

Haverhill Town Council

Minutes of a Meeting of Haverhill Town Council's

FULL COUNCIL

Held on Monday 28th October 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 Q Cox
Councillor J Crooks
Councillor P Firman
Councillor P Hanlon
Councillor M Martin
Councillor J Mason
Councillor L Miller-Jones (until 8.12pm)
Councillor L Smith

Apologies: Councillor B Davidson
Councillor A Luccarini
Councillor D Page
Councillor A Stinchcombe
Councillor D Roach – Suffolk County Council
Councillor H Sowa – Suffolk County Council

In Attendance: Ms Saffron Carter, Engagement & Advocacy Lead, Reach
Ms Kelleigh Jansen, Volunteer, Reach
Ms Sarah McElarney, Volunteer, Reach
Colin Poole, Town Clerk
Jane Lomas, Council Administrator

1 member of the public was present.

Welcome:

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

MINUTES

C24 **Apologies for Absence**
/135 The above apologies were noted.

C24 **Declaration of Interests and requests for dispensation**
/136 None.

ACTION

C24 /137 **Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held Monday, 30th September 2024**

It was proposed by Councillor R André, seconded by Councillor L Smith that the minutes of the meeting held 30th September 2024 be agreed as a true record.

RESOLVED

C24 /138 **To note progress of actions arising from the minutes not covered by this Agenda**

C24/125c) The bridleway section of Quakers Lane has been levelled and resurfaced.

C24/125f) Councillor Roach had written to the Clerk regarding the Sturmer Road/Chalkstone Way junction – all the white line work has been ordered which should make the 'give way' clearer. Consideration to remove the 40mph limit on Sturmer Road and reduce it to 30pmh has been requested.

C24 /139 **Reach report**

Saffron Carter, Engagement and Advocacy Lead, and Kelleigh Jansen and Sarah McElarney volunteers at Reach gave a presentation illustrating the work they do. Reach works within Haverhill and local villages with the aim of tackling poverty and preventing financial hardship, focussing on the Three P's (Prevention, Policy and Pounds in Pockets). Reach works with people, partners, schools and government bodies. A campaign currently underway called 'Everyday Essentials' is in collaboration with the Trussell Trust which aims to increase the universal credit amount of £91/week for a person over 25, to a minimum of £125/week for a single person, regardless of age. Work with people includes giving out food parcels, helping individuals financially by looking at government benefits, utility tariffs, broadband providers, etc. Reach also offers a drop-in service and assistance in any way they can. During the last year, Reach has achieved £1.4m in financial outcomes for people through financial gains, debt management and client aid.

Reach asked if Councillors could promote the work that Reach does so that the service reaches as many people as possible. Councillors thanked Ms Carter, Ms Jansen and Ms McElarney for giving an informative and lively presentation.

C24 /140 **Suffolk County Council Area Sustainable Transport Plan for Haverhill**

Councillors discussed Suffolk County Council Area Sustainable Transport Plan for Haverhill. The Town Clerk will draft a response reflecting Councillors' comments and concerns: large areas of the town are not covered, especially to the west; not enough people use the buses and a higher subsidy amount may be required to encourage use; geographically the town is surrounded by hills and transport is needed for people unable to walk or cycle these routes; the plan to improve walkways is welcome.

C24 /141 **Queen Street/High Street Enhancement Project**

The Town Clerk advised that the council were being asked only to endorse the basis of the approach of the working party, not any potential conclusions. Following a robust discussion it was proposed by Councillor L Miller-Jones, seconded by Councillor L Smith that Full Council endorses the working party's recommendation that pedestrianisation is the basis on which enhancement plans are predicated.

RESOLVED

Town Clerk

C24 /142 **Haverhill Area Forum**
To note that the Haverhill Area Forum is being held on Tuesday 5th November. All local elected representatives at any layer of government are invited.
NOTED

C24 /143 **Reports from District/County Councillors on issues pertinent to HAVERHILL and the PUBLIC FORUM**

