



## TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE CIVIC & COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

Cllr M Sharman (Chairman)

Cllr C Franklin (Vice Chairman)

Cllr D Aitchison

Cllr N Barber

Cllr S Bennett

Cllr J Candy

Cllr A Folley

Cllr S Harkin

Cllr M Morris

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the **CIVIC & COMMUNITY COMMITTEE** to be held at the **Town Hall, Felixstowe** on **Wednesday 9 April 2025** at **7.30pm** for the transaction of the following business:

### Public Attendance

Meetings of the Town Council and its Committees are open to the press and public who are welcome to attend. Members of the public are invited to make representations or put questions to the Committee during the public session.

*There is a limit to the number of public attending in-person. If you wish to attend in person, please email [townclerk@felixstowe.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@felixstowe.gov.uk) to confirm capacity.*

**Public are very welcome join via Zoom using the following link:**

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89465860989>**

Alternatively, you may join via the meeting ID 894 6586 0989 or over the telephone by calling 0131 460 1196.

Our online meeting guidance can be found here: <https://www.felixstowe.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Remote-Meeting-Guidelines.pdf>

*Council has a duty to pay due regard to preventing crime and disorder and to conserve biodiversity in its decision-making and Members are reminded to consider the Council's commitment to climate action.*

**Ash Tadjrishi**  
**Town Clerk**  
**4 April 2025**

For information (via email):

All Town Councillors  
Local Press

## **A G E N D A**

- 1. Public Question Time**  
Up to 15 minutes is set aside to allow members of the public (up to three minutes each) to make representations or put questions to the Committee on any relevant matters.
- 2. Apologies for Absence**  
To receive any apologies for absence.
- 3. Declarations of Interest**  
To receive any declarations of interest and to consider any requests for dispensations from Members on matters in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest, other registerable or non-registerable interest.
- 4. Confirmation of Minutes**  
To confirm the Minutes of Civic & Community Committee meeting held on 12 February 2025 as a true record.  
**(Pages 4-8)**
- 5. Felixstowe BID Update**  
To receive a presentation on recent changes to the Felixstowe BID and forthcoming event plans.  
**(Presentation)**
- 6. Civic & Community Budget Report**  
To receive the Civic & Community Budget report to 31 March 2025 and consider any actions deemed necessary.  
**(Page 9 & Appendix A)**
- 7. Annual Town Meeting and Civic Awards 2025**  
To receive an update on this year's Annual Town Meeting and Civic Awards.  
**(Page 10)**
- 8. Felixstowe in Flower 2025 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**  
To receive an update on Felixstowe in Flower.  
**(Pages 11-12)**
- 9. CCTV update**  
To receive a report on CCTV.  
**(Page 13)**
- 10. Annual Grants and Other Payments**  
To note and authorise the payment of annual grants and other annual payments included in the budget for 2025/26.  
**(Page 14 & Appendix B)**
- 11. VE80 Events Update**  
To receive an update on events for the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VE Day.  
**(Pages 15-16)**

**12. Charities and Community Groups Summit**

To consider a report on the Charities and Community Groups Summit held on 20 February 2025.

**(Pages 17-18)**

**13. Media Policy Update**

To receive a report on social media options following the review of the Council's Press and Media Policy at the previous meeting.

**(Pages 19-20)**

**14. Community Engagement Strategy 2025-26**

To review the Council's Community Engagement Strategy for 2025-26.

**(Page 20 & Appendix C)**

**15. Closure**

To close proceedings and confirm the date of the next meeting scheduled for Wednesday 11 June 2025 at 7.30pm.

## **AGENDA ITEM 4: CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

**MINUTES of a CIVIC & COMMUNITY COMMITTEE MEETING held at TOWN HALL, Felixstowe, on Wednesday 12 February 2025 at 7.30pm**

**PRESENT:** Cllr M Sharman (Chairman)  
Cllr C Franklin (Vice Chairman)  
Cllr D Aitchison  
Cllr N Barber  
Cllr S Bennett  
Cllr J Candy  
Cllr A Folley  
Cllr S Harkin  
Cllr M Morris

**OFFICERS:** Mrs D Frost (Deputy Town Clerk  
Mrs S Faversham (Civic Events Officer)

### **385. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

None.

