



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

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the **CIVIC & COMMUNITY COMMITTEE** to be held at the **Town Hall, Felixstowe** on **Wednesday 17 December 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 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
12 December 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 22 October 2025 as a true record. **(Pages 3-5)**
- 5. Civic & Community Budget Report**
To receive the Civic & Community Budget report to 30 November 2025 and consider any actions deemed necessary. **(Page 6 & Appendix A)**
- 6. UK Town of Culture**
To note the UK Town of Culture competition and consider, in principle, an expression of interest for Felixstowe. **(Pages 7-9)**
- 7. CCTV**
To receive an update from the CCTV Working Group and consider a proposal from ESC for CCTV upgrades. **(Pages 10-12)**
- 8. Felixstowe in Flower 2027 and Beyond**
To consider plans for Felixstowe in Flower 2027. **(Pages 13-16)**
- 9. Harwich Harbour Ferry update**
To receive an update report on the Harwich Harbour Ferry. **(Pages 17-19)**
- 10. Felixstowe Floods – 73rd Anniversary Commemoration**
To receive information on the Anniversary of Felixstowe Floods. **(Page 20-21)**
- 11. Closure**
To close proceedings and confirm the date of the next meeting scheduled for Wednesday 11 February 2026 at 7.30pm.

AGENDA ITEM 4: CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

MINUTES of a CIVIC & COMMUNITY COMMITTEE MEETING held at TOWN HALL, Felixstowe, on Wednesday 22 October 2025 at 7.30pm

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

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

233. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

None.

234. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from **Cllr D Aitchison** and **Cllr M Morris**.

235. 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)
Cllr S Bennett	#239	Other registerable interest (as a contributor to Pier Projects)
Cllr S Harkin	#239	Other registerable interest (as Chair of the Felixstowe History and Museum Society)

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.

236. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Civic & Community Committee meeting held on 10 September 2025 be confirmed as a true record.

237. CIVIC & COMMUNITY BUDGET REPORT

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

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

238. DRAFT BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS 2026-27

The committee considered the Civic & Community Committee's draft budget proposals for the 2026-27 financial year.

On a question regarding portioning staffing costs to elements of the Committee's budget, the Town Clerk confirmed that clerical staff costs were attributed to the Administration cost centre under the auspices of the Finance & Governance Committee.

RESOLVED that the draft budget for 2026-27 be recommended to the Finance & Governance Committee as presented.

239. OCCASIONAL GRANTS ROUND 2 2025/26

Committee considered completed applications for funding received prior to the 30 September 2025 deadline for the second round of Occasional Grants. The total of grant funding requested in this second round being £18,954.70.

Those Councillors having declared Other-Registerable Interests at Minute #235 above, absented themselves from the Chamber during the discussion and voting on those items.

RESOLVED that a total of £9,474.70 be awarded in Round 2 of the Occasional Grants for 2025/26, as detailed below, and approved for payment:

- i. £584.70 to the 8th Felixstowe Scout Group towards camping equipment;**
- ii. £450 to Being Well in Suffolk towards men's peer support network;**
- iii. £1,000 to the Compass towards emergency food and fuel vouchers;**
- iv. £350 to Cuppa towards storage for free food donations and for community sports equipment;**
- v. £1,819 to the Felixstowe History and Museum Society towards improving children's provision at Felixstowe Museum;**

- vi. **£580 to the Friends of Fairfield and Colneis towards an outdoor wooden mini adventure trail at Colneis Junior School;**
- vii. **£500 to the Friends of Felixstowe Seafront Gardens towards replenishment of gardening tools and equipment;**
- viii. **£1,500 to Home-Start Suffolk for volunteer training – Felixstowe;**
- ix. **£500 to Kingsfleet School Association towards playground improvements;**
- x. **£471 to Litter-Free Felixstowe towards litter pickers and certificates for children taking part in your treasure hunts over the coming year;**
- xi. **£900 to Memory Lane towards their Seaside Memories Project;**
- xii. **£200 to Pier Projects towards 10 Symposium bursary places;**
- xiii. **£500 to SARS (Suffolk Accident Rescue Service) towards Felixstowe activity;**
- xiv. **£120 to Save the Children towards Santa's ride around Town 2025.**

240. FELIXSTOWE IN FLOWER

Members noted the report on Felixstowe in Flower.

