

HARWICH TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES

of the Meeting of HARWICH TOWN COUNCIL

held at

The Guildhall, Church Street, Harwich

on

Tuesday 3rd June 2025 at 7.01pm

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| Present: | Councillors Calver, Chable, Davidson, Fay, I Henderson, J Henderson, McLeod, Powell, Richardson, Smith, and Wade |
| In the Chair: | Councillor P Morrison |
| Clerk: | Ms Lucy Ballard |
| Also present: | 0 members of the public, 0 member of the press, Revd. Cannon Ian Smith. |

Prayers were taken by the Rev. Cannon Ian Smith.

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| 011/25 | <u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> Cllrs Armstrong, Fowler, Saunders and Todd |
| 012/25 | <u>DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS</u> None |
| 013/25 | <u>PUBLIC QUESTIONS</u> None |
| 014/25 | <u>MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS</u> Members acknowledged a list of recent engagements attended by Cllr Morrison, which had been previously circulated. Cllr Morrison referred to the Employability Day at the Salvation Army which is on Friday 20 th June between 10am and 12.30pm and to which all members are invited. |
| 015/25 | <u>MINUTES OF LAST MEETING</u> RESOLVED: That the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the meeting of Harwich Town Council held on 8 th April 2025 (circulated separately) were approved as a correct record. FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Annual Statutory and Mayor Making meeting of Harwich Town Council held on 15 th May 2025 (circulated separately) were approved as a correct record. |
| 016/25 | <u>MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</u> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MIN 156/24 – Following a briefing from Mark Neville at the previous meeting, members considered how best to support the work of the Alzheimer’s Society and the newly created Integrated Dementia Commission. <p>Cllr Todd had previously met with members of the IDC but owing to his absence, this would be followed up at the next meeting. In the meantime members were eager to organise another local memory walk and make this an annual event. Members also liked the idea of encouraging local retailers to undergo training with the Alzheimer’s Society in order to raise awareness.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To proceed with organising a local memory walk and to reconvene the Working Party to include Cllrs Morrison, Chable, Smith, Todd and Wade.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MIN 160/24 – Cllr Morrison gave a report on the activities of VE-Day 80, which commenced with two readings of the Proclamation by the Town Crier, at the Guildhall at 8am and The Radar Tower at 9am, followed by a Tea Dance at the Park Pavilion, and finally the reading of the Tribute and Lighting of the Beacon at 9.30pm. Owing to a technical problem at the Electric Palace, the showings of ‘Their Finest’ couldn’t go ahead. It is hoped they will be able to show this on VJ-Day instead. The Council has also funded an event involving the Blind Veterans Choir and local primary schools at St Nicholas Church. <p>It was agreed to disband the working party.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MIN 160/24 – It was confirmed that a hearing was held on 24th April and HTC was successful. Cllr Calver commended the clerk for her professionalism throughout. • MIN 161/24 – Members acknowledged a response to Community Banking requests from Santander and Barclays. Cllr Morrison took the opportunity to speak to the TSB bank manager at the Ipswich branch about the closures. The clerk clarified that LINK assesses access to cash rather than non-transactional banking services. Cllr Calver suggested taking this back to the MPs office. <p>RESOLVED: To write back to Bernard Jenkin MP and using the evidence (responses received from banks), ask him to intervene with the banks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MIN 165/24 – The cost for Internal Auditor charges in 2025-26 was confirmed as £460. • MIN 167/24 – Cllr Calver confirmed that the electricity supply has been installed at the High Lighthouse but there have been some teething problems, which meant the illumination couldn’t go ahead for VE-Day and so he asked members to approve the illumination for VJ-Day instead, subject to the problems having been resolved. |
| 017/25 | <p><u>MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MIN 144/24 Cllr J Henderson asked if a response had been received from TDC in relation to our letter concerning enforcement action for Dog Fouling. The clerk confirmed no and that she would prompt TDC again. |
| 018/25 | <p><u>INTERNAL AUDIT</u></p> <p>Members received the year end internal audit report. The clerk confirmed that there were no recommendations made and therefore no plan of action was required. The members thanked and congratulated the clerk for her hard work.</p> |

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| | <p>RESOLVED: To accept the Audit Report and agree that no further action is required.</p> <p>Members also reviewed the effectiveness of Internal Audit. The Clerk confirmed that the auditor satisfied the requirements to be competent and independent and found that an interim and year-end audit was sufficient. She found the auditor to be thorough and the reports clear.</p> <p>FURTHER RESOLVED: That the current provisions were satisfactory and effective.</p> |
| 019/25 | <p><u>EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL</u></p> <p>Members considered the findings of the review of the Council's system of internal control, which was carried out at a previous meeting (MIN F88/24). Cllr Chable briefed members on the review he had carried out on 3rd March along with Cllrs Wade and Saunders. They were content that save for two minor additions, which would strengthen the SIC, all was in order.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To agree with the findings that there are sufficient controls in place to effectively mitigate the risk to the Council's finances.</p> <p>Cllr Chable offered Cllrs Wade and Saunders along with the RFO, his thanks for their meticulous work.</p> <p>It was FURTHER RESOLVED: to appoint Cllrs Chable, Saunders and Wade to conduct a review of the system of internal control in 2025/26.</p> |
| 020/25 | <p><u>REVIEW OF RISK MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS</u></p> <p>The clerk referred to the risk register maintained for 2024/25 and members reviewed the arrangements which are in place to identify and manage the risks associated with certain decisions which had been considered or taken over the previous financial year. The clerk confirmed that she was satisfied that risks are appropriately managed through a combination of risk assessments, controls, sound budgetary processes and insurance, and members agreed that discussing potential risks and giving full consideration of the implications (both financial and reputational) of any proposal as they arise is the most effective method of addressing them. The Clerk confirmed that the appointed clerk for each committee would raise potential risks at the time the agenda is formulated as an additional measure. The clerks will continue to maintain the risk register which accompanies other risk assessments that the council undertakes.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the findings of the review are that the arrangements in place are effective in mitigating against the risks associated with the finances and reputation of the council.</p> |
| 021/25 | <p><u>ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR)</u> <u>SECTION 1 - ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT</u></p> <p>Members discussed the assertions in Section 1 of the 2024/25 AGAR and the requirements needed to provide a 'yes' response. The Clerk referred to assertion 2 (internal control measures) which had been satisfied under MIN 019/25 and also assertion 5 (Risks), which had been satisfied under MIN 020/25.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve the Annual Governance Statement at Section 1 of the AGAR for 2024/25.</p> |
| 022/25 | <p><u>ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR)</u> <u>SECTION 2 - ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS</u></p> <p>Members reviewed the final Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2025 in</p> |

