

Haverhill Town Council

Minutes of a Meeting of Haverhill Town Council's



FULL COUNCIL

Held on Monday 15th December 2025 at 8.00pm at Haverhill Arts Centre, High Street, Haverhill

Present: Mayor Councillor Q Cox
Deputy Mayor L Miller-Jones
Councillor A Brown
Councillor J Burns
Councillor B Davidson
Councillor P Hanlon
Councillor M Martin
Councillor D Page
Councillor D Smith
Councillor L Smith
Councillor A Stinchcombe
Councillor J Teixeira

Apologies: Councillor J Crooks
Councillor P Firman
Councillor A Luccarini
Councillor J Mason
Vicky Phillips, Deputy Clerk
Mr E Pinnock

In Attendance: Colin Poole, Town Clerk
David Roach Suffolk County Councillor

There was one member of the public present.

Welcome:

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that the meeting was being recorded. In light of the terrible attack on a Jewish Hanukkah event on Bondi beach, Australia, the council stood to observe a minute's silence for the fifteen victims, those who were injured and their families.

MINUTES

C25 /166 **Apologies for Absence**
The above apologies were noted.

C25 /167 **Declaration of Interests and requests for dispensation**
There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensation.

C25 /168 **Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held 27th October 2025**

It was proposed by Councillor D Smith, seconded by Councillor P Hanlon, that the minutes of the meeting held 24th November 2025 be agreed as a true record.

RESOLVED

C25 /169 To note progress of actions arising from the minutes not covered by this Agenda

None – all matters arising are agenda items.

C25 /170 Reports from District/County Councillors on issues pertinent to HAVERHILL and the PUBLIC FORUM

a) Police Report:

The Mayor thanked Councillor J Burns for circulating the crime report.

b) Ambulance Report: (appendix i)

The Mayor thanked Councillor A Stinchcombe for his report of the meeting held with EEAST, and Nick Timothy MP on 28th November. It was proposed by Councillor A Stinchcombe, seconded by Councillor L Miller-Jones that the Clerk write to EEAST proposing they set up a Falls First Responder volunteer scheme.

RESOLVED

Also, the Clerk will ask for clarification of why the paid falls response car pilot was discontinued, as it appeared to be because it was too busy, rather than not busy enough.

c) County Councillors: (see Appendix ii)

Councillor J Mason had circulated his report ahead of the meeting. Councillor D Roach commended the town council for the carnival parade on November 29th. He advised that the County Council budget setting was awaiting confirmation of the central government support grant. Councillor D Smith asked if the sign on Burton End pointing to the now-demolished St John Ambulance Centre could be removed. Councillor Roach agreed to request this.

Councillor Roach left the meeting.

d) District Councillors:

Councillor A Brown advised that as well as new changing rooms at Puddlebrook, as previously reported, there will also be refurbishment works at the changing rooms on Motts Field, thanks to support from the Football Foundation.

e) Town Councillors: (see Appendix iii)

Councillor Burns had circulated his report.

Public Forum: None.

C25 /171 Mayor's Report

Mayor Cox had submitted his report (appendix iv). He congratulated Sara Marsh for her organising of the carnival parade and the rest of the Christmas events on 29th November. He noted he had not seen crowds like that in town in a long time.

Clerk

Clerk

**County
Councillor D
Roach**

Mayor Cox further noted that the council's Civic Carol Service was excellent, with superb playing by the Silver Band, singing by the school choir, dance from the Kerala Association and trumpet-playing by Archie Pannell.

C25 **ONE Haverhill Partnership**

/172

- a) The clerk advised that there had been a meeting of a sub-group to look at how casual racism in town can be tackled, as it appeared to be in danger of becoming normalised as part of a general decline in how people treated each other. A project to encourage people to respect each other was being planned.
- b) The Clerk advised that the work on the Wellbeing Hub was progressing, with the manager and deputy successfully recruited. Councillor L Miller-Jones advised that the service would be known going forward as the Stourview Wellbeing Centre. This was chosen by the Mental Health Action Group to help people know instinctively where it is, given the high profile of the Stourview Medical Centre which previously occupied the building. Whilst the name had changed, the purpose has not.

C25 **Financial Matters**

/173

- a) Authorisation of payments: It was proposed by Councillor J Burns, seconded by Councillor P Hanlon that the listed payments totalling £156,100.44 be authorised.

