

MINUTES of the **ORDINARY COUNCIL** meeting held at **Felixstowe Town Hall** on **Wednesday 6 November 2024 at 7.30pm**

PRESENT: Cllr D Rowe (Mayor) Cllr A Folley
Cllr C Franklin (Deputy Mayor) Cllr M James
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 Tadjrishi (Town Clerk)
Mrs D Frost (Deputy Town Clerk)

IN ATTENDANCE: *(in person)* 6 members of the public
1 member of the press
(via Zoom) Cllr S Harkin
Ms H Miles (Communications Officer)
Mr W Jennings, Parking Development Lead, ESC
8 members of the public

MOMENT OF REFLECTION

The meeting was preceded by a moment of reflection from Mr Andrew Marfleet, Walton Parish Nursing.

257. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A member of the public raised concerns about the proposed location for a motorhome park at Manor Terrace Car Park, suggesting that this would be inappropriate for motorhome owners. Drawing a comparison to the 'Aires' in northern and southern France and Germany, where motorhome parking areas are typically located in designated car parks, they recommended the Ranelagh Road car park as a more suitable alternative. They also proposed implementing a bylaw to prevent campervan parking along the seafront. It was clarified that Manor Terrace was not currently being considered for such a park according to the Town Council's knowledge.

Another member of the public asked whether a lift could be considered to improve accessibility to the seafront for elderly residents, people with mobility issues, and those with pushchairs. The idea had been explored previously, but it was acknowledged that installing such a lift would be a larger-scale project. The matter would likely need to be addressed by East Suffolk Council if it were to be located in the Seafront Gardens.

A member of the public mentioned that a Freedom of Information (FOI) request had been submitted to East Suffolk Council regarding the Seashore Village, specifically asking how many beach huts had been sold.

A member of the public raised concerns about the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood (NFGN), urging the Town Council to follow Saxmundham Town Council's lead in calling for the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to recognise a category of Severely Impacted Zones for communities facing the cumulative impact of separate developments. The Mayor advised that this was not currently being considered.

The Council was asked whether it was considering the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan to help protect local green spaces and why such a plan had not been implemented alongside the Local Plan. The Clerk confirmed that the idea had been considered but not progressed during the last council term. However, it was an active discussion for the CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) Working Group, which had recently met with East Suffolk Council to explore what would be involved in creating a Neighbourhood Plan. It was noted that creating such a plan would take 3-5 years, and the decision on whether to proceed was still under consideration.

The Town Council was also asked whether it could request a pause in the development of NFGN, referring to a petition with around 8,000 signatures calling to 'Save the Grove Eastward Ho Playing Fields and the Surrounding Area'.

A member of the public asked whether District Councillors were able to comment on the NFGN due to potential conflicts of interest. The Town Clerk clarified that East Suffolk Councillors, who were also Town Councillors, would be able to participate in discussions on this subject provided that a dispensation had been granted to allow them to take part.

Referring to the proposed relocation of the Leisure Centre, a member of the public noted a wide demographic of local people did not want the Leisure Centre to be moved. They expressed concern about the suitability of Gulpher Road for the new location and suggested that Brackenbury was more appropriate for a school. They questioned why the existing Leisure Centre could not be refurbished instead, acknowledging that this was ultimately an East Suffolk Council decision.

Cllr Harkin, attending online, also raised concerns about NFGN, the leisure centre's location, community safety, anti-social behaviour, and the capacity of the new school, noting that decisions should be based on actual rather than perceived needs. They advocated for a solution that prioritised residents' needs first, supported wildlife, and avoided building on Eastward Ho.

Regarding the proposal for replacing the gates at Allenby Park, clarification was requested on why replacement was proposed rather than repair. The Town Clerk confirmed that, subject to Council's consideration of the funding from CIL Earmarked Reserves, this matter was likely to be delegated back to the Assets & Services Committee to determine the best course of action, as the gates were not in good condition.

