



**HAVERHILL**  
TOWN COUNCIL

# Haverhill Town Council

Notes of a Meeting of Haverhill Town Council's

## LEISURE & COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

Held at Haverhill Arts Centre on Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 7.00pm

- Present:** Mayor D Smith  
Councillor J Burns (Chair)  
Councillor A Brown  
Councillor Q Cox  
Councillor P Hanlon  
Councillor A Luccarini
- Absent:** Councillor M Martin  
Councillor D Page
- In Attendance:** Colin Poole, Town Clerk  
Daniel Schumann, Creative Director (until 7.01pm)  
Karen Chapple, Youth Skills Manager (until 8.02pm)  
Jane Lomas, Council Administrator

1 member of the public was present.

### Welcome:

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chairman advised that the meeting was being streamed live on the Council's YouTube channel.

## MINUTES

**LC25** **Apologies for Absence**  
**/001** The above apologies were noted.

**LC25** **Declarations of Interest and requests for Dispensation**  
**/002** None.

**LC25** **Minutes of the Last Meeting**  
**/003** It was proposed by Councillor P Hanlon, seconded by Councillor D Smith, that the minutes of the meeting held Monday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2024 be agreed as a true record.

**RESOLVED**

**ACTION**

**LC25 Actions Arising from the Minutes**

**/004** None.

**LC25 Public Forum**

**/005** Mr E Pinnock said how much he enjoyed 'MJ The Legacy' and asked if Haverhill Arts Centre could book him again. The Town Clerk will pass his comments to the Arts Director.

**Town Clerk**

**LC25 Bus shelter, Eastern Avenue**

**/006** Five Perspex panels have been kicked out and a metal bar is missing from the bus shelter serving Castle Manor School. To replace the bus shelter will cost circa £7,700. Councillors discussed the merits of repairing, replacing or demolishing the structure.

It was proposed by Councillor A Luccarini, seconded by Councillor D Smith that estimates for repairing the bus shelter be obtained and to consider options once the figures are received.

**Town Clerk**

**RESOLVED**

**LC25 Splashpad & Kiosk opening times**

**/007** The length of the splashpad and kiosk season was debated and compared with similar facilities offered by other councils. The current opening period of Haverhill's facility is Easter to 30<sup>th</sup> September which, in 2024, equated to 28 weeks. Sales figures are very low in April and September which is probably due to the school term and inclement weather. By shortening the season, costs could be reduced through staffing, fewer cleaning sessions, and wastage of perishable food items.

It was proposed by Councillor D Smith, seconded by Councillor A Brown that opening times in 2025 be reduced to: 23<sup>rd</sup> May to 31<sup>st</sup> August, equating to fifteen weeks. However, it was noted this is the 'official' opening period and this can be extended informally if fine weather permits.

**RESOLVED**

**LC25 Grant Requests**

**/008** a) Year to date expenditure on grants:

Year to date expenditure on grants was considered. It is noted that Abbeycroft Leisure was able to secure £661 of funding from other sources. It is anticipated that circa £5,000 will left at the end of the financial year which will be absorbed into the budget.

b) Grant requests:

<b>Requesting Group</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Amount Requested</b>	<b>Amount Awarded</b>
Haverhill Air Cadets	Funding towards the costs of traffic management for their parade in 2025	£570.00	£570.00 Councillor A Luccarini Councillor D Smith <b>RESOLVED</b>

**Deputy Clerk**

**LC25 Reports from Officers (attached – Appendix 1)**

**/009 a) Creative Director and Arts Centre Report**

Daniel Schumann presented his report and highlighted:

- Pantomime net figures should be available by the end of the month.
- DS is looking at the schedule for this year's pantomime and has published a survey to ascertain what people would like regarding show start times. He is also reviewing the running length of the season, e.g. starting later in December and running until New Year's Eve.
- Michael Rosen will visit schools, instead of holding an event at the Arts Centre. He will visit two schools and in all, around five-hundred children will be able to see him.
- Arts Centre improvements: feedback from the Heritage Lottery Fund was due within twenty working days but notification has been received that feedback will take longer due to it being over the Christmas period.
- Analysis of events showed that not as many events were subsidised as in previous years. Joke Jam was still struggling but DS has changed the agency and the first show under the new contract fared better. Children's shows are consistently in the red because the ticket price point is low in order to attract as many families as possible. This investment in a young audience will encourage them to come to more live shows as they grow up. It is noted that we are a community theatre and one of our goals is to encourage people into the arts, so not all events will make a profit.
- DS will look at the bar drinks offering so see if it can be refreshed.

