

# Haverhill Town Council

## Minutes of a Meeting of Haverhill Town Council's

### FULL COUNCIL

Held on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 7.00pm at Haverhill Arts Centre, High Street, Haverhill



**HAVERHILL**  
TOWN COUNCIL

**Present:** Mayor Councillor D Smith  
Councillor A Brown  
Councillor J Burns  
Councillor A Cox  
Councillor P Firman  
Councillor P Hanlon  
Councillor A Luccarini  
Councillor J Mason  
Councillor L Miller-Jones  
Councillor D Page  
Councillor L Smith  
Councillor A Stinchcombe

**Apologies:** Councillor R André  
Councillor J Crooks  
Councillor B Davidson  
Councillor M Martin

**In Attendance:** Colin Poole, Town Clerk  
Jane Lomas, Council Administrator  
County Councillor D Roach  
Mr Henry Wilson MBE  
Georgia Arnold, Saffron Walden Town Council

One member of the public was present.

### **Welcome:**

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

A one minute's silence was held in remembrance of Mr Bill Gladden, World War II veteran who sadly passed away recently. Mr Gladden was one-hundred years old.

### **MINUTES**

**C24 /050** Apologies for Absence  
The above apologies were noted.

**C24** Declaration of Interests and requests for dispensation

**ACTION**

/051 None.

**C24 /052 Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

It was proposed by Councillor P Hanlon, seconded by Councillor L Smith that the minutes of the meeting held 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024 be agreed as a true record.  
**RESOLVED**

**C24 /053 To note progress of actions arising from the minutes not covered by this Agenda**

C24/040 Eastern Region Ambulance Trust.

The Town Clerk will write to the CEO of the Eastern Region Ambulance Trust on behalf of the Town Council to express concerns regarding ambulance waiting times for Haverhill residents.

CP

**C24 /054 Review of Standing Orders and Finance Regulations**

a) It was proposed by Councillor J Burns, seconded by Councillor A Brown that the revised council Standing Orders be adopted.  
**RESOLVED**

b) It was proposed by Councillor A Stinchcombe, seconded by Councillor D Page that the revised council Finance Regulations be adopted.  
**RESOLVED**

**C24 /055 Mayoral Charity Funds**

The mayor has £2,000 of unspent Mayoral allowance and asked for this amount to be donated to the Mayoral Charity. It was proposed by Councillor J Burns, seconded by Councillor L Smith that a virement of £2000 be made from Mayoral Allowance to Mayoral Charity.  
**RESOLVED**

RFO

**C24 /056 Reports from District/County Councillors on issues pertinent to HAVERHILL and the PUBLIC FORUM**

a) **Police Report** - No report received. It was noted that the Police have said they are unable to provide reports due to time and budget restrictions.

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

**Councillor J Mason:** see report attached (Appendix 1)

Cllr Mason is interested in the issue of speeding around the town and asked councillors to report any 'hot spots' to him.

It is disappointing that the no-entry sign at Swan Lane has not been replaced since the refurbishment of the bank, however this is the responsibility of the building society and not Highways.

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

**Councillor J Burns:** see report attached (Appendix 2)

Cllr Luccarini reported that he has observed a contractor spraying weeds around the town, which is welcomed.

Cllr L Smith explained that there were two chapels at the cemetery but one is now being used as a storeroom by Damien Parker's team at WSC. The floor is dangerously slippery and works are proposed to make it safe. Cllr Luccarini expressed concern that the floor is tiled and may have historical value. Cllr L Smith will forward information regarding the proposed works to Cllr Luccarini so he may investigate further.

Cllr Brown reported that work is scheduled in October next year to move cables over East Town Park into the ground under Stour Brook and Railway Walk. This has taken a long time to achieve but he has been persistent.

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

Nothing further to report.

**e) Public Forum**

No members of the public wished to speak.

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

**/057**

Mr Henry Wilson MBE (Reach) advised the meeting of some of the family debt situations his charity was supporting families with, and that many families are still struggling. A new project being undertaken by Reach is promoting debt prevention by teaching budgeting to children in schools. Councillors thanked Mr Wilson and his team for all the work they do around the town. It was proposed by Councillor J Burns, seconded by Councillor L Miller-Jones that Reach be awarded £5,000 for general running costs.

**RESOLVED**

**C24** **Mayor's Report** – see Appendix 3

**/058**

Councillors thanked the Mayor for his year of service.