### **386. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

### **387. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following Other Registerable Interests, to which no matters on the agenda were directly related, were noted:

<b>Member(s)</b>	<b>Minute No.</b>	<b>Nature of Interest</b>
Cllr A Folley Cllr S Bennett Cllr J Candy	All	Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and Other registerable interest (as Members of East Suffolk Council)
Cllr S Bennett	All	Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and Other registerable interest (as Member of Suffolk County Council)
Cllr S Harkin	All	Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and 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.

### **388. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

**It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Civic & Community Committee meeting held on 11 December 2024 be confirmed as a true record.**

### **389. CIVIC & COMMUNITY BUDGET REPORT**

The Committee considered a summary and detailed report showing income and expenditure against budget to 5 February 2025.

**RESOLVED that the Budget Report to 5 February 2025 be received and noted as presented with no other action required at this time**

### **390. CHARITY AND VOLUNTARY GROUPS SUMMIT**

A member inquired whether organisations from the Orwell villages had been invited to the summit. It was clarified that the event was primarily intended for Felixstowe-based organisations; however, invitations could still be extended to those from the Orwell villages if appropriate.

**RESOLVED Committee is requested to consider the report on the Charity and Community Summit.**

### **391. ANNUAL TOWN MEETING AND CIVIC AWARDS 2025**

Committee noted the report on the Annual Town Meeting and Civic Awards 2025. The Civic Events Officer confirmed that Felixstowe School had been booked as the venue, with the meeting scheduled to take place at 7pm on Wednesday 14th May.

Members considered a recommendation from the Council's Climate Emergency Working Group to introduce an Environmental Award as part of the Mayor's Civic Awards. While recognising the value of such an award, Committee noted potential challenges in identifying suitable nominees on an annual basis. However, it was agreed that the award should be introduced.

**It was RESOLVED that :**

- i. The report on the Annual Town Meeting and Civic Awards 2025 be noted; and,**
- ii. An Environmental Award be considered for inclusion as part of the Civic Awards at the Annual Town Meeting for the year 2025/26.**

### **392. VE80 EVENTS IN FELIXSTOWE**

Committee received the report on the 80th Anniversary of VE Day. A correction was made to the report, clarifying that the cost of the VE80 wreath was £27.50 rather than £25.50.

The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that funding for the event, estimated to be around £1,000, could be covered using a projected underspend from the Charity Summit budget. The Charity Summit had been allocated £3,000 from the Community Fund Earmarked Reserve (*Min #182 2024/25 refers*), with anticipated costs of around £2,000. It was also noted that any external grant funding secured for the VE80 event would be welcomed.

**It was RESOLVED that:**

- i. the report on the VE 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary be noted; and,**
- ii. funding for the event be drawn from the remaining balance of the £3,000 previously allocated for the Charity Summit (Min #182 2024/25 refers).**

**393. FELIXSTOWE IN FLOWER 40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

Committee considered the report on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Felixstowe in Flower.

Members requested that the Working Group explore the possibility of holding the awards evening at the Town Hall in two sessions, with children's awards presented first, followed by the adult categories, as was done in 2023. It was felt that the Town Hall would be a prestigious and fitting venue for the event.

It was also suggested that some particular unapproached local businesses be invited to participate in sponsorship opportunities. Felixstowe BID was also identified as a potential partner. It was noted that the Mayor would be visiting schools in March. Officer would be aiming to increase sponsorship to progress towards covering 100% of costs. Members suggested that the Working Group should consider the sponsoring of trophies.

Additionally, members encouraged the involvement of community groups such as Guides and Scouts.

**It was RESOLVED that:**

- i. the report on the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Felixstowe in Flower be noted;**
- ii. the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Working Group consider the Town Hall as a potential venue and review sponsorship opportunities for trophies;**
- iii. Officers seek to increase sponsorship with the aim of covering all associated costs; and,**
- iv. Felixstowe BID, and other local businesses be approached for potential involvement and sponsorship.**

**394. HARWICH HARBOUR FERRY AGREEMENT FOR 2025**

Committee received and noted the report on the Harwich Harbour Ferry Partnership agreement for 2025. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that £1,000 had been allocated in the budget to support the partnership grant for 2025/26.

