

MINUTES of the ASSETS & SERVICES COMMITTEE meeting held at Town Hall, Felixstowe on Wednesday 23 April 2025 at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Cllr D Rowe (Chairman)
Cllr M James (Vice Chairman)
Cllr D Aitchison
Cllr N Barber
Cllr S Harkin
Cllr M Morris
Cllr B Price
Cllr M Sharman
Cllr W Underwood

OFFICERS: Mr A Tadjirishi (Town Clerk)
Mrs D Frost (Deputy Town Clerk)
Mrs J Smith (Assets & Services Officer)
Mr T Minns (Grounds & Maintenance Manager)

IN ATTENDANCE:
Cllr S Bennett
Cllr A Folley
14 members of the public (*in person*)
9 members of the public (*via Zoom*)

514. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Questions and comments from members of the public were raised in relation to Item 5 on the agenda: Asset of Community Value – The Grove and Eastward Ho.

A member of the public enquired whether the Town Council would consider including an Asset of Community Value (ACV) listing within a future Neighbourhood Plan (NP), noting the link between ACVs and Neighbourhood Plans. It was confirmed that, subject to a Neighbourhood Plan being progressed, ACV listing could be referenced within.

A member of the public, who had authored the report on Assets of Community Value being presented to Committee, encouraged the Town Council to support the proposed listing. They emphasised the importance of doing so to assist the community in seeking to protect the land at the Grove and Eastward Ho.

A member of the public echoed the sentiments of the previous speaker and spoke of their concerns about the amenity of future residents as well as those currently living here.

Cllr Folley, speaking in attendance, expressed strong support for protecting the open space at the Grove and Eastward Ho. They noted that whilst they supported the principle of providing housing, it should be the right type in the right location, and that Eastward Ho and the surrounding area were not appropriate places for development. Cllr Folley urged Members to think of future generations and support the ACV listing to help safeguard the open space for the community.

515. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

516. 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 Harkin	All	Other registerable interests (as an employee of East Suffolk Council)

Members were reminded that if any matters directly related to their interests arose during the meeting, they should declare them at the appropriate time.

517. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Assets & Services Committee Meeting held on 19 February 2025 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

518. ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE – THE GROVE AND EASTWARD HO

The Committee considered a report submitted by a member of the public requesting that The Grove and Eastward Ho be nominated as Assets of Community Value (ACVs) under the Localism Act 2011. The submission outlined the long-standing community significance of these areas, highlighting their recreational, ecological, and amenity value. Both sites are located within the area identified for the proposed North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood, leading to increased community interest in their protection.

A vote of thanks was recorded to the author of the submission.

During discussion, strong support was expressed for the nomination, with Members emphasising the need to include the whole of Eastward Ho within the application, rather than limiting it to the playing fields. It was proposed that Eastward Ho be defined for the purposes of the nomination as including the playing fields, the paddock, and the two adjacent fields to the north and east.

A concern was raised regarding the need for the nomination process to remain independent of other departments within East Suffolk Council. Members stressed the importance of ensuring the ACV nomination is considered independently of the East Suffolk Council's development interests.

It was noted that asset reference numbers were duplicated within the report, and that this should be corrected if the report is subject to further scrutiny. It was confirmed that the Town Council would prepare and submit its own nomination, drawing on the material provided by the member of the public.

Questions were raised about whether land already allocated for development might affect the outcome of the ACV application. It was agreed that this would ultimately be a matter for the determining authority, but Members were advised that it would be preferable to submit the full application initially and resubmit in amended form if required. The Committee was also advised that it had the authority to make the submission and that referral to other committees would not be necessary.

It was RESOLVED that the Town Council submit a nomination to East Suffolk Council for the listing of The Grove and Eastward Ho as Assets of Community Value, with Eastward Ho defined as including the playing fields, the paddock, and the adjacent fields to the north and east.

519. ASSETS & SERVICES BUDGET REPORT

The Committee reviewed income and expenditure against the budget as of 31 March 2025.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that figures in the budget report had been reviewed by the internal auditor and were the final outturn figures for 2024-25.

It was RESOLVED that the Budget Report to 31 March 2025 be received and noted.

520. ASSET REGISTER 2024/25

Committee reviewed the Asset Register and noted the additions of assets that had been made during the year 2024/25.

Based on the Asset Register, the total of fixed assets for the Annual Governance and Accountability Return would be £340,429.43, which was a £10,090.33 net increase in fixed assets value between 31st March 2024 and 31st March 2025.

