

Haverhill Town Council

Minutes of a Meeting of Haverhill Town Council's



HAVERHILL
TOWN COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL

Held on **Tuesday, 28 April 2026** 7.15pm at Haverhill Arts Centre, High Street, Haverhill

Present: Mayor Councillor Q Cox
Deputy Mayor L Miller-Jones
Councillor A Brown
Councillor J Burns
Councillor J Crooks
Councillor B Davidson
Councillor A Luccarini
Councillor M Martin
Councillor J Mason
Councillor D Page
Councillor D Smith
Councillor L Smith
Councillor J Teixeira

Apologies: Councillor P Firman
Councillor P Hanlon
Councillor A Stinchcombe
Vicky Phillips, Deputy Clerk

In Attendance: Colin Poole, Town Clerk
County Councillor D Roach
PC Jack Oakley

There were no members of the public present.

Welcome:

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

MINUTES

C26 **Apologies for Absence**
/052 The above apologies were noted.

C26 **Declaration of Interests and requests for dispensation**
/053 There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensation.

C26 **Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held Monday, 23 March 2026**
/054 It was proposed by Councillor A Brown seconded by Councillor L Smith that the minutes of the meeting held Monday, 23 March 2026 be agreed as a true record.

RESOLVED

C26 /055 To note progress of actions arising from the minutes not covered by this Agenda

- a) C26/020 – Fraud Training – the Clerk reported that the fraud training is confirmed for 22nd June. This will need to be promoted.
- b) C26/041 - Active Travel Scheme – work is still ongoing
- c) C26/042 - Working progress.

C26/ 056 Reports from District/County Councillors on issues pertinent to HAVERHILL and the PUBLIC FORUM

a) Police Report:

PC Jack Oakley's update highlighted two main incidents:

A man believed responsible for repeated off-road motorbike nuisance, including multiple public reports and crimes, has been arrested, charged, and remanded in custody, and is currently in prison awaiting a court hearing on the 30th; police are also seeking additional court orders to restrict his vehicle use and strengthen enforcement powers. In a separate incident on railway walk, a serious assault left one person with significant injuries and in hospital, but reports circulating on Facebook were inaccurate, as there was no individual running around with a sword. The confusion arose from a well-intentioned report, and police findings indicate the situation differed from what was widely claimed.

In answer to Councillor Liz Smith's question, PC Oakley went on to explain that the railway walk assault has been recorded as a potential hate crime, as this classification is based on the perception reported initially, but it is too early to confirm whether it was genuinely motivated by racial hatred, as this requires further evidence. Regarding the dirt bike incidents, while such behaviour has been an ongoing issue involving multiple offenders over time, the recent surge in reports and social media attention is largely linked to one main individual, with police having connected numerous incidents to him, although the wider problem still persists.

Councillor J. Mason praised PC Jack Oakley and his team for their role in helping Suffolk achieve one of the lowest crime rates in the country, while noting a disconnect between this reality and public perception, particularly around nuisance off-road bikes, which residents feel are not being adequately controlled despite the challenges of enforcement. He welcomed recent police action as a significant success and hoped it would reinforce that such illegal vehicle use will not be tolerated. However, he highlighted ongoing frustration among residents about nuisance driving, including reports of a black BMW drifting on the relief road, and stressed that consistent enforcement and successful prosecutions are key to deterring those who deliberately break the law.

PC Jack Oakley answered Councillor J Mason's question on increased burglaries, saying that there has been no significant rise in burglaries locally, explaining that figures can be misleading as they include lesser offences like shed thefts, while residential burglaries remain low. PC Oakley also confirmed that shoplifting in the High Street is an ongoing issue but not necessarily worse than elsewhere. He explained that he now acts as the dedicated shoplifting lead for the area, though investigations are often hindered when businesses fail to provide CCTV evidence.

Councillor J Burns emailed members some statistics regarding burglaries.

