

**MINUTES of the ORDINARY COUNCIL meeting held at Felixstowe Town Hall on
Wednesday 5 March 2025 at 7.30pm**

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

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Inspector B Richards, Suffolk Police
4 members of the public (*in person*)
4 members of the public (*via Zoom*)

MOMENT OF REFLECTION

The meeting was preceded by a moment of reflection from Dee Balshaw, The Compass Charity.

428. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A member of the public (Ms T Green, Chair of Friends of Felixstowe Library) asked Council to note the range of services currently offered by the library and its team and asked if Members could assist in linking schools to the library, that are currently not engaged. Ms Green highlighted that on 18 March, Suffolk County Council Cabinet would be discussing the libraries contract and urged councillors to be mindful, with respect to CIL, that the building was in need of some refurbishment (there is a new boiler needed, they currently have no running water, and there has been no conversion to LED lighting).

Cllr Bird (SCC) provided a point of clarification regarding the library procurement exercise, none of the bids met the criteria, negotiation to continue the service in the interim broke down and therefore the decision was made to bring the libraries service in-house. All 35 remain open at the existing hours, existing budgets will stay and this is also the same for mobile libraries.

A member of the public, with regards to the Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) consultation, questioned whether the council has had an opportunity to consider a response to this consultation and whether the council will be considered better run locally than one of the outgoing authorities.

The Mayor confirmed that, the question of the consultation on the MCA was on the agenda later in the meeting but also added that Council does want to investigate running certain services at a more local level.

429. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

430. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Member(s)	Minute No.	Nature of Interest
Cllr S Bird Cllr S Bennett	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)

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.

431. QUESTIONS TO THE MAYOR

None.

432. CONFIRMATION OF COUNCIL MINUTES

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 8 January 2025 be signed by the Mayor as a true record and adopted by the Council.

433. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

The Mayor highlighted the Charities and Community Groups Summit and recorded thanks to the Council staff involved, in particular to the Clerk, Civic Events Officer and Communications Officer. Feedback on the summit will be reported to the next Civic & Community Committee.

The Mayor advised Council that he had, today, been made aware that East Suffolk Council had rescheduled its Annual Council Meeting to the 21st May, which clashed with the Annual Council Meeting of Felixstowe Town Council. Members debated whether to rearrange the Town Council's date and following a vote it was agreed not to change the date of the Annual Council meeting.

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

434. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Mayor wished it noted that the Chairman of Civic & Community Committee sought a correction to Minute 391, to clarify that the inclusion of an Environmental Award should be considered during the 2025/26 Municipal Year; and, a correction to Minute 397, to reflect Committee's decision to increase the number of grants rounds from 2 to 3, with a delegation to the Clerk to determine the appropriate timing of these rounds

It was RESOLVED that the, subject to the corrections being made to the Civic & Community Minutes as above, the Minutes of the following meetings be received and, subject to their accuracy being confirmed by those committees, adopted:

- a) Planning & Environment Committee 8 January 2025**
- b) Finance & Governance Committee 15 January 2025**
- c) Planning & Environment Committee 22 January 2025**
- d) Planning & Environment Committee 5 February 2025**
- e) Civic & Community Committee 12 February 2025**
- f) Planning & Environment Committee 19 February 2025**
- g) Assets & Services Committee 19 February 2025**

435. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

None.

436. LOCAL POLICING MATTERS : INSPECTOR BEN RICHARDS

Council received a verbal update from Inspector Ben Richards, along with a handout outlining Crime and Local Policing updates in Felixstowe for the period January – March 2025.

On police visibility, Inspector Richards reported that over 1,500 pulse patrols had been recorded in the South of Suffolk between 24 January and 20 February. A heatmap was presented showing the concentration of these patrols in the Felixstowe area and times of engagement.

Inspector Richards advised that the Felixstowe Communities Team had carried out 104 community engagement activities, including attendance at this Council meeting, which would be counted as one such engagement.

A notable increase in thefts reported from a local supermarket was observed. Inspector Richards attributed some of this to improved security arrangements and increased reporting. An operational response was underway to assess this trend further. He emphasised the value of being able to prosecute thefts successfully, which often served to deter and reduce associated criminal activity.

In relation to anti-social behaviour (ASB), the Inspector advised that attempts to secure Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBOs) for certain individuals had not been successful. However, newer ASB and community protection legislation was being considered.

A pilot for Enhanced Video Response (Digital Automated Video Response – DAVR) was being trialled in Suffolk, enabling remote engagement with victims and incidents under appropriate circumstances.

Inspector Richards also reported on a Live Facial Recognition (LFR) trial, funded through ASB monies and conducted in Ipswich. The technology was used to identify individuals from a watchlist of 300 known persons, resulting in five arrests. Although promising, the technology came with significant cost, and any further use would be subject to future funding bids.

A Clear, Hold, Build initiative update was given. The Diversion Group had commissioned 'Crucial Crew Plus' at the local high school to coincide with its careers day.

