

MINUTES of the ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
held at **The Orwell Hotel, Hamilton Road, Felixstowe**
on **Wednesday 10 May 2023 at 7pm**

IN ATTENDANCE:

From Felixstowe Town Council:

Cllr S Harkin (Mayor)

Cllr S Bird

Cllr D Aitchison

Cllr N Barber

Cllr S Bennett

Cllr M Deacon

Cllr T Green

Mr A Tadjrishi (Town Clerk)

Mrs S Morrison (Admin Assistant)

Mrs J Smith (Admin Assistant)

Cllr M Richardson (Deputy Mayor)

Cllr M Jepson

Cllr M Morris

Cllr S Gallant

Cllr A Smith

Cllr K Williams

Cllr S Wiles

Mrs S Faversham (Civic Events Officer)

Mr S Congi (Financial Admin Assistant)

Miss H Miles (Communications Apprentice)

Approximately 130 members of the public were also in attendance.

537. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

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

538. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 11 May 2022 were confirmed as a true record by those present and the Mayor was authorised to sign them.

539. MAYOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

The Mayor of Felixstowe presented the following report:

It's been an unsurpassable honour to serve, lead and represent Felixstowe Town Council and our community these past 12 months. An extraordinary year, some would even say a right royal year! A rollercoaster of a ride with joyful celebrations, unexpected challenges and the saddest of condolences - let alone working full time and carrying out over 200 engagements.

Bunting, bagpipes, beacon lighting, Big lunches, to parades and proclamations got me off to a flying start - literally. Standing on the steps of the Town Hall, in my Lilibeth blue dress, looking out to a sea of red, white and blue feeling so proud of Felixstowe - our sense of community spirit was evident - and into the skies for the RAF flypast as the Lancaster Bomber flew over our heads. It was an emotional moment that will stay with me forever.

As will the raucous reception for the Platinum Jubilee Torch procession, proudly carried by Jon Cresswell, Civic Award winner and Jewel of Felixstowe. Ask them

and they will come. I visited every school in my first weeks and asked the children to help me to line the prom and cheer the torch parade – oh and they came. Since that day I realized the weight of responsibility for our young people. How they embraced and put their hope in their Mayor to do right by them and their future. I've been upgraded to Queen and Empress. One of my fondest memories was two young girls skating over the ice rink towards me and shouting 'hello Mayor', or standing in the queue in Iceland with a young lad twirling around bored waiting for his mum to pack the shopping – he suddenly saw me and whispered, 'I know who you are' and I winked back and said, 'I know you do'.

In June we gathered to celebrate Suffolk Day and all that makes our county great. Felixstowe Town Council hosted an outdoor reception in the Town Hall gardens with special guests from our local care homes. In visiting these homes, I was struck by the resilience of our older people who had endured so much isolation and confinement during the height of Covid. Suffolk Day was for many the first outing in two years! It is so important to continue to connect our care homes with the outside world. In the evening, we gathered for St Elizabeth Hospice Suffolk Remembers returning after Covid. Celebrating the lives of loved ones that helped make Suffolk the wonderful county it is.

In July, I was invited to RAF Honington with 'matron my middle sister' and intrigued to learn more about the special connection between the RAF and Felixstowe. I was also invited to undertake virtual combat!

Felixstowe Carnival launched the start of a sizzling summer. Supergirl was so proud to lead the carnival of heroes and villains alongside my Deputy, we were overwhelmed by the crowds and the tremendous buzz in the air. We were also delighted to host 'Prince André' and 'Princess Susanne' from Wesel carnival. A poignant moment connecting our twin towns again.

Felixstowe Museum celebrated 40 years with an 80's birthday party and Frankie Goes to Felixstowe exhibition. Any excuse to dig out my tutu.

On 24th August I was honoured to stand with our Ukrainian families as they celebrated Ukrainian Independence Day, sharing their culture and singing their national anthem with such pride. At dusk, an emotional candlelit vigil remembering lives lost in war. The 24th of February marked the one-year anniversary of the Russian invasion. Natalia reduced us to tears as she recalled the night the war started in her home town. It is with disbelief and great sadness that this despicable war continues.

