

Haverhill Annual Town Meeting

Minutes of a Town Meeting

Held at Haverhill Arts Centre, High Street, Haverhill on Monday 12th May 2025 at 7.00pm.



HAVERHILL
TOWN COUNCIL

Chair: Councillor D Smith, Town Mayor
Present: 56 members of the public
13 Councillors and the Town Clerk

MINUTES

T25/ Welcome

001 The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting.

T25/ Apologies for Absence

002 Apologies were received from:

Cllr Roger André – Haverhill Town Council

Cllr Tony Brown – Haverhill Town Council

Cllr Jason Crooks – Haverhill Town Council

Cllr Justin Plumb – Chair of Shudy Camps Parish Council

Cllr Kerry Barnes – Chair of Steeple Bumpstead Parish Council

Revd Max Drinkwater – Rector, Haverhill & Withersfield, Diocese of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich

Ms Jacqueline Lowry – Chalkstone Community Centre

Mrs Joan Key – Freedom Recipient

Ms Madeleine Finn – Unity Healthcare Patient Participation Group

T25/ Minutes of the Meeting held on 13th May 2024

003 It was proposed by Councillor P Hanlon, seconded by Councillor L Miller-Jones that the minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 13th May 2024 be agreed as a true record.

RESOLVED

T25/ Town Mayor's report: Cllr David Smith, Mayor of Haverhill

004 Ladies and gentlemen. Friends. Welcome to Haverhill's Annual Town Meeting.

It has been another busy twelve months for the town of Haverhill.

In June we were asked to be the lead town for the annual Suffolk Day celebrations, and the great and good travelled from all four corners of the county and beyond to celebrate with us, including the Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk, the High Sheriff and the Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich.

The event was also broadcast throughout the morning on BBC Suffolk Radio. The officers, staff and volunteers of Haverhill Town Council put on a fantastic show, something for which they are rightly getting recognition wider afield, and the Suffolk Day organisers were extremely pleased with what was produced.

Comments I heard on the day from some of those who had been to them, all said it was the best Suffolk Day event so far, with the town's community spirit and focus really shining through. Lady Clare, the Lord Lieutenant, asked to be invited back for the full 'Haverhill

Experience, warts and all', and later in the year, Colin Poole, our Town Clerk, and myself, accompanied her and one of her deputies on a tour of the town.

Barely a week later we once again hosted a county-wide event as we were asked to lead on Suffolk's Armed Forces Day celebrations, where we recognise the work and achievements of all those keeping us safe at home and beyond.

Once again, the town pulled out all the stops to make the event an unqualified success. Special thanks go to Haverhill Local History Museum for their exhibits, and Haverhill Royal British Legion for their support, and the owners of the vehicles in the military convoy assembled by Councillor Tony Brown.

Another event which gained wider attention was when we hosted the Knife Angel, the National Monument Against Violence and Aggression. We were asked by the family of Harley Barfield to assist in bringing the monument to Haverhill in order to highlight the dangers of carrying knives, and to help prevent other families from having to face the tragedy of losing a loved one to knife crime.

Visitors came from far and wide to visit the sculpture which stood on the market square for the whole of September. During that time various educational events were staged for students.

These are just a few of the higher profile events that have happened in the past year, but day to day Town Council is working hard to make Haverhill an even better place to live and work.

It is easy to criticise, and we often see and hear comments asking what the Town Council is doing about this, that or the other. It reminds me of the scene from Monty Python's 'Life of Brian' where Reg, the leader of the Judean Popular Front (or is it the Popular Front of Judea?) asks, 'What have the Romans ever done for us?' One by one his comrades come up with ways in which their lives have been improved by Roman occupation: 'Well, there's the aqueduct, sanitation, the roads, irrigation, medicine, education, wine, law and order...'.

It can be a bit like that for the Town Council: well, there's the Youth Services, the Zone, Haverhill in the Park, estate fun days, Remembrance Day, the Halloween Trail, Christmas Family event and fireworks... and, of course, the wonderful programme of events put on here at the Arts Centre. The list is not exhaustive.

Many of the complaints made about the Town Council are not actually the responsibility of the council, but one of the higher-level authorities that serve us: Suffolk County Council or West Suffolk Council, but we are happy to work with these bodies to resolve problems. Some of our town councillors also sit on the other councils so there is a natural free flowing of information.

It is hoped that confusion over which council does what will be addressed with the upcoming local government reform where the county, district and borough councils across Suffolk will be replaced by a unitary authority. Whether that will be a single countywide authority or multiple smaller ones remains to be seen. It has been suggested in some quarters that town and parish councils will be given powers to do more. We have been doing that for years. Those in the know will be pointing to Haverhill saying, 'That is how it's done'.

I'd like to also mention a few volunteers of this town who are the backbone of what we do in the town and the community. I was happy to support two community initiatives this year: The Link, and Haverhill Men's Shed. In a moment we will hear some music from the ukelele group of the Haverhill Men's Shed.

The Mayor then presented Mrs Hellen Cullup, The Link, and Mr Anthony Cullup, Haverhill Men's Shed, each with a cheque for £1,525.

T25/ Public Forum

005 The Mayor invited any residents of the town to raise any matter relating to the town of Haverhill. No members of the public wished to raise any questions.

T25/ Closure

006 The Mayor declared the meeting closed at 7.09pm.

Signed:

Dated: