

# **SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN COUNCIL**

## **Minutes of Full Council Meeting**

**Date of meeting:** Monday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021 at 7.30pm

**Present:**

**Councillors:** Coote, De Vries, Freeman, Gadd, Gregory, Hawke-Smith, McLellan, Millward, Porch, Roberts, Toy

**Officers:** Lisa Courtney (Town Clerk), Terry Frostick (Operations Manager)

**Public:** None present

FC 227-21	<p><b>Apologies for absence</b></p> <p>Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Asker, Eke, Fairhurst, Frost, Light</p>
FC 228-21	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>Cllrs Coote, De Vries, and Freeman declared generic non-pecuniary interests as District Councillors for Uttlesford District Council (UDC)</p> <p>Cllr Gadd declared a generic non-pecuniary interest as County Councillor for Essex County Council</p>
FC 229-21	<p><b>Public Speaking Time</b></p> <p>There were no questions arising.</p>
FC 230-21	<p><b>County Councillor Update</b></p> <p>Cllr Gadd provided the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) He noted that many of the matters relating to Essex County Council (ECC) are highways or planning issues and he proposed to therefore raise these matters at the Town Council's Planning &amp; Transport Committee meetings rather than the Full Council meeting in the future – this course of action was approved and agreed by Council.</li><li>(b) Cllr Gadd advised each County Councillor has a £10,000 allocation per annum to be spent on local good causes and issues, under ECC's "Locality Scheme". Cllr Gadd is awaiting specific details of the full funding criteria from ECC but is aware that allocations may only be made to Town/Parish Councils or charities and £300 is the minimum allocation per grant. Grants can only be awarded for capital (not revenue) projects and Cllr Gadd encouraged the Council to consider local community projects or initiatives which would benefit from this ECC funding; he particularly encouraged environmentally friendly schemes.</li></ul>

Signed as a true and accurate record .....

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(c) Cllr Gadd has undertaken various training at ECC.

(d) Cllr Gadd advised of local interest and debates on the future referrals for SW residents to hospitals. He was aware of residents' concerns regarding future referrals to either Addenbrookes or Harlow hospital and he noted that ECC has little control or jurisdiction over the work of the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (WECCG) but was aware that GPs reserved the right to refer patients to any hospital. Cllr Gadd further noted the need for care pathways to be improved and reconciled for any patient attending hospital outside of Essex (for example at Addenbrookes) as queries remained on the care pathways following discharge from any hospital outside of Essex; Cllr Gadd advised he is progressing this matter with the WECCG and will keep Council informed.

(e) Cllr Coote advised that one of the biggest concerns to residents is the increasing number of potholes in and around the town and questioned how Cllr Gadd could support SWTC in bringing these to the further attention of ECC. Cllr Gadd advised he was aware of the Town Council's submitted list of potholes (submitted circa September 2020) and that he would progress the status of this list; he would further raise this query with his nominated "Buddy" at ECC (each ECC Councillor has a "Buddy" whose role is to support the needs of the County Councillor). Council agreed it would be helpful to revisit the existing list of potholes and to revise it accordingly, adding specific locations (using the "what 3 words" app); noted this task would likely fall to the newly appointed Office Administrator (who starts in posts mid July).

(f) Cllr Toy raised concerns of funding for businesses, theatres, community groups and acknowledged that ECC had just received additional Government funding and urged this to be devolved to those at the grassroots of the community. Cllr Gadd agreed to progress this matter.

(g) Cllr Porch advised he would like to better understand how ECC controls and manages reinstatement works of the highways, following works by utility companies. He did not believe there was currently any process for ECC Officers to check reinstatement works, leading to the cost often being picked up by local taxpayers. Cllr Gadd advised he would ascertain the current process.

FC 231-21 **Mayor's Communications**

The Mayor advised of activities over the past month which included attending various events, litter picking, meetings and a public session on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> June (Meet the Mayor in the Town Hall).