A member of the public attending online proposed changes to parking on Sea Road and the adjacent side roads. They supported the investigation into the

parking situation but expressed concerns about the impact on adjacent side roads. They asked if the Council planned to provide parking permits to residents and, if so, how many per household. Additionally, they asked whether visitor permits would be issued to residents and whether traffic calming measures would be introduced along Sea Road and Langer Road. They also referenced the fact that the Leisure Centre had been funded through local fundraising efforts, suggesting that the Council conduct a survey rather than letting developers decide its future. It was advised that these queries should be directed to East Suffolk Council.

258. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from **Cllr N Barber** and **Cllr S Harkin**.

259. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Town Clerk confirmed that according to national guidance on the [Local Government Association \(LGA\) Model Code of Conduct](#), which both Felixstowe Town Council and East Suffolk Council have adopted, allowances received from another council create a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest under "Employment, trade, office or vocation." This should be recorded in Councillor's Register of Interests and declared at meetings when relevant.

Such a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) may be engaged when the Town Council considers matters relating to East Suffolk Council's proposals for the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood. In such cases, a DPI would prevent participation, voting, and presence in the room unless a dispensation under Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011 has been granted.

The Town Clerk confirmed that as Felixstowe Town Council's Proper Officer, he had received written requests from all the East Suffolk Councillors and the one East Suffolk Council employee, and was issuing a dispensation to them all to allow them to speak and vote on any North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood related matters at Felixstowe Town Council meetings, reducing the risk of potential conflicts of interest. The Town Clerk considers this dispensation prudent and appropriate under the circumstances and grants dispensation to the following:

- Councillor Seamus Bennett
- Councillor Jan Candy
- Councillor Mike Deacon
- Councillor Amanda Folley
- Councillor Sharon Harkin

At upcoming Council meetings, when the Mayor asks if any interests need to be declared, it is recommended that a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest is declared in matters related to East Suffolk Council, noting that a dispensation has been granted and this will allow their participation and vote. This declaration and the recorded dispensation will help protect in case of any subsequent complaint or challenge.

The following Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Registerable Interests, were noted:

Member(s)	Minute No.	Nature of Interest
Cllr S Bird Cllr S Bennett Cllr S Wiles	All	Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and Other registerable interest (as Members of Suffolk County Council)
Cllr S Bennett Cllr J Candy Cllr M Deacon Cllr A Folley	All	Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and Other registerable interest (as Members of East Suffolk Council)
Cllr S Harkin	All	Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and Other registerable interest (as an employee of East Suffolk Council)

Cllr D Rowe declared an Other Registerable Interest in the CIL application from Level Two (as a Director of Level Two). As the matter for consideration directly related to his Other Registerable Interest, Cllr Rowe advised that he would leave the meeting prior to any debate and decision on this item.

Members were advised that, should any other matters arise in the meeting that directly relate to any of their interests, they should make appropriate declarations at that time.

260. QUESTIONS TO THE MAYOR

None.

261. CONFIRMATION OF COUNCIL MINUTES

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 4 September 2024 be signed by the Mayor as a true record and adopted by the Council.

262. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor addressed the Council, providing an update on recent Mayoral engagements.

Referring to the many positive engagements, the Mayor reported the fantastic experience of visiting Wesel for first time, for the 50th Anniversary of twinning and recommended that anyone who has not been, should pay a visit.

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

263. 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 4 September**
- b) **Civic & Community Committee 11 September 2024**
- c) **Planning & Environment Committee 18 September 2024**
- d) **Assets & Services Committee 18 September 2024**
- e) **Planning & Environment Committee 2 October 2024**
- f) **Personnel Committee 2 October 2024**
- g) **Civic & Community Committee 9 October 2024**
- h) **Planning & Environment Committee 16 October 2024**
- i) **Finance & Governance Committee 23 October 2024**
- j) **Planning & Environment Committee 30 October 2024**

264. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

None.

265. NORTH FELIXSTOWE GARDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD MASTERPLAN CONSULTATION

The Clerk highlighted a required correction within the draft consultation response: a reference to "12.1" should be "12.16". This correction would be made prior to its adoption.

