network covering the whole of East Suffolk. The aim was to open food pathways by bringing together food banks, pantry suppliers and producers to ensure better coordination, fair distribution of food, less waste, increased sustainability and more visibility for local food producers and businesses. This would give individuals, families, and communities access to sufficient food items in accessible locations.

Council heard of the Handyperson scheme, supporting the installation of low-cost energy efficiency measures in the homes for people with low incomes, or health conditions, unable to carry out the work themselves. East Suffolk Council would be funding 'cooking on a budget' classes aimed at giving families the skills and confidence to cook healthy balanced meals on a tight budget. There was also a project to distribute a stock of energy efficient microwaves, small, slow cookers and small electric hobs alongside fuel cards to help mitigate energy costs. Recipe books would also accompany the new equipment. Other projects included Comfort Food – places to provide additional meals in the community, Field to Fork – to promote growing your own food, winter warmth packs and uniform banks to help with the cost of school uniforms.

ESC were using data and local intelligence via its Community Partnership Officers to target support to people and families who were likely to come into crisis. The Warm Homes team will be leading on the Handyperson scheme – all relevant persons would safeguarding training and DBS checks.

Councillors noted the importance of getting the message out there. All enquiries should be directed to the website www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/contact-us/ease-the-squeeze

The Clerk reminded Council that, at the next Civic & Community Committee meeting, Members would be considering how best to utilise the £50,000 allocated by Council from its reserves and determine the best way to deliver support to residents during the cost-of-living crisis (*Minute #82i 2022/23 refers*).

Council thanked Ms Rickard for her presentation.

It was RESOLVED that the update on the cost-of-living crisis and presentation on ESC's Ease the Squeeze project, be noted.

167. REPORT FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Council noted reports from Cllr D Savage, representative to the Port Welfare Committee and Cllrs S Bennet and M Richardson, representatives to the Ukraine2Felixstowe Steering Committee.

It was RESOLVED that the Outside Body Reports be noted.

168. FELIXSTOWE BID UPDATE

Councillor M Jepson, as the Town Council's representative to the BID, provided an update to Council. It was noted that, the BID Manager, Kate Cain, was hoping to attend the next Council meeting. Council heard that Ms Cain was settling in well, had hit the ground running and had several meeting with local stakeholders, including East Suffolk Council. The BID was optimistic about adding value to local business and tourism. A new stylised 'map' of Felixstowe had been produced and distributed to the Tourist Information Point Beach Hut and were distributed around the table. A BID event, called 'Love Felixstowe', was organised to take place over the weekend of the 17th and 18th of September. The event would include activities at the Triangle and Pier Plaza, plus an air display. Councillors were invited to attend the event, which was for tourists and residents both. The BID were also arranging a photo competition.

It was RESOLVED that the Felixstowe BID update be noted.

169. MEMBERS ALLOWANCES & EXPENCES POLICY 2023-27

Council considered Finance & Governance Committee's recommendation to introduce a Basic Allowance for Members. The Clerk advised that, whilst Council is not obliged to adopt the rate recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), it must have regard to the recommendations when considering a Parish Basic Allowance. To date, the IRP had not given made any recommendation on a Parish Basic Allowance in East Suffolk. The Town Clerk had been making enquiries with East Suffolk Council on the process and cost to convene the IRP. Council noted that the cost to convene the IRP would be £600 + mileage. This cost could be shared with another town council which had been seeking a review before Covid. Members noted that, as far as ESC was aware, Beccles was the only other parish or town council in the East Suffolk area that pays its Members an allowance. This was currently £100 a year.

Council was advised that, should it decide to introduce an Allowance, it must give public notice in the parish and would also publish details of allowances paid to councillors following the end of each financial year.

A debate took place to consider whether an allowance should be introduced. Members expressed concern that potential future councillors may be put off standing for election due to financial reasons, e.g. childcare, and how this could impact on representation. It was noted that, of 178 parish councils in East Suffolk, only two were known to give an allowance. Some Members expressed their pride in volunteering their time to the town on the Council without receiving any remuneration, like members of many voluntary groups in the town. It was noted that town and parish councillors were community representatives, not responsible for the scale of significant service provision at higher tier authorities. Discussing the flexibility of being a parish or town councillor, Members noted that there was a balance to be struck between doing what you can on a voluntary basis, and being paid to attend meetings. Some Members pointed to the current cost-of-living crisis and felt that the Council should not increase its expenditure on Members at this time. It was stated that the Allowance would be voluntary, Members would not be obliged to take it, but it could help Council to be more inclusive.

