MINUTES of the **ASSETS & SERVICES COMMITTEE** meeting held at **Town Hall, Felixstowe** on **Wednesday 16 September 2026** at **7.30pm**

PRESENT: Cllr D Rowe (Chairman)
Cllr M James (Vice Chairman)
Cllr D Aitchison
Cllr T Gale
Cllr S Harkin
Cllr M Sharman
Cllr W Underwood

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr N Farthing (Chair, Felixstowe Allotment Association)
Mr P Weavers (Treasurer, Felixstowe Allotment Association)

169. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None.

170. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from **Cllr N Barber**.

171. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following interests were noted. Where a specific item on the agenda was directly related to any Members' declared interest, their participation was restricted in accordance with the Code of Conduct:

Member(s)	Minute No.	Nature of Interest
Cllr T Gale	All	Other Registerable Interest (as Member of Suffolk County Council)
Cllr S Harkin	All	Other registerable interests (as an employee of East Suffolk Council)
Cllr D Rowe	#175	Other registerable interest (Director of Level Two, which was an allotment tenant)

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.

172. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Assets & Services Committee Meeting held on 8 July 2026 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

173. ASSETS & SERVICES BUDGET REPORT

The Committee considered a summary and detailed report showing income and expenditure against the budget as at 11 September 2026.

It was RESOLVED that the Budget Report to 11 September 2026 be received and noted.

174. BUDGET REVIEW WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

Committee received a report on the recommendations of the Budget Review Working Group.

The Chair invited the Felixstowe Allotment Association (FAA) to make representations to Committee regarding the recommendations relating to allotment fees **Recommendations A&S 5 - 8**.

The FAA raised concerns regarding the potential impact of significant rent increases and changes to the concessionary arrangements, noting that a substantial change to the concession rate could result in a large number of plots being vacated. The FAA also raised concerns regarding the level of expenditure on the allotment service, suggesting that stronger enforcement against non-compliant plots would lower the maintenance and clearance expenses associated with poorly maintained, abandoned plots.

The representations made by the FAA were considered as part of the Committee's subsequent discussion, which included the level of subsidy provided by the Council, the costs associated with administering and maintaining the allotment service, and the wider social benefits provided by allotments.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed that the existing concessionary arrangements should remain unchanged. The proposed 10% annual rent increase would be considered as part of the subsequent Fees and Charges item. Additionally the recommendation for a borehole on the allotments would be discussed during the Allotment item

Recommendations A&S 1 & 2 - In relation to the promotion of weddings and registrar services, Members discussed concerns regarding the availability of registrar services at the Town Hall. It was agreed that Suffolk County Council should be contacted regarding the provision of registrar services, while the Town Council would continue to promote the Town Hall wedding offer.

Recommendation A&S 3 - It was noted that the recommendation had been made in anticipation of Local Government Reorganisation, which was no longer proceeding in the form previously proposed. Officers would continue to monitor the Town Hall leases

Recommendation A&S 4 - In relation to Broadway House, Members discussed the current leasing arrangements with the Felixstowe Old People's Welfare Association (FOPWA) and the potential for an annual grant to support the

organisation's longer-term financial sustainability. The Town Clerk confirmed that initial discussions had taken place with FOPWA and that the arrangements could be reviewed when the current lease was due for renewal.

It was RESOLVED that:

i. **the Budget Review Working Group recommendations be noted;**

ii. **the 10% allotment fee increase recommendation be noted and discussed during the Fee Review item;**

iii. **the recommendation for a borehole at the allotment sites be noted and discussed during the Allotment update item;**

iv. **no changes be made to the existing allotment concession rate;**

v. **Suffolk County Council be contacted regarding the provision of registrar services in Felixstowe;**

vi. **the arrangements with FOPWA be reviewed when their current lease is due for renewal in 2029.**

175. FEES AND CHARGES 2027-28

Committee considered the scale of Fees and Charges for Council services from 1 April 2027 as presented in the report.

Members evaluated general Town Hall hire charges alongside operational factors including usage levels, staffing overheads, and the impact on community and charitable groups.