**C24** **ONE Haverhill Partnership**

**/059**

a) As the OHP Board meeting was rescheduled, there is nothing to report.

b) The Clerk reported that feedback for the Haverhill Science Festival has been positive. The schools who provided feedback have said they are excited and thankful for the festival and that children are still talking about the events. They noted that these events would not have otherwise been possible for them because of budgetary restraints.

The BT technology day was very well received and schools have said they will add this to their curriculum as it was highly inspirational.

Positive feedback has also been received for events by Lord Winston, Helen Sharman, Professor Cowburn and Nick Corston.

Prof Winston thanked the Arts Centre for looking after him so well.

Although the weather was not ideal for the East Town Park Community Science day, it resulted in people attending in their hundreds, rather than thousands, which meant there was little queuing. It was heartening to note that parents said their children came home from school excited and insistent on participating in the ET Park day.

The festival came in under budget. There is an appetite for another festival and the Clerk suggested that an event might be held every other year.

The Clerk thanked councillors for their support and funding, from the town, district and county council plus business sponsors. He also thanked everyone who helped with organising an event or volunteered. Councillor P Hanlon proposed a vote of thanks to all staff and volunteers, Councillor L Miller-Jones seconded.

## RESOLVED

### **C24** Financial Matters

**/060** Authorisation of payments: It was proposed by Councillor J Burns, seconded by Councillor L Smith, that the listed payments totalling £144,998.00 be authorised.

**RESOLVED**

### **C24** Adoption of Committee Reports

#### **/061** a) Energy & Sustainability Working Party:

It was proposed by Councillor A Luccarini seconded by Councillor J Burns that the minutes of the Energy & Sustainability Working Party meeting held 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024 and the recommendations contained therein, be adopted.

**RESOLVED**

#### b) Planning Committee:

It was proposed by Councillor P Hanlon, seconded by Councillor A Luccarini, that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024 and the recommendations contained therein, be adopted.

**RESOLVED**

c) To note that the Planning Committee will, as an exception, meet by videoconference at 8pm on 20<sup>th</sup> May as a working party, as West Suffolk Council has arranged a training session for councillors which clashed with our meeting. It is not possible to find an alternative date for an in-person meeting that week. Councillors are asked to update their diaries accordingly.

**NOTED**

#### d) Finance Working Party

Consideration of the minutes of the Finance Working Party held 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024 to be deferred to the next Full Council meeting.

### **C24** Actions taken under delegated powers

**/062** None.

### **C24** To receive urgent correspondence

**/063** None.

### **C24** Date of Next Meetings

**/064** To note that May is a busy council month including:

**Annual Town Meeting:** Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024 commencing at 7:00pm.

**Annual Meeting of the Town Council:** To follow the Annual Town Meeting. Members are asked to note that the election of the Mayor for 2024/25 takes place at this meeting.

### **C24** Exclusion of Press and Public

**/065** It was proposed by Councillor A Luccarini, seconded by Councillor D Page, that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted – Personal private 3<sup>rd</sup> party matters.

**RESOLVED**

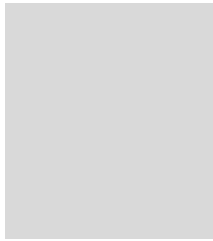
The public part of the meeting closed at 8.12pm.

**C24 Community Events Working Party**

**/066** The Clerk briefed the council on item CE24/002 on the minutes of the meeting held 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024. The meeting endorsed the recommendation of the Community Events Working party.

**C24 Closure**

**/067** The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.26pm



Signed .....  
**Chairman**

Date.....

**Appendix 1 – County Councillors’ reports**

**Appendix 2 – District Councillors’ reports**

**Appendix 3 – Mayor’s report**

## **County and District Councillor Report, April 2024**

### **Clr Joe Mason**

In this report.

1. Suffolk County Council News
2. Haverhill’s New Recycling Centre
3. Highways
4. Persimmon Estate & Relief Road
5. Banking Hub
6. West Suffolk News

### **1. Suffolk County Council News**

Suffolk County Council didn’t meet in March and is meeting this Thursday 25th April. The main headline from County include:

#### **[More Suffolk homes eligible for energy improvements](#)**

More Suffolk households can access free home improvements to make them warmer, healthier and cheaper to run, thanks to Warm Homes Suffolk.

#### **[New Independent Chair appointed to drive forward SEND reform](#)**

Suffolk County Council can today announce that Kathryn Boulton has been appointed as the new independent chair of the Local Area Partnership’s SEND Improvement Board.