A Member expressed gratitude to those who had contributed to the draft response but felt it understated the significant concerns about housing allocations, both personally and within the community. They highlighted the chronic shortage of genuinely affordable and social housing in Felixstowe and noted the historical context from the Regional Spatial Strategy, introduced before 2010, which allocated around 11,000 homes for the Suffolk Coastal District, to be delivered by 2036. However, no directive required over 30% of this allocation to be concentrated on the Felixstowe Peninsula. The Local Plan incorporated a figure exceeding 4,000 new homes for Felixstowe, some of which have been completed or are under construction.

The Member outlined key concerns:

Potential population increase of 14,000 residents (based on 3.5 persons per household) would necessitate substantial local employment opportunities; otherwise, significant commuting would ensue.

A large proportion of development would occur on greenfield sites, resulting in the loss of high-quality agricultural land, recreational spaces, and areas of natural beauty.

The proposed North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood (NFGN) includes Eastward Ho, an open green space with football pitches and wildlife habitats, and The Grove Woodland.

Policy SCLP12.3 of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan designates this area for development. Concerns were raised about whether the volume of proposed housing, as well as elements such as a junior school, community orchard, and farm, are genuinely needed. The member suggested that a pause in development could enable reassessment of Felixstowe's housing needs in light of post-Brexit, post-Covid, and Ukraine war impacts, which may have altered demand since the Local Plan's creation. Any future development, they suggested, should focus on limited social and market-rate housing to address the most pressing needs.

Members discussed the potential for the development of a Neighbourhood Plan, which was noted as currently under consideration by the CIL Working Group.

On matters of transport and connectivity, concerns were raised about the limited crossing points and insufficient pedestrian and cycling access, with calls for improvements.

Members emphasised that Felixstowe School is already near capacity, with forecasts indicating it would exceed capacity due to the development. They expressed concern that students might need to leave the town to attend high school. While an additional building at Felixstowe School was mentioned as a potential solution, no formal statements had been made to confirm this.

A motion was proposed to amend the Council's response by requesting that East Suffolk Council pause further housing development on the Felixstowe Peninsula to reassess housing needs. A cautionary note was raised that such a request might carry no weight within planning policy.

An amendment was suggested to strengthen references to secondary school capacity. It was proposed to replace the sentence: *"Investment in both primary and secondary school capacity is essential, with a particular focus on post-16 educational opportunities to support the aspirations of young people in Felixstowe"* with: *"Investment in primary schools and secondary school places is essential, with a particular focus on post-16 educational opportunities and a skills centre for vocational courses, to support the aspirations of young people in Felixstowe. No child living in Felixstowe should be required to leave the town to attend school."*

Amendments were proposed in respect of the reference to leisure facilities to add an eight-lane swimming pool and six-court sports hall to the first paragraph; remove references to an Olympic swimming pool in the third paragraph; and, insert a statement in the second paragraph emphasising accessibility via sustainable and public transport, not just private car use.

Stronger wording was requested in the allotments section, and that the response should be more direct in its request for modifications.

An amendment was proposed to strengthen references to housing and build quality, particularly regarding Net Zero standards. It was proposed to insert the phrase “*rather than the use of gas boilers*” in the final paragraph of the Housing section.

A further amendment was proposed to clarify the definition and extent of the area referred to as Eastward Ho, ensuring this is accurately delineated in all maps and plans to avoid ambiguity and to specify that pitches should remain grass rather than be converted to 3G/artificial turf.

Following a vote, the amendments having been accepted by the proposer, and seconded, were carried. It was then RESOLVED that:

- i. the Town Clerk incorporates the agreed amendments into the draft North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood Masterplan consultation response and submits the final response to East Suffolk Council on behalf of the Town Council; and,**
- ii. the final response is published on the Town Council’s website and shared through a press release.**

At 9.30pm, in accordance with Standing Order 3(x), Members agreed to extend the meeting time beyond the two hour limit.