- a) **Police Report** – Nothing to report.
- b) **Ambulance Report** – The Town Clerk is in the process of co-ordinating the diaries of key people to arrange a date to meet via Teams to discuss ambulance response times in the Haverhill area.
- c) **County Councillors** – see Appendix 1
Councillor J Mason: see report attached (Appendix 1)
Councillor Mason highlighted that the Quakers Lane works have cost in excess of £80,000. Thanks are given to Suffolk County Council and West Suffolk Council for their contributions.
Norton Road – it is expected that works will be completed on 22nd November.
Greenfields Way bus stop – a new path is being constructed from Norton Road with an accessible ramp to the surgery from the bus stop. Funding is now exhausted, and Councillor Mason recommends members asking the next County Councillor elected for this area next May to have dropped kerbs installed.
Banking hub on the High Street – this should be open by the end of the week.
- d) **District Councillors**
Councillor Hanlon thanked Councillor Mason for his work. He also thanked Town Councillors for attending the Civic Ceremony.
- e) **Town Councillors' matters to report** – see Appendix 2
Councillor J Burns: see report attached (Appendix 2).
- f) **Members of the public**
A member of the public asked Councillors to consider the full ramifications of looking at pedestrianising the High Street.

Town Clerk

C24 /144 **Mayor's Report** – See Appendix 3.
Nothing further to report.

C24 /145 **ONE Haverhill Partnership**
To note the response to ONE Haverhill Partnership to the CGP decision to proceed with SCET Phase 2.
NOTED

C24 /146 **Financial Matters**
a) **Authorisation of payments:** It was proposed by Councillor P Hanlon, seconded by Councillor M Martin, that the listed payments totalling £81,594.76 be authorised.

RESOLVED

- b) The review of the external audit and the external auditor's opinion has not yet been completed. This will be a further agenda item.
- c) To note that in accordance with the regulations the notice of completion of audit has been placed on the notice board and website within the prescribed time limit.

NOTED

Town Clerk

C24 Adoption of Committee Reports

/147 a) Planning Committee:

It was proposed by Councillor M Martin, seconded by Councillor R André, that the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held 7th October 2024, and 22nd October 2024 and the recommendations contained therein, be adopted.

RESOLVED

b) Finance Working Party:

It was proposed by Councillor L Smith, seconded by Councillor J Burns, that the minutes of the Finance Working Party meeting held 21st October 2024 and the recommendations contained therein, be adopted.

RESOLVED

C24 Actions taken under delegated powers

/148 None.

C24 Provisional meetings calendar for 2024

/149 Provisional dates for meeting in 2025 was circulated. Councillors were asked to advise the Town Clerk if any dates coincide with meeting dates elsewhere.

ALL to Note

C24 Date of next meeting

/150 The meeting noted that the next meeting will be held on Monday, 25th November 2024. The Community Trust AGM will be held before/after the meeting – the time to be advised.

C24 Closure

/151 The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.40pm.

Signed Date.....

Chairman

Appendix 1 – County Councillors’ reports

Appendix 2 – Town Councillors’ reports

Appendix 3 – Mayor’s report

APPENDIX 1 – County and District Councillor’s report Councillor Joe Mason

County and District Councillor Report, October 2024

Cllr Joe Mason

Suffolk County Council Full Council at on the 17th of October and will next sit on the 12th of December. I was invited by Council Leader Cllr Matthew Hicks, to second a motion on Winter Fuel Payments.

I attended Scrutiny Committee this month, mostly focussing on the County’s Flood Response in regard to the challenges brought about by Storm Babet.

In this report.

1. Suffolk County Council News
2. Haverhill’s new recycling centre and the old Chalkstone Way site
3. Highways Update
4. Persimmon Estate (inc Relief Road)
5. Anaerobic Biodigester
6. Memories are Golden & West Suffolk College
7. Banking Hub
8. Market
-
9. West Suffolk News
10. Addendums

1. Suffolk County Council News

Two motions presented to Council.

Proposed by Councillor Matthew Hicks and seconded by Councillor Joe Mason.

‘This Council believes that Winter Fuel Payments provide a vital lifeline to Suffolk’s pensioners and registers its opposition to the Labour government’s extreme and unnecessary cuts to this support.

The Council notes with concern that over 177,000 Suffolk residents now face uncertainty over the future of their Winter Fuel Payments. Moreover, the Council recognises that the government’s deliberate withholding of impact assessments on their proposals, ahead of the Parliamentary debate on the issue, was in breach of long-standing constitutional conventions on ministerial accountability to Parliament.

The Council also recognises that as a rural county, with many properties ‘off gas grid’, its residents are heavily reliant on oil and private car transport.