PC Jack Oakley debunked the myth that police do not investigate shoplifting under a certain value (often said to be £200) as incorrect, explaining that he routinely investigates cases well below that threshold, including low-value thefts, and said there is no policy preventing action on smaller incidents. He suggested the confusion may stem from an older penalty notice system rather than current practice, and emphasised that most shoplifting cases he deals with are still investigated.

He acknowledged some level of underreporting but said relationships with local businesses are generally good and the situation is improving overall. He also highlighted efforts to improve communication with shops through a modern alert system, similar to a WhatsApp-style network, but noted poor engagement from businesses when trying to roll it out, despite attempts to recruit participation from dozens of local retailers. It was discussed that the misconception about a minimum value threshold for investigating shoplifting should be actively challenged, with suggestions to use council and police social media to help correct the public perception. PC Jack Oakley agreed this was a good idea and offered to liaise with his team and share information publicly to help debunk the myth.

In relation to the proposed communication system for shops, he agreed to share details so it could potentially be promoted through council channels and councillors' social media to encourage greater business engagement.

b) Ambulance Report

Councillor T Brown mentioned that he was surprised to see a comment in the media about cycling paramedics being trialled in Cambridge to improve ambulance response times, given Cambridge already has the best response times in the region.

c) Suffolk County Councillors

Councillor D Roach explained that this was his last full council meeting after more than 13 years in local government service to the town. He explained that he will continue in his Vice-chair role at Suffolk County Council until 21st May, to complete the formal handover period, but this meeting marked the end of his regular council involvement. Councillor D Roach said it had been a privilege to have served Haverhill across different roles including Town Mayor, town, district and county councillor, and highlighted his involvement in work such as the local plan and community funding decisions, including significant financial support for local groups. He acknowledged both the rewards and frustrations of council work, including the need at times to deliver difficult decisions to residents, but emphasised the value of teamwork and co-operation across the council, highlighting that colleagues consistently worked together effectively.

Councillor Roach was thanked by fellow councillors and asked if he could report some outstanding local issues before he leaves, including road resurfacing at Chalkstone Way and outstanding unfilled potholes. Councillor D Roach reported that he had been told that the Sturmer Road works are nearly complete but still have small outstanding sections, and that other areas remain on the forward work programme without confirmed dates yet and that he had recently visited the highways team and confirmed the works are scheduled, though no firm timetable has been set beyond inclusion in the programme.

A formal vote of thanks was proposed by Councillor D Smith Seconded by Councillor J Mason.

RESOLVED

Councillor J Mason reported that he had attended a previous town council meeting where concerns about the condition the roundabouts on Coupals Road had been raised, these have now been resurfaced and white-lined, leaving it in a better state than before.

Councillor J Mason also reported ongoing concerns about a fenced-off manhole cover on the A130 near the Epicentre, expressing frustration that the issue has been left unresolved and confirming he is actively chasing the utility company responsible. He also updated that works at Allington Walk are scheduled for the coming weekend after several delays.

On the issue of Haverhill Library, he said plans for improving accessibility, including the installation of accessible toilets funded through Section 106 money, appear positive but have not yet been formally confirmed, likely due to the proximity of the election.

Finally, he described a constructive meeting that he, Colin Poole and Highways representatives had attended regarding parking problems outside Burton End Primary School, particularly cars parking on grassed areas, outlining that while no solution has yet been agreed, discussions were positive and a potential proposal will be put forward to the highways authority for consideration.

Councillor Lora Miller-Jones added that the schools are introducing a Bikeability Scheme to encourage children to bike to school.

d) District Councillors

Councillor L Smith reported that the EcoVend machine had been out of operation for around seven weeks, but contact has now been made with the responsible company and an engineer is due to inspect it to assess the issue and whether it can be made reliable and whether it needs to be relocated. The matter has also been discussed in an Energy and Sustainability meeting to consider longer-term options.

