

Haverhill Town Council

Minutes of a Meeting of Haverhill Town Council's

FULL COUNCIL

Held on Monday 29th January 2024 at 7.00pm at Haverhill Arts Centre,
High Street, Haverhill



HAVERHILL
TOWN COUNCIL

Present: Mayor Councillor D Smith
Councillor R André
Councillor A Brown
Councillor J Burns
Councillor B Davidson
Councillor P Firman
Councillor A Luccarini
Councillor M Martin

Apologies: Councillor Q Cox
Councillor J Crooks
Councillor P Hanlon
Councillor J Mason
Councillor L Miller-Jones
Councillor D Page
Councillor L Smith

In Attendance: Colin Poole, Town Clerk

0 members of the public were present.

Welcome:

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

MINUTES

C24 **Apologies for Absence**
/001 The above apologies were noted.

C24 **Casual Vacancy**
/002 a) To note that no petition for a poll was received by 4th January 2024 for the casual vacancy in West Ward and that the council is now free to fill the casual vacancy for Haverhill Town West by co-option.

NOTED

b) It was agreed to advertise the casual vacancy for a period of four weeks, and a decision regarding the appointment to be made at the March Full

ACTION

Clerk

Council meeting proposed by Councillor R André, seconded by Councillor A Luccarini.

RESOLVED

C24 /003 Declaration of Interests and requests for dispensation

None.

C24 /004 Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held Monday, 18th December 2023

It was proposed by Councillor A Luccarini, seconded by Councillor M Martin that the minutes of the meeting held 18th December 2023 be agreed as a true record.

RESOLVED

C24 /005 To note progress of actions arising from the minutes not covered by this Agenda

C24/005 East of England Ambulance Trust. A new date to visit the control centre at Norwich has been arranged for 20th February at 11am.

C24 /006 Reports from District/County Councillors on issues pertinent to HAVERHILL and the PUBLIC FORUM

a) **Police Report** - Cllr D Smith reported that he attended the Police and Crime Forum on 23rd January which focussed on the budget for the coming year.

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

Councillor J Mason: see report attached (Appendix 1)

i. The Town Clerk reported that an agreement with Highways has been made to re-site the Welcome to Haverhill sign from halfway along Haverhill Road, to the new boundary at the Redrow estate.

ii. The Town Clerk is working with Sturmer Council to urge Essex County Council to prioritise repairs to the brown Tourist sign at the Sturmer side of the roundabout which was damaged over eighteen months ago.

c) **District Councillors**

Councillor A Brown advised that the play park on Motts Field, which has been under the threat of closure, will be refurbished.

Councillor D Smith reported that the Local Plan submission draft consultation is from 30th January to 12th March. Documents will be available to view at Haverhill House and there will be an online virtual exhibition.

d) **Town Councillors' matters to report**

Councillor R André reported that he has received several complaints from residents regarding Havebury Housing's policy regarding damp and mould. Cllr André is pursuing this with Havebury Housing.

Cllr J Burns: see report attached (Appendix 2) reported a walkabout around Havebury Housing estates had found overgrown paths, dangerous fencing and litter.

e) **Public Forum**

No members of the public were present.

Clerk

Clerk

C24 **Grant Applications over £2,000**

/007 None

C24 **Mayor's Report:**

/008 a) Mayor's report – see appendix 3.

C24 **ONE Haverhill Partnership**

/009 At the Board meeting on 16th January the similarities seen by different agencies regarding demographics was discussed. Health and DWP are exploring opportunities to work on joint projects. DWP and West Suffolk College are exploring short courses for skills where there are barriers against employment, and skills shortages.

C24 **Adoption of Committee Reports**

/010 a) Planning Working Party:

It was proposed by Councillor A Luccarini, seconded by Councillor R André, that the minutes of the Planning Working Party meetings held 18th December 2023 and 15th January 2024 and the recommendations contained therein, be adopted.

RESOLVED

b) Finance Working Party:

It was proposed by Councillor J Burns, seconded by Councillor A Luccarini, that the minutes of the Finance Working Party meeting held 23rd January 2024 and the recommendations contained therein, be adopted.

RESOLVED

C24 **Financial Matters**

/011 a) Authorisation of payments: It was proposed by Councillor J Burns, seconded by Councillor M Martin, that the listed payments totalling £165,089.17 be authorised.