**b) Youth Skills Manager Report**

Karen Chapple presented her report and took questions from Councillors.

- It is three months until the end of the financial year and Karen is actively looking for funding for the next financial year.
- KC reported that it is rewarding to work with young people and to identify ways in which they can be supported.
- Councillor Cox offered to volunteer by holding some writing development sessions.
- The question of education for 16–18-year-olds in Haverhill was robustly debated. Currently only those with five GCSE passes can attend sixth form and more options are needed for those who are less academic. It is regrettable that West Suffolk College is unable to help in Haverhill. Currently, the only offerings are outside the town, for example in Bury St Edmunds which is a forty-mile round trip. Karen is in talks with Cambridge Regional College. It was suggested that Essex/Braintree may be open to discussions. Lofty Heights in Ipswich is a not-for-profit social enterprise and one of the areas they work in is to create new and inspiring employment training opportunities for young people. Funds were received through a successful Lottery bid. This may be worth exploring for Haverhill.

**c) Zone Manager and Lead Youth Worker Report**

Sandra Linnane's report was discussed, and Councillors expressed their sympathy at the passing of George Eady.

It was noted that the number of parties being booked at The Zone has dropped significantly. This is believed to be due to the opening of McDonald's in September and children choosing to go there for their birthday. Sandra is reviewing The Zone's food offering to ensure that we can provide an equivalent offer. The ice-cream machine is being relocated from the Kiosk to The Zone. HAC's marketing manager will ensure that the marketing is right.

**Creative  
Director**

**Sandra  
Linnane**

**Marketing  
Manager**

**LC25** **Grant Recipient Reports (attached – Appendix 2)**  
**/010** None.

**LC25** **Working Party Reports**

**/011** **a) Civic Events Working Party**

It was proposed by Councillor D Smith, seconded by Councillor Q Cox, that the minutes of the meeting held Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025 be agreed as a true record.

**RESOLVED**

**b) Community Events Working Party**

It was proposed by Councillor D Smith, seconded by Councillor A Luccarini, that the minutes of the meeting held Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025 be agreed as a true record.

**RESOLVED**

**LC25** **Any Other Business**

**/012** None.

**LC25** **Date of Next Meeting**

**/013** Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

**LC25** **Closure**

**/014** The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.32pm.

Signed .....

**Chairman**

Date .....

## **APPENDIX 1 – MANAGERS’ REPORTS**

### **10a Arts Centre Report**

#### **Box Office Update**

The Arts Centre has had a very busy period again. Notable shows have included:

- Buddy Holly Winter Dance Party – 190 Sold
- MJ Legacy – Sold Out
- Twigwidge to the Rescue – Sold Out
- Sleeping with Beauty – Sold Out
- Swinging Cat Jazz – Sold Out

#### ***Future Sales***

The following have all made a particularly healthy start:

- Cilla Show – 138 Sold
- Marcus Brigstocke – Sold Out
- Seriously Collins – 152 Sold
- Million Dollar Men – 124 Sold
- Tribute to Taylor Swift – 140 Sold

#### ***Cinema***

We have had a good run of cinema... highlights include:

- Small Things Like These - 55 tickets sold
- Wicked - 48 tickets sold
- Paddington - 36 tickets sold
- Nutcracker - 67 tickets sold
- Conclave - 47 tickets sold

Our Dementia Screenings in partnership with The Terrific Tuesday Club continue to go well. These are being helped with funding from the warm spaces fund.