RESOLVED

- b) Budget 2026/27: The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) presented the latest iteration of the budget. Nothing had changed, bar some minor tidying-up. He thanked Councillors J Burns and J Teixeira for their proof-reading of the budget. The RFO referred members to his report, in particular highlighting the allowances for potential activity. He stressed that the budget process only agrees the budget, there is a second stage to actually signing off a project.

The budget allows for

- i. Supporting improving literacy levels in Haverhill.
- ii. Funds for match-funding West Suffolk Council in the provision of a Town Centre Manager.
- iii. Allowance for Vision 2030.
- iv. The maze project funds will be drawn from earmarked reserves.

It was proposed by Councillor P Hanlon, seconded by Councillor M Martin, that the latest iteration of the budget be approved as a further draft. The council will adopt a final version in January.

RESOLVED

C25 **Local Government Reorganisation consultation**

/174

Subject to an amendment to comment on the impact of SEN, social care and Highways on discretionary services, it was proposed by Councillor A Brown, seconded by Councillor P Hanlon that the draft response be adopted and submitted.

RESOLVED

C25 **Graffiti Wall at Hales Barn Skate Park**

/175

It was proposed by Councillor J Burns seconded by Councillor M Martin that £1000 be allocated from the s17 reserve towards the construction of a legal graffiti wall, subject to permission from West Suffolk Council.

RESOLVED

CP

- C25** **Adoption of Committee Reports**
/176 a) Planning: It was proposed by Councillor P Hanlon, seconded by Councillor M Martin, that the minutes of the meeting held 1st December 2025 and any recommendations contained therein, be agreed as a true record.
RESOLVED
- C25** **Date of Next Meeting**
/177 The next meeting will be held on Monday 27th January 2026.
- C25** **Exclusion of the Press and Public**
/178 It was proposed by Councillor L Miller-Jones, seconded by Councillor D Smith, 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 – Third-party confidential information.
RESOLVED
- C25** **Freedom of Haverhill Request**
/179 It was proposed by Councillor J Teixeira, seconded by Councillor J Burns that a letter of Mayoral thanks be prepared for the nominee.
RESOLVED
Furthermore, it was agreed that there was a need for a broader range of awards to recognise the contributions of residents to the community of Haverhill.
- C25** **Closure**
/180 The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 21:17pm

Deputy Clerk

Deputy Clerk

Signed Date.....
Chairman

- Appendix i) – Ambulance Report**
Appendix ii) - County Councillors' reports
Appendix iii – Town Councillors' reports
Appendix iv) – Mayor's report

Appendix (i)

Ambulance report

Report on meeting with EEAST & Nick Timothy on 28th November 2025 by Alan Stinchcombe

Google AI says that in January and March 2025, the Care Quality Commission issued warning notices to EEAST "again citing issues with organisational culture, staff training compliance, and leadership not adequately acting on staff feedback to improve and develop the service". Perhaps this indirectly helped EEAST to adopt a slightly more cooperative attitude, and at times treating HTC almost like a user representative group. Unfortunately, Tony Brown and I agree that we failed to make any new ground.

EEAST started to address the four questions that our working party had given them in writing beforehand:

- Did EEAST deploy managers to crew an RRV on standby in Haverhill in July, as planned? If so, how many hours of deployment were achieved and what effect on C1 response times was observed?

EEAST deployed 120 hours of RRV standby to Haverhill, but the RRV only managed to arrive earlier than a CFR or military co-responder at 4 incidents, which was not deemed cost-effective. Not being prepared to commit $120/4 = 30$ hours of RRV standby time to provide each early C1 response is consistent with having taken away our last 24-hour RRV provision that provided one about once a day, which suggests that a life in Haverhill is valued at less than the cost of 24 hours of RRV standby time.

- Precisely what criteria are used to assign RAG ratings to response times? Do those criteria reflect what EEAST deems acceptable for Haverhill or other populations remote from hospitals?

EEAST agreed that it was not appropriate to shade poor response times to look better in areas like Haverhill with very poor response times.

Unfortunately, they still failed to respond to two of our questions:

- Did EEAST's demand and capacity review offer any suggestions for reducing inequality of response times between communities close to, and far from, hospitals?
- Does EEAST have statistical evidence to support its previous assertion that travel time to hospital is not a significant factor in mortality for C2 incidents?

