

Framlingham Town Council



Minutes of a Meeting of Framlingham Town Council held in the Castle Community Rooms Framlingham at 7pm on Wednesday 4th December 2024

1. Present & Apologies

Councillors Clive Eastwood (Chair), Tim Cope, Phil Dean, Tony Hammond, Trudie Hammond, Tim Higham, Gill Knights, Alan Wraight, Penny Wraight
Apologies: Cllr. Steve Rose sent his apologies due to a family engagement.

2. In Attendance

Alan Davidson (Responsible Financial Officer- RFO), Lydia Kindred (Deputy Town Clerk- DTC) and 2 residents, one of whom was online.

3. Minutes

Cllr. Eastwood proposed accepting the Minutes of 19th November as a true record of the meeting. This was seconded by Cllr. T. Cope and passed with two abstentions.

FCM-2024-12-04/1

Cllr. Higham asked that consideration of the Minutes of 26th November be deferred.

4. Interests & Dispensations

Cllr. T. Cope declared an pecuniary interest in item 10.1.

Cllr. Knights declared a non-registrable interest in item 16.6.

Cllrs. A. Wraight, P. Wraight, Trudy Hammond and Tony Hammond declared an interest in item 12.2 and dispensations previously granted were noted.

ADJOURNMENT

5. Public Forum

The resident present expressed his interest in hearing discussions about the Westbury Centre. He also asked for an update on the Town Clerk's absence, noting that he had not attended meetings for several months. The Chair informed the resident that the Town Clerk remains on sick leave and that no further updates are available at this time.

RECONVENE

6. Correspondence

Cllrs. Trudie Hammond and G. Knights will discuss NALC's current consultation on online and hybrid meetings with the DTC and form a response on behalf of the Council.

7. Procedural Items

7.1 Changes to the Committee structure

Cllr. Trudie Hammond wished to join the recently formed Human Resources committee and Councillors were in agreement with this.

7.2 Officers' upcoming annual leave and the RFO's absence due to medical reasons in February were noted.

7.3 It was confirmed that the office will be closed for Christmas between 24th December and 2nd January. **ACTION** DTC to do a notice advising residents of the Christmas opening times.

7.4 The Council has experimented with two Full Council meetings in lieu of the Committee meetings for three months. Councillors expressed some concerns about the late finishing times of these meetings and that some items cannot be discussed in sufficient depth in a Full Council meeting. Cllr. Dean noted that he found the format beneficial for gaining an overall perspective on the Council's various activities.

It was agreed that from January, the Council will revert to one Full Council meeting and reinstate meetings for the Lands & Markets, Strategy & Development, Human Resources, Finance and Communications, Events and Partnerships Committees. The DTC advised that she may not be able to attend all of these meetings or carry out the associated work with agenda and meeting preparation, producing minutes and post-meeting actions.

January meeting dates were confirmed as: Full Council meeting 2nd January, CEP 14th, Lands 16th, SAD 22nd, Finance 23rd, Recovery & Resilience group 28th. Dates for the Human Resources Committee and the next Neighbourhood Plan Review group are to be confirmed.

8. Finance Committee

8.1. It was confirmed that BACS payments approved at the November meeting have been paid as agreed and the bank print out has been verified and signed by two Councillors.

8.2 Cllr. Eastwood proposed approving the payment of current invoices. This was seconded by Cllr. Dean and carried with one abstention. **FCM-2024-12-04/2**

The RFO reported on a credit for over-charged electricity at the pavilion due to estimated readings.

The RFO also reported on extra work that the Maintenance Contractor has carried out that is outside the scope of his contract.

8.3 The details of all bank accounts were noted.

8.4 It was agreed to appoint the following Councillors as signatories on the HSBC bank mandate, in addition to Cllr. Eastwood: Cllr Knights, Cllr Cope, Cllr Dean, Cllr A. Wraight and Cllr Trudie Hammond.

8.5 Whilst officers are not normally banking mandates, in order for the RFO to get a business credit card, he must be a mandate. After discussion, Cllr. Eastwood proposed that the RFO is issued with a commercial card for Council expenditure on the same terms as the clerk's card, with a credit limit of £1,200. This was seconded by Cllr. Knights and carried unanimously. **FCM-2024-12-04/3**

It was noted that this was an exception to our Financial Regulations.