#### ***Pantomime***

According to our current calculations we took £48,898 – which means we far exceeded last year (£45,957). Once again, the Pantomime was produced in house, meaning that all profit will be retained by us. The reviews were excellent, with the Cambridge News saying it was,

*“A sparkling show for all ages...”*

Also, public feedback was extremely strong, with many saying it is the best they have seen.

This means that artistically and financially the pantomime was a huge success for us. My plan is to reevaluate the schedule and see if we can adjust the show dates and times to further take advantage of demand.

#### ***Half Term & Easter Family Show***

I have now confirmed that MICHAEL ROSEN will be coming to Haverhill on 13<sup>th</sup> February to do his show and book signing. Over 500 young people will benefit from this rare and special visit. Many thanks to West Suffolk and Suffolk County Council Members for their assistance with Locality Funds. This would not have been possible without your support.

Also, for School Holidays we are creating our own Princess Show for February half term. I have also teamed up with Rentadinosaur to produce a spectacular Easter Dinosaur Show specially for HAC called Jursassica Spectacular.

### ***Comedy Nights***

I am pleased to report that our first show with our new comedy partner - BIG DEAL COMEDY has now sold out. The next one (March) is also close to sell out already.

### ***Developments of Note***

- ***Visual Arts Exhibitions***

We have a touring Claude Cahun exhibition from the world-famous Hayward Gallery booked for May/June 2025.

- ***Cinema Programming***

I have found a provider (the Independent Cinema Office) who can offer us a more cost-effective programming service. I am now in the process of giving notice to our current provider.

- ***Suffolk County Council Culture Fund***

A full application for this fund was submitted by the deadline of 29<sup>th</sup> November. The application was for £30,000 across 12 months. It would support a variety of arts projects for young people and elderly people as these were target groups for the fund.

### ***Arts Centre Improvements***

Following my initial meeting with The Heritage Lottery Fund to discuss a capital project to improve and revitalize the Arts Centre, we submitted our stage one application (known as Expression of Interest) on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024. This will be assessed, and we will hear their feedback within 20 working days and about whether NLHF would like us to progress to the next stage. Some basic community consultation took place to support our EOI.

**Daniel Schumann**  
**January 2025**

## **10b Youth Skills Report December 2024**

### **Well-Being Youth Hub**

We have a regular group of 25 young people attending this activity. The sessions are very sociable, providing the participants with an opportunity to chat with each other while engaging in various activities. They discuss hobbies, school, and other topics; despite coming from different year groups or schools they are making new friendships. Creating edible art or making something to take home are firm favourites. Involvement in town events has helped build further confidence in public spaces. Going forward, the activities will incorporate more aspects of well-being, offering topics for discussion while eating or engaging in activities. This will serve to address strategies for improving well-being and foster meaningful conversations.

### **Website**

Joseph Dexter is currently working on our website, with input from our team. Rebekah has renewed our flyers and produced a newsletter for our project, the link has been shared to our website.

### **Level 2 WS Provision Update**

A full term has been completed with 17 students across two groups, and a 6th staff member has been recruited. There is growing interest from potential students for both this and the next academic year. While WS are currently unable to confirm exact numbers for the upcoming year, they recognise the demand and are working with West Suffolk Council to secure an alternative venue to enable them to increase their capacity. They anticipate that around 50% of their current students will continue with them next year to further their progress. For January, they are operating from the EpiCentre due to the ongoing heating issues at The Clements Community Centre.

### **Transitioning Support Group**

The Transitioning Group meets weekly to provide support, combat isolation, explore training opportunities, and build confidence. The group fosters a strong sense of community, where members actively encourage each other's growth. Together, we break down barriers, form lasting friendships, and make meaningful progress as we work towards becoming our best selves.

### **1-2-1 Sessions**

We supported individuals to take next steps. We met a young person who was a refugee, we supported her to produce a CV and applying for part-time work, in which she was successful in securing. We linked her up with West Suffolk College, and she is now attending a social care course at the Bury St Edmund campus.