Councillor L Smith also reported that after concerns were raised around sharps disposal, councillors worked with the relevant portfolio holder to push for quicker action. The town council offered to host a bin at Stourview Wellbeing Centre. She also reported that Haverhill residents can also drop-off them off at the Haverhill Family Practice.

e) Town Councillors:

- i. Councillor L Smith reported that she had been attending the Steering group regarding the situation at Zone, which was meeting weekly and making progress.
- ii. J Burns had submitted his report (attached appendix ii).
- iii. Mayor Q Cox reiterated a point in his report about how great the Science Festival was and thanked Sara, the Town Council team and volunteers. There was some discussion about the event and members gave some feedback for next year.

- iv. Councillor L Miller-Jones proposed a vote of thanks to all the staff members for all the events that the team put on, seconded Councillor Page.

RESOLVED

f) Public Forum:

None.

C26 **Mayor's Report (appendix iv)**

/057 Mayor Q Cox submitted his report ahead of the meeting. He highlighted two events that he had recently attended, the Hindu celebrations and the Muslim Association.

C26 **ONE Haverhill Partnership**

/058 a) **Report from Clerk**

The Clerk reported that the ONE Haverhill Science Festival was a major success, involving a week of activities across primary schools, including workshops, visits from the Curiosity Cube, and the distribution of books to every primary school child as part of the festival and national reading initiatives.

The Epicentre also hosted a well-attended programme for adults, including a business breakfast showcasing a local company developing food packaging technology that extends shelf life and reduces waste, alongside a jobs fair attended by over 190 people.

There was also a fascinating maths-themed talk delivered by Rev Dr Alex Shannon at St Mary's Church. The Clerk highlighted strong partnership working across organisations and the positive impact and growing reach of the initiative.

The Clerk will be sending formal letters of thanks to those involved in delivery the Science Festival, in his capacity as Chair of the Science Festival Task Group.

b) **Stourview Wellbeing Centre**

Stourview Wellbeing Centre is now largely complete and already in use, including the new secure sharps disposal bin already being utilised. There are still some minor external works, particularly with the patio paving adjustments to ensure correct drainage levels, are still being finished but are close to completion. Members who had visited the centre were impressed with the high-quality finish of the space, effective use and the potential of the garden area. The external signage is still to be installed.

Official launch date is Friday 15th May at 2.00pm, with a community open day on the 16th.

Councillor L Miller-Jones thanked all those involved in this, including the community wardens who have worked so hard.

Councillor J Mason thanked Councillor L Miller-Jones for her vision and the town council working to deliver the project.

A vote of thanks was given.

C26 **Financial Matters**

/059 a) **Authorisation of payments:**

It was proposed by Councillor J Burns seconded by Councillor L Miller-Jones that the listed payments totalling £111,372.73 was authorised.

RESOLVED

Town Clerk

- b) Mayoral Charity
It was proposed by Councillor D Smith and seconded by Councillor D Page that the unspent funds from the Mayoral Allowance be vired to the Mayor's Charity.

RESOLVED

- c) Grant Applications
Suffolk Families Together had request £5,000 for the continuation of their Haverhill group: it was proposed by Councillor J Mason, seconded by Councillor J Burns, that a reduced amount of £3,000 be awarded.

DEFEATED

It was proposed by Councillor L Miller-Jones, seconded by Councillor J Teixeira that the amount of £5,000 to Haverhill Families Together Suffolk to contribute towards the continuation of the CCP Haverhill group.

RESOLVED

Although the council approved the full amount this year, the Clerk was asked to contact them to explain that for future applications they would like the organisation to demonstrate efforts to secure additional funding or raise income from other sources.

**C26/
060**

- a) I.T. Policy

It was proposed by Councillor A Luccarini seconded by Councillor J Burns to adopt the Town Council's updated I.T. Policy

RESOLVED

- b) Staff Data Protection Policy

It was proposed by Councillor A Luccarini seconded by Councillor J Burns to adopt the Town Council's updated Staff Data Policy.

RESOLVED

**C26/
061**

HSBC

Members discussed whether the Town Council should adopt a formal position on the future of the former HSBC building in Haverhill town centre. Members noted frustration that, despite several years of discussion through the High Street Enhancement Group, no detailed plans, visualisations, or costings had yet been provided by West Suffolk Council.