RESOLVED that the update report on Felixstowe in Flower be noted.

241. WESEL TWINNING VISIT

Members noted the report on Twinning.

RESOLVED that the update report on Twinning be noted

242. CLOSURE

The meeting was closed at 9.05pm. It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 17 December 2025 at 7.30pm.

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 30 November 2025 is provided below with a detailed report at **Appendix A**.

1 April - 12 December 2025 (2025 - 2026)

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	0.00	0.00	0.00	N/A	34,480.00	21,260.56	13,219	61.66%
302 Grants	0.00			N/A	56,992.00	43,157.70	13,834	75.73%
303 Felixstowe in Flower	7,500.00	4,908.38	2,592	65.45%	9,250.00	7,835.65	8,740	84.71%
304 Communication	7,500.00	3,612.50	3,888	48.17%	20,356.00	9,973.00	10,383	48.99%
305 Community Projects & Partner	0.00			N/A	11,000.00	11,000.00	0	100.00%
NET TOTAL	15,000.00	8,520.88	6,479.12	56.81%	132,078.00	93,226.91	46,177.12	70.58%

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Committee is requested to consider the budget report to 30 November 2025 and decide any action it deems necessary.

AGENDA ITEM 6: UK TOWN OF CULTURE

In September/October 2025, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) announced the launch of a new UK Town of Culture competition. The competition is designed to recognise and celebrate the unique cultural identity and contribution of smaller towns across the UK. It builds on the established UK City of Culture programme, which has seen positive impacts in places such as Derry/Londonderry, Hull, Coventry and Bradford.

The first Town of Culture title will be awarded to a winning town that will deliver an ambitious cultural programme in 2028, supported by a £3.5 million prize fund. Shortlisted towns are expected to receive £60,000 towards the development of their full bid. www.gov.uk/government/news/new-town-of-culture-competition-to-shine-a-spotlight-on-the-contribution-of-towns-that-tell-national-story

The competition aims to:

- Amplify local cultural assets and identity.
- Encourage community participation and pride in place.
- Support inclusive cultural engagement and broader civic outcomes.
- Generate lasting legacy benefits for the winning town.

Following a meeting with the MP for Suffolk Coastal, Committee is asked to consider the potential for Felixstowe Town Council to lead on facilitating a bid or Expression of Interest (EOI), subject to formal endorsement by Council.

Key Competition Details & Indicative Timeline

Although detailed guidance for the Town of Culture competition is still forthcoming, the following are confirmed or widely reported elements of the competition to date:

Award & Support

- Winning town receives £3.5 million to deliver a cultural programme in 2028.
- Shortlisted towns receive £60,000 for bid development.
- Bids will be judged on criteria including the town's unique story, inclusive cultural programme and deliverability.

Expression of Interest (EOI) Phase

- Applications are anticipated to open shortly; DCMS has confirmed that applications will run through a multi-phase process starting with an EOI.
- The EOI phase is intended to be light touch, focusing on a town's vision and readiness to deliver. [UK Parliament](https://www.parliament.uk)

Next Stages (Indicative)

- EOI submission window: expected to open soon and run into early 2026 (mirror model of the UK City of Culture timelines).
- Shortlist & full bid development: following EOI assessment, shortlisted towns are supported to produce full bids.
- Winner announcement: anticipated in early 2027, with the delivery year of the cultural programme in 2028.

Note: Final official guidance is expected to be published imminently by DCMS and will be reported to Members once available.