**It was RESOLVED that:**

- i. the report on the Harwich Harbour Ferry Partnership be noted;**
- ii. the Harwich Harbour Ferry agreement be adopted and signed; and,**

- iii. **The grant payment for 2025/26 be approved for payment in April.**

### **395. MAYOR'S CADET**

Committee considered the introduction of a Mayor's Cadet for Felixstowe. It was proposed that instead of appointing a single cadet, both a Mayor's Cadet and a Mayor's Deputy Cadet be introduced. This would ensure that if the Mayor's Cadet was unable to attend an event, the Mayor's Deputy Cadet could step in. Each cadet organisation would be responsible for arranging representation.

Committee agreed that a badge should be presented to the Mayor's Cadet at the Annual Town Meeting, with framed certificates awarded at the end of their term to both cadets.

It was also agreed that the role of Mayor's Cadet should rotate between the Army Cadet Force, Air Training Corps, and Sea Cadets. Initial discussions had taken place with the Air Training Corps, and once confirmed, the other organisations would be approached.

Officers confirmed that a DBS check was not required, as the Mayor's Cadet would always be accompanied by a parent, guardian, or cadet representative.

Committee agreed that a safeguarding policy covering young and vulnerable individuals, including Youth Forum attendees, work experience placements, and the Mayor's Cadet, should be considered by the Personnel Committee.

**It was RESOLVED that:**

- i. **the report on the Mayor's Cadet be noted;**
- ii. **it be recommended to Council the Mayor's Cadet Policy be approved and consideration given to inviting the parent cadet force to also appoint a Mayor's Deputy Cadet; and,**
- iii. **it be recommended to the Personnel Committee that a Safeguarding Policy be developed.**

### **396. PLAY AREA REFURBISHMENTS**

Committee noted the report on play area refurbishments and welcomed the inclusion of varied equipment at different locations.

**It was RESOLVED that the report on the play area refurbishments be noted.**

### **397. OCCASIONAL GRANTS POLICY**

Committee reviewed the Council's Occasional Grants Policy and suggested the following amendments:

- Page 1: Amend the eligibility criteria to explicitly include Community Interest Companies (CICs).
- Page 1: Modify the heading “What will not be funded” to read “What will usually not be funded” for greater flexibility.
- Page 3: Amend the final bullet point to state: “An Occasional Grant is given on the strict condition that the support of Felixstowe Town Council is suitably acknowledged in relevant promotional material and on social media, with evidence provided to the Council.”
- two rounds are increased to three rounds for the year 2025/26 being 31 May, 30 September and 31 January.

**It was RESOLVED that the Occasional Grants Policy for 2025/26 be recommended to Council for adoption, incorporating the above changes.**

### **398. PRESS & MEDIA POLICY**

Committee reviewed and approved the Press and Media Policy. Members suggested that the Council explore expanding its social media presence to include platforms such as Instagram and BlueSky. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the Communications Officer would present a report on this at the next meeting.

**It was RESOLVED that:**

- the Press & Media Policy for 2025/26 be recommended to Council for adoption as presented; and,**
- the Communications Officer provide a report on additional social media opportunities at the next Civic & Community Committee meeting.**

### **399. CLOSURE**

The meeting was closed at 8.50 pm. It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 9 April 2025 at 7.30pm.

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## **AGENDA ITEM 5: CIVIC & COMMUNITY BUDGET REPORT**

Committee is to regularly receive reports on the Civic & Community element of Council's budget. A summary of the position to 31 March 2025 is provided below with a detailed report at **Appendix A**.

