

MINUTES of a CIVIC & COMMUNITY COMMITTEE MEETING held at TOWN HALL, Felixstowe, on Wednesday 17 December 2025 at 7.30pm

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

OFFICERS: Mr Ash Tadrisi (Town Clerk)
Mrs D Frost (Deputy Town Clerk)
Ms H Miles (Communications Officer)

317. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

None.

318. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from **Cllr A Folley**.

319. 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 Bennett Cllr J Candy Cllr A Folley	All	Other registerable interests (as Members of East Suffolk Council)
Cllr S Bennett	All	Other registerable interests (as a Member of Suffolk County Council)
Cllr S Harkin	All	Other registerable interests (as an employee of East Suffolk Council)

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

320. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Civic & Community Committee meeting held on 22 October 2025 be confirmed as a true record.

321. CIVIC & COMMUNITY BUDGET REPORT

The Committee considered a summary and detailed report showing income and expenditure against the budget as at 30 November 2025.

It was RESOLVED that the Budget Report to 30 November 2025 be received and noted with no further action required at this time.

322. UK TOWN OF CULTURE

The Committee received a report introducing the newly announced UK Town of Culture competition and outlining the potential opportunity for Felixstowe to participate through the submission of an Expression of Interest (EOI), subject to Council endorsement.

Members noted that the competition, launched by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), is intended to recognise and celebrate the cultural identity of towns, offering a £3.5 million prize fund for the successful town to deliver an ambitious cultural programme in 2028, with development funding available for shortlisted places.

Committee considered the relevance of the competition to Felixstowe, recognising the town's diverse cultural assets, heritage, creative organisations, and volunteer networks, as well as the potential wider benefits of partnership working, community engagement, and profile-raising, regardless of the outcome of the competition.

Members discussed the role of the Town Council at this early stage, noting that the EOI phase is expected to be light-touch and carry minimal financial risk. Any progression to a full bid would require more detailed consideration of governance, resources, and deliverability, and would be subject to further reports and formal approval by Council.

The importance of partnership working was emphasised, with Members expressing support for a convening and facilitative role for the Town Council, rather than acting as sole deliverer, and for ensuring that any preparatory work is inclusive, representative, and aligned with equality and accessibility principles.

RESOLVED that the introduction of the UK Town of Culture competition and the potential opportunity it presents for Felixstowe be noted; and, the Committee supports officers undertaking preparatory work towards an Expression of Interest, including early stakeholder engagement and exploration of an appropriate partnership and governance framework, with further reports to be brought back to Committee and Council once DCMS guidance is published.

323. CCTV – UPDATE FROM THE WORKING GROUP AND ESC PROPOSAL

Committee received an update from the CCTV Working Group following its meeting on 5 December 2025, together with a draft proposal from East Suffolk Council (ESC) regarding a phased, district-led upgrade and monitoring model for public-space CCTV in Felixstowe.

Members noted the current position, including the split ownership of cameras between the Town Council and ESC, and the longstanding aspiration for a more

strategic and consistent approach led by the statutory community safety authority.

Members noted the scope of the proposed upgrade, the indicative capital costs for the Felixstowe phase, the intention for ESC to assume responsibility for monitoring, and the proposal to establish a joint CCTV Steering Group involving ESC, the Town Council and Suffolk Constabulary.

An additional priority location at Runnacles Way (“Blue Bridge”) was discussed, and it was agreed that this be requested for consideration for inclusion, subject to this not impacting on project delivery timetable. Members further agreed that, should the additional camera be viable, the Town Council should consider funding the capital cost.