Relevance to Felixstowe

Felixstowe has a rich and diverse cultural base including heritage assets, creative groups, volunteer networks and a strong visitor economy. The Town of Culture competition offers a structured opportunity to:

- Articulate and showcase Felixstowe's cultural identity and story.
- Strengthen partnerships between civic bodies, community groups, cultural organisations, education providers and businesses.
- Support inclusive cultural participation across the community.
- Enhance local pride, civic engagement and external economic interest.

The preparatory process itself can deliver benefits by fostering collaboration, clarifying local cultural priorities and encouraging strategic planning.

Considerations for the Town Council

The Committee is invited to reflect on the following:

Role of the Town Council

- Whether the Council should endorse the development of an initial Expression of Interest for Felixstowe.
- Whether the Council should facilitate and convene a partnership structure (e.g. Steering Group and working groups) to support preparation, rather than acting as sole deliverer.
- How officer time and resources can be managed within existing capacity at this early stage.

Governance & Partnerships

- The value of establishing a Steering Group comprising Town Council, East Suffolk Council, community partners (e.g. Landguard Partners, BID, arts and heritage representatives) to guide the process.
- Ensuring that any bid preparation considers inclusion, equality, accessibility and community representation.

Risks and Opportunities

- The EOI phase carries minimal financial risk but promotes learning and partnership development.
- A competitive expression of interest has the potential to unlock external funding and raise the town's profile.
- Resource demands will increase significantly only if the Council agrees to proceed to a full bid stage.

Next Steps Should Members Support the Concept

If the Committee supports further work on this initiative, officers propose to:

1. Prepare a draft Expression of Interest proposal for consideration, once final DCMS guidance is published.
2. Initiate early stakeholder engagement with cultural partners and East Suffolk Council to explore collaboration and capacity.
3. Report back with a proposed governance structure, timeline and estimated resource implications for the EOI and, if applicable, full bid.

Committee is requested to:

- i. **note the introduction of the UK Town of Culture competition and the potential opportunity it presents for Felixstowe; and,**
- ii. **consider whether the Town Council should proceed with preparatory work towards an Expression of Interest, including facilitation of a partnership process and establishing an initial governance framework.**

AGENDA ITEM 7: CCTV - UPDATE FROM THE WORKING GROUP AND ESC PROPOSAL

This report updates the Committee on the work of the Town Council's CCTV Working Group, which met on Friday 5 December 2025, and presents a proposal received from East Suffolk Council (ESC) regarding the future delivery, ownership and monitoring of public space CCTV in Felixstowe.

The Committee is asked to consider the Working Group's conclusions and determine whether to recommend to Council an in-principle endorsement of the proposed partnership approach and use of the Town Council's CCTV Earmarked Reserve towards the capital phase of the project.

Background

Felixstowe Town Council currently maintains nine of the fifteen public space CCTV cameras in the town, with servicing of these carried out by STC Solutions; the remaining six (Sea Front Gardens) are owned by ESC.

FTC units. Monitoring is not undertaken by FTC; footage is accessed by Suffolk Police and reviewed post-incident from equipment located at the Police Station.

For several years, FTC has expressed support for a more strategic, district-led CCTV model. ESC is the statutory authority for community safety and holds responsibility for the majority of public assets where CCTV is required. FTC's CCTV Earmarked Reserve (£42,000) exists to support improvements in partnership with ESC should an appropriate upgrade proposal emerge.

Update from the CCTV Working Group (Meeting of 5 December 2025)

The Working Group received an update from Sergeant Nick Kitchen confirming that Suffolk Police will now check existing cameras weekly. A service report was also received from STC Solutions detailing maintenance since March 2025. The Working Group noted that:

- Public safety and ASB mitigation are the primary objectives for CCTV.
- ESC, as the statutory body for community safety and the principal owner of public assets, is better placed to lead the operational and governance model for a modernised system.
- FTC has consistently indicated it does not wish to be a data controller or operate monitoring systems from the Town Hall; monitoring should remain with either the Police or a district-managed monitoring centre.

Members reviewed the locations identified within ESC's proposal. An additional priority location was identified as the blue bridge off Runnacles Way, which was a recognised ASB hotspot.

