

Haverhill Town Council

Minutes of a Meeting of Haverhill Town Council's

FULL COUNCIL

Held on Monday 18th December at 7.30pm at Haverhill Arts Centre, High Street, Haverhill.



HAVERHILL
TOWN COUNCIL

Present: Mayor Councillor D Smith
Councillor R André
Councillor A Brown
Councillor P Hanlon
Councillor J Mason
Councillor L Smith

Apologies: Councillor J Burns Councillor J Crooks
Councillor Q Cox
Councillor P Firman
Councillor B Davidson
Councillor A Luccarini
Councillor M Martin
Councillor L Miller-Jones
Councillor D Page

In Attendance: Colin Poole, Town Clerk
Vicky Phillips, Deputy Clerk

1 member of the public was present.

Welcome:

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that the meeting was being recorded.

MINUTES

ACTION

C23 **Apologies for Absence**
/160 The above apologies were noted. The Mayor noted that Councillor J Burns was out of hospital and recovering well.

C23 **Casual Vacancy**
/161 a) Councillor Margaret Marks has resigned as a councillor, so a casual vacancy now exists. If a poll is not requested by 3rd January the council may consider co-option.

NOTED

b) Councillor J Mason paid tribute to the service Councillor Marks had given the town, and noted that she was still a willing volunteer for town council events.

C23 **Declaration of Interests and requests for dispensation**

/162 None.

C23 **Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held Tuesday, 28th November 2023**

/163

It was proposed by Councillor P Hanlon, seconded by Councillor L Smith that the minutes of the meeting held 28th November 2023 be agreed as a true record.

RESOLVED

C23 **To note progress of actions arising from the minutes not covered by this Agenda**

/164

C23/129. Polling stations – Mr Ben Smith, Elections Manager at West Suffolk council visited Haverhill to review the polling station sites. He met via Teams with the Clerk and advised that he had taken into account issues raised by councillors, and changes will be made as a result. In the case of a replacement venue for Haverhill West's polling station, there is no ideal solution and the 'least worst' option is to use the rugby club.

C23/149b(v) Anglian Water – The Clerk has written to Anglian Water in respect of the leaks around Haverhill and received a holding acknowledgement.

C23/149c(i) East of England Ambulance Trust response times – The Clerk had circulated a Doodle poll for councillors to indicate their interest and availability in attending a visit to the emergency control centre to see how ambulances are routed and calls prioritised. He will check what the outcome is of the poll.

C23/151b – Benches on Railway Walk – the Mayor and Clerk had both signed the letter of thanks to Mr Blackman.

C23 **Reports from District/County Councillors on issues pertinent to HAVERHILL and the PUBLIC FORUM**

/165

a) **Police Report** – It was noted that Councillor J Burns had circulated crime figures. The Mayor advised he had joined the Police and Crime Scrutiny Panel.

b) **County Councillors** – see Appendix 1

c) **District Councillors** – See Appendix 2

d) **Town Councillors' matters to report** – None

e) **Public Forum**

Mr E Pinnock raised the matter of the blue-badge parking bays adjacent to the Police Station in Murton Slade being occupied by vehicles not displaying blue badges. His understanding was that Civil Enforcement was not possible as the relevant signage was missing. Councillor J Mason will talk to Councillor J Crooks actions regarding this, and to County Councillor D Roach as this location is in his Division.

C23 **Grant Applications over £2,000**

/166

a) It was proposed by Councillor P Hanlon, seconded by Councillor R André that Families Together Suffolk be awarded a grant of £4,892 towards the continuation of their perinatal service in Haverhill.

CLERK

RESOLVED

C23 Mayor's Report:

- /167 a) Mayor's report – see appendix 4. Councillor J Mason highlighted the family Christmas event on 2nd December, that the town was full despite the freezing cold weather, and he had received good feedback.

C23 ONE Haverhill Partnership

- /168 Nothing to report. The next meeting has been moved to 16th January 2024.

C23 Adoption of Committee Reports

/169 a) Planning Working Party:

It was proposed by Councillor P Hanlon, seconded by Councillor R André, that the minutes of the Planning Working Party meeting held 5th December 2023 and the recommendations contained therein, be adopted.

RESOLVED

C23 Financial Matters

- /170 a) Authorisation of payments: It was proposed by Councillor J Mason, seconded by Councillor L Smith, that the listed payments totalling £157,302.42 be authorised.