Councillors expressed mixed views on the building itself:

- Some supported demolition, arguing the building had remained vacant for around six years and that removing it could improve pedestrian access, safety, and the overall flow between the car parks and the high street.
- Others supported retaining or refurbishing the building, citing its value as an asset, concerns about demolition costs, and the environmental impact of demolition and rebuilding.
- Concerns were also raised that demolition costs could reduce funding available for other town centre improvements.

However, the main point of discussion was whether the Town Council was in a position to adopt a formal stance at all. Several councillors argued that the council could not make an informed decision without further information from West Suffolk Council.

A proposal was put forward and approved requesting that West Suffolk Council provide:

1. A detailed option for retaining/refurbishing the building.
2. A detailed option for demolishing the building.
3. Financial costings for each option.

4. The projected net carbon impact of each option.
5. Consideration of the option of selling the building.

The agreed outcome was therefore not for the Town Council to adopt a formal position at this time, but instead to defer and request further information and options before deciding whether a formal position should be taken.

Proposed by Councillor L Miller-Jones seconded by Councillor J Burns

RESOLVED

Councillors also requested more regular updates from West Suffolk Council on progress relating to the High Street Enhancement Project.

Town Clerk

C26 **Adoption of Committee Reports**

/062 a) **Planning Committee**

It was proposed by Councillor J Teixeira and seconded by Councillor D Page that the Minutes of the meeting held 7th April 2026 and any recommendations contained therein, be agreed as a true record.

RESOLVED

C26/ **Actions taken under delegated powers**

063 None

C26 **Date of Next Meeting**

/064 The annual meeting of the Town Council and Mayor Making will take place on Monday, 11 May 2026.

C26 **Closure**

/065 The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.55pm

Signed Date.....
Chairman

Appendix i) - County Councillors' reports - None

Appendix ii) – Town Councillors' reports

Appendix iii) – Mayor's report

Appendix ii)
Town Councillor Report
Councillor John Burns

Great Wilsey Park: Work continues alongside Chalkstone Way on the Barratt development. Revised applications in for the Bloor development.

Police Matters: Crime stats for February 2026 distributed on 12th April. Attended One Haverhill Community Safety partnership meeting with others regarding domestic violence and general crime statistics.

SCC Highways: Chalkstone Way causing a lot of angst with the numerous potholes that have now resulted in SCC putting out signs warning of them. Whilst Millfields Way scheduled to be resurfaced in May there is no news about this even just filling in the craters. Still no sign of the missing signs outside the Bull PH which was very noticeable during the Science Festival that drivers just ignoring the TRO due no signage.

Parking: Still no perceived benefit from the so-called increase in enforcement. I have made my usual annual FOI request for parking statistics.

Markets: We held a meeting but found it to be very lacking in any progress nor indeed no future action. Like others was very disappointed considering now coming up to 4 years since the markets review was completed and actions agreed.

Vixen PH (Millfields Way): Nothing obvious happening other than site is constantly being accessed via broken panels.

Strasbourg Square: See above.

Other work (in no particular order):

1. Splashpad: Work was completed to replace 32 connectors and 16 pipes that had failed or would have failed. The pad was tested again yesterday, and I found some water leakage within the cabinet which I have reported to the maintenance company. Bacterial water testing is due to take place 1st week May ready for opening on 23rd.
2. Wellbeing Centre: Wireless access points installed in all offices and public area. Isolated from each other.

Setup new printer so scanning can be used and monitoring software installed. Working out what is needed to allow PIN code protection for confidential documents from the offices used by hirers.

Setup and installed the hardware for the till system. Waiting for café operators to tell me what they want as regards the configuration of the till system software.
3. One Haverhill: Attended board meeting.
4. Birds Estate: With Havebury representatives carried out an estate inspection which found to be much improved since last year in terms of vegetation, cleanliness, and general look.
5. Science Festival: Helped out at event on Market Square.
6. Facilitated hybrid Zoom planning and working on sourcing more permanent solution.
7. Attended town centre development meeting.
8. Provided usual weekly financial income stats from the till system for the various sites to HTC management plus attending various HTC meetings.

