

**MINUTES of the ORDINARY COUNCIL meeting held at Felixstowe Town Hall on
Wednesday 4 September 2024 at 7.30pm**

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

OFFICERS: Mr A Tadjirishi (Town Clerk)
Mrs D Frost (Deputy Town Clerk)
Mrs J Smith (Assets & Services Officer) (*via Zoom*)

IN ATTENDANCE: Inspector B Richards, Suffolk Constabulary
Reverend A Dotchin, St. John's Church
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 Mr Stephen Wyatt, Member of Felixstowe Methodist Church and Director of Level Two Youth Project.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Council paid tribute to Reverend Andrew Dotchin, who would be leaving Felixstowe to join the parish of Kesgrave. The Mayor expressed gratitude to Reverend Dotchin for his dedicated service to the parish of Felixstowe and his unwavering advocacy for marginalised members of the community.

152. COUNCILLOR'S DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

Council noted that in accordance with Section 83 (3) of the Local Government Act 1972, Cllr Wendy Underwood, who was elected to Felixstowe Town Council following the South Ward byelection on 4th July 2024, has made their Declaration of Acceptance of Office before the Town Clerk.

153. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were none.

154. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from **Cllr N Barber** and **Cllr M James**.

155. 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 Bennett Cllr S Wiles	All	Other registerable interest (as Members of Suffolk County Council)
Cllr S Bennett Cllr J Candy Cllr M Deacon Cllr A Folley	All	Other registerable interest (as Members of East Suffolk Council)
Cllr S Harkin	All	Other registerable interest (as an employee of East Suffolk Council)

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.

156. QUESTIONS TO THE MAYOR

None.

157. CONFIRMATION OF COUNCIL MINUTES

It was RESOLVED that, subject to a correction to Minute #80 to clarify that the Council was only seeking one alternative site for campervan parking, the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 19 June 2024 be signed by the Mayor as a true record and adopted by the Council.

158. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor addressed the Council, providing an update on recent Mayoral engagements. He began by highlighting the Pride Wellbeing Walk, which took place at the end of June as one of two Pride events held in Felixstowe this year.

The Mayor then spoke about the 30th Anniversary of the Twinning with Salzwedel, during which a reception was held. As part of the celebration, a tree was gifted by Salzwedel and has since been planted in Allenby Park, with a commemorative plaque. The Mayor expressed his thanks to Cllr Deacon for organising the event.

Next, the Mayor shared his experience attending the 80th Anniversary of the crashing of the Lancaster Bomber. He extended his gratitude to Cllr Harkin and the Felixstowe Museum for their efforts in putting on the event, noting that it provided an opportunity to learn more about the history and was well-attended by family members.

Looking ahead, the Mayor mentioned the forthcoming weekend, which will feature events such as Love Green Felixstowe and the Tour of Britain. The

Mayor thanked East Suffolk Council and its officers for their work in securing the return of the Tour to Felixstowe.

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

159. 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 19 June 2024**
- b) **Planning & Environment Committee 3 July 2024**
- c) **Assets & Services Committee 10 July 2024**
- d) **Planning & Environment Committee 17 July 2024**
- e) **Personnel Committee 19 July 2024**
- f) **Planning & Environment Committee 31 July 2024**
- g) **Planning & Environment Committee 14 August 2024**

160. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Council received a report from Cllr Candy on the Friends of Felixstowe Library, as well as a report on the Port of Felixstowe Local Authority Liaison Committee.

The Council also received a report from Cllr Folley on the Felixstowe-Wesel Association. Further to her report, Cllr Folley paid tribute to the late Mary Cotterell, one of the founding members of the Association.

The Council recorded its condolences to the Cotterell family for their loss.

It was RESOLVED that the reports from outside bodies be noted.

161. LOCAL POLICING MATTERS: INSPECTOR BEN RICHARDS

The Mayor welcomed Inspector Ben Richards, who gave a presentation on the recent change in policing model from the Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) to the Community Policing Team (CPT).

Questions were raised regarding the police's approach to anti-social behaviour (ASB), particularly in relation to proactive versus reactive policing. Inspector Richards assured that the police are taking preventive measures, including the use of barriers in car parks and the successful deterrence of car meets before they reach Felixstowe. He also emphasised that approximately 30 response officers are on shift at any time in the region.

A query was made about the engagement between local schools and the police. While specific information regarding school grading could not be shared, Inspector Richards encouraged schools to involve the police for educational presentations.

The value of officers being visible on foot versus in vehicles was also discussed. Inspector Richards acknowledged that while there is great value in community engagement through foot patrols, there must be a balance between this and responding to urgent incidents.