RESOLVED

- b) Budget 2024/5: The RFO presented his working paper and report setting out a possible budget for 2024/5, taking into account the aspirations of the council to keep the precept as low as possible. The proposal was for a budget with a precept increase of 15p/week, which is 25% lower than the prediction for 2024/5 made when setting the current budget.

Councillors thanked the RFO for his work on the first draft budget. If, with the benefit of data from P9, it was possible to achieve a lower precept increase, Councillors asked that this be the goal. The RFO advised that the Community Events Working Party would have the opportunity to review any potential for cost-saving, and the next draft budget was to be considered by the Finance Committee and Full Council in January.

RFO

C23 Policy Review

- /171 a) Safeguarding – It was proposed by Councillor L Smith, seconded by Councillor R André, that the updated Safeguarding Policy be adopted.

RESOLVED

- b) Health and Safety – It was proposed by Councillor R André, seconded by Councillor L Smith, that the updated Health and Safety Policy be adopted.

RESOLVED

C23 Actions taken under delegated powers

- /172 None.

C23 To receive urgent correspondence

- /173 None.

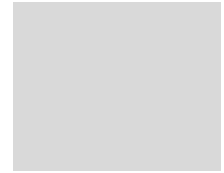
C23 Date of Next Meeting

- /174 Monday, 29th January 2024 commencing at 7:00pm.

C23
/175

Closure

The Chairman wished everyone a safe and joyful Christmas and declared the meeting closed at 20:29pm.



Signed
Chairman

Date.....

- Appendix 1 – County Councillors’ reports**
- Appendix 2 – District Councillors’ reports**
- Appendix 3 – Town Councillors’ reports**
- Appendix 4 – Mayor’s Report**

APPENDIX 1 – County Councillor’s report
Councillor Joe Mason

As the year comes to a close, I am reflective on the year that has past, particularly since May. I was saddened to hear Councillor Margaret Marks had decided to step down from the town council. I have huge appreciation for the contribution Cllr Margaret Marks has made as a Councillor over the years and will continue to make as a West Suffolk Councillor. I believe there are very few members of the community, across Suffolk, with her particular and extensive experience that currently serve as a Councillor. I believe her stepping down, although not a surprise to me, is this Council’s loss. Of course, I wish her well as she continues to serve the community with the many projects she remains committed to, often spending considerable time each week engaged with volunteering.

I also recognise the huge and very personal contribution made by my father, who passed last week, Malcolm Mason. He instilled values in me as a child all of which I have taken forward into my teaching career over the last 32 years and will be my compass going forward as a councillor serving the community. I will miss him dearly, though I know he and my late mother will continue to guide me in all that I do and the decisions I make going forward.

Christmas is a time for family and community coming together, putting aside differences. For many people Christmas is not an easy time, and my thoughts go out to all who may not find the coming weeks easy. I urge residents across our communities to reach out for support if for any reason they find themselves struggling.

These last weeks I have been particularly engaged with the Haverhill Santa project the team and I organise with the Haverhill Show and Disco Kitchen. It has been an absolute pleasure meeting the community spreading good cheer and raising money for the two local charities. REACH Foodbank and the Joshua Tarrant Trust. This is a team project and it wouldn’t happen without the talents of residents; Kelly Bennett, Any Palyzon and Dave Wilson. We will announce our fundraising total next Saturday (23rd) after visiting the High Street one last time. We are fortunate we have these people as well as so many others across our community give up their precious time for the benefit of the community.

Before continuing with my report I would like to congratulate the team responsible for Haverhill Town Council’s event on the 2nd of December. I have had many people in the community say

what a special atmosphere there was. Congrats to officer and volunteers making this event such a success.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas as well as a successful and healthy New Year.

Joe

APPENDIX 2 – District Councillors’ reports

Cllr Tony Brown

I Have not had any communication back from EEAST, our MP or SCC Health Scrutiny about Haverhill Area Ambulance provision despite emailing them several weeks ago which is disappointing. I hope that the TC has a better response from EEAST

Still working on the provision of lighting for the eastern end of the old railway walk

WSC has now repaired the broken bench by Tesco’s on the old railway walk. They have done a good job of this, using Hardwood and also repainting the metalwork. This was initially reported early in the year I have been having discussions with WSC over the last few years about getting the High Voltage overhead power lines that run over the meadow at East Town Park buried for the safety of park users. I have seen people flying kites there in the past plus it also restricts some of the activities that can be carried out there. WSC have now met with the Power Networks people discussed options and have had a quite positive outcome. So hopefully things will move forward with this (but could take up to 5 years) The grass cutting/landscaping review draft paper has been distributed. This is going to be an ongoing work in progress, we will be having further meetings of our small cross party working group with officers at regular intervals. If in the future Cllrs have any feedback as to how things are progressing please let me know and I will pass this on to the working group

Cllr Pat Hanlon

Usual Deputy chair of West Suffolk District Council engagements - more busy being Christmas with the last one of this year being on Christmas eve at Bury Cathedral - called Nine Lessons and Carols.