### **Funding Applications**

We have applied for a £10,000 Thriving Communities Grant to support our Signpost Projects and are currently awaiting the outcome. In addition, we have submitted a £20,000 application to "Awards for All" to help expand our services for isolated, vulnerable individuals with low mood. If successful, this funding will allow us to offer a tailored support package, including the option of counselling.

## **Signpost Projects**

### **Adult Signpost**

Sessions have included, art therapy, board games, painting glass, candle workshop, group 'Gartic' phone activity. The group are growing closer, discussing personal issues more openly and offering peer-support to each other. We linked up with West Suffolk College to discuss opportunities for adult learning. We have asked for the group to take responsibility and plan sessions for next month, to organise, plan and budget. This will give a sense of ownership and breed loyalty.

### **Junior Signpost**

Junior Signpost offered a variety of activities, including roller skating at Abbey Croft, badminton, and crafting snow globes and headwear for the Christmas parade. They also had the chance to participate in the parade itself. In addition, they attended the pantomime, where some of our clients were pulled up on stage—a moment they secretly enjoyed. Throughout these experiences, we saw relationships deepen, confidence grow, and a true sense of belonging flourish.

### **Toddler and Me**

We supported parents with toddlers at the zone, the soft play area provides a valuable opportunity for both children and parents to engage in active play, the parents often find themselves interacting with others in similar stages of parenting. The soft play environment fosters connections through shared experiences, where parents discuss challenges like sleep routines, potty training, and dealing with tantrums. This social setting allows for mutual support, as parents exchange advice, offer encouragement, and bond over the ups and downs of raising young children. These conversations can alleviate feelings of isolation, build friendships, and offer fresh perspectives on parenting, all while toddlers enjoy safe, physical activities that enhance their development.

### **Boost**

We were awarded **£11,902**- we have spent to date £8743.72 We have £3158.28 to spend in the last quarter.

The project has delivered positive outcomes across various areas. There have been challenges in engaging with all clients fully, some have been more responsive than others. We have successfully maintained consistent engagement with a dedicated core group of participants. They have actively participated in selected elements of the programme, although not all. We have received valuable feedback from both schools and parents, which has been encouraging.

The integration of therapeutic counselling with additional support services has proven to be effective, and we are pleased to see that those referred have benefited from these services, which might otherwise have been inaccessible to them. The activities selected by participants, along with the mentoring sessions, have been well-received. However, we encountered difficulties with the educational sessions, particularly in securing attendance and bringing all participants together for a third weekly session. As a result, we adapted by delivering educational content through the mentoring and counselling components.

On a positive note, individuals who had previously been making poor decisions at school and in general, appear to be reassessing their choices. Although they continue to face challenges in consistently making the best decisions, there is noticeable progress in their thought processes, which is encouraging. This shift could signify the beginning of positive changes in their behaviour.



We will hold exit interviews with our clients on completion, we will ask school staff, parents, mentors and counsellors to feed back on the outcomes. This will indicate outputs and conclusions of the project results. **BOOST Case Study**

#### **Client A**

**Counselling:** Group counselling is going well; A is committed to attending and sees the benefits.

**Activity:** A has taken part in both golf and football and has enjoyed both, it has provided a good outlet for his energy and a positive focus for him. A has shown improved skills, which in turn has improved his confidence. A has formed positive relationships with instructors of the sports mentioned and this has been a positive experience for him.

**School:** Mixed behaviour, school are supportive and understand that he is trying to make better decisions, he is remorseful when he makes bad choices and apologises when he does, taking responsibility for his actions. He is showing more of a thought process when making decisions, the hope is for him to choose the positive behaviour rather than the negative.

#### **New funding**

We are pleased to report that our application for funding from the prosperity fund has been successful. This funding of **£2700** will enable us to expand our initiative, aimed at supporting groups of young people and their families. Our goal is to help these individuals build confidence, acquire valuable life skills, and foster relationships within the community. The program is designed for those who are eager to learn new crafts, particularly in sewing, and use these skills to develop personal strength while creating connections with others.

#### **Program Overview:**

The initiative will focus on teaching sewing as a craft and life skill, offering participants a sense of accomplishment, focus, and pride. Engaging in the process of creating something tangible will provide participants with a constructive and positive outlet for their energy. Sewing encourages mindfulness and enhances problem-solving abilities, making it an ideal tool for fostering personal growth. Additionally, it provides a safe, warm environment where individuals can focus on learning and self-improvement.

#### **Key Benefits:**

- **Increased Confidence and Skill Development:** skills but also teach patience, attention to detail, and perseverance qualities that are transferable to all areas of life, including school and future employment.
- **Promoting Inclusivity and Sustainability:** Securing funding for sewing machines will enable participants to work on their own projects, upcycle clothes, or create items for charity. The opportunity to engage in upcycling promotes sustainability and offers entrepreneurial opportunities. These free sessions will be inclusive, allowing community members from various backgrounds and skill levels to participate and learn together.

#### **Conclusion:**

With the funding secured, we are excited to offering sewing workshops from the end of January from the Zone, we will start advertising this from next week. We have already via word of mouth secured 6 learners. We will work with other organisations and departments to ensure this equipment is fully made use of and as many people can benefit from it as possible.

**Karen Chapple**  
**Youth Skills Manager**

## 10c Zone Soft Play and Youth Work Report

**Staffing** – It was with huge sadness that we heard that our colleague George Eady passed away at the end of December. Everyone at The Zone will miss him dearly. His cheeky ways, helpful nature, his willingness to cover for staff absences/holidays. Our thoughts are with his family and friends. Staff are being supported during this difficult time. George had only just decided to stay at The Zone and was a great help covering for staff sickness during December, so it was all the more of a shock he was taken away from us so suddenly. All the staff were contacted and have been offered support.

On a very practical level George's passing exacerbates the need for an additional cook at the Zone. We will start recruitment in due course.

**Training** – Online and in house training continues as and when needed. Congratulations to Monica who completed her Leadership and Management course with High Speed Learning.

**Updated Website** – The Marketing team have done a great job of updating the Zone's website and have been publishing our events more frequently.

**Parties** – The number of parties has been lower than last year. We still have an outside agency who deliver laser tag, dodge ball and football parties. We have had a couple of the pre-schools book their Christmas parties along with some SEND classes from two different schools and a rainbow and guides group. We will be working with Joe Dexter to see what can be done to improve the numbers.

Numbers of **parties** booked in 2023 and 2024

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
November	21	15
December	23	15

### **Soft Play:**

These numbers do not include the birthday party attendees.

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
November	1412	1307
December	921	788

The difference during this period is we are down by 238 visits in 2024.

### **Zone Financials**

#### **November 2023:**

Entrance £3,255.13  
Café Sales £4,594.97  
Party Sales £4,001.77

#### **November 2024:**

Entrance £3,091.89  
Café Sales £4,185.39  
Party Sales £2,454.76

We are down by £2119.83 across the board compared to November 23, which is mainly due to the reduction in parties.

#### **December 2023:**

Entrance £2,514.63  
Café Sales £3,371.86

#### **December 2024:**

Entrance Fees £1883.24  
Café Sales £2864.40

Party Sales £1,719.51

Party Sales £ 626.24

We are down by £2232.42 across the board compared to December 23. We had a couple of unexpected closures due to staff sickness which has been exceptionally bad over this Christmas period.

**Father Christmas** – We have been lucky to have Santa visit us for six afternoon sessions and one of the SEND Christmas parties asked for Santa. 64 children in total. A very big thank you to our Father Christmas (who is DBS checked, for the record).

**Christmas holidays** – We were closed Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> to Friday 27<sup>th</sup> December. We were due to re-open Saturday 28<sup>th</sup>, but staff sickness prevented this and no cover was available. We re-opened Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> and did not open Monday 30<sup>th</sup> December due to the sad and sudden death of George Eady. Re-opened Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> January, Saturday and Sunday. Then back to our normal hours.