1 April - 31 March 2025 (2024 - 2025)

### **Felixstowe Town Council Summary of Receipts and Payments Summary - Civic & Community**

Cost Centre	Receipts				Payments			
	Budgeted	Actual	Variance	% Received	Budgeted	Actual	Variance	% Spent
301 Civic & Community	4,191.00		4,191	0.00%	38,578.00	29,211.45	9,367	75.72%
302 Grants				N/A	44,950.00	42,707.45	2,243	95.01%
303 Felixstowe in Flower	6,000.00	4,050.06	1,950	67.50%	9,250.00	7,551.36	1,699	81.64%
304 Communication	6,000.00	4,695.00	1,305	78.25%	22,000.00	19,673.00	2,327	89.42%
305 Community Projects & Partne	8,000.00			N/A	11,000.00	11,000.00	0	100.00%
<b>NET TOTAL</b>	<b>24,191.00</b>	<b>8,745.06</b>	<b>7,445.94</b>	<b>36.15%</b>	<b>125,778.00</b>	<b>110,143.26</b>	<b>15,634.74</b>	<b>87.57%</b>

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**Committee is requested to consider the budget report to 31 March 2025 and decide any action it deems necessary.**

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## **AGENDA ITEM 7: ANNUAL TOWN MEETING / CIVIC AWARDS**

### **2025**

Arrangements are underway for the 2025 Annual Town Meeting and Civic Awards Ceremony, which will take place at 7pm on Wednesday 14 May at Felixstowe School.

As in previous years, community groups that received a Town Council grant during the 2024/25 financial year have been invited to take part in the event. They will each provide a short written report outlining how their grant was used and the outcomes achieved. These reports will be presented during the Annual Town Meeting following the Mayor of Felixstowe's annual report.

In addition, these groups will be showcasing their work in the school atrium, where they will host display stands. This will provide an excellent opportunity for attendees to engage directly with local groups and learn more about their projects.

Following the meeting and Civic Awards presentation, light refreshments will be served, and guests will be invited to browse the displays and speak with the representatives of the various organisations.

#### **Civic Awards 2025**

The nomination period for the Civic Awards closed on 31 March 2025, and nominations have been received across all seven categories. A meeting of the Civic Awards Panel will be held shortly to review the nominations and select this year's recipients. The Panel comprises the following Members:

- The Mayor (Chair)
- The Immediate Past Mayor
- The Deputy Mayor
- Chairman of the Civic & Community Committee
- Chairman of the Finance & Governance Committee

The Panel will consider nominations and determine recipients of the following awards:

- Mayor's Awards (up to five)
- Community Award
- Ganges Youth Award

**Committee is requested to note the arrangements for the Annual Town Meeting and Civic Awards 2025, and endorse the proposed approach for this year's event.**

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## **AGENDA ITEM 8: FELIXSTOWE IN FLOWER 2025 – 40<sup>th</sup>** **ANNIVERSARY**

2025 marks the 40th anniversary of Felixstowe in Flower, a flagship community initiative which encourages civic pride and horticultural achievement across the town. Preparations are well underway for this year's enhanced programme of activity, with the Launch Event scheduled for Saturday, 7 June 2025, at the Triangle.

### **Hanging Baskets**

The Town Council's annual floral displays are progressing well. Baskets have been taken to the nursery to be planted up, allowing sufficient time for growth and acclimatisation. Subject to favourable weather conditions, baskets are due to be installed across the town in mid-May.

### **Schools Engagement**

The Mayor and a member of the Grounds Team will be visiting local schools after the Easter holidays to promote the youth competitions.

As part of the engagement programme, schools will receive:

- Gro Bags
- Seeds for edible produce
- Garden canes and pots
- Sunflower seeds and entry forms for the Tallest Sunflower Competition

These resources aim to encourage youth participation and highlight the special 40th anniversary theme.

### **Launch Event – Saturday, 7 June**

Preparations for the Launch Event at the Triangle are in progress. 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary merchandise, including branded tote bags, has been ordered to be distributed at the event.

### **Councillor Involvement**

Councillors are invited to participate in a 40th Anniversary Flowerpot Competition. This year's theme is sustainability.

Pots will be available to collect from the Town Hall from Tuesday, 15 April.

Councillors are also encouraged to help distribute competition and sponsorship forms within their wards, supporting wider community engagement.

### **Business Window Display Competition**

Local businesses will be invited to take part in a special Window Dressing Competition.