#### **[Council welcomes £11million new investment into SEND services](#)**

Suffolk County Council is set to receive an additional £10.9million to create new specialist places for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

#### **[Over 400 Suffolk roads set for upgrade as largest ever surfacing project gets underway](#)**

Residents across Suffolk are set to benefit from 421 newly surfaced roads this year - almost doubling the number of roads completed last year, as Suffolk Highways’ largest ever resurfacing programmes get underway.

#### **[Forging ahead with the battle on potholes as surface dressing programme begins](#)**

By Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council’s cabinet member for Ipswich, operational highways and flooding

### **2. Haverhill’s New Recycling Centre**

I visited the Waste Centre this week and there will be a press release in the Echo this Friday. I am being told that it will be open by mid-summer. As we are in a period of Purdah, I have been asked to not say more than this until the election is over

### 3. Highways

#### Town Centre Signage

Still no construction date given on the Town Centre Signage. I have been told that the project is being prioritised and will be delivered as soon as possible. Materials have been ordered and we are awaiting to hear from the operations team for the delivery of the signs themselves. I am awaiting an update and will keep the council updated when I know more.

#### Sturmer Road Roundabout

As featured in this week's Echo, Sturmer Road Arches roundabout is set for a full resurface. Although long awaited the temporary repairs are holding and I am sure we will all be glad when this work is concluded. As ever please do report all defects.

#### £10m Urban Roads programme

I attach the same report as I did last month for reference and hopefully we can start seeing improvements in the coming months ahead. It will be good to see these being crossed off the list as works are completed.

SCHEME REF.	TYPES OF WORKS	ROAD NAME	TREATMENT TYPE	START LOCATION	END LOCATION	YEAR	STATUS
228455	FOOTWAYS	ABBOTTS ROAD	SLURRY SEAL	CHAPPLE DRIVE JUNCTION	LOOP OUTSIDE NO26 ABBOTTS ROAD	24/25	IN DESIGN
228466	FOOTWAYS	ASH GROVE	SLURRY SEAL	EASTERN AVENUE JUNCTION	WESTERN AVENUE JUNCTION	24/25	IN DESIGN
228478	FOOTWAYS	BEECH GROVE	RECONSTRUCTION	JUNCTION WITH EASTERN AVENUE	WESTERN AVENUE	24/25	IN DESIGN
227876	FOOTWAYS	CAMBRIDGE WAY	SLURRY SEAL	WESTERN AVENUE	END	23/24	IN DESIGN
228408	FOOTWAYS	DUDDERY HILL	SLURRY SEAL	NO1 DUDDERY HILL	JUST PAST JUST PAST JUNCTION TO CLEMENTS CLOSE	24/25	IN DESIGN
235421	FOOTWAYS	GREENFIELDS WAY	RECONSTRUCTION	JUNCTION WITH HARROW	ROUNDAABOUT WITH CLEVES	24/25	IN DESIGN
235859	FOOTWAYS	PARK ROAD	SLURRY SEAL	A1307 JUNCTION	END OF ROAD NEAR SPINDLE RD	24/25	IN DESIGN
239516	ROAD	ALLINGTON WALK	TO BE DECIDED	EASTERN AVENUE	END OF CUL-DE-SAC	24/25	IN DESIGN
238697	ROAD	BEAUMONT VALE	TO BE DECIDED	BUMPSTEAD ROAD	END OF CUL-DE-SAC	24/25	IN DESIGN
239584	ROAD	CAMBRIDGE CLOSE	TO BE DECIDED	CAMBRIDGE WAY	WILLIAM BLAKE COURT	24/25	IN DESIGN
239514	ROAD	CHESTNUT CLOSE	TO BE DECIDED	EASTERN AVENUE	END OF CUL-DE-SAC	24/25	IN DESIGN
239596	ROAD	CLARENDON ROAD	TO BE DECIDED	GREENFIELDS WAY	END OF CULIN DESIGNDEIN DESIGNSAC	24/25	IN DESIGN
231767	ROAD	CORNWALLIS ROAD	TO BE DECIDED	JUNCTION WITH GREENFIELDS WAY	END OF ROAD, INCLUDING SECTIONS OF LANDSEER COURT, ABERCORN COURT & ARGYLL COURT	24/25	IN DESIGN
239506	ROAD	DUNSEY WOOD LOSE	TO BE DECIDED	SPINDLE ROAD	END OF CUL-DE-SAC	24/25	IN DESIGN
239512	ROAD	ELM CLOSE	TO BE DECIDED	EASTERN AVENUE	END OF CUL-DE-SAC	24/25	IN DESIGN
239450	ROAD	HARROW ROAD	TO BE DECIDED	GREENFIELDS WAY	END OF CUL-DE-SAC	24/25	IN DESIGN
239515	ROAD	HAZEL CLOSE	TO BE DECIDED	NORTH AVENUE	END OF CULIN DESIGNDEIN DESIGNSAC	24/25	IN DESIGN