RESOLVED

C24 **Budget & Precept 2024/25**

/012 a) The Clerk presented five scenarios for the 2024/25 budget which were all thoroughly discussed. Councillors discussed closing the Volunteer Centre, cancelling the Big Day Out event, and reducing Haverhill in the Park to two days (Friday and Saturday) resulted in the following budget:

Net Expenditure:	£2,108,216
Net Income:	£643,427
From Reserves:	£20,000
Balance:	£1,444,789

It was proposed by Councillor A Luccarini, seconded by Councillor B Davidson, that the proposed budget for 2024/25 be adopted.

RESOLVED

b) It was proposed by Councillor A Luccarini seconded by Councillor R André, that a precept for 2024/25 of £1,445,073 be adopted. This represents an increase of 3.99%, or 13p/week on a Band D property,

meaning the Town Council contribution by Band D council tax payers would be £182.33 per year. Band B council tax, representing 48.6% of dwellings in Haverhill, would rise to £141.81, an increase of 11p/week.

RESOLVED

- c) It was proposed by Councillor J Burns, seconded by Councillor A Luccarini, to authorise the Chairman and Clerk to serve the precept demand upon the District Council.

RESOLVED

C24 Actions taken under delegated powers

/013

- a) None.
- b) The Clerk advised that he will require delegated powers to replace the Parish Handyman van which has been hit by a car and written-off.

C24 To receive urgent correspondence

/014

- a) None.
- b) The Clerk has written to the Director of Fairhome Property Developments which last submitted planning applications for the Argos building, highlighting damaged and fallen masonry. Land Registry appears to indicate the property has not changed hands since that application was submitted. This is an enforcement issue for WSC who has been contacted but they have advised they are unable to contact the owner.

C24 Date of Next Meeting

/015

Monday, 19 February 2024 commencing at 7:00pm.

C24 Closure

/016

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8:13pm

Signed

Chairman

Date.....

Appendix 1 – County Councillors’ reports

Appendix 2 – District Councillors’ reports

Appendix 3 – Mayor’s Report

APPENDIX 1 – County Councillor’s report Councillor Joe Mason

County and District Councillor Report, January 2024 - Cllr Joe Mason

No SCC Full Council meeting was held since the December report to members. I attended Scrutiny, where we looked at the Suffolk County Council Budget for 2024/205.

Little has moved forward on a range of topics since my last report. Hopefully I will have more for the February meeting.

In this report.

1. Suffolk County Council News
2. Haverhill’s New Recycling Centre
3. Highways Update
4. Persimmon Estate & Relief Road
5. S106 – Improvement to Ann Suckling Road and Wratting Road
6. Cabinet Tour of the Town and meeting with West Suffolk Members at the Epicentre

1. Suffolk County Council News

Budget Proposals : [More public money for adult and children’s care, but difficult decisions are needed to balance the books](#)

A lot has been made of the £500,000 cut to core funding of 9 Arts Organisations. Little analysis, publicly has been done on the other areas of the budget, and I encourage members to read through the link above. The section, which refers to the cuts to the arts is now out of date and members should read the latest press release on this part of the Budget Proposals - [Council to propose new funding for arts & heritage in Suffolk](#)

2. Haverhill’s New Recycling Centre

I have received further confirmation from that the Haverhill Site will continue to be delivered for a 2024 opening, This had been under threat due to pressures on the budget. Representations were made and I hope all councillors will be relieved to hear that this project will be delivered this coming year.

3. Highways

Update on Winter Service from Cllr Paul West. The winter season commenced on the 1 October and Suffolk Highways are ready to undertake winter gritting duties as and when the temperatures drop. The fleet is located back in Suffolk, safely stored within our eight winter depots located across the county. Grit bin restocking has been completed and details on how to get further refills undertaken throughout the season can be found on our winter pages which can be viewed using the following link: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-andtransport/highway-maintenance/check-which-roads-are-gritted/grit-bins>

Highways issues

- **Town Centre Road Signs** - Refer to last report

- **Howe Road Signs:** Refer to last report
- **Clements Drive Dropped Kerbs:** Refer to last report
- **Bus Stop on Greenfields way:** Refer to last report
- **Lay-by:** Refer to last report
- **Pot Holes:** Milestone have been busy filling pot holes across the town. The number of Potholes always increases during the winter months and I encourage all members to be active in reporting these using the Suffolk reporting Tool. We should wherever possible encourage residents to contribute to the community effort of reporting. If highways don't know where the potholes are, they won't repair them. Many thanks to Cllr David Roach who frequently tours the town with our local Highways officer to identify road defects not picked reported on the system.

4. Persimmon Estate and Relief Road

There are a multitude of items/issues I am chasing and will only mention the main items for the purposes of this report.