Noting that Suffolk is home to an ageing population which will be disproportionately impacted by the Labour government’s decision, the Council resolves to:

- 1. Write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP, asking her to a) immediately reverse this decision and b) rule out any increase to fuel duty in the upcoming autumn budget.*
- 2. Continue to oppose the cuts to Winter Fuel Payments at every opportunity.*
- 3. Register its opposition to any increase in fuel duty in the upcoming autumn budget.*
- 4. Support rural motorists and recognise the vital role private cars play both in combatting rural isolation and in our social care offer.*
- 5. Welcome the recently announced £3 million project to offer interest free loans to Suffolk residents wanting to upgrade the energy efficiency.*

6. Continue to oppose a 'heat pump first' approach to decarbonising housing stock and argue for any approach to decarbonisation to be a) technologically agnostic and b) avoid solutions that disproportionately disadvantage residents with older properties and or oil-fired central heating.
Motion Passed

For further response or info to this please refer to:

Suffolk County Council News:

Press: [Tory-run Suffolk County Council calls for winter fuel cuts U-turn | East Anglian Daily Times \(eadt.co.uk\)](#) Record of Vote: [Suffolk County Council Vote](#)

Motion 2 – Proposed by Councillor Ruth Leach and seconded by Councillor Keith Welham.

'Suffolk County Council takes seriously its responsibilities to create and maintain routes and facilities that are safe and accessible for pedestrian traffic.

Within the context of the new government's recent announcement of 'unprecedented levels of funding' to encourage active travel, more people will be walking, wheeling and cycling to meet the active travel objectives. Almost three quarters of trips in England are less than five miles long and the goal of the government's executive body, Active Travel England, is for 50% of trips in the country's towns and cities to be walked, wheeled or cycled by 2030.

Therefore, meeting the statutory responsibility to maintain pavements to accommodate this increased pedestrian usage and to reduce risk for footpath users, is imperative.

We acknowledge the commitment of the Cabinet member and officers in maintaining our highways, footways and cycleways within the restrictions of a necessarily frugal budget.

However, this council also takes into the account the duty of care it has to residents.

To encourage active travel in line with the council's objectives, footways and pavements need to be made safe, maintained fit for purpose and given a higher level of priority than has been the case in the past. This is particularly important given the ageing population of the county.

Councillors will have examples where the defect criteria outlined in the Highways Maintenance Operational Plan has not adequately protected Suffolk residents from injury when walking.

This council therefore agrees to an urgent cross-party review of the Highways Maintenance Operational Plan under Matrix K (Footway Potholes) and Matrix L (Footway Level Difference) relating to footways in urban and busy pedestrian areas, especially where a recent fall has been reported. It is vital that 5 both the baseline for defect intervention (currently 20mm) and the category of response time for repair is reviewed.' *Motion not Passed.*

Suffolk County Council News

[Have fun and stay safe for Halloween and Bonfire Night](#)

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has issued safety advice for Halloween and Bonfire Night.

[Suffolk County Council set on major investment to further protect Suffolk from flooding as it calls on Government to 'step up'](#)

Suffolk County Council has today announced its intention to invest another £1.5 million to carry out important flooding prevention work.

[Suffolk residents encouraged to share views on new Local Transport Plan](#)

A newly developed plan which details the long-term vision for transport in Suffolk has been launched as part of a county-wide consultation this week.

Consultation Link: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/LTP>

[Council to offer interest-free loans to make homes more energy efficient - Suffolk County Council](#)

Energy efficiency upgrades such as insulation, solar panels, batteries, glazing, or heat pumps will all be possible with loans of up to £15,000 to be repaid over a maximum of 7 years at 0% interest.

2. Haverhill's new recycling centre & the old Chalkstone Way site

I will be formally visiting the site in November with Cllr Roach & Cllr Sowa and will welcome any comments or concerns to represent to FCC and/or portfolio holder Cllr Chris Chambers.

3. Highways

Quakers Lane - Latest

A lot has been achieved in the last month. The Bridle Way Section and Car Park area has been levelled and resurfaced (unbound).

Please note the works detailed below for this week.

“Contractors are going to be onsite Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of week commencing 28 October to lay the new asphalt surface on the two sections of Quakers Lane (1 adjacent to the Ex-Servicemen's Club, 1 from the junction with Recreation Road).

This scheme has proven to be slightly larger than first anticipated and it is intended to dedicate three resurfacing teams to this, to ensure that the works are completed within the 3-day window (although one extra day has been allowed as a contingency, should this be needed).