Displays will be showcased from 1–7 June, to coincide with the Launch Event and judging will be carried out by the Mayor of Felixstowe.

### Awards Ceremony – Tuesday, 17 September

Enquiries are being made into hosting the awards ceremony at Sea You, as a new potential venue.

An alternative suggestion has been received to repeat the two-tier ceremony at the Town Hall, as successfully delivered in 2023 when the Children's awards were made first, followed by a brief intermission, then the remainder of the awards.

**Committee is requested to note the progress update on Felixstowe in Flower 2025, including plans for the 40th anniversary celebrations; and, consider preferences for the Awards Ceremony venue and format, noting the options currently under review.**

## **AGENDA ITEM 9: CCTV WORKING GROUP UPDATE**

The Council's CCTV Working Group met on 1 April 2025 to discuss the current position regarding public space surveillance in Felixstowe.

The Group expressed disappointment at the continued lack of priority being given to CCTV in Felixstowe by East Suffolk Council (ESC), despite several approaches over recent years to review existing provision and explore the possibility of investing in 24/7 monitoring.

The Working Group considered the future of the nine CCTV cameras currently maintained by STC Solutions on behalf of Felixstowe Town Council. It was agreed that the Town Council should continue with the existing quarterly renewable maintenance contract to ensure the cameras remain operational. However, the Group felt it would not be appropriate for the Town Council to progress a wider improvement programme independently, as responsibility for addressing anti-social behaviour (ASB) lies with East Suffolk Council and the Police.

The Group also noted concerns about potential changes arising from the forthcoming local government reorganisation, including the possibility that any new equipment installed now might not be compatible with future systems used for centralised monitoring.

To reaffirm the Council's position, the Chair of the Working Group will write to East Suffolk Council to:

- Reiterate Felixstowe Town Council's interest in supporting improvements to local CCTV infrastructure;
- Highlight the availability of funding, including £42,000 currently held in a CCTV Earmarked Reserve, and the potential for additional support via local and regional Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding streams.

**The Committee is requested to note the report and consider any further action it may deem appropriate in relation to CCTV Working Group.**

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## **AGENDA ITEM 10: ANNUAL GRANTS AND OTHER PAYMENTS**

In accordance with Committee's budget recommendations (*Minute #174 2024/25 refers*), at its meeting of 8 January 2025 Council approved provisions for Annual Grants totalling £21,992 and other annual payments for 2024/25 (*Minute #351 of 2024/25 refers*). The receiving organisations were to be as follows:

### **As Annual Grants:**

Art on the Prom	£3,000
Citizen's Advice	£3,000
FACTS	£2,500
Fairtrade Forum	£42
Felixstowe Book Festival	£2,000
Felixstowe Carnival	£5,000
Felixstowe Council for Sport and Recreation	£300
Felixstowe Coast Patrol	£2,000
Landguard Fort	£1,000
Royal British Legion	£250
Salzwedel Twinning Association	£200
WAMFest	£2,500
Wesel Twinning Assoc.	£200
<b>Total</b>	<b>£21,992</b>

### **As Partnership Projects:**

Level Two	£10,000
Harwich Harbour Ferry Services Partnership	£1,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£11,000</b>

The Lions Club of Felixstowe have provided a report on Christmas lights 2024, which can be seen at **Appendix B**. A grant of £8,000 towards the provision of the 2025 Christmas lights to the Lions Club of Felixstowe has also been allowed for in the budget for 2025/26.

**Committee is requested to note the above and approve the payment of Annual Grants and other annual payments for 2025/26.**

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## **AGENDA ITEM 11: VE80 EVENTS UPDATE**

At the February meeting, the Committee approved plans for the commemoration of the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VE Day, including a range of events scheduled for Thursday 8 May 2025, alongside additional community events in early May. This report provides an update on the planning and preparations for VE80 events in Felixstowe.

### **Monday 5 May 2025**

- **VE80 at the Triangle (9:30am – 3pm):** The Felixstowe Branch of the RBL has organised a day of entertainment at the Felixstowe Triangle, featuring a jazz band, raffle and a vintage military vehicle display.