Considerations for wedding fees focused on maintaining the Felixstowe resident discount, noting that the Clerk's Office serves smaller ceremonies while the Council Chamber remains the venue for larger events.

Across community facilities, Members examined Walton Community Hall charges to ensure pricing remains competitive without discouraging uptake, while cemetery fees were weighed against comparative rates levied by neighbouring authorities. Discussions on allotment rents balanced the level of Council subsidy and the impact on tenants against the Budget Review Working Group's recommendation for a 10% annual increase. Members considered that a 10% increase would be excessive but agreed that a percentage-based uplift, rather than a flat-rate increase, would better ensure that rents kept pace with rising costs over time.

Following detailed consideration across all departments, the Committee agreed to a 10% increase for Town Hall general hire charges, alongside 5% increases applied across wedding fees, Walton Community Hall hire, cemetery service charges, and allotment rents.

It was RESOLVED that the Fees and Charges for Council services be adopted as below with effect from 1 April 2027:

i. Town Hall – General Hire:

Hire fees for 2027-28 be increased by 10% as follows:

FELIXSTOWE TOWN HALL Hire includes VAT where applicable. Fees are higher outside of office hours to reflect additional staffing costs.	**Full day (Weekday, 9am-5pm)**	**Half day (weekdays 9-1pm, 1pm-5pm)**	**Hourly rate (weekday hours between 9am-5pm)**	**Hourly rate (all other times)**
Council Chamber				
Commercial/Business Hire	£279	£141	£44	£64
Voluntary/Charity/Community	£136	£70	£22	£41
Other Town Hall Rooms				
Commercial/Business Hire	£209	£107	£31	£57
Voluntary/Charity/Community	£123	£60	£17	£34
Refreshments (to include tea, coffee, water and biscuits)		£2 per delegate		

ii. Town Hall - Weddings and Special Events:

Wedding fees for 2027-28 to be increased by 5% as follows:

WEDDINGS AND SPECIAL EVENTS FELIXSTOWE TOWN HALL	**Weekday** (1st April-30th Sept)	**Weekend** (1st April-30th Sept)	**Any Day** (1st Oct-31st March)	**Post-Ceremony Drinks**
Council Chamber (for ceremonies attended by a maximum 76)	£680	£835	£680	N/A
Felixstowe Resident Rate	£580	£735	£580	
Clerk's Office (for ceremonies attended by a maximum 15)	£415	£515	£415	N/A
Felixstowe Resident Rate	£315	£415	£315	
Courtroom Gallery	N/A	N/A	N/A	£160
Other Rooms	N/A	N/A	N/A	£160

iii. Walton Community Hall – General Hire:

Hire fees for 2027-28 be increased by 5% as follows:

WALTON COMMUNITY HALL Hire includes VAT where applicable. Fees are higher outside of office hours to reflect additional staffing costs.	**Weekdays 9-5pm**	**Evenings and Weekends up to 10pm**	**Session Rate Mon-Sun 9am-10pm**

			(up to 4 hours)
Commercial/Business Hire	£21	£24.50	£65.50
Voluntary/Charity/Community /Private Hire	£11	£14.50	£36

iv. Cemetery:

Fees for 2027-28 be increased by 5% as follows:

1. INTERMENTS		
Charges applicable during ordinary hours of burial 9am - 3pm Mon-Fri	**Standard Fee**	**Felixstowe Resident fee***
Still Born – 1 Month	No charge	No charge
Child up to 18 Years	No charge	No charge
Adult Grave - Single Depth 4'6"	1604	802
Double Depth 6'4"	2595	1298
Triple Depth 7'6"	3029	1515
Urn of cremated remains	408	204
Scattering of ashes	92	92
Additional charges applicable outside ordinary hours of burial Monday to Friday	**Standard Fee**	**Felixstowe Resident fee**
Grave space	1070	535
Urn space	635	318
Scattering of ashes	361	181
Additional charges applicable on Weekends and Bank Holidays (subject to availability)	**Standard Fee**	**Felixstowe Resident fee**
Grave space	1779	890
Urn space	1244	622
Scattering of ashes	456	228
2. PURCHASE OF EXCLUSIVE RIGHT OF BURIAL FOR A PERIOD OF 50 YEARS		
Charges applicable during ordinary hours of burial 9am to 3pm inclusive Monday to Friday	**Standard Fee**	**Felixstowe Resident fee***
Adult Grave 8' by 3'	3035	1518
Children's grave 4' by 3'	No Charge	No Charge
Urn plot in GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE	1244	622
Urn plot in LAWN GARDEN	2281	1141
3. RENEWAL OF EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS OF BURIAL		

