

**MINUTES of the EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL meeting held at Felixstowe Town Hall on Tuesday 29 July 2025 at 6.00pm**

**PRESENT:** Cllr C Franklin (Mayor) Cllr S Harkin  
Cllr D Aitchison Cllr M James  
Cllr N Barber (*to item #54*) Cllr B Price  
Cllr S Bennett Cllr D Rowe  
Cllr S Bird Cllr M Sharman  
Cllr J Candy Cllr W Underwood  
Cllr M Deacon Cllr S Wiles  
Cllr A Folley

**OFFICERS:** Mr A Tadjirishi (Town Clerk)  
Mrs J Smith (Assets & Services Officer)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** 6 members of the public (*in person*)  
5 members of the Public (*via Zoom*).

**115. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Council heard from members of the public concerned about the potential loss of the cinema to redevelopment, the loss of a secular meeting space, and the potential loss of a key cultural and commercial leisure venue in the town.

Members of the public raised the need for public community space, the opportunity for young people and adults to engage in cultural and educational spaces.

**116. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from **Cllr M Morris**.

**117. 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	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)
Cllr A Folley Cllr W Underwood	All	Other registerable interest (as a Member of the organisation)

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.

#### **118. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Council considered whether to exclude the press and public for the next item of business.

Some Members felt that discussion should take place in public to ensure transparency, particularly given the community interest in the future of the building.

Others highlighted the likelihood that commercial and financially sensitive matters would arise during the discussion. It was noted that reference to confidential information, including financial figures and negotiations, would make a closed session appropriate under statutory provisions.

The Town Clerk advised that, while some general aspects of the matter could reasonably be discussed in public, the associated report included commercially sensitive details. To protect the integrity of any future negotiations and respect the confidentiality of third-party information, the Clerk recommended moving into a closed session. It was further proposed that Council could return to public session following the discussion to summarise the decision taken.

Council agreed that, in accord with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 s.1 (2), due to the confidential nature of the business which was to be transacted, it was advisable that the press and public be temporarily excluded.

**It was RESOLVED that the Press and Public be excluded and instructed to withdraw.**

#### **119. FELIXSTOWE PALACE CINEMA**

Council considered a detailed report from the Town Clerk regarding the opportunity to purchase the Felixstowe Palace Cinema.

The Town Clerk provided updates from initial due diligence, discussions with the vendor's agent, and consultations with key potential stakeholders including East Suffolk Council. Members noted the strategic potential of acquiring the cinema to deliver community, cultural, and economic benefits.

Members acknowledged the lack of comparable public venues in the town and saw potential for regeneration, community use, and cultural development. The project was seen as a potential long-term investment for the benefit of Felixstowe residents. While the building required substantial refurbishment, its preservation was viewed by many as preferable to its potential conversion into private dwellings.

Others expressed caution, noting the financial risks and the Council's duty to safeguard public money. Questions were raised about the viability of cinema operations, long-term maintenance, and management capacity. It was stressed that the Council should not commit to an asset without full understanding of costs, liabilities, and operational plans.

**At this point, 18:51pm, Cllr Barber left the meeting**

All Members recognised no purchase decision was being made at this stage, only due diligence. There was broad consensus that the Council had an obligation to explore the opportunity seriously and with care.

Use of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was discussed as a possible funding route for initial surveys and professional assessments. Members stressed the need to ensure this project would not detract from existing priorities and ongoing commitments.

After extensive debate, it was proposed that The Council should pursue further exploration of the potential acquisition of the Palace Cinema.

**It was RESOLVED that:**

- i. the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Mayor and Chair of the Assets & Services Committee, engage with the vendor's agent and submit a non-binding expression of interest;**
- ii. the necessary surveys, valuations and legal advice be commissioned, up to a maximum budget of £25,000 to be met from CIL;**
- iii. a public statement be prepared to outline the Council's decision to undertake due diligence, ensuring it is presented as a collective position of Felixstowe Town Council;**
- iv. other funding options be explored, including the use of external grant sources; and,**
- v. a full business case be brought back to Full Council in September for consideration prior to any formal offer being made.**

**Following the confidential discussion, the meeting was reopened to the public session. It was noted that no members of the public remained in attendance at that point.**

**120. CLOSURE**

The meeting was closed at 7.36pm.

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Town Mayor: \_\_\_\_\_