Communication has taken place with the staff at the Ex-Servicemen's club to ensure that their deliveries can take place without issue. They requested that Mondays were avoided as this is when they receive their Dray delivery. They also have a delivery on Wednesday of dry goods, and this has been pushed back to late afternoon, so hopefully there will be no problems accessing the club.

In addition to the 2 large areas of full resurfacing, we are also going to 'find and fill' all defects on the length of Quakers Lane from the High Street up to the ExServicemen's Club. This will address the numerous defects here that are not at intervention level (the areas of cracking, crazing and shallower potholes). Whilst this will be patching repairs only, rather than full resurfacing, it will at least ensure the full length of Quakers Lane has a decent, safe and resilient surface moving forwards.”

I have been informed that these works have cost in excess of £80,000. I am most grateful for SCC for investing in these significant works and WSC for its contribution to fixing to this rather forgotten and forlorn part of town.



Haverhill Town Centre Signs

Cllr Burns and I are still working to find a resolution to the TRO on the High Street that doesn't support the closure of the High Street till 6pm on a Saturday. Quite frustrating, but still willing to explore all avenues. Highways have agreed to meet on site date tbc.

Other Works

Lots of works happening around Town. E.g. patching on Queensway. Regarding Norton Rd. I have been informed the last parts that need to be done has been scheduled for the 22nd of November.

Ehringshausen Way Bus Stop

I have requested a further update re: the missing bus stop flag on Ehringshausen Way to be reinstalled. I had requested a new bus stop flag for this to be installed.

Greenfields Way Bus Stop

Over 4 years in the making. First ordered by then Cllr Paula Fox from her locality budget. The project from the onset has been beset with legal, land ownership, design and funding issues. It so nearly got kicked into the long grass and forgotten about. I can't begin to count the emails and discussions I have had on this project alone.

What we have here is going to be superb! A new path from Norton Road with accessible ramped access to the Surgery from the Bus Stop. There will now be no need for pedestrians to have to risk slipping on the grass.

This has been the hardest project for me to get over the line and an awful list of persistence and resilience has really paid off.

Looking forward to returning at the end of the week when it is all done!

There is still a need for dropped kerbs across Greenfields way. My funding is now exhausted, and I recommend members asking the next County Councillor elected for this area next May to have these installed.



Persimmon Estate and Relief Road & S106 – Improvement to Ann Suckling Road and Watting Road and Freshwater Estate

Landscaping - Tree planting to replace those dead ones that have been removed will take place in the new year.

- Thistles/Weeds in Grass across the park preventing play. Persimmon have said they would go back to their contractors. I am not confident; Persimmon are giving sufficient priority to resolving P.O.S. issues.

Vandalism - Many thanks to Persimmon for a speedy response to repairing further vandalism on the play park.

Farrant Rd – No further progress. Persimmon are now instructing Contractors. They have stated completion by the end of the year. But I have heard that before.

Howe Road Bus Gate No further update

Other Issues

Watting Rd Puffin Crossing No further update.

Saxon Crescent Dropped Kerb and other Issues on Saxon Crescent No further update, awaiting update from West Suffolk Planning,

Future Phases

The local Centre plans (3A) are expected to drop imminently, and it was helpful to have a workshop with Persimmon held at Haverhill Arts Centre to go through the plans and again raise concerns of interest to residents.

4. Anaerobic Biodigester

It would seem that Acorn have now submitted some of their response to SCC requests for more information/mitigations. I have not yet seen these and will report back when I know more. If this does go to committee it is unlikely it will be before the end of the year. I will of course keep the Town Council updated as developments occur.

5. Memories are Golden & West Suffolk College

I would urge all members to arrange a visit to the Memories are Golden who have now found and secured their new home in the Leisure Centre. Members who have followed the fortunes of this local charity will know how difficult the organisation has found finding a new home. It was a pleasure to visit them and see how happy everyone was with their new home.

I also visited West Suffolk College, Haverhill on the High Street. The upgrade to the building I significant and of high quality. I intend to promote and encourage community take up of courses. This is an important addition to adult education in Haverhill and hopefully will interest many people to either gain a qualification, engage in personal development or take up an interest and the process of learning something new with other like-minded people.