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| | <p>conjunction with the Accounting Statements in Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve the accounts for year ending 31st March 2025 and to approve the Accounting Statements in Section 2 of the AGAR.</p> <p>FURTHER RESOLVED: To set the dates for the Exercise of Public Rights as 5th June to 16th July 2025.</p> |
| 023/25 | <p><u>STANDING ORDERS</u></p> <p>Members reviewed current Standing Orders. The clerk confirmed there were no amendments to the existing model, which had been amended earlier this year to reflect changes to the expenditure limits for public contracts.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve Standing Orders for use during the 2025/26 year.</p> |
| 024/25 | <p><u>SIGNATORIES AND BANK MANDATE</u></p> <p>It was reaffirmed that in relation to MIN 25/24 – Signatories (Morrison, Fowler, I Henderson and Powell) would remain until 2027.</p> |
| 025/25 | <p><u>INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE ACCOUNTS</u></p> <p>RESOLVED: To appoint Cllrs Smith and Chable as independent members to periodically review the bank reconciliation in accordance with Financial Regulation 2.6.</p> <p>The Clerk mentioned that Cllrs Chable and Smith did a sterling job in fulfilling this role during the previous four financial years.</p> |
| 026/25 | <p><u>DATA PROTECTION RISK ASSESSMENT</u></p> <p>Members reviewed the risks associated with the processing of personal data within the council and the measures taken or required to mitigate these risks.</p> <p>RESOLVED: that the risks were being properly identified and managed.</p> |
| 027/25 | <p><u>HARWICH FESTIVAL</u></p> <p>Members considered grant funding for the Harwich Festival of the arts 2025.</p> <p>RESOLVED: to award a grant of £4000 to be expended from the Grants budget.</p> |
| 028/25 | <p><u>BRIEF REPORTS BY MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES BY THE COUNCIL</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr J Henderson attended a Teen Talk meeting. They're struggling for trustees. They have some funding but it's becoming more difficult as there's more competition for funds. • Cllr Powell attended a meeting of the Tourism (Accelerator Group) and reported there have been 25 grants accepted for the improvements to shop fronts. The Archway through to the promenade will also be spruced up with some lighting. Cllr I Henderson reported that a 1-year lease had been taken on for a pop-up shop at the former Card Corner and the new retailer will be announced in due course. He also referred to the Public Realm works, which are expect to commence at the end of the summer. • Cllr McLeod reported following a meeting of TDALC on the average speed limit which is being introduced on the A120 and the concern by member councils on the potential effect on the villages as traffic is diverted. • Cllr Morrison attended a meeting at the Ark Centre and reported that everyone is back on full hours, with 3 apprentices on the team. The nursery is full. They are starting an initiative (Toys for children) for their birthday, supported by NEST. Also, supported by Surya Foods and Rotary, they have |

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| | the Ark food bank which is working well, as is the Outreach Programme. They are looking at further staff training to enhance their support to parents. During the school holidays, they will hold sessions during which a nutritious hot meal will be provided. |
| 029/25 | <u>COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES</u> Members received the Minutes of the following meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extraordinary F&GP Committee – 1st May 2025 |
| 030/25 | <u>ACCOUNTS</u> RESOLVED: To receive the financial report and to approve accounts for payment as per the schedule (circulated separately). |
| 031/25 | <u>CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED IN THE POST OR RAISED BY MEMBERS</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Fay referred to a conversation he'd had with an American visitor who would like to come to the Guildhall and hopes to return to the UK later this year. • Cllr Morrison referred to the cruise ship visit which came in last week. Cllr Calver said the Guildhall only received 6 visitors as the majority of passengers went out of the town during the morning. He hoped that there would be more notice next year to put greater provision in place. |
| 032/25 | <u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</u> The next meeting of Harwich Town Council will be held on Wednesday 16th July 2025 at The Guildhall, Church Street, Harwich at 7.00pm , or at the rise of the Town Planning Committee, whichever is the later. |
| 033/25 | Exclusion of Press and Public Pursuant to Sub-Section 2 of Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it was RESOLVED: that the meeting be closed to the press and public for the transaction of the under-mentioned business: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hill School Site Lease Renewals |

The Chairman closed the public part of the meeting at 8.28pm

CHAIRMAN

DATE