ESC Proposal

ESC has now shared a draft proposal for a phased CCTV upgrade across Felixstowe and Lowestoft. Key elements relating to Felixstowe include:

- Upgrade of the existing 15 cameras plus installation of 8 new cameras across priority sites including Sea Road, Langer Park, Hamilton Road, the Library, Train Station, Walton High Street, and the Viewpoint Café area.
- A total estimated capital cost of £97,500 for the Felixstowe phase.
- ESC is preparing to take a report through its own governance process early in the new year to secure district-level capital funding and approval for a unified monitoring model.
- Monitoring would be undertaken by ESC (through ESSL or a contracted provider), with indicative ongoing annual monitoring costs funded by ESC.
- A joint ESC–FTC–Suffolk Police CCTV Steering Group would be established to oversee implementation and ongoing performance management.

Working Group Position

The Working Group agreed that:

1. FTC is content to contribute its CCTV Earmarked Reserve (£42,000) towards the capital cost of the Felixstowe upgrade, subject to the agreement of Council.
2. FTC should remain an active partner within a joint CCTV Steering Group with ESC and the police, ensuring the Town Council retains an effective voice in strategic deployment, performance monitoring, and ongoing review.

This approach aligns with good governance principles by allowing the statutory authority for community safety to take primary responsibility for delivery, while FTC contributes proportionately and appropriately to capital investment.

Financial Implications

FTC holds £42,000 within its CCTV Earmarked Reserve, set aside for future system improvements. Release of this reserve would require a decision of Council. There are no further financial commitments proposed at this stage.

Next Steps

- ESC will progress its proposal through its governance channels in early 2026.
- FTC to continue to engage to ensure that the Town Council's priorities are reflected, including consideration of the potential addition of the Runnacles Way "blue bridge" camera location.

- Subject to Committee approval, a recommendation will be made to Council for an in-principle endorsement of the partnership model and release of the earmarked reserve funds.

Committee is requested to:

- i. note the update from the CCTV Working Group;**
- ii. consider the Town Council's participation in any future joint CCTV Steering Group alongside ESC and Suffolk Constabulary;**
- iii. consider recommending to Council that it, in principle, welcomes and endorses the ESC proposal for a district-led CCTV upgrade and monitoring model for Felixstowe; and,**
- iv. consider recommending to Council that, subject to ESC's commitment to delivering the upgraded system, the Town Council approves the release of its £42,000 CCTV Earmarked Reserve towards the capital cost of Phase 1.**

AGENDA ITEM 8: FELIXSTOWE IN FLOWER 2027 AND BEYOND

This report reviews the current operation of Felixstowe in Flower (FIF) and proposes a strategic shift from the 2027 season onwards. In line with Committee's ambition to enhance visual impact whilst improving sustainability, the recommendation is to discontinue floral displays along the Seafront and reallocate resources to high-footfall areas—principally Hamilton Road/Shared Space and Walton High Street. This approach would allow for investment in modern, self-watering planters, reduce maintenance pressures, provide stronger sponsorship opportunities, and better reflect public feedback on which displays offer the greatest benefit.

Background

Felixstowe in Flower, established over 40 years ago, remains one of the Council's most recognisable community and environmental initiatives. The scheme currently comprises:

- Over 200 hanging baskets
- 12 railing planters (troughs)
- 16 whisky barrel planters

These are installed from late May to mid-September and maintained by the Council's Grounds and Maintenance Team. The Council is grateful for the ongoing support of Felixstowe Golf Club, which provides environmentally responsible grey water for the scheme.

Review of Current Provision

Strengths

- Town Centre railing planters along Hamilton Road receive the strongest public endorsement.
- Sponsorship take-up is consistently highest where visibility is greatest.
- Maintenance efficiencies are strongest in concentrated planting areas.

Challenges

- Seafront planters require the highest labour input, longest watering routes, and are most exposed to wind and salt, limiting impact and plant performance.
- Several whisky barrels are now ageing and require replacement within two years.
- The current scheme's geographic spread results in significant vehicle miles, staff hours and water usage.