Following a vote, it was determined that Council would not introduce a Basic Allowance for Members at this time. However, it was agreed that the expenses policy should be reviewed again in due course to support Councillors from being out-of-pocket insofar as was appropriate.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. the Members' Allowances and Expenses Policy for the 2023-27 Council term be approved;**
- ii. a Basic Allowance for Members is not introduced at this time but should be reconsidered if felt appropriate in the future; and,**
- iii. Council's Expenses policy be reviewed by the Finance & Governance Committee in due course to consider the most appropriate way to support Councillors from being out-of-pocket.**

170. TOWN HALL WINDOWS UPDATE REPORT

The Deputy Town Clerk gave an update on the latest quotation for the renovation of the Town Hall windows using Fineo glass which has the lowest thermal transmittance of 0.7 w/m².k.

It was noted that quote to include Fineo glass was now higher than the £50,000 threshold for the authority to spend against the Town Hall Earmarked Reserve which had been delegated to the Assets & Services Committee (*Minute #85 of 2022/23 refers*).

It was RESOLVED that the additional amount of £7,357 be approved from the Town Hall Earmarked Reserve for the refurbishment of the Town Hall windows with Fineo glass, making the total funding for the renovation of the windows totalling £57,357 +VAT.

171. CLIMATE EMERGENCY WORKING GROUP UPDATE

Councillor Mick Richardson updated Council on a Climate Emergency Working Group Meeting held earlier that week.

Members were pleased to hear that the Climate Action Meeting had been organised with local stakeholders. A further update would be circulated after this meeting.

It was suggested that 'Motion for the Ocean' be investigated by the Climate Emergency Working Group. The ocean absorbs more than 90% of the excess heat in the climate system as well as absorbing around 20% of annual carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions generated by human activity.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. the update from the Climate Emergency Working Group be noted; and,**
- ii. 'Motion for the Ocean' be investigated by the Climate Emergency Working Group.**

172. COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE TO THE FPCP

Council considered the appointment of another representative from the Town Council to the Felixstowe Peninsula Community Partnership since a vacancy has arisen.

It was RESOLVED that Cllr N Barber be appointed as the Town Council Representative to the Felixstowe Peninsula Community Partnership.

173. FTC/ESC JOINT LIASON GROUP MEETING

Council received the notes of the FTC/ESC Joint Liaison Group meeting held on 26 July 2022. At the next meeting discussions will include the consideration of beach information boards. Public toilets would also be on the agenda, alongside other items including the mobile chip van, camper van parking, the skate park, and the process for reporting of vandalism to East Suffolk Council assets.

The next meeting was scheduled to take place on 1st November 2022 and the Clerk invited Members to contact him with any other items they wished to be considered for inclusion on the agenda.

It was RESOLVED that the notes from the Felixstowe Town Council/East Suffolk Council Joint Liaison group be noted.

174. REQUEST FROM DUNKIRK TO FLY THE FELIXSTOWE FLAG

Council considered a request from the Mayor of Dunkirk to fly the Felixstowe flag from a newly renovated bridge in the city of Dunkirk, France.

It was RESOLVED that permission be granted to the city of Dunkirk to fly the Felixstowe flag.

175. SAAA CENTRAL EXTERNAL AUDITOR APPOINTMENT ARRANGEMENT

Council considered the external auditor appointment arrangements for the next five years, running from 2022-23 until 2026-27.

It was RESOLVED the council do not opt out of the current arrangements with SAAA.

176. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

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

Date	Voucher Nos.	Total Payment
30/06/2022	114 - 152	£78,804.18
14/07/2022	153 - 172	£11,696.99
31/07/2022	173 - 188	£45,231.86
12/08/2022	189 - 207	£10,940.15
31/08/2022	208 - 227	£43,973.34
	TOTAL	£190,646.52

177. CLOSURE

The meeting was closed at 9.26pm. It was noted that the next Ordinary Meeting was scheduled for 9 November 2022 at 7.30pm.

Date: _____

Town Mayor: _____