END

**Appendix iii)
Mayor's Report**

24th March to 28th April 2026

I would like to again apologise for having to miss some events due to health reasons. It has been a cultural and educational time with the Haverhill Science Fayre, A Malayalee Association Event and attending the Mosque. The rich and wonderful diversity we have is incredible, our community rich with so many things.

11th April

Haverhill Malayalee Association Easter, Vishnu and Ramadan Celebration

As has been the case in attending all of their events, they could not be more hospitable or respectful. A vibrant, joyful and wonderful community that I have had the privilege to be part of. The celebration focused on the three religions through interpretive dances and songs, which involved the young and old in the celebrations. The colours music and dance were fun, enjoyable and engaging. I was treated to both lunch and dinner, but they were prepared for me this time with plenty of water and tissues. I thank them for their invitations over the past Mayoral year, it has been a joy. I will look forward to seeing how they will continue to embrace being part of the community and how they continue to make it that bit better.



14th April French Students Visit

A healthy number of students came from our twin town, Pont-Saint-Esprit, France to visit us. HTTA were involved with supporting the trip and were engaged in going both to Samuel Ward and Castle Manor. I met them in the Royal Exchange, where the very lively and fabulous group assembled, before finishing their day with having some photos in the town square. I hope they had a good trip and that this brings about a new era for the twinning of our two towns.

Thank you to both Bruce Davidson and Elaine McManus for working tirelessly to support the HTTC and its links.



Haverhill Community Care – Awards evening

I would like to thank Isabelle for inviting me to be a part of Haverhill Community Care Awards evening, it was an honour to be invited. The people working within the company are clearly very passionate about their CEO Nathalie Gilder they wanted to present her with an award herself. Isabelle grew the company and has set up a variety of other groups supporting local needs. The awards evening was a surprise, which was great to see. The passion in which those at the awards evening celebrated each person winning an award was exemplary and a real positive for the company itself.

18th of April

Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk Retirement Service

A thank you from Haverhill to Clare, Countess of Euston, Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk for your service, which was beautiful, reflecting on all things Suffolk. It was well attended with readings and hymns which worked wonderfully to show a massive sign of respect for the outgoing Lord Lieutenant.

A huge welcome to Mark Pendlington as the new Lieutenant of Suffolk, Haverhill wishes you well in your role.

Below are two items from the order of service I felt compelled to share, with kind permission from the Lord Lieutenant.

A County can be a Friend: Suffolk

Written by Libby Purves

Sometimes, a county is a friend
And offers what that word implies:
A sense of where you'll always end,
A memory, rooted through the years.

It may be just a place: some earth,
A squiggle on an OS map,
A stretch of sandlings, flying geese
Across a cold wild winter sky -

But it is home. It always was.
It has to change, like any friend
Who knows their body will erode
And compromise, and fade and crack.

It's seen long times and patient years.
A Continental phase: a chalky track
to Holland, till that filled with sea.
Then dry land, worked with wood and mud
And bronze and iron and mud and bone.

Then Romans came, and built some roads
And dumped some coins, and made some
rules.
And when they left the Angles came:
Great kings in noble ships arrived
To lie in state on Deben-side.

Tempests cut slices off the coast
And battles ripped the peace apart.
At Bulcamp, Butley, Burrow Hill
the bones still sing their quiet song.
Cromwell and King bled into it
And witches burned. But gentle ploughs
drove on. Rain fell, sheep grazed, corn
grew.

Call it a friend, patient and wise: ,
Whose long years taught it to endure.
A comrade, offering space and rest,
A border round your messy years.

It's safe to tell it what you feel:
To lie complaining in the reeds
or howl back at the honking geese.
It doesn't mind: it's seen enough
of fuss and fights and biting winds.