At the direction of the Mayor, the meeting was adjourned for 5 minutes.

266. ESC PARKING REVIEW PROPOSALS

The Council considered the report on the East Suffolk Council parking review. It was confirmed that there was no intention to use Manor Terrace Car Park for motorhomes.

A Member was reassured by proposal 6: Protection of cycle lanes through waiting restrictions on key cycle route of High Street, High Road West and High Road East. Which will improve safety for cyclists by preventing inappropriate parking as this was a real problem in Walton.

The Mayor and Town Clerk thanked Mr Will Jillings for his attendance online this evening in case there were any questions regarding the parking review.

Mr Jillings extended his thanks for the robust scrutiny through this process and looks forward to working further with the Town Council.

It was RESOLVED that the positions discussed regarding the parking proposals as received are formally submitted to East Suffolk Council.

267. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2023/24

Council received the report on the Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2023/24 and noted that the notice of conclusion of audit had been displayed on the noticeboard and on the website.

Council gave thanks to the staff for their hard work in achieving an unqualified audit.

It was RESOLVED that the Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2023/24 is approved by Council.

268. INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2024/25

Council noted a report on the Interim Internal Audit Report 2024/25.

Council gave thanks to the staff for their hard work in achieving another positive audit report.

It was RESOLVED that the Interim Internal Audit Report 2024/25 was approved by Council.

269. CLEAR HOLD PROJECT 'FUTURE FELIXSTOWE'

Council noted the report on the Clear Hold Build initiative and requested clarification over the time of the meeting on 12th November, this would be circulated to all members.

It was RESOLVED that the following representatives of the Town Council be nominated for the following Delivery Groups of the Clear Hold Build Project:

ASB / Crime / Drugs	Cllr M James and Cllr J Candy
Community Culture	Cllr M Sharman, Cllr A Folley and Cllr S Bennett
Youth	Cllr D Aitchison and Cllr C Franklin
CCTV	Cllr M James and Cllr D Aitchison
Tactical	The Mayor of Felixstowe

270. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

All Members spoke positively on the CIL funding proposals.

The Council noted the report on CIL.

The Mayor Cllr D Rowe left the room for the discussion and decision of Level Two funding, with the Deputy Mayor Cllr C Franklin taking the chair.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following projects are funded/part funded from the CIL Earmarked Reserve:

- i. **£100,000 (£50,000 for each site) be allocated for the complete refurbishment of play equipment at Walton and Seaton Road Recreation Grounds; and,**
- ii. **£15,000 + VAT to fund new gates at Allenby Park (subject to consultation with the Felixstowe Society); and,**
- iii. **Delegated authority to Council’s Assets & Services Committee to decide whether the Allenby Park gates should be repaired or replaced; and,**
- iv. **£30,000 towards the Level Two Music Digital Arts Centre at Beach Street, to be released once planning and confirmation that project will go ahead.**

271. EARMARKED RESERVES EXPENDITURE

Council noted the report on Council’s Committees approved Earmarked Reserve spending.

It was RESOLVED that the report on Earmarked Reserve Expenditure be noted.

272. REMEMBRANCE EVENTS 2024

Members were disappointed to note that Felixstowe Football Club would be setting off fireworks on Remembrance Day and that the East Suffolk Council event on NFGN would be taking place on the same evening as the Felixstowe Festival of Remembrance Concert.

It was RESOLVED that the report on events taking place for Remembrance 2024 be noted.

273. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

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

Date	Voucher Nos.	Total Payment
29/08/2024	172 – 187	£50,663.29
16/09/2024	188 – 204	£6,167.82
30/09/2024	205 - 224	£91,443.29
17/10/2024	225 - 240	£5,865.47
31/10/2024	241 - 262	£57,364.76
31/10/2024	263 - 266	£4,974.77
	TOTAL	£216,479.40

274. CLOSURE

The meeting was closed at 10.20 pm. It was noted that the next Ordinary Meeting was scheduled for 8 January 2025 at 7.30pm.

Date: _____

Town Mayor: _____