Analysis suggests that resources could be more effectively deployed to maximise visual benefit, environmental sustainability, and sponsorship value.

Proposal for 2027 and Beyond

The current scheme is set to continue, as planned for 2026. Costs for 2026 are confirmed and flowers have been ordered.

Refocusing Priority Areas

It is proposed that from the 2027 season:

- The Seafront displays (excluding those at the Town Hall) be removed.
- Investment be focused on:
 - Hamilton Road and the Shared Space, including the Triangle.
 - Walton High Street, with a consistent run of attractive displays.
- Scope retained for smaller displays in other areas where sponsorship covers full cost.

Enhancing Key Locations

Potential enhancements include:

- Increasing railing planters on Hamilton Road and around the Triangle.
- Phasing out whisky barrels and replacing with modern tiered planters.
- Installing self-watering tiered planters in the Shared Space and Walton High Street to create focal points near seating and retail frontages.
- Aligning planter colours and branding for a more cohesive appearance.

Sustainability and Efficiency

The proposed changes will:

- Reduce staff time spent watering and travelling long distances.
- Cut water consumption.
- Reduce vehicle mileage and associated emissions.
- Support better plant health through improved planter technology.
- Strengthen the long-term resilience of the scheme.

Sponsorship Growth Potential

By concentrating displays in the busiest parts of the town, visibility for sponsors improves, making sponsorship packages more attractive and supporting the scheme's financial sustainability.

Updated Annual Timeline

Committee previously created a working timeline. Following review, the following revised timeline is proposed to better reflect operational needs, officer capacity, procurement cycles, sponsorship timelines and governance requirements.

January	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review previous season outcomes with Grounds Team, including any damage, planter replacements and operational notes.• Hold annual meeting with the Main Sponsor.• Confirm event dates (launch event, judging week, awards evening).• Begin procurement planning: hanging baskets, troughs, compost and plants.• Identify and confirm Awards Evening venue.
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mayor issues letters to previous sponsors thanking them and confirming arrangements for the forthcoming season.• Begin direct engagement and “door-knocking” for new sponsors.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact community groups interested in stalls for the Launch event. • Request quotations for 2027 tiered/self-watering planters scheme (subject to Committee approval).
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write to schools to confirm participation in competitions. • Arrange dates for school visits by the Mayor. • Include an article in the Spring edition of Felixstowe Magazine. • Begin finalising Launch event logistics.
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor to distribute the annual Felixstowe in Flower school kits. • Launch competitions online and at the Annual Town Meeting. • Confirm all sponsors for printed materials, plaques and signage. • Begin production of plaques/stickers for new planters. • Issue invitations to sponsors and community groups for the Launch event.
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planting and installation of baskets, troughs and tubs. • Competition forms included in the Summer edition of the Magazine. • Prepare a full list of sponsored locations for publication and records. • Distribute competition forms to Scouts/Guides and through councillor networks.
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch Event in the town centre. • Acknowledgement emails/letters to all entrants. • Begin monitoring plant performance and early summer watering regime.
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judging of schools, gardens and allotments. • Council participation in Felixstowe Carnival – raising awareness of FiF • Photograph all entries and displays prior to judging week. • Refresh judging panel as required to ensure fairness and rotation. • Mid-season review of display condition.
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued maintenance and watering. • Review any issues to inform changes for the following year. • Begin drafting outline proposals for the next season for Committee consideration.
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Felixstowe in Flower Awards Evening (date to be confirmed). • Main Sponsor to present the “Best of the Best” Award. • Publish results on Council website and social media.
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of remaining baskets and seasonal planters. • Condition assessment of all planters and hardware. • Quote for 2027 flower provision. • Budget confirmation and sponsorship package review. • Seek early pledges for tiered planter sponsorship (for 2027 approach).
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to Civic & Community Committee confirming scheme for following year.

