MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FAVERSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

14th September 2026 at 7:00pm

The Guildhall

Present: Cllr C Martin (Chair), Cllr Coniam, Cllr Crayford, Cllr Eyre, Cllr Gibson, Cllr B Martin, Cllr T Martin, Cllr Newman, Cllr Perkin, Cllr Saunders.

Apologies: Cllr Cook, Cllr Golding, Cllr Jones, Cllr Rowlands

In attendance: Adrienne Begent (Interim Town Clerk), Mike Ellsmore (Faversham Pools – Minute Item 696 only)

Public Questions:

680. Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

It was proposed by Cllr C Martin, seconded by Cllr Gibson, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to accept the apologies for absence with reasons from Cllrs Cook, B Martin, Golding, and Rowlands.***

681. Declarations of Interest

None.

682. Town Council Minutes

It was proposed by Cllr Gibson, seconded by Cllr T Martin, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to accept the Minutes of the Extraordinary Town Council meeting dated 28th July 2026.***

It was proposed by Cllr Gibson, seconded by Cllr T Martin, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to accept the Minutes of the Town Council meeting dated 10th August 2026.***

683. Mayor's Announcements

Cllr C Martin reported on recent engagements including:

- Family Jamboree Day at Faversham Recreation Ground
- Hythe Venetian Fete
- Hop Festival weekend
- Chatty Table at Creek Creative
- Faversham Life 10th Anniversary
- Faversham In Bloom Awards
- Swale BC Civic Service
- Nouds Farm Memorial Service

684. Report from Community Police Officers

The Report from the Community Police Officers dated September 2026 was received and noted.

An apology was noted from the Community Police Officer who was due to attend but had been called away on an operational matter.

Cllr Crayford suggested feeding back the lack of engagement from the Community Police Officers and to query if they could attend meetings on a quarterly basis as minimum. Cllr Newman advised that recently the surgeries held with the public had been cancelled at short notice. Cllr C Martin advised she would email the chain of command the views of the Town Council.

685. Active Travel Committee

Cllr B Martin summarised the meeting of 2nd September 2026 and provided an update on the Faversham Hopper Community Bus, which had its busiest day yet on the Saturday of the Hop Festival. Cllr B Martin thanked Rob Gibbs and the volunteers for their work on the day.

It was proposed by Cllr B Martin, seconded by Cllr Perkin, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to accept the Minutes of the Active Travel Committee meeting dated 2nd September 2026.***

686. Policy and Resources Committee

Cllr Eyre expressed concern that fund had yet to be moved from the Lloyds account to the CCLA and asked for this to be raised with the RFO.

Cllr Saunders raised an amendment under Minute Item 354 clarifying that his point was about the reduction of the General Reserve, and it was important to consider this.

Cllr Crayford referred to the Vexatious Complaints Policy, which had been deferred to seek guidance on best practice, but had been accepted at the Policy and Resources Committee on 7th September without this.

Cllr Crayford and Cllr Martin expressed concern about Rialtas and the end of support for the software as they moved to a web-based system. They felt this required clarification as the Town Council was still under contract. Cllr Crayford requested clarification on where in the budget the additional £825 cost to upgrade was being taken from.

It was proposed by Cllr C Martin, seconded by Cllr Gibson, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to accept the RECOMMENDATION to close the following accounts: NatWest Liquidity Manager 35 Day Account, Lloyds 23 Day Notice Account and Unity Trust Instant Access Account.***

It was proposed by Cllr C Martin, seconded by Cllr Gibson, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to accept the RECOMMENDATION that due to still being in contract, to upgrade to RialtasWeb with an additional cost of £825 (total cost £2539 exc VAT) including Omega, Sales Ledger, Purchase Ledger, MTD, Facilities Bookings and Web Access.***

Subject to the amendment under Minute Item 354, it was proposed by Cllr C Martin, seconded by Cllr Gibson, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to accept the Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting dated 7th September.***

687. Environment Committee

Cllr Coniam provided a summary of the meeting of 9th September.

Subject to an amendment under Minute Item 283 where the action should be attributed to Cllr Crayford, it was proposed by Cllr Coniam, seconded by Cllr Crayford, and on being put to the Meeting it was ***RESOLVED to accept the Minutes of the Environment Committee meeting dated 9th September 2026.***

Cllr Crayford felt there had been a delay in obtaining budget information which had delayed progress on the work on the graffiti policy. Whilst recognising there was a transition, it was important to have the information to be able to make informed decisions.

688. Swale Borough Council – Pavement Policy Licence

Councillors discussed the draft SBC Pavement Policy Licence.