8.6 The Chair thanked the RFO for all his work preparing the draft budget for 2025-2026 budget. He proposed that the draft budget as circulated is approved. This was seconded by Cllr. Knights and carried with four abstentions. **FCM-2024-12-04/4**

Cllr. Eastwood also proposed setting the precept for 2025-2026 as £198,152. This was seconded by Cllr. Tony Hammond and carried with four abstentions.

FCM-2024-12-04/5

9. Planning Committee

Cllr. Cope left the meeting

9.1 Application DC/24/4031/LBC Framlingham College, College Road, Framlingham, IP13 9EY

Listed Building Consent - Minor internal alterations to dormitories on the second floor level in the main building (Clock Tower)

Cllr. Wraight proposed supporting this application. This was seconded by Cllr Dean and was carried unanimously. **FCM-2024-12-04/6**

Cllr. Cope returned to the meeting

9.2 ESPA

It was agreed not to affiliate with East Suffolk Planning Alliance (ESPA) currently, but to attend the next public meeting in January.

9.3 Matters of report

Cllr. A. Wraight gave an update from the information gathering meeting with the developers of land at Saxtead Road, Framlingham regarding the *Hope Park* proposals.

10. Communication, events and partnership committee

10.1 Cllr. Tony Hammond gave an update on the destination website and meeting with the developers on 28th November. He outlined the proposed timescale and advised that the new site should be live by the end of May 2025.

10.2 Christmas

10.2.1 Cllr. Hammond gave a report on the Christmas event held on 23rd November. Unfortunately this had to be scaled back due to Storm Bert but it was still a success and attendees gave positive feedback. He thanked the Retail and Business Co-Ordinator for all her hard work organising the event.

10.2.2 Cllr. Hammond will discuss ownership and storage of the Christmas lights with the head of the Framlingham Retailers group.

10.2.3 A pledge to donate £200 to Hall Farm Butchers for electricity used to power the town's Christmas lights was noted and alternative options for next year were briefly discussed.

10.2.4 Christmas Tree Festival

The DTC will decorate the Town Council's tree for the Christmas Tree Festival ahead of the preview on Friday 6th.

10.3 Events Training

Cllr. Eastwood proposed reserving up to £300 for Officers and/or Councillors to attend an Event Safety Training Day with other local Councils. This was seconded by Cllr. Knights and carried unanimously. **FCM-2024-12-04/7**

It was noted that East Suffolk Council has been approached in this regard and they may fund this course.

10.4 Matters of report

Cllr. Hammond reported on progress with the Town Trail.

The various alternative URLs for the destination site have now been purchased.

11. Strategy & Development Committee

11.1 Sale of the Westbury Centre, Fairfield Road

Discussions took place regarding the potential sale of the current building and the possibility of the Town Council purchasing it. Cllr. Higham proposed having a building survey carried out at a cost of £850, to provide the Council with informed

insights for future discussions. This was seconded by Cllr. A. Wraight and carried with 1 abstention and 1 vote against. **FCM-2024-12-04/8**

11.2 CIL application from Hour Community for up to £140,000 to purchase the Westbury Centre for the community

Further information required to discuss this request is still awaited and so it was agreed to defer this item.

11.3 Neighbourhood Plan Review

The working group will next meet on 17th December. £10,000 grant funding for the project has been awarded by Locality.

11.4 Request to carry out outreach youth work on the Market Hill

Whilst Councillors supported youth work within the town, there were concerns regarding health and safety issues and also parking restriction issues. It was agreed to suggest the library car park as an alternative location.

11.5 Other matters of report

The most recent public flooding meeting on 29th November was attended by 74 people. 64% of people who attended and provided feedback found the event “very relevant” and 13% found it “quite relevant”.

12. Lands Committee

12.1 Memorial Rose Garden

This will be considered again at the Lands Committee meeting in January. Councillors were asked to visit the Memorial Garden ahead of that meeting. Cllr. Knights reported that the rose beds have now been tidied and would like to thank the volunteer for carrying out the pruning.

12.2 Allotment gate and tap housing

Cllr. Cope reported that Framlingham College will be fixing the gate at the entrance to the allotments. Quotations for replacement tap housing and a second tap will be sought by the RFO when time permits.

12.3 Consider riparian responsibilities at The Fens

Deferred to January’s committee meeting

12.4 Additional Cut

Cllr. Higham proposed the retrospective approval of £140 for an additional cut of the Pageant Field by the G&P contractor that is outside of the G&P contract. This was seconded by Cllr Cope and carried with one abstention. **FCM-2024-12-04/9**

12.5 Market application

Cllr. Higham proposed accepting an application from Halesworth Wax Emporium to sell scented candles, wax melts, incense burners and bath bombs on a Saturday market with a 20ft pitch. This was seconded by Cllr. Dean and carried unanimously.