239520	ROAD	IXWORTH ROAD	TO BE DECIDED	GREENFIELDS WAY	END OF CULIN DESIGNDEIN DESIGNSAC	24/25	IN DESIGN
239595	ROAD	LEATHER LANE	TO BE DECIDED	GREENFIELDS WAY	END OF CULIN DESIGNDEIN DESIGNSAC	24/25	IN DESIGN
239451	ROAD	NORTON ROAD	TO BE DECIDED	GREENFIELDS WAY	END OF CUL-DE-SAC	24/25	IN DESIGN
239446	ROAD	PARK ROAD	TO BE DECIDED	WHOLE OF CAR PARKING AREA	END OF CUL-DE-SAC	24/25	IN DESIGN
239517	ROAD	SCHOOL LANE	TO BE DECIDED	BURTON END	HIGHWAY BOUNDARY	24/25	IN DESIGN
239511	ROAD	ST BOTOLPHS WAY	TO BE DECIDED	CASTLE LANE JUNCTION	END OF CUL-DE-SAC	24/25	IN DESIGN
239449	ROAD	YORK ROAD	TO BE DECIDED	GREENFIELDS WAY	END OF CUL-DE-SAC	24/25	IN DESIGN
272406	ROAD	DUDDERY HILL	TO BE DECIDED	FROM HELIONS WALK	TO HELIONS PARK AVENUE	24/25	IN DESIGN

#### 4. Persimmon Estate and Relief Road

As reported in the Press and the Community Newsletter Persimmon sent out. The Relief Road is set to open by 'the end of the year' We will all have an opinion on this news. Indeed there is much understandable frustration across the town and I am sure most disappointment is felt by residents who continue to experience excessively high traffic volumes along Withersfield Road. I continue to push, but in truth there is little that can be done other than to hold Persimmon to account.

#### 5. Banking Hub – Cash Access UK

No news here other than they are still 'officially/publicly' in the Property search underway phase. I would have hoped contracts would have been signed by now and it wont be long before we will need a more detailed update such is the concern held by the community.

#### 6 .West Suffolk Council News

There is little News to report from West Suffolk Council a quick glance at their news page suggest lots is going on in Mildenhall, but there seems nothing of relevance to Haverhill at the moment. <https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/news/index.cfm>

I received correspondence from Cllr Neal and I welcome the energy and ideas he is bringing forward relating to markets. There seems no movement on Car Parking charges and I am resolute that a more holistic approach to the High Street is needed and not just one that focuses on the markets.

- Locally, metal barriers (I like to call them "Giant Staples) have been installed across the town, much to the chagrin of many residents who felt they there was insufficient consultation. The barriers themselves although much longer lasting are not a popular replacement.



- I continue to liaise with Persimmon on a weekly basis, challenging aspects of the development that are either substandard or do not match what was planned. The play park is completed and should be open for May Half term holiday.
- I was approached by Haverhill Cricket Club relating to Groundwork West Suffolk Parks Team had carried out and a dispute about the works done. (I had previously given grants to the club and they requested my involvement) I liaised with Cllr Hanlon and Cllr Miller Jones as it is in their ward. A meeting was set up of which Cllr Hanlon and I attended with the club Treasurer and officers from the Parks Team. This resulted in a positive outcome for the club. As this is Cllr Hanlon's ward, I will leave it for him to provide/report further detail, but I would like to thank him for working collaboratively on this.
- Stage 1 of Glebe Biodiversity project is now complete with planting carried out by West Suffolk Council. Anti-Social behaviour has remained an issue moving young people from here to another inappropriate location, causing disturbance and conflict with residents. West Suffolk Council have been involved. Thank to Cllr Paul Firman for assisting with grant money to help fund some youth work. Stage 2 involves more planting elsewhere on the Glebe. We are also exploring whether a community orchard is possible nearby.
- West Suffolk Council are taking a lease on the Cangle Playing fields and Jon Eaton is doing some excellent work liaising with Peter Betts at the football club to create an area for young people to go to play football. New Croft will be supplying some goals and hopefully this will reduce tensions experienced in some of our nearby communities which do not have enough open play spaces for young people.
- Following a request of the Energy & Sustainability Committee, Highways have agreed to share a plan of the utilities along Chapple Drive so that an assessment can be made regarding tree planting.