It was proposed by Cllr T Martin, seconded by Cllr Gibson, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to respond to the SBC consultation that the Town Council broadly supported businesses in the town centre having the opportunity to have space to trade outside, however an equality impact assessment should be made on the difficulties faced by those with disabilities, or people with child buggies had getting around the town centre as a result of street furniture. Information should also be provided to the businesses on what was considered a busy time in their area.***

689. Accreditations

It was proposed by Cllr Perkin, seconded by Cllr Crayford, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED that Cllr Perkin assumes responsibility for the Age Friendly Faversham accreditation.***

It was proposed by Cllr Eyre, seconded by Cllr Newman, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED that Cllr Eyre assumes responsibility for Digital Inclusion.***

It was proposed by Cllr Coniam, seconded by Cllr Crayford, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED that Cllr Coniam assumes responsibility for Neighbourhood Watch.***

690. Bank Signatories

It was proposed by Cllr Gibson, seconded by Cllr T Martin, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to add Cllr Eyre as a bank signatory.***

It was agreed to check with Cllr Cook whether he still wished to be a bank signatory.

691. Receipts and Payments

It was proposed by Cllr T Martin, seconded by Cllr Gibson, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to approve the receipts and payments for September 2026.***

692. Motion: Review of the Process for Considering Councillors' Apologies for Absence

It was proposed by Cllr Crayford, seconded by Cllr Saunders, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED:***

This Council notes that:

- ***At present, the Council is asked to vote on whether to accept apologies for absence from councillors, often without being provided with any information regarding the reason for the absence.***
- ***As a consequence, councillors are frequently expected to make a decision without sufficient information to enable meaningful consideration or discussion.***
- ***The Council recognises that some reasons for absence may be personal or confidential and should be treated with appropriate sensitivity and respect. • However, the current process does not strike an appropriate balance between protecting legitimate confidentiality and enabling councillors to make informed democratic decisions.***
- ***Unlike principal authorities, where legislation places time limits on councillors' attendance before a seat may become vacant, there is currently no equivalent statutory time limit governing attendance at town and parish councils. This means councillors can, in some circumstances, remain absent from meetings for extended periods whilst continuing to represent their residents.***
- ***Residents are entitled to expect transparency and accountability regarding the attendance of those elected to represent them. Council therefore resolves to:***
  1. Refer this matter to the Policy and Resources Committee.
  2. Request that the Committee reviews the Council's existing process for considering apologies for absence.
  3. Develop and recommend a revised procedure that provides greater transparency and enables councillors to make informed decisions, whilst continuing to respect confidential or sensitive personal information where appropriate and ensuring their rights under GDPR are not breached.
  4. Present any proposed amendments to Council for consideration and adoption.

693. Motion: Closure of Swale Borough Council's Faversham District Office

It was proposed by Cllr Crayford, seconded by Cllr Gibson, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED:***

Faversham Town Council notes that Swale Borough Council's Policy & Resources Committee is being asked to approve the closure of the Faversham District Office (FDO) and the withdrawal of routine face-to-face customer services from that location.

The Town Council notes that Swale Borough Council intends to provide alternative access to its services, including telephone support, online services, postal fulfilment for parking vouchers and signposting residents who require face-to-face support to alternative access points, with Faversham Library identified as one possible location.

The Town Council recognises that the closure represents a significant change in how Faversham residents access Borough Council services and that some residents, particularly those who are digitally excluded or require additional support, may be more affected by the change.

This Council therefore resolves to:

Work with Swale council to publicise the proposed closure and, should the decision be approved, ensure residents are clearly informed about when the Faversham District Office will close and the alternative ways, they can access Swale Borough Council services.

1. ***Ask the Town Clerk to engage with Swale Borough Council to understand the detailed alternative arrangements being put in place for Faversham residents.***
2. ***Work constructively with Swale Borough Council and relevant local organisations to identify and promote appropriate alternative access points within Faversham, particularly for residents who need face-to-face or assisted-digital support.***
3. ***Ask Swale Borough Council to provide clear information for residents on telephone, online and face-to-face alternatives before the Faversham District Office closes.***
4. ***Keep the impact of the closure on Faversham residents under review and raise any significant access issues with Swale Borough Council.***

694. Motion: Town Twinning Ukraine

It was confirmed that his motion had been withdrawn by Cllr Rowlands.

695. Newsletter

It was proposed by Cllr Perkin, seconded by Cllr Eyre, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to approve the Autumn 2026 Newsletter.***

696. Private Session

It was proposed by Cllr Gibson, seconded by Cllr T Martin, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity be prejudicial to the public interest because of the commercially sensitive nature of the business to be transacted.***

Cllr Perkin left the meeting.

Mike Ellsmore (Co-Chair of Trustees of Faversham Pools) provided background and then left the meeting before Councillors discussed the matter.

It was proposed by Cllr B Martin, seconded by Cllr Newman, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED that the Town Council are minded taking over the existing Charity and request answers to the following questions as soon as possible to ensure we can support the statement on 1st October:***

- ***The Charity's asset ownership arrangements***
- ***Any property interests held by the Charity***
- ***The terms of any proposed future operational arrangements, and the intended governance model following implementation of those arrangements.***
- ***Terms and restrictions of existing grants.***

Additionally, please keep us informed of any complaints raised against the Charity whilst this process is ongoing.

The meeting closed at 8:56pm.