EEAST continues to be keen to divert demand for ambulances back to community resources, but I think that comes with its own risks and blockages. For example, with sepsis:

- A community services nurse may not be able to recognise its symptoms as well as a paramedic.
- As it can develop within hours, quite severe symptoms may develop before first contact with a GP practice. One of Haverhill's GP practices insists on first contact via eConsult and the other encourages it, and if one agrees that the patient has "severe difficulty breathing", eConsult terminates the contact and advises "Call 999 or go to your local A&E".

We agreed to meet again in May 2026.

After the meeting

1. Having heard from Lora Miller-Jones during the meeting that she has been allowed as a visitor to a residential care facility to lift fallen residents, something that their own workplace policy prevents staff from doing themselves, Colin Poole has suggested that EEAST could invest in promoting Falls First Responders (FFRs), a new volunteering role for people who would be willing, like Lora, to just attend falls at care homes. Not everyone wants to get involved in life-or-death situations, so there could be a lot of people who would be too squeamish to volunteer to be a full CFR, but would be willing to attend falls. This could be advertised in Haverhill's fitness suite and gyms. EEAST could provide basic first aid, patient assessment and lifting training. EEAST could then send an FFR to a fall without injury call, rather than an ambulance. With experience, some FFRs might even want to volunteer to become a full CFR in due course. Each town wouldn't need many to make a difference.
2. I could try making a FoI request for stats on clinical outcomes to contrast Haverhill with Cambridge, but it's unclear to me whether EEAST or NHS England Digital holds the data linking ambulance and hospital records. As this could take a long time, I'll suggest that Health Scrutiny asks Suffolk Public Health and Communities to take this on, when I draft a briefing paper for Joe Mason

Appendix (ii)

County and District Councillor Report, December 2025

Report by Cllr Joe Mason

In this report

1. Suffolk County Council News
 2. SCC Annual Property Report
 3. Relief Road
 4. Highways Update
 5. Active Travel, Cyclists, Pedestrians and Rights of Way
 6. Haverhill Library Toilet
 7. Widdington Recycling Limited (MRF Application)
 8. Ambulance Service and Response Times in Haverhill
 9. EV Charging Installations
 10. Persimmon (Landscaping & Maintenance Issues)
 11. Blue Lights Hub
 12. West Suffolk Council News & Updates
 13. Community
 14. Addendum (SCC Motions)
1. **Suffolk County Council News** Four Motions last week at Full Council one from the Conservative, Labour, Green and Reform Groups. Please see addendum. The motions submitted provide an insight into what is debated in the chamber.

£12m Active Travel funding over four years announced for Suffolk

Suffolk County Council schemes promoting walking, cycling and wheeling receive funding for another four years from the government.

Suffolk County Council has been awarded more than £12 million over four years by Active Travel England to continue its work promoting sustainable travel.

Active Travel England (ATE) works with local authorities and other bodies to help them put in place infrastructure and facilities that make it easier for more people to walk, wheel and cycle, more often, on local journeys. <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news/12m-active-travel-funding-over-four-years-announced-for-suffolk> *(I am seeking clarity as to whether this supplements the existing monies*

that were available from the previous award to the Council – unclear as to impact on delivery with Local Government Reorganisation on the horizon)

SEND data shows improvement, but impact not felt by everyone, committee hears

Education Scrutiny Committee hears that progress in SEND reform is being made and robust improvement plans in place but further work is needed to ensure progress is felt by all <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news/send-data-shows-improvement-but-impact-not-felt-by-everyone-committee-hears>

Suffolk secures more than £26 million bus funding over three years Government funding for public transport in Suffolk is confirmed for three years.

Millions of pounds of investment is to take place in Suffolk's bus network over three years following allocation of Government funding. Services, ticketing, and infrastructure will all benefit under the package worth nearly £27 million between 2026 and 2029. <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news/suffolk-secures-more-than-27-million-bus-funding-over-three-years>

One Suffolk plan gains county-wide backing as Government launches consultation

Suffolk community leaders from the worlds of business, health, social care, agriculture and tourism, have backed a plan to scrap Suffolk's six councils and replace them with one council delivering all county-wide and local services.