August Bank Holiday weekend I discovered muscles I never knew I had giving out over 400 medals at our amazing triathlon event.

On 8th September, at 5.10pm Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth died. On 19th September, Felixstowe, alongside the rest of the world, witnessed the grandest and most solemn of days. As Mayor of Felixstowe, Her Majesty's death was unprecedented and one of the most challenging periods for Town Council. It was surreal facing 7,000 people on the steps of Ipswich Town Hall representing our Town to receive, and in turn to then read The King's Proclamation – with the word

King boldly underlined in the words of the National Anthem for fear of singing Queen. A time of intense emotional strain and privilege.

Felixstowe was declared Suffolk's Most Active County, one of many accolades our town received this year... Blue flags, Green flags, The Sunday Times best places to live list and not forgetting Lisa Williams, Civic Award Winner and World porridge making champion for 2nd time.

As we moved into late Autumn, the tide was shifting our glorious summer overtaken by the looming cost of living crisis. The Mayor's Fashion Show extravaganza was the tonic to lift our spirits.

In November Felixstowe Town Council was proud to mark Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday. Don't we do it well! Thousands gathered at the War Memorial to remember those lives lost in times of conflict. Away from the public eye the more private service at our Commonwealth war graves at Felixstowe Cemetery – very moving.

That brings us nicely to Christmas. After the threat of Covid cancelling Christmas the year before we were so relieved to have a more settled near normal Christmas ready to belt out carols once more.

A wonderful opportunity for the Mayor to engage with our community, return of the ever-popular Ice rink, festive fun at Landguard, a 'knit-mas' tree, the much-loved Christmas Day Dip and Santa and Rudolph were back with new sleigh. Thanks to the Felixstowe Lions Club for lighting up our town and for me it was a dream come true - I got to press the button! With a little help from my assistant Merida. The Mayor's traditional Hospital visit on Xmas day was cancelled - COVID!

Thankyou - to our Salvation Army, Compass, Cuppa, Community Hubs, Churches Together, BASIC, Pushchair Pitstop and many more who helped those less fortunate, facing considerable hardship or struggling with loneliness at Christmas.

On Dec 27th we received the saddest news that our fellow councillor, Graham Newman had passed away. It was an honour to attend his funeral, for which we thank his wife, Jan, and his family and an absolute privilege to later read a tribute on behalf of Felixstowe Town Council at the Suffolk County Memorial Service.

The New Year - a quiet time I thought and a chance to catch breath - however Mayoral engagements were back in full swing as we marked the 70th anniversary of the North Sea Floods remembering Britain's biggest peace time disaster. Chinese New Year, welcoming the year of the rabbit, squadron dinners, society awards, Matilda and more.

On 24th February we proudly laid Felixstowe's first 'purple wreathes' at the war memorial in recognition of International War Animal Remembrance Day, commemorating deeds and sacrifices of animals at war.

What better way to start a Sat morning in March with a little samba and fabulous flamenco.... Yes, Laura Locke was back with WAMfest and a mardis gras vibe at Beach Street. On the back of this I hosted 'Every Woman Counts' at Cuppa. Bringing women together to inspire support each other like Hannah Young, partially sighted yet travelled across the world to play cricket for England.

A Royal Visit too, as I was privileged to be presented to HRH Princess Anne at a reception at the Orwell Hotel as part of her visit to the Felixstowe National Coastwatch Institution, for which she is Royal Patron.

April was blooming marvellous as we celebrated The Mayor's Charity Spring Ball, a most glamorous affair, fabulous décor and a fun filled evening, for which I am most grateful to the local business and charities for their support. We were absolutely thrilled to be joined by two visiting Mayors and their parties from our twinning towns in Salzwedel and Wesel. A first visit to Felixstowe after Covid, a chance to rekindle friendships and plan for the future.

May day brought the Rotary Fun Run and the pressure of judging best fancy dress.

On 6th May a historic occasion upon us once again, celebrating His Majesty King Charles III Coronation, sharing a moment in history. Thank you to Ranelagh Rd and the Convent for inviting me to your coronation celebrations.