	Standard Fee	Felixstowe Resident fee*
Renewal 50 years: Adult Grave	2675	1338
Child Grave	No Charge	No Charge
Urn plot (Garden of Remembrance)	889	445
Urn plot (Lawn Garden)	1920	960
Renewal 25 years: Adult Grave	1358	679
Child Grave	No Charge	No Charge
Urn plot (Garden of Remembrance)	448	224
Urn plot (Lawn Garden)	984	492
4. PERMISSION TO ERECT MEMORIALS		
	Standard Fee	
Kerb stone or border stone or edging not exceeding 6'6" by 2'6" by 6" in height (Blocks A – F only)	383	
Memorial not exceeding 3' 6" height by 3' width	383	
Kerb stone/border stone/edging AND Memorial (Blocks A – F only)	637	
Memorial not exceeding 2' height by 1'3 width by 3" depth (Block J urns, M urns, & Block O)	210	
Scroll, tablet or open book not exceeding 2' 6" wide by 1' 6" high	210	
Additional inscription on any memorial after the first	130	
Garden of Remembrance – Ground level Plaque		
Vase with or without lettering	52	
Plaque for urn plot 6" by 4"	52	
Plaque for urn plot 8" by 6"	52	
MEMORIAL GARDEN (subject to VAT)		
	Standard Fee	**Felixstowe Resident fee***
Single granite plaque in MEMORIAL GARDEN (includes plaque but inscription chargeable by stonemason) for 10 years	802	401
Leaf on Memorial Tree in MEMORIAL GARDEN (includes leaf and inscription) for 10 years	495	248
Renewal of lease for the above memorials for further 5 years	171	171
Memorial bench plaques with inscription for 10 years (prices from)	1644	822
5. MAINTENANCE AND UPKEEP OF GRAVE SPACE (subject to VAT)		

Planting single grave space with flowers or bedding plants and bulbs(winter and summer) and maintaining for ten years	2188	2188
Planting single grave with winter and summer plants and maintaining for one year	381	381
Annual maintenance thereafter	218	218
6. MISCELLANEOUS		
Registering transfer of grant	58	58
Exhumation (Burial)	2139	2139
Exhumation (Ashes)	889	889
Register Search	34	34
Preparation of Statutory Declaration	75	75

v. Allotments

For tenancies renewing in October 2027, or new tenancies beginning from April 2027, the applicable fees will be:

Plot Size	**Standard Rent (inc. Water)**	**Discount Rent (inc. Water)**
Single-size plot **New tenant** (approx. 125m^2 or '5 Rods')	**£79**	Discount will be applied to first full year
Single-size plot (approx. 125m^2 or '5 Rods')	**£48.55**	**£31.55**
Double-size plot (approx. 250m^2 or '10 Rods')	**£97.10**	**£63.10**
'Allitlement' (Miniplot)	**£30.50**	**N/A**

176. WALTON COMMUNITY HALL REFURBISHMENT

The Committee received an update on the Walton Community Hall refurbishment.

Members acknowledged the improvements made to Walton Community Hall and discussed the potential for an Assets & Services Committee meeting to be held there, noting the historic significance of the building and the opportunity to showcase the improvements undertaken. An early update was also provided on the performance of the solar panels and the recent commencement of the feed-in tariff.

Members also discussed the availability of parking and the possibility of engaging with the NHS regarding use of its nearby car park outside normal operating hours.