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news/one-suffolk-plan-gains-county-wide-backing-as-government-launches-consultation>

2. **SCC Annual Property Report** Last week I delivered my first Annual Report to council. See attachment. In truth it is written by the directorate, though the foreword and executive summary was penned by me. It's an interesting read and demonstrates the range of work the team I work with are engaged with. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PUO1L15dlv_kCpUdg4SZXC_NqHB2TuT6/view?usp=sharing

Of particular interest and something I have been involved with is seeing through the recently announced sale of Landmark House in Ipswich. These large corporate buildings are a drain on Council resources and the disposal of properties like this mean significant cost avoidance, meaning the taxpayer has money spent on maintain vital services as opposed to keeping the lights and heating on at buildings that are no longer needed. <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news/suffolk-county-council-welcomes-landmark-house-sale-to-suffolk-police>

3. **Relief Road**

The Relief Road was not previously included in the salting programme but has now been added. I have also requested additional signage directing traffic to Bury St Edmunds at the Hales Barn Road Roundabout, and to Cambridge at the roundabout near The Fox. A decision is still pending regarding the removal or reinstatement of the red material on the Heras fencing. I have requested its removal, subject to speed data being within acceptable limits.

4. **Highways Update**

- **Haverhill Town Centre Signs** No further Update: Signs have been ordered and the order is now with M Group (previously Milestone) – awaiting installation (6th of January has been given to me informally)
- **Allington Walk**
No further update: This road is still scheduled a resurface but has been pushed back to February – No further update.

- **Bypass/ A1307 cutback and signage issues**
No further updates. Awaiting costings for the project from Highways. I am pressing Cllr Paul West where I can to see if progress can be made and works committed to.
 - **Pothole Season**
Tis the season to find potholes. Please can members report potholes that appear in their wards. Last week I reported two using the Suffolk Highways reporting tool. The more serious defect on Wratting Road opposite Hill Crescent was reported on the 8th and there is a 10 day work order on it. SO hopefully it will be repaired this week. In short if potholes are not reported then highways can't assess against the Highways Maintenance Operational Plan (HMOP) criteria.
5. **Active Travel, Cyclists, Pedestrians and Rights of Way**
- **Haverhill Local Transport Plan**
No further Updates. The HLTP is progressing and officers are identifying projects for delivery across the Town. When I have more, I will share.
 - **New Pelican/Toucan Crossing on Wratting Road**
No further update, still awaiting date for the installation.
 - **Consultation on Raised Table on Ann Suckling Road** The consultation has period has now passed with no objections from the community. I am meeting with Persimmon this week and will seek installation date info.
 - **Greenfields Way dropped Kerbs & Path from Clements School to The Doctors Surgery (Bus Stop)**
No further updates: Still awaiting notification of an installation date. It had been paused due to other planned works on Greenfield Way. This has now been lifted. No date but expecting installation in January/February, weather permitting.
 - **Bus Improvement Scheme**
No further Updates
6. **Haverhill Library Toilet**
No further update – Still awaiting S106 monies to be released to fund the Toilet project. Persimmon are now very close to 500 occupied units triggering the release of funds. Awaiting confirmation so that monies can be released for works to commence. I am meeting them this week and will be asking for an update.
7. **Widdington MRF Planning Application**
This is coming to committee this week (Tuesday 16th)
Many thanks to Cllr Tony Brown for his comments. I have not received any representations from any other TC members.
8. **Ambulance Service and Response Times in Haverhill**
I have spoken with the new Chair of the Health Scrutiny Committee Cllr Liz Harsant and she is happy for the item to be added as a topic on the forward work programme.
9. **EV Charging Installations**
No further update. Awaiting installation info that hopefully will be shared in the New Year
10. **Persimmon (Landscaping & Maintenance Issues)**

I have meetings scheduled with Persimmon for Monday 15th December and January 15th January following a comprehensive report I submitted. Persimmon have agreed to work through issues identified by myself and residents and clarify which areas are now the responsibility of RMG.

11. **Blue Lights Hub After some extensive lobbying and work with Nick Timothy MP & Tim Passmore PCC** and meeting with key Stakeholders from the Police and Ambulance Service, it would appear this is slowly gaining momentum. Another successful meeting was held at the beginning of December. Hopefully this will continue to progress and I look forward to seeing how this will progress.

12. **West Suffolk Council News**

No Full Council in November. Next meeting is Tuesday 16th December.

Adventure awaits: £243k revamp transforms play areas across West Suffolk

Four play areas in West Suffolk have received makeovers over the last few months as part of a council funded programme for playground refurbishment and developers S106 contributions worth £243,000. The newly refurbished play facilities are in Bury St Edmunds, **Haverhill**, Lakenheath and Newmarket.