On May Bank Holiday we marked VE Day and commemorated peace. However, my favourite thing that weekend was the vintage car rally as I was collected in a vintage Rolls Royce to Christchurch Park then driven to Felixstowe in an open top bus - If you are stepping down from Mayor of Felixstowe that's the way to do it! It was fabulous!

Next stop Eurovision.....

Thank you to Cllr Mick Richardson, Deputy Mayor and his wife Lou, for being at the ready, stepping in when needed and for taking on a project promoting micro businesses in the town.

Thank you to Felixstowe Town Council, Our Town Clerk Ash, the staff and fellow Councillors for their ongoing support and professional approach, and of course to Sue Faversham, our Civic Events Officer and my wing-woman – we've had quite the year.

Thank you to my parents and sisters for stepping in as 'consort' and being at my side when it mattered and mum and dad for being here this evening and understanding how much Mayor of Felixstowe has meant to me. You will get your daughter back soon!

So, before I step aside, let me tell you Felixstowe that YOU ARE AMAZING.

There are countless organisations and initiatives in our town – get involved and share in a community that shines with compassion and kindness.... I shall hand over the Chain of Office with the heaviest of hearts (and probably tears). I have

loved every minute of getting to know you and how wonderful you are. Be proud of where you live – I am.

540. CIVIC AWARDS 2023

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 2023

Wendy Tolliday and Isabel Jenkins, for their voluntary work through Felixstowe Mencap.

Carolyn Jones, for her voluntary work via St Phillip's Community Hub.

Nigel Odin, for his voluntary work at Landguard Nature Reserve.

Sarah Fitch, for provision of support offered to the local community via Cuppa Café.

Laura Baalham, for her role in Felixstowe Air Cadets and as a First Aider.

b) HMS Ganges Youth Trophy

Cammeron Cammel, for his participation in Felixstowe School's Garden Club and care demonstrated towards the local environment.

c) The Community Award

Ukraine2Felixstowe, for the provision of support offered to the Ukrainian Guests in Felixstowe following Russia's ongoing, illegal invasion of Ukraine (Award collected on behalf of Kim and Dee Balshaw)

d) Coronation Awards

The 2023 Civic Awards also saw a number of residents presented with Coronation Awards, in recognition of a nationally significant year and Felixstowe's fierce community spirit. Coronation Awards were presented to

Diana Barnard, Michael Sharman, Charles Wright, Jean Macpherson, Rob Dunger, Richard Lord, Debbie Bartlett, Pushchair Pitstop, Visit Felixstowe Volunteers, Suzanne Banks, Mollie Bennett, Katie Mitton and Libby Bone.

With special recognition shown to Tim Lukehurst via a Posthumous Coronation Award in recognition of his role in the formation of Litter-Free Felixstowe.

541. PRESENTATION TO MAYOR'S CHARITIES

The Mayor announced that a total of £16,500 had been raised in support of her three chosen charities: Felixstowe Community Hospital League of Friends, The Compass and Felixstowe Opportunity Group. Each charity was presented with a cheque for £5,500.00.

542. REPORTS FROM COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

The following reports were noted as received:

- ActivLives - Saturday ActivSport Hub
- Citizens Advice Felixstowe
- DAS Report to Felixstowe Town Council 15.03.2023
- Felixstowe & Walton Football Club
- Felixstowe Area Community Transport
- Felixstowe Book Festival
- Felixstowe Carnival Association
- Felixstowe Coast Patrol
- Felixstowe Ferry Sailing Club
- Felixstowe Radio
- Headway
- Landguard Bird Observatory
- Landguard Trust
- Level Two
- Lions grant Report
- Manna Pop up shop
- Music in Felixstowe
- Old Felixstowe Community Association
- Salvation Army Summer Holiday Club
- SARS
- Save the Children
- St Phillips Community Hub
- Suffolk County Council
- Suffolk Mind - funded training
- TS Landguard Sea Cadets
- Two Sisters Arts Centre
- WAMfest
- Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner

543. 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.

No matters were raised.

544. CLOSURE

There being no other questions or comments the meeting was closed at 8.30pm.

Date: _____

Chairman: _____