Bush cut back across a path in Dalham Place.

Reported three Path lights out in Dalham Place with steps in a very dark area.

Cllr Miller-Jones are and I have been having regular meetings with the Chair and group of the Haverhill Mental Health Action Group.

Attend the Haverhill Rovers Christmas Fayre, which Cllr Miller-Jones and I helped to fund with our locality budgets.

APPENDIX 3 – Town Councillors’ reports

None

APPENDIX 4 – Mayor’s Report

The Christmas season got into full swing on the first Saturday in December with our Christmas fun day. I was able to speak with many of the craft and charity stall holders, and the majority were very pleased with how their day had turned out despite the freezing conditions. I was asked to pass on my thanks to Haverhill Town Council for organising an excellent event.

Later on, I was appreciative of the mayoral robes as I introduced the turning on of the Christmas tree lights, compered by Andy Lake from Star Radio and performed by Scott Wright, who would play King Rat in our pantomime.

The focus then turned to the Recreation Ground where I performed the countdown for the fireworks display. It was a shame that the mist that was hanging around all day didn't clear completely, but I'm afraid we cannot control the weather. Many people's view was obscured as the smoke from the fireworks mingled to form a literal smokescreen, but it sounded good!

The following morning, I was invited to Haverhill Methodist Church in order to receive donations on behalf of our residents at their annual Toy Service. At a time when everyone is struggling with household budgets the generosity shown towards those even less fortunate was heartwarming.

That evening I attended Haverhill Silver Band's Christmas concert at the Arts Centre. The first half was performed by the Youth and Development Band, with the senior band taking over after the interval. The finale saw many of the Y&D band return to the stage for a mass performance from 50 musicians. As always, a superb programme under the batons of Diane Pannell and Matt Brown.

The Christmas theme continued the next evening as I attended the West Suffolk Council Carol Service at the cathedral in Bury St Edmunds at the invitation of Roger Dicker, Chair of the council.

Our own Civic Carol service was held two days later at St Mary's Church, which was very well attended. I was pleased, finally, to reveal that the good cause I have chosen to support in my mayoral year is Room4, who provide a safe space and place for young people who have experienced adverse childhood experiences and trauma. Thank you to Haverhill Silver Band for providing a stirring musical accompaniment, the choirs of St Mary's Church and Centre Stage, and, of course, the many wonderful readers. Thank you, also, to Rev. Max for selecting the readings and carols, and Fr. John for leading the prayers. A sumptuous buffet was provided at the Arts Centre by Mel, assisted by Helen, and a special thank you to Vicky for ensuring the whole event went smoothly, despite some unforeseen last-minute alterations to proceedings.

The penultimate engagement I attended was the Haverhill's Singer's Christmas Concert. This group continues to go from strength to strength under the leadership of new MD Dr Matthew Olyver, and it is always a pleasure to be invited to their concerts. The next one in March is St John's Passion by Bach, and I hope to be there for that.

Finally, and by no means least, it was an honour and an absolute pleasure to be able to award the Freedom of Haverhill to two of our most treasured residents, Joan Key and Dennis Weddell, before the opening of our Pantomime at the Arts Centre last Friday. It would have been impossible to do justice to the contributions they have made to our town in the short speech I gave. I hope they appreciate the honour as much as we appreciate them.

And talking about the pantomime, as the critics would say, what a triumph! The writing, production, acting, singing, dancing and music were all absolutely fantastic. Congratulations to Dan and everyone involved in putting the show on. I managed to sneak backstage after the show to thank the cast personally for such a wonderful evening's entertainment. It certainly took me back many years to the days when, as a child, I would be taken to the annual panto in Westcliff.

All that is left is for me to wish you all a very, merry Christmas and a happy, and healthy, New Year.

David