<https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/news/pr20251212ws04.cfm>

(I have been told that the play areas at Alderton Close and Hales Barn Road are up for renewal with plans to be shared around February 2026)

Start-up grant opens doors for West Suffolk entrepreneurs

Aspiring entrepreneurs and newly established businesses in West Suffolk are being given a major boost through a startup grant initiative.

Community activities are being put on across more than 40 warm spaces this winter with West Suffolk Council providing additional support and advice to residents.

<https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/news/pr20251212ws03.cfm>

Free activities during school holidays for families who need support

With the school holidays a week away, children from families in need of support can book onto discretionary places for free activities coordinated by West Suffolk Council.

<https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/news/pr20251212ws01.cfm>

West Suffolk Council and Haverhill Town Council launch engagement events to shape town centre revitalisation

West Suffolk Council are working with Haverhill Town Council to promote and deliver two key initiatives, public realm lighting and town centre wayfinding, as part of a wider regeneration project.

<https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/news/pr20251125ws01.cfm>

Council Leaders back 'Suffolk to the Power of Three' option as part of local government reorganisation consultation

Suffolk residents, businesses and local organisations are being urged to take part in a once in a generational opportunity to shape how council services are delivered for their local communities.

<https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/news/pr20251119ws03.cfm>

Other updates

• Markets

No further updates, other than it would seem that the Makers Market had fewer stalls than normal this month and the Saturday Market doesn't seem to be benefitting from the pre-Christmas period with still low numbers of stall holders.

- **Argos Building**

Lobbied West Suffolk Council unsuccessfully regarding the Argos building that is up for Auction. In fairness the auction date I have been told has come to quickly for due diligence, surveys etc to be carried out. Will be interesting to see what happens.

13. Community

- Burton Centre Court – No further update. Announcement has been delayed and will now be end of December/January
- I continue to liaise with the community police team on a range of issues around town, mostly related to anti-social behaviour

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Please note this report does not in any means include all the casework I am undertaking now 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 to previous month’s reports.

Members are always welcome to contact me should they need any information or assistance relating to issues across the Cangle District.

For Reference:

There have been some further changes to committees I have been appointed to. At **Suffolk County Council** (SCC) I am responsible for Property & County Farms and I would welcome representations made to me on any SCC owned property owned in the area. At SCC I now sit on:

- Development & Regulation Committee (Planning)
- Education & Children’s Scrutiny Committee
- Scrutiny Committee
- Budget Working Group
- Minerals & Waste Policy Working Group

At **West Suffolk Council** I now sit on

- Performance & Audit Scrutiny Committee

At **Haverhill Town Council** I don’t currently sit formally on any committees, but I will of course attend if summoned or need to act in capacity e.g. as a County Councillor such as the Haverhill High Street Enhancement Group or if the agenda requires my attendance such as the Planning Committee, Energy & Sustainability Committee and Community & Leisure Community, which I have attended on a number of occasions over the last year.

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14. **Addendum (SCC Motions) Motion 1 – Proposed by Councillor Richard Smith MVO and seconded by Councillor Matthew Hicks - Conservative Group - Motion Passed**

‘Suffolk County Council formally registers its disappointment and concern following both the government’s Autumn Budget and “fairer funding” review, which leaves Suffolk’s local government system markedly worse off.

In addition, the council considers that the government’s Autumn Budget prioritised welfare handouts over working people. Welfare spending is now projected to rise from £314.7 billion in 2024/25 to £406.2 billion in 2030/31 – a predicted increase of 29 percent. In consequence, the council registers its opposition to the lifting of the

two-child benefit cap and its view that our ageing population means the county, and nation, cannot afford to have a significant proportion of the working age population economically inactive.

Moreover, the council expresses its concern about the budget's impact on Suffolk's hospitality and tourism sector. According to trade body UK Hospitality, ratable values have risen by as much as 76 percent for accommodation and 30 percent for pubs. This, in combination with tax relief for hospitality ending in April 2026, poses a real risk to this vital sector. Recognising that, in this sector, Suffolk is home to internationally renowned businesses, as well as many excellent smaller enterprises, this council calls on the government to give additional support to the hospitality and tourism industry.

Therefore, the council resolves to write to Suffolk's MPs and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rachel Reeves MP, setting out these concerns.'