### **Thursday 8 May 2025 (VE Day)**

- **Flag Raising (9am):** The VE Day flag will be raised at the Town Hall. The flag has been ordered at a cost of £17.76.
- **War Memorial Service (10.45am):** A short service of remembrance will be held at the War Memorial on Undercliff Road West. This is being organised in collaboration with the Felixstowe Branch of the Royal British Legion (RBL) and local clergy.
- **Torch Parade & Beacon Lighting (8.45pm onwards):** The Torch Parade will proceed along Undercliff Road West, from the Town Hall Gardens to the War Memorial. 112 torches will represent the local lives lost during WWII. Names of the fallen will be read aloud as each torch is extinguished. The parade will conclude with the beacon lighting, with musical accompaniment provided by the Salvation Army. A call for torchbearers has been made, with residents invited to take part.

### **Saturday 10 May 2025**

- **Wartime Tea Dance (12pm-5pm):** Martello Tower Green will host live entertainment, dancing, and themed picnic areas and is being organised by ESC Cultural Connections. Entertainments begin at 1pm and public are welcome to bring a picnic from 12pm.

### **Publicity & Community Engagement:**

- A unified 'VE80 in Felixstowe' promotional campaign is publicising the events, including a feature in the Town Council's Spring Magazine.
- Local residents have been encouraged to share their own VE80 plans, helping to generate community involvement.
- A press release announcing the VE80 events has been circulated to local media and will be shared via social media channels to increase awareness and participation.

The estimated cost for the Town Council-led events is approximately £1,000. This includes the purchase of torches, wreaths, road closures, printing of event programmes, and other associated costs.

As previously agreed, funding for the event will be drawn from the remaining balance of the £3,000 allocated for the Charity Summit (*Minute #392 of 2024/25 refers*).

**Committee is requested to note the update on VE80 event planning.**



## **AGENDA ITEM 12: CHARITIES AND COMMUNITY GROUPS SUMMIT**

### **REPORT**

On 20 February 2025, Felixstowe Town Council hosted its inaugural Charities and Voluntary Groups Summit at Felixstowe School. The event provided an opportunity for individuals working within the charity and voluntary sector to network, collaborate, and participate in a series of expert-led workshops. The topics covered included:

- Marketing and Promotion
- The Importance of Safeguarding
- Fundraising
- Grant Applications
- Governance, Policies, and Procedures
- Event Management
- Attracting, Managing, and Training Volunteers
- Collaboration

The event was well-attended, with approximately 80 participants. Feedback was collected via formal feedback forms and subsequently reviewed in a meeting held on 19 March 2025.

#### **Feedback Summary**

The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive, with many attendees expressing interest in making the Charities and Voluntary Groups Summit an annual or biennial event. Participants praised Felixstowe School as a suitable venue, meeting the event's logistical and accessibility needs. Additionally, the catering, provided by Sea You, which included a selection of miniature pastries and a buffet-style lunch, was well received.

One of the most appreciated aspects of the event was the opportunity for networking, with attendees reporting that this was both enjoyable and beneficial. The total budget allocated for the summit was £3,000. The event was delivered under budget, with costs currently being finalised but anticipated to be less than £2,000.

#### **Areas for Improvement**

Whilst feedback was largely positive, suggestions for the future were noted as follows:

- Inclusion of vegan breakfast options at future events.
- Extended workshop durations, allowing attendees to participate in a greater number of sessions.
- Finalising the workshop itinerary before promoting the event, enabling attendees to register for the day with a single ticket.

## Potential Outcomes

### 1. Proposal for a Volunteering Fair

At the follow-up meeting, the possibility of hosting a Volunteering Fair was discussed. An event of this nature would operate in a similar format to a job fair, allowing charities and voluntary organisations to:

- Showcase their work,
- Recruit new volunteers, and
- Connect with one another for future collaboration.

The Felixstowe Leisure Centre was identified as a potential venue, with its central location and seafront proximity expected to help attract footfall and engagement. Collaboration with corporate volunteering schemes, such as those supported by the Port of Felixstowe, could also be explored.

