

**SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Full Council Meeting**

**Date of meeting:** Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at 7.30pm

**Present Councillors:** Cllrs Asker, Coote, de Vries, Eke, Freeman, Gadd, Hawke-Smith, Light, McLellan, Millward, Porch (Chair), Roberts and Toy.

**Officers:** Georgia Arnold, Committee Clerk and Terry Frostick, Operations Manager

**Public:** Representative of the Walden Local and Representative of the Reporter.  
Seven members of the public.

FC 037-22	<p><b>Apologies for absence</b></p> <p>Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Fairhurst, Frost and Gregory.</p>
FC 038-22	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>Cllrs Asker, Coote, de Vries, Eke, Freeman and Light 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 039-22	<p><b>Public Speaking Time</b></p> <p>Members of the public attended to speak regarding the Chamber Room furniture as it had recently been resolved to dispose of the table and chairs during the February Assets and Services Committee. Speakers included Mr Hibbs, Mr Ketteridge and Mr Trimnell.</p> <p>The Mayor reiterated the recent press release explaining that subsequent to this decision to dispose of the furniture, a few petitions have been made to the Town Council to retain the table and that given this representation, the Assets &amp; Services Committee will further consider the future of this furniture at its March Assets &amp; Services Committee meeting and meanwhile the furniture will be retained in storage.</p> <p>Mr Hibbs explained that he is deeply concerned that the table and chairs may be disposed, particularly from a historic perspective. He noted that the Town Hall is a listed building and that the Gibson family gifted monies for the building including the table and chairs which is an integral part of the Chamber Room. The removal of the furniture would cause harm to Saffron Walden Town due to the loss of this heritage asset. Mr Hibbs went on further to say that moving the SWTC offices to the Town Hall certainly made sense as a temporary measure during the corona-virus outbreak but requests that the Chamber Room furniture is reinstated when possible and the decision to dispose of the furniture is revoked.</p>

	<p>The Mayor thanked Mr Hibbs for his comments and allowed two more members of the public to speak but reminded the public that any decisions will be made at the upcoming Assets and Services Committee meeting and that this topic is not included within this Full Council meeting agenda; he also explained that the A&amp;S Committee have delegated powers within the Councils agreed Terms of Reference to administer these decisions.</p> <p>Mr Ketteridge said that the furniture is included within the agenda as it is included within the A&amp;S Minutes of 28.02.2022 and explained that in October 2019 after the local elections the furniture was very first discussed at a council meeting and it was resolved that the Town Clerk would investigate potential options and come back with a recommendation.</p> <p>Mr Ketteridge then read out a recent email exchange between himself and the Town Clerk which explained that the matter of the furniture first arose in 2019 from a number of complaints from attendees at meetings who felt the table was restricting participation within a meeting, reiterated by Councillors – Mr Ketteridge explained that he tried to ask which Councillors felt this way the Town Clerk did not recollect dates or times. Mr Ketteridge explained that having asked the former Clerk and ex-Cllrs they did experience any problems.</p> <p>Mr Ketteridge then explained that in September 2020 a confidential officer report was issued with an agenda. He explained that the Town Clerk said it was in relation to office accommodation and not the furniture, which he said two councillors have confirmed.</p> <p>He then reiterated that in February 2022 the A&amp;S Committee unanimously agreed to dispose of the table and chairs, where there were only three Councillors present. The furniture has civic and historic value and should be restored within the Council Chamber due to its civic heritage.</p> <p>To close he noted that a decision could be made within the Full Council meeting as it is included within the agenda under A&amp;S Minutes 28.02.22.</p> <p>Mr Trimnell then spoke stating he first entered the Town Hall when he was four or five years old and thought the building was fantastic with his grandfather and met the then mayor Elsie Harris and attended various events in the hall whilst growing up. He noted that Council administration comes and goes however civic historic items should be kept due to their importance.</p> <p>The Mayor thanked both Mr Ketteridge and Mr Trimnell for speaking and noted that any further decisions will be made at the March A&amp;S meeting on 28.02.22. The Mayor also noted that the minutes are included within the agenda ‘to note for information only’ and therefore no decision could legitimately be made at this meeting.</p>
FC 040-22	<p><b>Essex County Councillor Update</b></p> <p>Cllr Gadd explained that the most recent updates have been provided to the Planning and Transport Committee and written updates are available within the P&amp;T Committee Reports.</p>