Friend Suffolk does not put on airs.
It takes no nonsense: stands beside
its old acquaintance, pebble-hard
and wide as sky. It shrugs off time,
And offers silent sympathy.
Rest in its offering of peace.

A Suffolk Reflection

We all have a unique reason for loving Suffolk.

From the stark beauty of the Breckland wilds in the west, to the incomparable estuaries and crumbly coastline of the east. From the proud history of deep-sea fishing in Lowestoft to Felixstowe, the UK's biggest container port. From Newmarket, the historic home of international racing, to the University town of Ipswich with its iconic football club and its historic waterfront, and to Martlesham where global broadband was invented, and where today many of the world's finest minds are innovating new technology.

We are proud of our glorious towns and villages and of the individual and diverse character of so many of our wonderful communities.

We are the 'South-folk', but who are we?

Suffolk and its people have played an important role in the development of democracy, culture and the arts, sport, science and health, farming, religion and international trade. We live in the footsteps of Edmund, King and Martyr, Patron Saint of England for hundreds of years. Of the visionary authors of the Magna Carta who met in Bury St Edmunds and founded our democracy, and of Bartholomew Gosnold who set sail from Ipswich to found the first American colony.

And of Cardinal Wolsey, the son of a butcher from Ipswich, who 550 years ago became Lord Chancellor of England. Of Constable and Gainsborough, Benjamin Britten and Ed Sheeran. And of Elizabeth Garret Anderson, mayor of Aldeburgh: the first woman mayor and the first woman doctor in England. Together, we live, work and learn in one of the best countries in the world, and in one of the best and finest counties in Britain.

Life here is full of opportunity, but we are also home to many severe challenges. From the pandemic to the impacts of war, to cost of living challenges, heartache for many families and the consequences felt by too many vulnerable individuals.

As we draw inspiration from our heritage, we find deep reserves of kindness and compassion. We are caring and welcoming. Tough in our own quiet way, modest too. Artistic and creative. Ever-reliable and always there when family, friends and community need us. Suffolk people want to help, but don't want to make a song and dance about it and don't expect reward. The very best of loyal friends. Which provides us with the courage and resilience to meet head on the challenges of today.

This is the Suffolk character at its best, as we bring generations and diverse communities together and all work hard to make sure no-one is left behind.

These wonderful attributes are at the heart of the Suffolk character. Those who have gone before us have shaped a better world. Let us draw on that great strength and inspiration and, together, let us be even more determined to do the same.

5th of April Haverhill Science Festival 2026

Another Science Festival, a fabulous experience with a number of stalls that were busy from the time they opened. A real buzz about the market square. It seems to me another great success and well supported by the town. Its location on the market square seems to be a good one and with space to grow next time around in 2028. I particularly like the stall with students from Cambridge University where it seemed very authentic with enthusiasm and keen to share their knowledge. I am of course thankful for all the stall that turned up to provide a stimulating morning and afternoon. We couldn't have had better weather.

I need to thank Sara who pulled this together with support of Town Councillors and the Town Council team. A special thank you to volunteers that came out to help, without which many events might not happen.



Mayor of Stowmarket – Quiz Night

As always great company from the Chain Gang and a very warm welcome from David Child and his wife Marie. Quizzes are not my speciality, which can be attested to by both Dave Smith and Liz Smith whilst Dave was mayor, but it was a fun event that raised (as David Child put it) a goodly sum for his charity. I thank him for a wonderful night and one of the last events of my mayoral year.

24th of April

Invitation to Haverhill Mosque and meeting members of the community

A real honour to be invited to the Mosque, joining their prayers and addressing their community. They welcomed other members of the Town Council and have said that they are very keen to work with the community and become a strong part of it. After, they provided us a meal which was delicious and we had some wonderful conversations with their community. I look forward to working closely with them and our community.

I want to thank them for their incredibly kind welcome and hospitality



This is my penultimate report of the year. I have had so many incredible experiences, I have also learned so much as to what it means to have the privilege of being Mayor of Haverhill and what fellow Town Councillors can give. The journey is almost at an end and one that shall be treasured.

Quinn Cox