Financial and Resource Implications

No changes proposed for the currently approved 2026 budget. Costs for the 2027 scheme TBC, subject to confirmation of revised layout.

Street Trees

Separately to the proposed alterations to Felixstowe in Flower, the Felixstowe BID are preparing an application to Suffolk County Council Highways to install new trees planted into tree pits into the ground through the shared space and Hamilton Road. If the application is approved, it is anticipated that these would replace the trees in the above ground wooden street planters. The Town Council may wish to consider its support for this project, which would provide a more sustainable environment for the town centre trees and further complement the proposed changes to the Felixstowe in Flower scheme.

Committee is requested to:

- i. note the review of the current Felixstowe in Flower arrangements;**
- ii. consider the proposal to remove Seafront floral displays from 2027 onwards;**
- iii. support in principle the redirection of resources towards Hamilton Road/Shared Space and Walton High Street;**
- iv. endorse the updated Annual Timeline for the scheme; and,**
- v. determine any further action it deems necessary.**

AGENDA ITEM 9: HARWICH HARBOUR FERRY UPDATE

The annual meeting regarding the Harwich Harbour Ferry funding for the 2026 season took place on 10th November. Freeport East attended the second half of the meeting. The meeting focused on the feasibility and future potential of extending the ferry service to operate on a year-round basis, with particular interest in commuter travel as well as tourism growth. Freeport East confirmed strategic interest in the ferry as part of its ambition to improve workforce connectivity and support economic growth across Felixstowe and Harwich. While Freeport funding is not a direct funding stream, it could support progressive investment over its 25-year lifespan, including cleaner fuels, vessel upgrades and infrastructure feasibility work.

While the current vessel can technically operate year-round, it is not well suited for winter conditions. Unpredictable winds, tidal constraints and limited winter passenger capacity make reliable commuter use challenging. Accessibility, particularly at Felixstowe, is a major issue, with low-tide landings requiring a long walk across shingle and no current capability to cater for wheelchair users.

Funding from partners currently totals £31,000 per annum, distributed as follows:

- Suffolk County Council: £12,500
- Essex County Council: £12,500
- Tendring District Council: £1,500
- East Suffolk Council: £1,500
- Babergh District Council: £1,000
- Felixstowe Town Council: £1,000
- Harwich Town Council: £1,000

Key Challenges

Current vessel limitations

- Not suitable for reliable year-round operation.
- Winter capacity limited to 12 passengers, restricting commuter use.
- Accessibility issues, including inability to take wheelchairs.

Weather and tidal constraints

- Unpredictable winds causes cancellations.
- Difficult tides and accessibility at Felixstowe; low-tide landing requires a 150-yard walk.
- Harwich can be locked sometimes.

Financial viability

- Labour costs estimated at £250k–£300k annually for year-round service.
- Fuel costs have increased by 30%.
- Operating costs expected to exceed revenue in winter/off-season.
- Uncertainty over long-term funding due to local government reorganisation (LGR) and mayoral changes.

Infrastructure constraints

- If a larger vessel is used then there would be a need for agreements with Shotley Marina, Felixstowe HHA and Harwich.
- Felixstowe dredging now less frequent; accessibility challenges remain.
- Current timetable doesn't support commuters.

Uncertainty in demand

- A survey has been considered but a 12-month trial would provide better data.

Operational risk

- Extending service with the current vessel risks service failure and reputational damage.
- Off-season services only viable in good weather.
- A new vessel could take more than 6 months to register.

Key Opportunities

Working with Freeport East partnership

- Potential long-term (25-year) support.
- Alignment with workforce mobility between Felixstowe and Harwich.
- Opportunity to explore cleaner fuels and sustainability.
- Potential for progressive funding rather than one-off grants to help make it more sustainable and self-funding.

Economic and tourism growth

- Increased housing at Shotley increases future demand.
- Strong visitor performance (target 40k, this year achieved 39,057).
- Scope to boost off-season tourism through marketing and business partnerships.
- Potential for integration with cycling (e-bikes) and future autonomous bus services.