## **APPENDIX 2 – District Councillor's report**

### **Councillor John Burns**

- **Great Wilsey Park:** Work continues at a slow pace with the entire Wratting Road phases now sold out and Chalkstone Way phase building to demand.

I attended the consultation on the new local centre proposals which attracted about 70 local residents as well. The plans are well thought out however they are concerned about the plans for the Fox PH and may well change their thinking as to what they provide including possibility of providing a formal diner instead of the shopping area. It would appear that WSC planning have failed to tell them about the Fox plans, and they were not aware the application had already been validated. They had hoped to submit their own application next month but that may well be deferred. Construction would not start for about 2 years and would include a community centre & café, nursery, small health provision (NHS have not even answered their requests to have a meeting so the s106 provision looks like it will be cash rather than facilities), car parking and green bits. The provision is being handled by the Pelley Trust which I am pleased about. I am being sent PDF versions of the panels on display and will distribute when received.

- **Police Matters:** Crime stats for February 2024 were distributed on 10<sup>th</sup> April.

Cllr Hanlon, Deputy Town Clerk and I met with Insp Michaels on 28<sup>th</sup> March to discuss

general policing matters as part of the liaison group. There is some good news as regards operations on ABS and particularly drug seizures/arrests which continue. The new Community Policing Team (CPT) are working very well which has been commented on with more visible policing as well as social media updates. In fact, I saw them at the GWP consultation event because they will be the ones who will have to monitor it when built.

The CPT held an event at the Clements Community Centre on 12<sup>th</sup> April early evening and, despite publicity before and on the day, only one person attended. A “day of action” involving police, fire service, Havebury, WSC and Reach was undertaken on 23<sup>rd</sup> April on the Clements estate. Numerous actions by the agencies were undertaken with help of 2 x PCSO from BSE including vehicles being checked and a drug arrest following a stop and search.

- **SCC Highways:** Cllr Mason has reported separately on this. My only update is I was told the town centre signs (the ones to replace those taken away during Covid and due to go back in Oct 2021) will not appear until at least June. I have reported some other problems and disappointed by the general “does not meet HMOP” answers including surface drains with water flowing out of them because they are blocked.
- **Combined Authority:** No further updates.
- **Greater Cambridge Partnership:** Nil to report.
- **Parking:** WSC still appear to do little in the way of CPE enforcement other than in the easy areas such as car parks and resident permit areas.
- **Markets:** Still no progress on the markets review despite claims to the contrary. This is not linked to the car parking situation which is managed by the car park review working party. In both cases they are supposed to work together on a town by town basis to ensure that the economics and growth of the respective towns is fully included in any plans.
- **Sturmer Arches:** Nothing new to report.
- **Fox PH (Wratting Road):** As has been stated this has now changed from a sit-down family diner to a drive-through coffee shop and a convenience store. I, and several others, worked long and hard to ensure this was suitable for the development and to provide services for the residents of the new estate including pressure (to no avail) on SCC Highways to allow access from the roundabout. The new proposals plan to use that same access however the amount of traffic will be substantially increased if allowed to go ahead. I am very disappointed not only with the plans but lack of resident/member consultation until the plans are basically final.
- **Vixen PH (Millfields Way):** No further updates known.
- **Strasbourg Square:** Nothing new to report. I attended a Havebury-led Chalkstone estate inspection on 21<sup>st</sup> March, with others, and found a few things that needed rectifying. It is obvious there is a culture that “who owns what” is the factor that determines whether anything gets done rather than working together. I await the list of jobs to be done and who is going to do them.

A similar inspection was carried out on 16<sup>th</sup> April on the Birds Estate. Areas that I had previously reported to Havebury (with a denial of ownership) were eventually acknowledged by them as being owned by them. Some of them have already been cleared of debris, rubbish, and vegetation following that acceptance.

- **Other work:**
  - Continue to regularly approve HTC/HCT invoice payments.
  - Attended various HTC meetings online and in person.
  - Setup systems for new Youth Skills employee and various other IT related problems.