I attended Workshop at Town Council regarding Persimmon phase 5a &5C as well as the plans for the local centre. I have concerns regarding the over development of the local centre with a very large 3 level building which will be dominating the Skyline. I will look forward to discussing this more with members when plans are formally submitted.

Relief Road has been confirmed for a September opening.

Finishing the Play park is high priority, but is unlikely going to be open before Easter. This is disappointing for all residents who have children, with nowhere for them to play locally.

5. S106 – Improvement to Ann Suckling Road and Wratting Road

Refer to last report.

6. Cabinet Tour of the Town and meeting with West Suffolk Members at the Epicentre

This was an interesting opportunity to discuss issues pertaining to investment infrastructure and growth of the town. No decisions were made, but I welcomed the open forum where members could talk passionately about local issues, which I am sure was useful for the cabinet to get a feel for the town. It is uncertain whether this meeting will generate any additional investment in the town beyond that already committed to re: Provincial House.

In particular, I would welcome property services resolving once and for all the issues relating to the Atterton and Ellis site. I would also welcome West Suffolk to invest in purchasing the Corn Exchange with a view to safeguarding this important landmark for residents.

For me there was insufficient focus on the High Street and Markets. I believe West Suffolk can and should do much more in this area to stimulate footfall and support local businesses.

The HSBC building has been empty for too long and a decision needs to be made soon regarding its future use.

APPENDIX 2 – Town Councillor’s report Councillor John Burns

Apologies no report in December as I slowly recover from my recent surgery with this one being naturally a short brief for the same reason.

- **Great Wilsey Park:** Work continues at a slow pace. Good progress being made on next phase designs.

I have in my diary to contact the developer as complaints coming in about indiscriminate parking on the estate by those dropping off or picking up young people from Westfield School including blocking of private driveways and parking on the pavements. The school has been asked several times for its latest transport plan without any response – as is the case with Coupals School.

- **Police Matters:** Crime stats for November 2023 were distributed on 5th January. No new version of Constable’s County available.
- **SCC Highways:** No updates provided direct to me. It has now been 2.25 years since they promised to replace the town centre signs post-Covid.
- **Combined Authority:** No further useful updates.
- **Greater Cambridge Partnership:** Work progresses on the new roundabout at Bartlow Crossroads.
- **Parking:** No further updates. Problems still exist at New Croft with verge parking and now noted outside Westfield and Samuel Ward academies. It is not known what efforts CPE are making to reduce illegal parking.

It has also been noted during my recent post-recovery walking efforts how many vehicles are parked totally on pavements completely blocking them particularly on the Chalkstone Estate. For able-bodied persons this is bad enough with having to walk into the road so for disabled, or those with buggies, it must be a nightmare.

- **Markets:** No real updates or progress on the markets review some 18 months after it was agreed.
- **Sturmer Arches:** No further updates available. I still investigate via potential online resources the ownership problem. I am awaiting the latest inspection report from Highways England.
- **Fox PH (Wratting Road):** No further updates other than owner is still in discussion with WSC planning as to their revised plans.
- **Vixen PH (Millfields Way):** The new owner is still in discussion with WSC planners and has been in contact with HTC on a separate matter. Occupiers of the Square are looking forward to what comes out of those.
- **Strasbourg Square:** Nothing new to report.
- **Other work:**
 - Continue to regularly approve HTC/HCT invoice payments.
 - Attended various HTC meetings online and slowly getting back into the fold for in person meetings. With instructions I made at end of November the live stream of in person meetings has been successfully made using provided equipment by me by Town Clerk and Cllr Luccarini.
 - Amending various HTC related software systems to cater for new requests from users particularly around the till systems. Working with HTC staff on

testing/implementing new till systems for the HTC bar so that all systems across all sites use the same software and reporting tools.

- Various HTC network infrastructure and system changes made with assistance from HTC Tech as unable to currently undertake any physically taxing jobs for a while.

APPENDIX 3 – Mayor’s Report

Mayor’s Report to Haverhill Town Council

Monday 29th January, 2024

This month’s report will be a brief one.

Events attended:

20th December – Official opening of the new 3G pitch at The New Croft.

22nd December – Carol Concert at Eastcotts Nursing Home

22nd December – Haverhill Men’s Shed Christmas Party

12th January – Tour of Eastern Education Group Campuses in Bury St Edmunds

12th January – Bill Gladden’s 100th Birthday Party

18th January – Dan Schumann’s Leaving Party

20th January – Centre Stage Pantomime, Robin Hood.

I will be happy to take questions at Full Council.

David