Motion 2

Proposed by Councillor Ruth Leach and Seconded by Councillor Andrew Stringer - Green Group - Motion Not Passed

'This Council notes:

1. That all Suffolk's rivers — including the Stour, Orwell, Gipping, Deben, Alde, Blyth and Waveney — are central to the county's ecological health, cultural heritage, local economy and community wellbeing.
2. That rivers across the UK face growing pressures from pollution, habitat degradation, over-abstraction and the impacts of climate change.
3. That there is an emerging international and national movement recognising the "Rights of Rivers" as a constructive framework for improving the long-term health and resilience of waterways.

This Council believes:

That adopting a Rights-of-Rivers approach can strengthen efforts to protect Suffolk's freshwater ecosystems and support the Council's wider environmental, climate and biodiversity ambitions.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. Acknowledge in principle the intrinsic rights of rivers within Suffolk, informed by the principles of the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Rivers, including: • The right to flow, naturally and seasonally; • The right to perform essential ecosystem functions; • The right to be free from pollution and contamination; • The right to interact sustainably with aquifers and freshwater sources; • The right to native biodiversity, ecological integrity, and restoration; • The right to regeneration from environmental harm.
2. Work collaboratively with local communities, river trusts, environmental organisations, landowners, district and parish councils, and statutory bodies to explore practical ways of recognising and strengthening river rights and river health across Suffolk.
3. Embed river-health considerations into relevant Council strategies and policies, including those relating to planning, water management, highways, flood risk, biodiversity and climate adaptation.
4. Advocate to national and regional bodies, including the Environment Agency and water companies, for stronger protections for Suffolk's rivers and for greater transparency around water quality and river health.
5. Support local monitoring and restoration initiatives, including citizen science programmes, riparian habitat projects and nature-based solutions.
6. Facilitate the development of a "Declaration on the Rights of Rivers in Suffolk", led by relevant stakeholders, and bring a draft declaration to Council for consideration within two years.'

Motion 3 Proposed by Councillor Sandy Martin and Seconded by Councillor Peter Byatt - Labour Group - Motion Not Passed

‘The government’s SEND strategy focuses on providing the best possible support for children in mainstream schools. The acute shortage of speech and language therapists, the varying attitudes of schools across Suffolk, the reduction in Sure Start centres and other early years provision, and the severe delays faced by parents in getting help for their children, all lead to unsatisfactory outcomes for children in Suffolk. Therefore, this Council calls on the administration to:

1. Convene a deliberative process involving schools, parents, relevant medical and therapy practitioners and CYP officers to identify failings and blockages in the provision of the best possible early interventions.
2. Produce a plan to increase the support given to parents, children and schools at the earliest possible stage, so as to minimise the impact of Special Needs on children and their families.’

Motion 3 Proposed amendment by Conservative Group - Motion Passed

‘The government’s SEND strategy focuses on providing the best possible support for children in mainstream schools. The shortage of speech and language therapists, the varying attitudes of schools across Suffolk, the reduction in early years provision, and the delays faced by parents in getting help for their children, all lead to variable outcomes for children in Suffolk.

The council also registers its frustration at the government’s delay to the SEND White Paper and failure to address the issue of increasing Dedicated Schools Grant deficits

Therefore, this Council agrees to:

1. Continue its deliberative process within the Local Area Partnership involving schools, children, parents, therapists, medical practitioners and CYP officers to identify failings and blockages in the provision of the best possible early interventions corroborating its work through the SEND Improvement board
2. Continue with its plan to support parents, children and schools at the earliest possible stage, minimising the impact of Special Needs on children and their families.’

Motion 4 As amended – proposed by Councillor Philip Faircloth-Mutton (Reform) Seconded by Councillor Nadia Cenci (Conservative) – Motion Passed

This Council notes that:

1. Rural post offices are vital to the social and economic life of Suffolk’s villages and towns.
2. They provide essential services, such as banking, bill payments, cash access, paying in cheques, parcels, and trusted support, especially for elderly residents, those without internet, and small businesses.
3. Many face financial pressures from declining footfall, rising costs, and reduced government/Post Office remuneration.
4. Closures cause hardship, reduce access to services, and weaken town and village centres.

This Council believes that:

1. All Suffolk residents deserve fair access to postal and banking services.
2. A strong rural post office network is essential to community sustainability.
3. Local authorities must support infrastructure and advocate for fair funding.