- Worked with HTC staff to arrange and supervise cleaning, opening and management of the Splash Pad plus arranging for installation of a new power socket in the cabinet to power a portable pressure washer. The weather has not helped with usage which in turn affects the kiosk income.
- Continue to make changes to the till system for HAC bar system as staff requirements are confirmed/changed. It is now in use albeit we wait for the till drawers to be installed. I have attended the HAC several times over the past week at events/shows to gather feedback, fix any problems, and just be there in case of any problems. Changes to the till system for the Zone are in the pipeline to cater for Youth Skills activities, gift vouchers and annual passes although the actual nature of what is required is yet to be discussed. Changes to the till reporting system were made to include the HAC bar and I continue to report weekly sales statistics to the Town Clerk.
- Filmed the Easter pantomime on behalf of the production company. Sadly, I have since heard that one of the young people in the audience, who was invited on stage as part of the “sing along” on the last show, passed away that night at the age of 14. I have been asked to extract that section of the video for the family to have a memento which I am only too pleased to do.
- The replacement video driver PCB for the digisign has been dispatched and once received will work with the tech team to have it installed to hopefully fix the lack of anything on the non-traffic facing side.
- Worked (a bit) last Friday & Saturday on setting up/taking down the Science Festival at East Town Park which went very well after a year of planning with the Town Clerk leading the group on a successful event all round both publicly and in the schools/EpiCentre etc.

**END**

## **APPENDIX 3 – Mayor’s report**

Mayor’s Report to Haverhill Town Council

Monday 29<sup>th</sup> April, 2024

This will be my last report before the Annual Town Meeting on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May. I can’t believe how quickly the year has flown by. It is true when they say that time flies when you are having fun, and this year has been very enjoyable.

The previous month or so has seen the usual eclectic mix of engagements, and the variety of events I am asked to attend is what makes the mayor’s role so interesting.

I was invited to the Haverhill Singers Easter Concert, where they performed excerpts from St John’s Passion by Bach. Anyone who knows anything about choral music will tell you that tackling such a complex piece is not for the faint-hearted. Some of you may have seen Gareth Malone’s latest programme shown at about the same time, where he plucked eight amateur singers to perform the masterpiece with the BBC Singers. For an amateur group to attempt this on their own may be seen as foolhardy, but they leapt into the performance with their usual enthusiasm, and the result was a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

The following day I was at Finborough School for the Suffolk Volunteer Police Cadets parade and presentation, where I was asked to inspect the cadets. One of our Haverhill cadets was presented an award for their work over the year. Apologies for not remembering her name. I had the pleasure of attending Haverhill and District Town Twinning Association's French Night, where we enjoyed a French themed meal and dancing to Emma and the Dinosaurs.

Thank you to those councillors who were able attend my Thanksgiving Service at St Felix church. A good number of visiting dignitaries made the journey to our corner of Suffolk, as well as many of our local volunteer heroes. Thank you to Fr John, Rev Max and Dcn Huw for the leading the service, to all of the readers, and to the community at St Felix who provided the music and refreshments. Special thanks to Cllr Hanlon who stepped in at the last minute to act as usher on the day. A retiring collection was held for my chosen good cause, Room4... Thank you to those who contributed.

I accepted an invitation as mayor to be part of a small group of stakeholders that meet with the Suffolk Chief Constable, Rachel Kearton, where she was keen to hear of our views on local policing. It was only a short meeting, but it is hoped that this line of communication will continue on a regular basis.

The inaugural Haverhill Science Festival has just been held, and I thought that it was a brilliant affair. I was fortunate enough to meet with Lord Robert Winstone when he was shown around the EpiCentre, and was present at his wonderfully entertaining talk and Q&A event at the Arts Centre later that same evening. Who would have thought he'd had such a varied career? On Saturday I went to the Planetarium show, relocated back at the Arts Centre because of the threat of inclement weather, before moving across to the main event at East Town Park, where a variety of activities were provided for children (and adults) which were enthusiastically recieved. Thankfully, the threatened downpour didn't materialise, and the day finished with a bang as Nick Coulston, who had been touring the primary schools all week, set of a rocket into the Haverhill sky. Thank you to everyone who organised the event, the exhibitors, and all who volunteered on the day. I am definitely looking forward to the next one.

I have at least three events in the diary for the next two weeks, including what I am sure will be an emotional service for St Nicholas Hospice at St Edmundsbury Cathedral.

David