FCM-2024-12-04/10

12.6 Matters of report

Cllr. Higham reported on replacement water pipe replacement works at Victoria Mill Road. The Pageant Field fence and basketball court have both been repaired. The DTC has written to the member of public who attended November’s Full Council meeting regarding the rose garden.

13. Highways, Rights of Way & Parking Committee

13.1 Defective Pigs Meadow ground-level lighting

Despite many chasers, these repairs have still not been carried out. It was agreed to write to the contractor with a deadline for a response. If none is received, another

contractor will be asked to carry out the repairs and the original contractor will be charged for these works. DTC to draft a letter to be considered by Cllr. Cope.

13.2 Faulty streetlamp 71 Fairfield Road

The DTC has been in contact with the installers regarding this lamp. It is still under warranty and a replacement will be sent. She has received a quotation from a local firm to install the lamp as the warranty does not cover labour.

Cllr. Eastwood proposed accepting the quotation of £174 to fit the replacement streetlamp . This was seconded by Cllr. Higham and carried unanimously.

FCM-2024-12-04/11

13.3 Matters of report

Graffiti at Brook Lane needs reporting to the police and FTC or SCC will need to remove it.

The Market Hill parking income for quarter 2(until 30.09.24) is £1,798.61.

The Speed Indicator Device at Station Road has now been configured and installed.

Members of Greener Fram have kindly agreed to plant our *East Suffolk in Bloom* bulbs.

14. Other matters of report and items to raise at future Council meetings

Cllr. Knights commended the ground's contractor for taking pride in his job and carrying out additional tasks to improve the town centre's appearance.

She also expressed gratitude to the Deputy Town Clerk for arranging the removal of overgrown vegetation from streetlamp 71 without incurring additional costs for the Council. Thanks were extended to CDC Blowes and Red House Barn for carrying out this work when delivering the Christmas tree.

The Advent Windows display on Double Street was highlighted, which aims to raise funds for charity as well as being a positive event for the town.

Cllr. Higham reported on a recent severe fire on Victoria Mill Road, noting the swift response from the fire crew. Sympathies were extended to the affected homeowner and the strong community spirit since the event was commended.

The Lanman Museum has purchased its new cabinet, funded by the Town Council.

Cllr. Higham will suggest wording for the plaque and pass to the Chairman for his approval.

The History Society's advent calendar is now live on its website & has also been advertised by the Town Council.

15. Public Bodies Act. See item 16.3

16. Human Resources

16.1 After discussion, it was agreed to defer the Terms of Reference for the newly formed HR Committee until the next meeting.

16.2 Cllr. Wraight provided an update on legislation regarding sexual harassment which will be considered further at a future meeting

16.3 Cllr. Eastwood proposed resolving to exclude the press and public from this section of the meeting by virtue of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 s1 (2) due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. This was seconded by Cllr. Knights and carried with four votes in favour, four abstentions and one vote against. **FCM-2024-12-04/12**

16.4 Cllrs. Eastwood and Higham provided updates on current HR issues.

16.5 Urgent HR issues that need to be addressed and agree next steps

See item 16.6

16.6 Staff salaries and responsibilities

To appoint the Deputy Town Clerk, Lydia Kindred, on the acceptance of terms and conditions, to the role of Acting Town Clerk with effect from 1st December 2024 for a period of 6 months, to be reviewed after 3 months, or until such time as the Town Clerk is able to resume his duties, whichever of these is the sooner.

Proposed Cllr Eastwood, seconded Cllr P Wright, agreed unanimously.

FCM-2024-12-04/13

To award the Acting Town Clerk, on acceptance of terms and conditions, an "acting up allowance" from 1st December 2024 to spinal column point 28 for a period of 6 months, to be reviewed after 3 months (taking into consideration annual increments dependant on performance), or until such time as the Town Clerk is able to resume his duties within this period.

Proposed Cllr Eastwood, seconded Cllr Dean, agreed unanimously.

FCM-2024-12-04/14

Cllr Higham left the meeting at 21.40 (before these motions were put)

16.7 Matters of report - None

17. Next meeting date

The next meeting was confirmed as being on Thursday 19th December.
The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.50pm.

Signed
Chair of the Council

Date