6. Banking Hub

I am expecting the banking hub on the High Street to open by the end of this week, with a formal opening the week after, bringing an end to this long running community banking issue.

This morning, I was given a tour the banking hub and I was impressed how quickly this has all come together. Looking forward to this being used by the community. I remain concerned about the lack of Cash Points. LINK is the national provider of Cash Point and when Lloyds closes, in December I understand, it will be important to get a new assessment completed for the needs of the High Street.



7. Market

This month I met with officers regarding plans for the Market in Haverhill & indeed across West Suffolk. I have publicly shared my frustrations at how slowly the Market plan in is being implemented. I am reassured somewhat by some structural and staff changes/developments that are being made. I am somewhat as a loss as to why things are taking so long. I have requested a briefing paper, which summarises what is in progress and what we can expect in the coming months, and I will share when I receive it.

8. West Suffolk Council

Extraordinary meeting was held on 15th October

The main business of this meeting was focussed on West Suffolk's response to the Nationwide Simpler Recycling programme.

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It is recommended that, as set out in Report number: COU/WS/24/019, Council:

1. Approves Option B – the introduction of a twin stream recycling collection service to ensure that the Council can:

a. effectively implement Simpler Recycling.

- b. Meet its statutory requirements in compliance with The Environment Act 2021 by the 31 March 2026 deadline. Agenda Item 5 Extraordinary Council – 15 October 2024 – COU/WS/24/019
 - c. Maximise recycling and the quality of the materials collected to ensure the Suffolk taxpayer receives the best value for money.
 - d. Work consistently and cost effectively with other Suffolk councils.
 - e. Create a service that improves performance and supports resident engagement.
2. Agrees delegated authority is given to the Director (Operations, Leisure and Culture), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Operations, to agree and authorise the procurement strategy for twin stream recycling, individually and/or collectively as required with partner Suffolk councils, to deliver the necessary procurement and contractual variations to deliver the service change.
 3. Maintains the two weekly collection frequency of residual waste.
 4. In consultation with the Chief Operating Officer and Portfolio Holder for Resources, monitors and reports the net cost of Simpler Recycling (compared to our current budget for waste services) to members once procurement, Government funding and a revised Inter-Authority Agreement has been established for the Suffolk Waste Partnership. **Recommendation Passed**

There was a particularly robust debate on an amendment seeking improvements and assurances to the recommendation. Whilst the amendment was defeated, verbal assurances were given that if there was a change sought to fortnightly bin collections becoming three weekly, the decision would have to come back to the Full Council Chamber.

Biodiversity and Community Orchard – Glebe – Ongoing

Woolpack planting project - Ongoing

Stour View Medical Centre - No further update.

Better Access to Health & Mental Health Services – No further update, though I continue to press the need for better Health & Mental Health Services/provision, and I am calling on the council to work with partners to help deliver better access to Health Services in the Town.

West Suffolk Council News

Other West Suffolk News

[Battery and vape recycling plea after bin waste fire](#)

Residents are being encouraged to dispose of their used batteries and vapes safely after a fire at the Bury St Edmunds waste transfer station.

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Please note this report does not include all the work I am undertaking at the moment or projects I am engaged with and trying to move forward for the betterment of the community. Where I have stated 'no further updates' or 'ongoing', please refer back to my previous months report. Members are always welcome to contact me should they need any information or assistance relating to issues across the Cangle District.

APPENDIX 2 – Town Councillor’s report

Councillor John Burns

- **Great Wilsey Park:** Redrow have asked SCC to introduce new TRO. In discussions with SCC appears that none of the roads nor roundabout on Chalkstone Way has yet been adopted however SCC have agreed to enforce any such TRO with Redrow’s permission. The TRO consultation is currently underway and is designed to stop the inconsiderate parking by drivers using Westfield School. It is a shame that such measures have to be taken.

An application for the local centre has gone in and looks very good although there is a concern that the proposed convenience store will not be built until at least 1000 occupations taken place. Considering that Redrow are only building up to 900 properties in the current phases this could mean that facility may not be built for another 10-15 years. Unsurprisingly the NHS have once again ignored the provision of healthcare facilities on the estate instead taking looking to the equivalent money offered for services now not guaranteed to be spent in the town.