**Toddler Time** - (parents attending and are responsible for their children) takes place during term time only stops during the school holidays. It resumed (Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2025) and continues every Wednesday and Friday. These prove popular sessions, and we have regular customers who prefer just having preschool children here and it's usually a calmer session. Good time for parent's and children to make new friendships.

**Toddler Multi-Sport** – We have teamed up with Prestige Sports who have been delivering multi sports in our football/basketball area on a Thursday morning. Numbers picked up slightly but dropped off near Christmas. We will re start Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> January and see if it helps with increasing customer numbers. Age range 2 to 4 years. The children have the opportunity to take part or just use the soft play equipment or do both. We have had a couple of visitors come from outside of town specially for the multi-Sport session.

**SEND Sessions** – Funded by Activities Unlimited take place every other Monday during term time. This ensures we only have a maximum of 25 children and parents/carers have the opportunity to chat with others who are experiencing similar concerns but also sharing what works for them. Unlimited squash and some healthy snacks are offered to the children. This group has a good uptake. Any children/parents who find our main sessions that are open to the public challenging are given information regarding our Monday SEND session. We have submitted our funding application to Activities Unlimited in the hope to secure funding for 2024 to 2025.

**Food Hygiene Visit:** We had a visit from Environmental Health just before Christmas and The Zone retained our 5-star rating. Thanks to all the team.

**Funding** – We continue to look for funding to enable us to offer different projects.

## **Youth Work**

**Staffing** - We have two new youth workers who are settling in. Looking forward to the New Year with regular youth work sessions.

**Training** - We have had Sexual Health Training delivered by Suffolk Sexual Health Service 5 members of the youth/youth skills team were able to take this up.

**Funding** – We approached West Suffolk Council (Uk Shared Prosperity Fund) for replacement laptops for the On Spot Van and also a special keyboard to help partial sighted

young people to access them. We are pleased to say the funding bid has been a success and we will be receiving £969.00. A big thank you.

**Pride Alliance Group** – Continues at Castle Manor (term time) for an hour on a Wednesday to meet with Miss Kennard, Miss Sparks and young people to discuss matters regarding LGQBT+ and other topics of interest. We usually have between 12 to 16 young people attend. For our Christmas meeting we took in some party food and the group chose games to play.

**Detached** – Ideally, we would like to go out weekly but due to a shortage of youth workers this has not been possible. PC Jack Oakley offered to come out on some sessions, but his policing took priority, and this did not take place. We have since been in touch and will be meeting up in the New Year. We continue to work with the police, communities within Haverhill, and other professionals to enable us to provide the best service possible to the young people.

**SEND Youth Night** – We did not have a SEND youth session during the Christmas holidays. The next one will be in February half term. This session invites young people with their families/carers to access pool, table tennis, giant Jenga, giant connect four, colouring, football, basketball and also the chance for the young people and their families to meet up. We welcome younger siblings if this is the only way SEND young people can visit us, but the youngest is usually about 11. These are great evenings and thank you to Activities Unlimited for the funding.

**Wellbeing Youth Hub** – Continues and had a break over the Christmas holidays. Young people can play football, basketball, PlayStation 5, giant Jenga and giant connect four. Arts and crafts are available, pool and table tennis. Some of the young people like to just sit and chill and catch up with their mates. We invite other professionals in to deliver other activities.

**Boost Project** – We continue to work with the Youth Skills team to mentor young people who are attending the Boost Project. We also support the Boost activities held at The Zone on a Monday afternoon.

**On Spot Van** – Been out when staffing has permitted. Regular weekly/two weekly visits will start in the New Year. (Staff availability permitting)

**Case Study Work Placement:** Have spoken with the young person who we helped find a work placement at a local school and when asked how it is going, she said, “It has turned out better than she had expected” and thanked us again.

Thanks for your continued support.

**Sandra Linnane**  
**January 2025**