In answer to a question on asset values, the Clerk confirmed that asset values were not depreciated. Instead, the values remain fixed until the assets are disposed of. The Clerk also clarified that insurance values are separate and may differ from the asset values in the register, as they are often index-linked and buildings are revalued periodically.

A further question was raised about the replacement cycle for council laptops. The Clerk explained that laptops are replaced as needed, typically when they are no longer functional or are broken. There is no regular upgrade schedule for these items

It was RESOLVED that the Asset Register be approved and recommended to Annual Council for adoption as presented.

521. WALTON COMMUNITY HALL UPDATE REPORT

The Deputy Town Clerk provided an update on the Walton Community Hall project, confirming that the Town Council's funding application had been approved. The Committee was advised that the remaining balance for the project could potentially be covered using Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding, subject to Council approval.

As part of the report, the Deputy Town Clerk relayed a matter raised by Orwell Housing regarding the installation of the solar panels. They questioned how the panels would be attached to the roof, as the roof's guarantee wouldn't cover any damage caused by the installation.

The preference for fibre broadband was expressed, with a clear interest in using it for the project. The Clerk advised that fibre broadband could be costed into the project and incorporated into future budgeting.

It was RESOLVED that;

- i. The Walton Community Hall update be noted, and;**
- ii. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding be recommended to cover any balance required for the project, once final project costs were known.**

522. ALLOTMENT UPDATE REPORT

The Assets & Services Officer gave an update on current allotment occupancy.

In response to a question about whether the remaining tenants on the Cemetery site had been offered relocation assistance, it was confirmed that all tenants were given the option to relocate when initially informed about the Cemetery extension years ago. While early indications suggest the remaining tenants will be vacating the plots entirely, assistance will be available should they choose to relocate instead.

It was RESOLVED that the Allotment update report be noted.

523. CEMETERY EXTENSION REPORT

Committee received an update on the Cemetery Extension Project. It was highlighted that approval was being sought for the introduction of a gated access system at the boundary of the cemetery land along Langley Avenue.

During discussion, it was confirmed that the initial installation would involve a galvanised steel gate, similar in design to the existing gate at the Mill Lane end of Langley Avenue, positioned in line with the Cemetery Boundary at the opposite end. It was noted that pedestrian access would not be restricted at this stage and that the gate would remain open during the day.

The potential for a separate pedestrian gate was discussed, and it was clarified that for the soft launch phase, the focus would be on limiting vehicular traffic. Full implementation, including pedestrian access control outside of operating hours, would be addressed at a later stage once the full gate system was installed.

It was RESOLVED that the Cemetery Extension Project report be noted and that approval be given to proceed with the gated access system as outlined.

524. COUNCIL MOTOR VEHICLES

The Grounds & Maintenance Manager provided a report outlining options for the replacement of the Council's leased electric van, due to expire on 17 August 2025, and an update on the Grounds Team's truck (Toyota Hilux).

Following discussion on the electric van, Members considered the options presented, noting that purchasing the current van appeared to offer better value than entering into a new lease, particularly when considering potential cost savings compared to market prices. It was also acknowledged that while the outright purchase cost of a petrol equivalent would be lower, the ongoing running costs would be significantly higher.

It was proposed that delegated authority be granted to the Town Clerk and Chairman to agree the purchase of a replacement electric van.

The Committee noted the estimated repair costs for the Toyota Hilux following its recent MOT, alongside concerns that, given the vehicle's age and mileage, further mechanical issues were likely to arise.

It was agreed that officers should bring a report to a future Assets & Services Committee meeting a report outlining both leasing and purchasing options for a suitable replacement truck. It was noted that any future vehicle would need to meet the operational demands of towing plant equipment and the water bowser, and that while electric vehicles were preferable for sustainability, a modern diesel vehicle was likely to be the most viable option at this time.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, to agree the purchase of a replacement electric van, up to a maximum budget of £15,000, funded from Asset Repairs and Replacement, and;**
- ii. Further investigations to be made into the purchasing options for a replacement truck, to be brought back to committee at a future meeting.**

525. NATURE AT WORK

Committee received the report on East Suffolk Council's newly launched Nature at Work initiative, which aims to enhance biodiversity, improve green infrastructure, and connect communities with nature through practical, collaborative projects. Felixstowe Town Council has expressed interest in participating and is awaiting further information from East Suffolk Council regarding engagement processes, funding opportunities, and suitable project examples.

It was RESOLVED that the Nature at Work report be noted

526. CLOSURE

The meeting was closed at 8.44pm. The next meeting was noted as being scheduled for Wednesday 9 July 2025 at 7.30pm.

Date: _____

Chairman: _____