FC 041-22	<p><b>Mayor's Communications</b></p> <p>The Mayor provided a written update which was noted by Council.</p>
FC 042-22	<p><b>To verify the Minutes of the Town Council meetings</b></p> <p>The 14.02.22 Full Council minute reference FC 031-22 was queried by Cllr Light where her name was mentioned. Council agreed for this to be removed from the minutes, once amended the minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Mayor.</p> <p>The 23.02.22 Full Council minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meetings and signed by the Mayor.</p>
FC 043-22	<p><b>To receive the Minutes of the Previous Meetings</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 10.02.2022</li> <li>• Planning and Transport 24.02.2022</li> <li>• Finance and Establishment 21.02.2022</li> <li>• Assets and Services 28.02.2022</li> </ul>
FC 044-22	<p>All members of the public left the meeting</p>
FC 045-22	<p><b>Nominations to the positions of Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor</b></p> <p>The nominations were noted and accepted by Council, these being:</p> <p>Nomination to Mayor: Cllr de Vries</p> <p>Nominated by Cllr Freeman / Seconded by Cllr Millward</p> <p>Nomination to Deputy Mayor: Cllr Freeman</p> <p>Nominated by Cllr de Vries / Seconded by Cllr Millward</p>
	<p><b>Town Centre Road Closures Consultation</b></p> <p>The Committee Clerk explained to Council that the market square road consultation has been running in two phases and the second phase of results were presented to the Assets &amp; Services Committee in February.</p> <p>The report was presented to Council and it was explained that 75% of respondents preferred some sort of road closure (full or partial).</p> <p>It was noted that the Assets &amp; Services Committee are recommending a partial road closure to Council, this would allow vehicular access through King Street and out of Market Street only and suitable barriers would be required to keep the Square and</p>

	<p>Market Hill pedestrianised. This closure would also allow some parking within King Street alongside the library.</p> <p>As detailed in the report, Council is asked to choose some indicative timings for submission to Essex Highways, but it was noted that highways will also run their own consultation and this could mean that any changes might take up to a year or more as any applications will need to be submitted via the LHP process.</p> <p>Cllrs commented on how great it is to see that residents engaged and positive that they also support pedestrianisation.</p> <p>Council also noted a letter received from a member of the public regarding the consultation and it was agreed that a response would be sent in due course by the Committee Clerk on behalf of SWTC.</p> <p>It was noted that a 24/7 closure would be preferred however noted that decisions need to be understanding for residents and business in the centre and that a limited partial closure of 08.00-16.00 would be a suitable compromise and ideally in place seven days a week.</p> <p>Cllrs considered a 08-16.00 road closure to be in place five days a week or seven days a week and noted that Sundays are a more sociable day.</p> <p>Cllr Light proposed five days a week road closure to be in place 08-16.00.</p> <p>Cllr Asker proposed seven days a week road closure to be in place 08-16.00; this was agreed by all Councillors except Cllr Light.</p> <p>It was resolved for an application to Essex Highways requesting 7 days a week road closure in place 08-16.00.</p> <p>Council passed on their thanks to the Town Clerk, Committee Clerk and SWTC officers who have worked on this project and thanks to the Committee Clerk for the reports prepared.</p>
FC	<p><b>Reports from other Meetings</b></p> <p>No meetings reported.</p>
FC	<p><b>Additional Forthcoming Meetings</b></p> <p>No meetings reported.</p>
FC	<p><b>Urgent Items</b></p> <p>No urgent information items were raised however Councillors noted that it was a shame that discussions were being had regarding the furniture where time could have been spent discussing options to further support the Ukraine crisis.</p>

	Council stood for a minute's silence to pause and think of those in Ukraine and those elsewhere in the world in crisis.
FC	<p><b>Date and time of Next meeting(s)</b></p> <p>The Mayor reminded all that the next Council meeting is scheduled for Monday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2022 at 7.30pm in The Town Hall.</p> <p>The Annual Town Meeting is scheduled for Monday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2022 at 7pm in The Town Hall.</p> <p>The Committee Clerk confirmed that the May meeting Annual (General) Meeting is separate to the Annual Town Meeting – the AGM will take place Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022.</p>

The Mayor closed the meeting at 8.30pm