It was RESOLVED that:

i. **the Walton Community Hall Refurbishment update report be noted;**

ii. **arrangements be made for a future Assets & Services Committee meeting to be held at Walton Community Hall; and,**

iii. **officers engage with the NHS regarding the potential use of its car park outside normal operating hours.**

177. CEMETERY UPDATE REPORT

The Committee received an update regarding operational projects and developments at Felixstowe Cemetery, including the replacement cemetery entrance gates and the Cemetery Extension Project.

Members noted the progress of the gate replacement works and discussed arrangements for the removal of the Scout Group's hut as part of the Cemetery Extension Project.

It was RESOLVED that the Cemetery update report be noted.

178. TELECOMS MAST LICENCE

The Committee received an update on the progress with the Telecoms Mast Licence contract negotiations.

Members noted that the amended Heads of Terms incorporated the operational safeguards previously requested by the Council and that the matter was now ready to progress to the legal stage.

It was RESOLVED that:

i. **the Telecoms Mast Licence report be noted; and,**

ii. **officers be authorised to progress the agreement to the legal stage.**

179. ALLOTMENTS UPDATE REPORT

The Committee received an update regarding allotment matters, including the proposed Cowpasture borehole and clearance works required at Railway Hill.

Members considered the Hydrogeological Risk Assessment required before any borehole drilling could proceed. The Committee agreed that the quotation of £575 + VAT represented an appropriate initial step in establishing the feasibility of the proposed borehole. The potential to transport water from Cowpasture to other allotment sites using the Council's bowser was also discussed.

Members discussed the significant resources required to clear neglected plots at Railway Hill and considered potential ways of reducing the costs incurred by the

Council when plots were left in an unsatisfactory condition by previous tenants. A deposit scheme was considered but was not felt to be appropriate.

Members instead emphasised the importance of firmer enforcement of existing tenancy conditions to reduce the likelihood of significant clearance costs arising in the first place. The Committee confirmed its support for officers taking a firmer approach to enforcement and indicated that officers would have Members' backing should this result in challenge or objection from tenants. Existing debt recovery procedures were also noted as a means of recovering costs from tenants where appropriate.

Members also discussed the possibility of introducing an anonymous reporting facility for allotment issues. It was confirmed that, where there was insufficient evidence to identify an individual tenant as being responsible for a reported issue, the Council's existing approach was to contact all tenants, or all tenants within the affected area, rather than approach a single tenant.

Members considered that this approach could be supplemented by an anonymous reporting facility, potentially using a QR code linked to an online reporting form. It was noted that this could provide tenants with a straightforward means of reporting concerns without identifying themselves.

It was RESOLVED that:

i. **the Allotment update report be noted;**

ii. **an expenditure of £575 + VAT be approved from the Asset Repair and Replacement Earmarked Reserve for the hydrogeological risk assessment;**

iii. **the costs associated with clearing the Railway Hill allotment plots be monitored and reported back to the Committee;**

iv. **the enforcement of cultivation standards across the allotment sites be strengthened, in accordance with the Council's cultivation and enforcement procedures; and,**

v. **a system for the anonymous reporting of allotment issues be implemented, with the practical arrangements for the system to be developed by officers.**

180. PARKS UPDATE REPORT

The Committee received an update regarding maintenance and surface repair works at Gosford Way Play Area.

Members were advised that, in addition to the quotation included within the agenda papers, a further quotation of £1,470 + VAT had been received from another contractor prior to the meeting, but after publication of the agenda.

Although the second quotation was higher, it included a more comprehensive scope of works. The Grounds & Maintenance Manager explained that, due to the nature of the soil at the site, the contractor had advised that the works could not be guaranteed. Members queried whether the alternative contractor could offer a guarantee for its proposed works. It was noted that this was not specified in the quotation and could be clarified with the contractor.

Having considered the quotations and the respective scopes of work, the Committee agreed to proceed with the more comprehensive works at a cost of £1,470 + VAT.

It was RESOLVED that:

i. the Parks Update Report be noted; and,

ii. Company B be selected to undertake the surface repair works at Gosford Way Play Area at a cost of £1,470 + VAT, to be met from the Parks and Recreation Repairs and Maintenance budget.

181. CLOSURE

The meeting closed at 9.29pm. The next meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 18 November 2026 at 7.30pm.

Date: _____ Chairman: _____