The Environmental Group had contacted East Suffolk Council regarding its CCTV upgrade programme, notifying them of funding available via Felixstowe Town Council. Integration with the 24/7 control room in Lowestoft was the goal. Alleyway clearance was also being looked into, but complications around land ownership remained a barrier. It was noted that this work would require direct action from East Suffolk Council or potentially be undertaken on a paid basis.

An education programme led by Suffolk County Council had been introduced to address local child exploitation concerns. Additionally, an Emergency Services Diversion Programme, led by Inspector Dan Fisk, was running in schools to engage students who may benefit from learning more about emergency service roles.

Although reports of child exploitation had reduced, Inspector Richards cautioned that this did not signal an end to the issue.

The Inspector outlined local policing priorities, which included tackling county lines drug dealing, reducing burglaries, robberies and vehicle-related theft, and working with partners to address ASB in public spaces. Since the Community Policing Team (CPT) replaced the Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT), a near 50% reduction in ASB reporting had been recorded in the southern sector.

Members raised the following points and questions:

In relation to alleyway clearance, it was confirmed that East Suffolk Council's Environment Portfolio Holder had requested East Suffolk Services Ltd to provide a quotation for some of the work.

A query on data retention from LFR scanning was raised. Inspector Richards clarified that only images of individuals on the watchlist were retained; all other data was deleted within seconds if there was no match.

Asked about liaison with Border Force, the Inspector confirmed that while there was no ongoing direct relationship, collaboration occurred on a case-by-case basis as required.

In terms of partnership working, the Inspector confirmed that the police were engaging with the new Felixstowe BID Manager.

On the subject of crime mapping, it was confirmed that online maps do not identify victims but display crime types and, where appropriate, perpetrators.

A question was raised regarding the cyclical nature of drug dealing, asking whether arrested dealers were quickly replaced. Inspector Richards acknowledged that, particularly in large-scale operations, this was often the case. However, smaller operations could be significantly disrupted through arrests.

The Mayor thanked Inspector Richards for his comprehensive update and extended best wishes for his forthcoming role as Staff Officer to the Chief Constable.

Council recorded a formal vote of thanks to Inspector Richards.

437. MOTION: 20 MPH SPEED LIMITS

The Council considered the motion of Cllr S Bennett submitted in accordance with Standing Order 9.

Cllr Bennett proposed that Council should support a 20mph speed limit survey in the Felixstowe Conservation Area. Highlighting key benefits, including:

- Increased safety for pedestrians and cyclists
- Reduced severity of accidents
- Potential for smoother traffic flow

Members discussed various aspects, including the enforcement of a 20mph limit, the potential impact on journey times, and whether alternative locations should be considered.

Cllr Bennett highlighted Suffolk County Council's policy on 20mph limits, explaining that they must be self-enforcing, with evidence showing a significant number of vehicles already travelling below 24mph.

Members queried whether any public consultation had been carried out and whether the views of local residents and businesses had been sought. It was noted that many of the roads in the proposed Conservation Area were congested with parked cars, and Members suggested the South Conservation Area may be more appropriate due to the known issues of speeding on Sea Road. Cllr Bennett advised that the Felixstowe Conservation Area had been chosen as a starting point as it is already a defined character area and more economical to survey.

It was confirmed that there would be no cost to the Town Council as the survey costs, estimated at £10,000, would be covered by Cllr Bennett's SCC Highways budget, with the total scheme cost estimated at £20,000. This would fund speed surveys and an assessment of traffic impact before any decision was made. Subject to the survey, and due diligence, should a 20mph limit become installed, only entrance and exits to the area would be proposed to be signposted.

Members expressed general support for initiatives that demonstrably encouraged walking and cycling initiatives, reducing pollution and traffic noise and suggested that other high-footfall areas, such as roads near schools, and the south seafront should also be considered.

It was RESOLVED that Felixstowe Town Council supports in principle a 20mph speed limit survey in the Felixstowe Conservation Area and Cllr Bennett report back on the feasibility and cost of a wider scheme, including other potential locations in Felixstowe.

As the meeting approached the two hour mark, the Mayor sought agreement from Members that the meeting be permitted to continue.

RESOLVED that Standing Orders be suspended to allow the meeting to continue.

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

The meeting resumed at 9.35pm.

438. CONSULTATION ON COMBINED MAYORAL AUTHORITY

Council considered whether to respond to the Government's consultation on the proposal to establish a Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA) for the local government areas of Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council.

During discussion, a Member expressed concern that the proposal appeared to be a *fait accompli* and questioned the value of engaging with the consultation process.

Another Member raised concerns regarding democratic legitimacy, noting the potential difficulty in securing a meaningful electoral mandate should the proposed Mayor be elected under a first-past-the-post system.

It was further suggested by a Member that the Government lacked a clear mandate to impose a directly elected Mayor across the combined counties of Suffolk and Norfolk.