### 2. Development of an Online Charity & Community Hub

The development of a dedicated online hub for charities, voluntary groups, and not-for-profit organisations in Felixstowe and the surrounding areas was also proposed. Potential features include:

- Template policies and best practice guidelines
- Advice and guidance for charities and voluntary groups
- A platform for listing available equipment and resources
- Volunteer recruitment opportunities
- Links to funding and grant resources
- A forum for groups to share ideas, resources, and support

The Chairman of the Landguard Trust has offered to work in collaboration with interested charity and community group partners to develop the online hub project. To gauge interest and ensure alignment with community needs, attendees of the Charities and Voluntary Groups Summit have been contacted regarding both the volunteering fair and the proposed online hub.

## Conclusion

The 2025 Charities and Voluntary Groups Summit has been widely regarded as a successful and worthwhile event, offering tangible benefits to participants and the wider community. Based on the positive feedback received, and subject to Committee's considerations, the Town Council may explore the feasibility of hosting a Volunteering Fair and establishing an Online Charity & Community Hub can be further explored, in line with the needs and preferences of the local voluntary sector.

**Committee is requested to note the report on the Charities and Voluntary Groups Summit; consider establishing the summit as an annual or biennial event; explore the possibility of hosting a Volunteering Fair; and, support development of the online charity and community hub to enhance ongoing collaboration and resource-sharing, subject to confirmed interest and available funding.**

## **AGENDA ITEM 13: MEDIA POLICY UPDATE**

Following the Town Council's decision to suspend the use of X (formerly Twitter) on 4 September 2024 (Min. #162 refers) and the review of the Press & Media Policy at the previous meeting, the Civic & Community Committee requested a brief report on potential alternative social media platforms (Min. #398 refers).

Currently, the Town Council uses Facebook to promote upcoming meetings, events, and to enhance visibility in Felixstowe and surrounding areas. The Felixstowe Town Council Facebook page has 1,500 followers to date.

To explore potential alternatives, an overview of three additional social media platforms—Instagram, Bluesky, and TikTok—is provided below.

### **Instagram**

Instagram is a visually driven platform centred around photo and video sharing, with a strong focus on aesthetic and engaging content. The Town Council has previously trialled the use of Instagram (@felixstowetc) and has gained 198 followers.

#### *Considerations:*

- A platform to echo Facebook messaging, ensuring broader reach.
- Greater emphasis on visual media to promote Council initiatives, events, and key messages.
- Seamless integration with the Felixstowe Town Council website, providing an additional mode of connectivity for residents.

### **Bluesky**

Bluesky is a decentralised, open-source, user-controlled social network designed by the creator of Twitter in 2019, and has become more popular as an alternative to Twitter/X.

#### *Considerations:*

- Similar in format to Twitter/X, making it a potentially intuitive replacement for former users.
- Local user adoption remains low, which may limit the Town Council's reach.
- It is less established than other platforms, so future adoption rates are uncertain.

### **TikTok**

TikTok is a short-form video platform known for its creativity, trends, and algorithm-driven content discovery.

#### *Considerations:*

- The Chinese state-owned platform is highly engaging and prioritises short, fast-paced content.
- The nature of the format of many Town Council communications (e.g., agendas, meeting dates, event details) may not align well with TikTok's format.
- A significant content strategy shift, including video creation and trend participation, would be required to gain visibility.
- The demographic differences between users of TikTok and those regularly engaging with local councils may offer less value for the Town Council in using this platform.

Each platform presents unique opportunities and challenges. Instagram offers a strong visual communication tool with proven local engagement, while Bluesky presents an alternative to X/Twitter but with, currently, limited reach. TikTok, although highly engaging, may not be best suited for the Town Council's primary communication needs due to its format, required strategy shift, and lower relevance to the Town Council's demographic.

**The Committee is invited to consider the information provided and discuss the next steps for social media engagement.**

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## **AGENDA ITEM 14: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2025-26**

Committee is to review its Community Engagement Strategy annually. The current Strategy is presented at **Appendix C** for review and onward recommendation to Council.

**Committee is requested to review the Community Engagement Strategy 2025-26 for onward referral to Council.**

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