This Council resolves to:

1. Where existing resources allow, work with the Post Office, MPs, district and borough councils, parish councils, and community groups to identify at-risk branches and explore solutions such as co-location, community ownership, business-rate relief, and volunteer-run service points.
2. Write to Post Office Ltd urging:
 - Sustainable funding for rural branches;
 - Fair remuneration for postmasters and sub-postmasters;
 - Continued access-to-cash services in rural Suffolk.
3. Establish the budgetary implications and feasibility of developing a Rural Services Impact Assessment to scrutinise proposed closures and their impact on vulnerable residents and report back to the Cabinet Member for Communities.
4. Promote awareness, including support for the ongoing Countryside Alliance campaign, encouraging residents to use local post offices.

This Council commits to championing Suffolk's rural post offices as essential community infrastructure.

Appendix (iii)

Town Councillor Reports:

Report by Cllr John Burns:

- **Great Wilsey Park:** Work has restarted on phase A8 next to Green Road.
- **Police Matters:** Crime stats for October 2025 were distributed on 14th December. Work is being undertaken by PC Oakley on a potential graffiti wall near the Skate Park plus a potential Community Alcohol Partnerships Action Plan (CAP). I have attended both online meetings.
- **SCC Highways:** We still await the new signs promised for early 2026.
- **Combined Authority:** Nothing to report.
- **Greater Cambridge Partnership:** No further updates.
- **Parking:** Still no perceived benefit from the so-called increase in enforcement.
- **Markets:** Still awaiting another meeting.
- **Sturmer Arches:** Nothing to report.
- **Fox PH (Wratting Road):** Nothing to report.
- **Vixen PH (Millfields Way):** A revised planning application has been submitted removing the underground car park and the convenience store. I still have concerns over the waste storage area which, despite what someone in WSC waste management seems to think is OK without examining the area, means that bins will fall off the edge of the footpath pavement whilst at same time blocking it. I have spoken to a waste truck operative who said it is not acceptable after examining it for themselves. In addition, concerns still exist over lack of residential, visitor, and store employees parking as well as how deliveries to the 2 x shops will be made. This is being discussed at HTC planning on 15th December after which I will be submitting my own concerns to WSC.
- **Strasbourg Square:** See above.
- **Other work:**
 - Worked the entire day until late at night on the Halloween Trail.
 - Following theft of equipment from the Zone, assisted staff and police with CCTV extraction for identity and evidence purposes.
 - Vetted budget spread sheet on behalf of the Town Clerk.

- Delivered and collected barriers for the Xmas event.
- As part of the town centre enhancement project went around town with others examining areas where enhanced lighting would benefit both safety and attractiveness.
- Met with others for town centre enhancement update.
- Finished initial setup of 5 x new computers for the Tech Office systems – further work needed when they are physically connected to the Arts Centre network. Supporting other systems and users.
- Provided usual weekly financial income stats from the till system for the various sites to HTC management plus attending various HTC meetings.

END

Appendix (iv) **Mayor's Report**

Cllr Quinn Cox Mayoral Report:
November 25th to December 15th

A quick turn around since our last full Town Council Meeting on the 24th. Some very notable events to reflect on.

29th November **Christmas Event**

What an event, a huge thank you to Sara for her efforts to bring about a fantastic event. I know it wasn't just Sara, so thank to the whole team at the Town Council as it was a huge team effort. Another event to be hugely proud that was to part of Haverhill, a town to be proud of. My day started with Max and St Marys Church with some Carols and the Nativity story, with much going on inside the church for children and their families plus tea coffee and cake, which I can neither deny or declare I partook in. I hear they were amazing. Thank you to Max and the team for providing such a vital service and being an important part of the towns community. The Parade had an excellent gathering of participants with a huge effort being made with costumes to add to the brilliance of the event. With the music and drums the atmosphere was amazing. Thank you to all involved on the Parade. I would also like to thank our very own Councillor Tony Brown for bringing along the Ferrett, which was great fun to ride and Tony was fabulous company which made for me the event in better. My daughter did message and ask, Dad, why are you in a tank! Which made me smile. The attendance was outstanding, the High Street was a good four people deep, lots of smiles and appreciation on people's faces. On arrival at the Market Square it was jam packed. Definite carnival atmosphere and to be joined by some of the cast of this year's Panto to turn on the Christmas lights was brilliant. The excitement didn't end there as we moved the Recreation Ground for this year's epic firework display. There was great anticipation with the crowd and the display did not disappoint. It really was epic, they just kept on giving. Just when you thought it was all over and the crowd started cheering, they hit is with more spectacular fireworks. To those who put the display together on what was a wet and gloomy day we are grateful for your efforts.