Following discussion, it was RESOLVED that Council would not submit a formal response to the consultation on the proposed Mayoral Combined County Authority.

439. EAST SUFFOLK TOWN COUNCILS' CONFERENCE

Council received a report on the inaugural East Suffolk Town Councils' Conference, held on 27 February 2025.

Members noted that discussions at the conference included the emerging proposals for local government reorganisation in Suffolk and Norfolk. It was recognised that the implications for towns such as Felixstowe could be significant, particularly in relation to the delivery of local services.

It was suggested that Felixstowe Town Council should consider forming and submitting its own position on local government reorganisation once all relevant principal authorities had published theirs. Members queried the potential impact of reorganisation on adopted and emerging Neighbourhood Plans.

The Town Clerk advised that Suffolk County Council and Ipswich Borough Council had published formal positions, and East Suffolk Council was due to do so on 19 March. It was noted that the window for submissions would be limited, and there may be an opportunity for Felixstowe Town Council to consider what form of unitary governance would best serve the town, particularly with regard to the efficient delivery of services.

Members were reminded that Minute #350 had resolved to consider the implications of any new governance model on Felixstowe Town Council's responsibilities and to assess preparatory actions required in anticipation of potential changes.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. the report on the East Suffolk Town Councils' Conference be noted; and,**
- ii. the Mayor would consider whether an Extraordinary Council Meeting should be convened to discuss the forthcoming local government reorganisation and the effect on Felixstowe Town Council in further detail.**

440. QUARTERLY 'PUBLIC REALM' DROP-IN MEETINGS

Council noted the continuing arrangements for the FTC/ESC Quarterly Drop in Meetings for Public Realm Maintenance.

It was RESOLVED that the report on quarterly 'public realm' drop-in meetings be noted.

441. EARMARKED RESERVES EXPENDITURE

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

It was RESOLVED that the Earmarked Reserve Expenditure be noted.

442. YEAR END BALANCES AND EARMARKED RESERVE TRANSFERS

Council received the report on Year End balances and Earmarked Reserve transfers.

It was RESOLVED that the report on the projected outturn for the year 2024/25 and the Earmarked Reserve transfers be noted.

443. INVESTMENT POLICY & STRATEGY 2025/26

Council considered its Annual Investment Policy & Strategy for 2025/26 as updated to reflect current investments as recommended by the Finance & Governance Committee (*Minute #361 of 2024/25*)

RESOLVED that the Investment Policy & Strategy for 2025/26 be approved and adopted as presented in the report.

444. INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS 2025/26

Council considered its insurance arrangements for 2025/26 as per the recommendation of the Finance & Governance Committee (*Minute #362 of 2024/25 refers*).

It was RESOLVED that the Council's arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks be approved and confirmed as adequate for 2025/26.

445. MAYOR'S CADET

Council considered the introduction of a Mayor's Cadet and spoke positively about the prospect. A Member asked that the Council consider including an addition to the first line after the title 'Welfare and Safeguarding' to include "Whilst the Town Council has a duty of care..."

Members emphasised the need to ensure that the Mayor's Cadet received a badge at the beginning of their term at the Annual Council meeting and a framed certificate at the end of their year at the Annual Town Meeting.

It was agreed that the cadet organisation be invited to appoint a Mayor's Deputy Cadet.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. the report on the Mayor's Cadet be noted; and,**
- ii. the Mayor's Cadet Policy be adopted subject to addition of "Whilst the Town Council has a duty of care..." under the title of 'Welfare and Safeguarding'; and,**
- iii. the parent cadet force be invited to appoint a Mayor's Deputy Cadet.**

446. OCCASIONAL GRANTS POLICY 2025/26

Council considered its Occasional Grants Policy for 2025/26 as recommended by the 12 February 2025 Civic & Community Committee (*Minute #397 of 2025/26 refers*).

Members noted the increased flexibility of the grants which was anticipated to help promote the availability of the grants.

At this point in the meeting, 10.20pm, Cllr B Price left the meeting.

RESOLVED that the Occasional Grants Policy for 2025/26 be approved and adopted with the amendments as presented in the report and inclusion of three rounds with their closing dates being 31 May, 30 September and 31 January.

447. PRESS & MEDIA POLICY 2025/26

Council considered its Press & Media Policy for 2025/26 as recommended by the 12 February 2025 Civic & Community Committee (*Minute #398 of 2025/26 refers*).

RESOLVED that the Press & Media Policy for 2025/26 be approved and adopted as presented in the report.

448. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

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

Date	Voucher Nos.	Total Payment
15/01/2025	354 – 374	£10,537.27
31/01/2025	375 – 391	£64,474.18
15/02/2025	392 – 401	£2,065.35
28/02/2025	402 - 419	£64,464.57
	TOTAL	£141,541.37

449. CLOSURE

The meeting was closed at 10.22pm. It was noted that the next meeting is the Annual Council Meeting scheduled for 21 May 2025 at 7pm.

Date: _____

Town Mayor: _____