Service sustainability

- Year-round operation would improve staff recruitment and retention.
- More consistent service would benefit commuters and businesses.
- Scope to improve self-funding over time.

Marketing and digital improvements

- New website in development with strong footfall.
- New branding and social media templates planned.
- Opportunity to better promote activities across all three destinations.

Infrastructure feasibility work

- Potential future investment in Felixstowe landing infrastructure.
- Study funding opportunity through Freeport.

Agreed / Proposed Actions

Short Term (Next 6–12 Months)

Harwich Harbour Ferry to provide:

- Full-year leisure usage figures.
- A simple year-round business plan for tourist operation (including risks).
- Clear outline of what a winter trial would look like.

Marketing actions:

- Finalise new website (next few months).
- Develop branded social media templates.
- Strengthen destination-led marketing for spring launch.

Infrastructure and access:

- Continue exploring solutions for Felixstowe low-tide access.
- Partnership to potentially write letters of support for:
 - Fuel supplier negotiations.
 - Dredging improvements.

Working with Freeport East:

- Scope requirements for all-year-round service.
- Develop options paper for the Freeport Board.
- Align with upcoming Transport Plan.
- Explore cleaner fuel and sustainable vessel options.

Medium Term (2026–2027)

Trial extension of the season

- Focus initially on extending leisure season rather than full commuter service.
- Aim for possible Winter 2026/27 trial, subject to:
 - Funding approval.
 - Vessel suitability.

Funding and governance

- Monitor impact of LGR and new Mayoral Authorities on transport funding.
- Explore blended funding models (grants & loans).

Infrastructure feasibility study

- Investigate long-term accessibility solutions at Felixstowe and Harwich.
- Assess commuter-grade landing facilities.

Longer Term

- Consider new vessel procurement for reliable year-round service.
- Explore integrated transport options (bus, autonomous transport).
- Progressive scaling toward a self-sustaining operation.

A meeting is planned for early February to continue planning for the future of the Harwich Harbour Ferry.

Committee is requested to note the update report on the Harwich Harbour Ferry.

AGENDA ITEM 10: FELIXSTOWE FLOODS – 73RD ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION

This report provides an update on arrangements to mark the 73rd Anniversary of the Felixstowe Floods, one of the most significant and tragic events in the town's modern history. The annual commemoration remains an important element of the Council's civic programme, offering an opportunity for the community to come together in remembrance and reflection.

Background

On the night of 31 January 1953, a devastating storm surge struck the East Coast, causing catastrophic flooding across many coastal communities. Felixstowe suffered heavily, with floodwaters inundating homes and streets in the southern part of the town. Forty-one residents lost their lives, and some of the deepest recorded flood levels occurred close to the present-day site of the Flood Memorial on Langer Road.

The Flood Memorial, situated at Langer Primary School, was unveiled at midnight on 31 January 2006 – exactly 53 years after the disaster – and now serves as a place of remembrance for the victims. Its design features a blue line marking the depth of floodwaters, alongside a plaque listing those who died. The Council maintains a full list of victims on its website to ensure this history continues to be accessible to residents, schools and visitors.

In preparation for the 70th Anniversary in 2023, the Memorial underwent refurbishment in 2022 to support its long-term preservation and ensure it remains a fitting tribute.



73rd Anniversary – 31 January 2026

As in previous years, the Council will coordinate a short commemorative service at the Flood Memorial. The 73rd Anniversary falls on Saturday 31 January 2026, and the service is planned for 10.00am.

While the programme will be confirmed closer to the date, it is anticipated to include:

- A formal wreath-laying ceremony.
- Reflections on the events of 1953 and the stories of local people.
- Contributions from community representatives and stakeholders, reinforcing the shared importance of civic remembrance.

Further details will be shared, subsequent, to the meeting once operational arrangements have been finalised.

Committee is requested to note the report on the forthcoming service to mark the 73rd Anniversary of the Felixstowe Floods.