The whole day has been a very wet and gloomy affair yet cleared for the main event and joined by the biggest crowd I have ever seen. I could not have been happier to see such a successful event hugely attended. Again, to everyone thank you for making it such an amazing day.

1st December

West Suffolk Council Civic Carol Service

As to be expected a well-attended and grand affair. RAF Honington Band were in attendance and were magnificent. The Choir beautiful together with some great Christmas Carols to help develop the Christmas mood. Nice to see a variety of members of the Chain Gang and other dignitaries there providing for a lovely evening.

3rd December

Haverhill Town Council Civic Carol Service

As our own civic service had arrived it was nice to see Mayors and other dignitaries joins us for the event. St Marys Church was full and St Marys Choir and Haverhill Silver Band lead us through the carols. I was blown away but the Silver Band who were absolutely incredible, they lifted the roof and made for a spectacular evening. From Dancers from Haverhill Malayalee Association, singers from Samuel Ward, readers from Castle Manor, plus a solo performance from Archie Panel, it was a treat to have been present. I couldn't have left any happier a huge thank you to those involved. Another thank you to all those that looked after our guests ensuring they arrived for the fabulous feast at the Arts Centre. Thank you for the efforts there to ensure we had plenty good quality food to enjoy.

So much to have enjoyed and really positive feedback from those that attended. An event to be proud of with our Town once again showing how outstanding it is. Once again thank you to those involved pulling it together particularly Vicky Phillips who managed to co-ordinate getting so many people there.

5th December

Westfield Primary Academy Christmas Fayre

It was a real pleasure to have been invited to the Westfield Christmas Fayre, I am always made very welcome by the staff team there. I would particularly like to thank Ms Jones and Mr Gooch. I was asked if I could go in full robes which I was happy to oblige although one student did ask if I was a Pirate. The Fayre was fabulous with both staff and students working hard to provide lots and fun and raise money for the school. It did look like all stalls had done remarkably well and were well supported. I managed in my Pirate costume to have a photo with Father Christmas which was lovely. Another part of Haverhill that demonstrated it had an fantastic community working together brilliantly. The school did itself proud and was pleased to have been able to attend.

7th December

Haverhill Methodist Church – Annual Toy Service

I would like to thank Rosemary for the invite to the church service and for the welcome I received by the congregation. A number of familiar faces were there, which was lovely. Moses was, as always, a delight and the service was lovely with an interview with a member of the congregation which happens once a month. It was nice to see how once again the community spirit was incredible with a collective involvement within the service. When it came to the donation of toys, I was taken aback by how much was donated, the congregation showed a huge amount of generosity with large donations going to those locally that are in need. A huge thank you to all for your kindness and community spirit. It is hugely appreciated. With a gathering for refreshments after it was nice to catch up with a number of faces and appreciated the hospitality shown. Lots of cake!

Mayor of Thetford Community Carol Service

It was nice to be included in Thetford Carol Service. I do enjoy a Christmas Carol and getting my fill this year which is fantastic. A nice gathering and gentle service with singing some of

the classic carols. The Mayor of Thetford offered her thanks and was nice to have been present.

9th December

Westfield Primary Academy – Abbey Croft Family Cooking Session

The session is to provide some time for more vulnerable families to have the chance to do things together. Abbeycroft work in the local community providing a variety of sessions over the year to the more vulnerable. I was asked to join in and had a chance to cook and talk to the families involved that really value the sessions and were very engaged. We cooked a sweet potato curry which was very nice and the families the next day would be given a box of goodies to re-create the meal again at home. A fun, valuable session and great to see work Abbey Croft is doing in the community. Thank you to Ms Jones for inviting me to take part.

14th December

Haverhill Silver Band with Mayes Performing Arts Choir – The Snowman

This was a real treat, a stunning evening of fun and an incredible quality from the silver band. A fabulous choir accompanied the band for some of the carols that were played which was great. The main feature was to play along to the classic film, The Snowman. It was a unique experience and one I thoroughly enjoyed it. The Silver Band is incredible and a real asset to the town. I look forward to seeing what they might do next. I would love to see them do an Andre Rieu concert in the town, a real celebration.

It has been a busy and amazing few weeks. Feeling very festive with all the carols and celebrations I have been lucky enough attend. I might seem like a broken record but every time I have written the Mayoral report I comment on how amazing our Haverhill community is. I have been placed in a privileged position, and our community just keeps impressing more and more. I thank my fellow councillors for giving me the amazing opportunity.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and an incredible 2026