He advised of forthcoming events which include various fund raising activities (Rolling Clones concert on 18.09.21) and others later in the year. He further noted plans were being revised for Mayor Making on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> July due to continued covid measures and restrictions.

FC 232-21	<p><b>To verify the Minutes of the Previous Meetings</b></p> <p>The minutes of the Annual Meeting and Full Council meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021 were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meetings and signed by the Mayor.</p>
FC 233-21	<p><b>Committee Minutes</b></p> <p>Council received and noted the minutes from the following Committee meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and Transport 13<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (approved minutes)</li> <li>• Planning and Transport 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (draft minutes)</li> <li>• Finance and Establishment 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (draft minutes)</li> <li>• Assets and Services 24<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (draft minutes)</li> </ul>
FC 234-21	<p><b>Committee Membership</b></p> <p>It was <b>Resolved</b>:</p> <p>(a) To appoint Cllr Gregory to the Planning &amp; Transport Committee with immediate effect and to acknowledge her declination to membership of the Finance and Establishment Committee</p> <p>(b) To appoint Cllr Coote to the vacant position in the Finance and Establishment Committee with immediate effect</p>
FC 235-21	<p><b>Community Governance Review</b></p> <p>The Clerk spoke further to the review and the process, noting that any changes would be implemented from 2023 therefore Council should consider any changes or amendments both for the present and future, until at least 2027/31. There followed considerable debate, it was <b>Resolved</b>:</p> <p>That a report be brought forward to the July Full Council meeting to incorporate the following views, discussions and proposals:</p> <p>(a) To review the number of Councillors representing each Ward, given the government guidelines for representation is 16 councillors for 10,000 electorates. SWTC is currently 16 councillors for 12,906 electorate with development in town anticipated; a review of the number of councillors is therefore proposed to ensure that SWTC Councillors are able to best represent their community. It was noted that Shire Ward (for example) has an average of 891 residents per councillor in comparison with smaller parishes who had less than 100 residents per councillor (examples cited are Swards End, Littlebury, and Elsenham). It was further noted that the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest town in Uttlesford, Great Dunmow had a representation of 482 and 414 residents per councillor.</p>

	<p>(b) To consider the speculative development in and around Saffron Walden which would impact upon the town and that consideration should be given to new development and its inclusion with any natural urban or rural boundary.</p> <p>(c) That Council must be mindful of the sense of place and distinctness of existing developments and parishes.</p>
FC 236-21	<p><b>Reports from other Meetings</b></p> <p>No meetings reported.</p>
FC 237-21	<p><b>Additional Forthcoming Meetings</b></p> <p>No meetings reported.</p>
FC 238-21	<p><b>Urgent Information Items</b></p> <p>No matters were raised.</p>
FC 239-21	<p><b>Date and time of Next Meeting(s)</b></p> <p>The next meeting is scheduled for Monday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2021 at 7.30pm in the Town Hall, Saffron Walden.</p>
FC 240-21	<p><b>Confidential Item – Exclusion of Press and Public (part II meeting)</b></p> <p>It was resolved that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by s.100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the public and accredited representatives of newspapers be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.</p>
FC 241-21	<p><b>Market Report</b></p> <p>The Town Clerk and Operations Manager spoke further to the report, expressing concerns at the current situation. It was <b>Resolved</b>:</p> <p>That the Operations Manager enters into informal and amicable discussions with the 3<sup>rd</sup> party operator, requesting them to cease their current activity.</p>
FC 242-21	<p><b>Land at Ridgeon’s Site</b></p> <p>The Town Clerk and Operations Manager spoke further to the report, advising they were content with the recommendations made and encouraged Council to adopt the proposals. The Operations Manager was thanked for his diligence and perseverance in negotiations with Bloor Homes. It was unanimously <b>Resolved</b>:</p> <p>To approve options 1-4 as per the report presented to Council and that Officers are authorised to progress this to conclusion on behalf of the Town Council.</p>

The Mayor closed the meeting at 8.40pm

Signed as a true and accurate record .....

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