Concerns were raised about individuals engaging in deceptive begging and how ASB can be reported in real-time. Inspector Richards recommended using the 101 service or online reporting for non-urgent incidents, which are assessed via the THRIVE framework. For serious crimes in progress, 999 should be called.

Speeding was another area of concern. Inspector Richards confirmed that surveillance data gathered by SafeCam had shown negligible speeding in a particular area of concern. He also noted that resources are being increasingly focused on speeding issues.

An inquiry was made regarding the number of police cars seen outside the station. Inspector Richards explained that this could be due to visiting units, officers being on foot patrol, or vehicles awaiting maintenance.

The discussion then shifted to the importance of addressing recurrent ASB. Inspector Richards noted that over 50,000 ASB cases had been reported in Suffolk since 1 January 2024, with neighbourhood disputes being a major contributor. He reassured the Council that all reports are recorded and hotspot areas receive greater attention.

It was further confirmed that East Suffolk Council, Suffolk County Council, and the Police share data on ASB, which is regularly discussed at Felixstowe Peninsula ASB meetings.

Inspector Richards was thanked for his time and contribution to the Council meeting.

It was RESOLVED that the update report on local policing matters be noted.

162. MOTION: X (FORMERLY TWITTER)

The Council considered a motion submitted by Cllr Deacon in accordance with Standing Order 9. Cllr Deacon proposed:

“This Council is deeply saddened by the recent riots fuelled by hatred, far-right extremism, and Islamophobia, particularly on social media, with X (formerly Twitter) being a notable platform. X appears to be doing little to restrict this hateful content. As a result, this Council determines to suspend the use of X as a form of communication and instructs the Civic & Community Committee to review the Council’s Press & Media Policy accordingly.”

The motion was seconded by Cllr Folley.

During the discussion, members unanimously condemned the recent riots and addressed concerns regarding misinformation and hate speech on social media. It was noted that while X has been a platform for such divisive content, the mainstream press could also be considered equally harmful. Members cautioned against solely blaming the platform for the riots, especially given that Suffolk did not experience these disturbances but continues to use social media effectively.

It was further recognised that social media, when used positively, remains a valuable tool for engagement. The Council also reaffirmed its commitment to free speech, honesty, and transparency.

Following a vote, the motion was passed, and it was RESOLVED that the Council suspend its use of X as a form of communication and instructed the Civic & Community Committee to review the Council's Press & Media Policy accordingly.

163. TOWN HALL REPAIRS

Members discussed the necessary repairs to several rooms at the Town Hall due to damp and damage that had occurred over the past few years. Unfortunately, the contractor who had recently undertaken work in the Chamber and the disabled entrance was unable to submit a broader quote in time for the meeting.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. the revised quote of £1,480 + VAT for the repairs to the Clerk's Office be accepted and funded from the Town Hall Earmarked Reserves; and,**
- ii. three quotes be obtained for the repairs to the remaining four rooms upstairs and presented to the Council's Assets & Services Committee for consideration.**

164. 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:

- i. Cllr W Underwood to fill the vacancy on the Finance & Governance Committee;**
- ii. Cllr W Underwood to replace Cllr J Candy on the Assets & Services Committee; and,**
- iii. Cllr S Bennett to replace Cllr B Price on the Civic & Community Committee.**

165. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

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

It was RESOLVED that Council's representatives to Outside Bodies remain as before.

166. ANNUAL TOWN MEETING AND ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING DATES

The Council noted a correction to the previously scheduled dates the Annual Town and Annual Council meetings. The Annual Town Meeting which had incorrectly been scheduled for 7th May, should instead take place on the take place on the second Wednesday in May. The Annual Council meeting should take place the following Wednesday.

Council reviewed the change in dates to align with the approved Terms of Reference.

It was RESOLVED that date of the Annual Town Meeting for the year 2024/25 be corrected and held on Wednesday 14th May 2025, with the Annual Council meeting for 2025/26 to be held on the following Wednesday, 21st May 2025.

167. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

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

Date	Voucher Nos.	Total Payment
30/06/2024	97 – 119	£61,690.46
15/07/2024	120 – 136	£8,638.39
31/07/2024	137 - 153	£50,397.09
16/08/2024	154 - 171	£6,261.39
	TOTAL	£126,987.33

168. CLOSURE

The meeting was closed at 9.12pm. It was noted that the next Ordinary Meeting was scheduled for 6 November 2024 at 7.30pm.

Date: _____

Town Mayor: _____