- **Police Matters:** Crime stats for August 2024 were distributed on 14th October. There has been no new Constable’s County.
- **SCC Highways:** Cllr Joe Mason and myself will be meeting with SCC as there seems to be some confusion over the town centre signage with a view to finally putting this to bed 3 years after they lost the original signs after Covid restrictions were eased.
- **Greater Cambridge Partnership:** As reported elsewhere in the agenda, the GCP, and subsequently Cambridge County Council, voted to proceed with the new busway from Cambridge South to Fourwentways despite all the sensible comments regarding the lack of support for the A1307 corridor to Haverhill. The authority seems to think, from the many meetings I have attended, that the use of buses is the only solution to any transport problems so hardly surprising.
- **Parking:** I have formally requested WSC (via a FOI request) for the parking enforcement statistics to April 2024 in Haverhill and as a comparison those in BSE & Newmarket. I have the figures to 2022 so will make an interesting comparison as to where they have been enforcing.
- **Markets:** I have had no response to my request from the Portfolio Holder as to what progress has been made as reported in last month’s report.
- **Sturmer Arches:** Still nothing to report.
- **Fox PH (Wratting Road):** No further news known.
- **Vixen PH (Millfields Way):** No further news known.
- **Strasbourg Square:** Nothing new to report.
- **Other work:**
 - Attended various HTC meetings online and in person.
 - I have been working with others on plans for the Remembrance event on 10th November which will be live-streamed. The parade will leave the back of HAC at around 1420, stop at front of HAC where the band will lead off, then to the Market Square to pick up invited guests, with an aim to start the service in the cemetery at around 1500.
 - Helped with Knife Angel removal and created video of the closing ceremony for HTC.
 - Attended WSC Town and Parish Forum & 1st meeting of the Town Centre enhancement project.

- Carried out several IT related tasks at Zone and HAC.

APPENDIX 3 – Mayor’s report

Monday 28th October 2024

This month’s report is a short one, with civic appointments being few and far between, but I am sure that will be remedied next month with a full programme of Remembrance services coming up.

Liz and I took up the invitation to visit Haverhill Men’s Shed at their new facility at the old caretaker’s house at Samuel Ward school. The building needs a lot of work doing to it, not least the installation of an electricity supply, following years of neglect and vandalism. But I know that Anthony and his hardy crew will make it work for them. We spoke to a number of members who told us how important the Shed has been in turning their lives around and bringing them back from some very dark places. I would encourage you all to support them in any way you can. The following day we attended the Sudbury Civic Service. I was especially pleased to meet up with my former manager at Haverhill Post Office, Cllr Andy Welsh, who is the new Deputy Mayor of Sudbury.

On Tuesday 8th October I had a brief meeting with the subpostmaster at the temporary banking hub in the library to see how he was getting on. I believe the permanent premises will be opening in the High Street at beginning of November.

Later that evening we attended Reach’s Challenging Poverty event here at the Arts Centre, where we spoke some of the staff and volunteers that are attempting to raise awareness of poverty in our community, and what we need to do to eradicate it.

I attended the AGM of West Suffolk Citizens Advice Bureau, where we heard about the work that they do for our residents, and were given a history of CAB in West Suffolk. The branch in Haverhill was their first one, beating Bury St Edmunds by a week.

That afternoon I went to Westfield Primary Academy with Cllrs Hanlon, Miller-Jones and Cox to support their community litter pick. The pupils have been learning about the harmful effect that littering can have on their environment.

On Saturday 19th I took advantage of an offer from Haverhill Singers to join in with their Come and Sing event at St Mary’s as they commemorated the centenary of Gabriel Faure’s death with a performance of his Requiem and other well-known pieces. It was a terrific day, and a nice change to be on the other side for a change.

The next day Liz and I were at St Edmundsbury Cathedral for the Civic Service of the Chair of West Suffolk, our very own Cllr Hanlon. The Dean’s homily was right on point as he reminded of why we entered public service, namely to serve our communities before ourselves. Thank you to Cllrs Martin and Cox who were also there to support Pat. The highlight, though, was definitely the performance of Mozart given by Karmel Stannard, Pat’s long-time friend and collaborator at Churchill’s School.

Most of last week was taken up with my attendance at the LGA Conference in Harrogate, but yesterday I was able to squeeze in a visit to see the facilities, partly funded by the Town Council, that Haverhill Silver Band have constructed at their new practice centre in Clements Primary Academy. We were then treated to a performance of the programme that they are performing next week in competition at Evesham, and a few other popular pieces.