Members acknowledged that the proposal aligned with good governance principles by placing operational responsibility with the statutory authority, while enabling the Town Council to contribute proportionately through its existing CCTV Earmarked Reserve and retain an effective strategic voice.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. **the update from the CCTV Working Group be noted;**
- ii. **the Committee supports the Town Council’s participation in a future joint CCTV Steering Group with East Suffolk Council and Suffolk Constabulary;**
- iii. **the Committee recommends to Council, in principle, welcoming and endorsing the proposed district-led CCTV upgrade and monitoring model for Felixstowe;**
- iv. **the Committee requests that ESC consider the inclusion of an additional camera at Runnacles Way (“Blue Bridge”), subject to this not impacting the project delivery timetable; and**
- v. **the Committee recommends to Council that, subject to ESC proceeding with delivery of the upgraded system, the Town Council approves the release of its £42,000 CCTV Earmarked Reserve towards the capital cost of the project.**

324. FELIXSTOWE IN FLOWER 2027 AND BEYOND

The Committee received a report reviewing the current operation of the Felixstowe in Flower scheme and proposing a strategic refocusing from the 2027 season onwards to enhance visual impact, sustainability, and operational efficiency.

Members noted the long-standing success and community value of the scheme, as well as review findings identifying stronger public support, sponsorship uptake, and maintenance efficiencies in concentrated, high-footfall areas such as Hamilton Road.

The challenges associated with the seafront displays were discussed, including high maintenance demands, exposure to coastal conditions, ageing infrastructure, and lower relative impact. Members considered the proposal to discontinue seafront displays (excluding the Town Hall) from 2027 and redirect resources towards Hamilton Road, the Shared Space, and Walton High Street.

Members requested that consideration be given to incorporating other spaces, such as Gosford Way and Adastral Close, in the scheme as well as other sustainable planting infrastructure, such as moss benches within the display arrangements.

The Committee welcomed the emphasis on sustainability, including reduced water use, vehicle mileage, and staff time, and the potential for modern, self-watering planters to improve resilience and presentation. The updated annual timeline was considered helpful in reflecting operational realities and governance requirements.

Members also noted related work by the Felixstowe BID in relation to street trees and recognised the opportunity for complementary improvements to the town centre environment.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. **the review of the current Felixstowe in Flower arrangements be noted;**
- ii. **the proposal to remove seafront floral displays (excluding the Town Hall) from 2027 onwards be supported in principle;**
- iii. **the redirection of resources towards Hamilton Road/Shared Space and Walton High Street be supported in principle;**
- iv. **the updated Annual Timeline for the scheme be endorsed; and,**
- v. **Officers bring forward further detailed proposals, including costings and sponsorship implications, for future consideration as required.**

325. HARWICH HARBOUR FERRY UPDATE

Committee received an update report following the annual meeting on Harwich Harbour Ferry funding for the 2026 season and discussions on the longer-term future of the service, including the potential for year-round operation.

Members noted the attendance and strategic interest of Freeport East, particularly in relation to workforce connectivity and longer-term investment opportunities, alongside the significant operational, financial and infrastructure challenges currently facing the service.

Committee noted the limitations of the existing vessel, accessibility constraints at Felixstowe, weather and tidal risks, and the financial viability of winter operation.

The opportunities associated with tourism growth, marketing improvements, cleaner fuels and future infrastructure feasibility work were also noted.

Members welcomed the proposed phased and evidence-led approach, including the development of a clearer business plan, improved data collection and continued partnership working.

RESOLVED that the update report on the Harwich Harbour Ferry be noted.

326. FELIXSTOWE FLOODS – 73RD ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION

The Committee received a report outlining arrangements to mark the 73rd Anniversary of the Felixstowe Floods on Saturday 31 January 2026.

The Clerk advised that, since publication of the agenda, Langer School had indicated a wish to participate in the commemoration, which would be possible if held on Friday 30 January instead of Saturday.

Members noted the continued importance of the annual commemoration as part of the Council's civic programme and the plans for a short service at the Flood Memorial on Langer Road, including wreath-laying and community reflections. Members agreed that it would be preferable to hold the event at a time more appropriate for schools.

The Committee acknowledged the significance of maintaining the Memorial and ensuring that the history and impact of the 1953 floods continue to be remembered and shared with future generations.

It was RESOLVED that the report on the forthcoming service to mark the 73rd Anniversary of the Felixstowe Floods be noted, and that the Civic Events Officer liaise with Langer School to confirm details of the commemoration service.

327. CLOSURE

The meeting was closed at 9.02pm. It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 11 February 2026 at 7.30pm.

Date: _____

Chairman: _____