

HARWICH TOWN COUNCIL
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MINUTES
of the Meeting of HARWICH TOWN COUNCIL
 held at
The Guildhall, Church Street, Harwich
 on
Tuesday 7th April 2026 at 7.00pm

Present:	Councillors Calver, Davidson, Fay, I Henderson, J Henderson, McLeod, Powell, Richardson, Smith, Todd and Wade
In the Chair:	Councillor P Morrison
Clerk:	Ms Lucy Ballard
Also present:	0 members of the public, 0 member of the press, The Rev. Canon Ian Smith and Richard Colley of Harwich Connexions

Prayers were taken by the Rev. Canon Ian Smith

146/25	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> Cllrs Chable, Fowler and Saunders Absent – Cllr Armstrong
147/25	<u>DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS</u> None
148/25	<u>HARWICH CONNEXIONS PRESENTATION</u> The chairman welcomed Richard Colley, Chairman of Harwich Connexions who spoke on the work of the charity and how it had grown in its 25 years. In 2001 Government funding was made available for local organisations which enabled the Town Council to support the creation of Harwich Connexions. They were joined by 40 other organisations to help bring services and support to the town. Over the years, they've been able to partner with larger players such as Essex County Council and SUSTRANS which has enabled greater funding for bigger projects. After a time, Harwich Connexions formed Harwich Connexions Community Transport and moved their operations to the Harwich & District Community Association's Park Pavilion premises. The charity has grown substantially over the years and have acquired premises including the 1912 Centre and Enterprise Centre in Parkeston. Additionally, they helped to save the Ark Centre and previously both Noah's and The Windmill nurseries. They also brought the Motorcycle Rally to Harwich. Today, they employ 90 staff across all their services with in excess of £1m annual wage bill. Richard referred to the Hospital Hopper and free wheelchair services, which are also run by Harwich Connexions as well as the town's defibrillators, which they've taken on following the closure of the Fellowship of the Sick 2 years

	<p>ago. There are 16 sited throughout the town into the Oakleys. They are all operational as are checked monthly. Richard demonstrated one of the new models which have been installed under a £14k installation project.</p> <p>Richard also spoke about the Harwich Men's Health Checks (CHAPS) which has partnered with Harwich Connexions who provide the funding. 140 men were successfully tested in 2025 at a cost of £5100 since this is yet to be funded on the NHS. He promoted the 2026 session on 23rd April, at which there are still spaces left.</p> <p>Following a couple of comments from members, the chairman thanked Mr Colley for his time.</p>
149/25	<p><u>PUBLIC QUESTIONS</u> None</p>
150/25	<p><u>MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS</u> Members acknowledged a list of recent engagements attended by Cllr Morrison.</p>
151/25	<p><u>MINUTES OF LAST MEETING</u> RESOLVED: That the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the meeting of Harwich Town Council held on 24th February 2026 (circulated separately) were approved as a correct record.</p>
152/25	<p><u>MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MIN 131/25 – The clerk reported no response from Greater Anglia in relation to request for additional services on the Manningtree and Harwich Branch Line. Cllr I Henderson referred to the Railway Transport Community Group (Jane Stewart) runs a bi-monthly Greater Anglia Steering group and it was RESOLVED: to request to join the Steering Group with a view to this being added to the annual reps list. • MIN 134/25 – It was confirmed the Community Christmas Carol Service is to be held on Friday 11th December at St Nicholas Church, commencing at 7pm.
153/25	<p><u>MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MIN 80/25 – The finalised High Lighthouse Illuminations Policy to include dates for illumination was noted.
154/25	<p><u>INTERNAL AUDITOR</u> Members reviewed the effectiveness of the arrangements for internal audit provision and assessed the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Scope of Internal Audit work 2) Competence 3) Independence 4) Relationship with Clerk 5) Audit Planning and Reporting <p>RESOLVED: To accept the Scope of Internal Audit work and agree the provisions for the arrangements for internal audit are effective. RESOLVED: To appoint Heather Heelis of Heelis & Lodge as the Council's Internal Auditor for the 2026/27 financial year at a cost of £505 to be expended from the audit budget.</p>
155/25	<p><u>SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES</u></p>

	REF: MIN 168/23 - Members noted the scheme of allowances for the forthcoming year, paying reference to a report from the clerk. The allowances will remain in force until 2027.
156/25	<u>ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS</u> RESOLVED: To approve annual subscriptions which become payable during the 2026/27 financial year.
157/25	<u>REGULAR PAYMENTS</u> RESOLVED: To authorise regular payments that will arise during the course of the 2026/27 year, including those made by variable direct debit, in accordance with Financial Regulation 6.6.
158/25	<u>HARWICH FESTIVAL</u> Members considered a grant application. Cllr Wade declared an interest. RESOLVED: To award a grant of £4200.
159/25	<u>BRIEF REPORTS BY MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES BY THE COUNCIL</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Powell reported on the Harwich Foot Ferry which has changed its name to Harbour Ferry. They are trialling winter services and will keep the accounts separate so that any losses aren't having to be offset by the summer income. • Cllrs Powell and I Henderson reported on the final programme of activities from the High Street Accelerator Programme. All the shop fronts have been finished and some of the pathways are being repaired along the promenade along with the tunnel which will have new floor lighting and 'Dovercourt Bay' wording. • Cllr J Henderson reported on Teen Talk. Awaiting acknowledgement on funding applications to cover operational costs, otherwise it will impact on staffing provision. • Cllr Morrison reported on the Ark Centre which is going from strength to strength. She referred to some funded training, which supported staff becoming qualified to work with domestic abuse cases and off the back of that training, additional funding has been received to further support their activity.
160/25	<u>COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES</u> Members received the Minutes of the following meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allotments Committee – 4th March 2026 • Finance & General Purposes Committee – 17th March 2026 • Environment & Community Committee – 26th March 2026
161/25	<u>ACCOUNTS</u> RESOLVED: To accept the financial report and to approve accounts for payment as per the schedule (circulated separately).
162/25	<u>CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED IN THE POST OR MATTERS RAISED BY MEMBERS</u> None
163/25	<u>MATTERS TO BE REPORTED</u> Cllr Wade reported that Barclays Bank is looking to re-open branches in some towns where they have previously closed.

164/25	<p><u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</u></p> <p>The next meeting of Harwich Town Council will be held on Tuesday 9th June 2026 at The Guildhall, Church Street, Harwich at 7.00pm, or at the rise of the Town Planning Committee, whichever is the later.</p> <p>The Annual Statutory and Mayor Making meeting will be held on Thursday 21st May 2026 at The Guildhall, Harwich, at 11am.</p> <p>The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Monday 27th April 2026 at The Guildhall, Church Street, Harwich, at 7.00pm, or at the rise of the Town Planning Committee, whichever is the later.</p>
165/25	<p><u>EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC</u></p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT Policy

The chairman closed the public part of the meeting at 7.55pm

CHAIRMAN

DATE