

MINUTES (draft) of the ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 2025 held on 29th April 2025 at The Cabin, Northstowe

NB: Minutes are to be presented to the next Annual Town Meeting to be held on 24th March 2026.

Reports from NORTHSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL

Welcome from the Chair of Northstowe Town Council

The Town Mayor, Cllr Paul Littlemore, chaired the meeting, and opened the meeting at 7:02 PM.

He welcomed all attendees and speakers, and provided an overview of the evening's presentations.

The Mayor highlighted that this year, due to pre-election period restrictions in place, there are no presentations from the County and District Council Ward Members. Their annual reports, are, however, to be made available on the Town Council's website after the elections; see:

- Report County Council: Cllr Firouz Thompson, County Councillor for the Longstanton division;
- Report District Council: Cllr Natalie Warren-Green, Longstanton Ward Member;
- Report District Council: Cllr Tom Bygott, Longstanton Ward Member.

The meeting was attended by 22 people.

To note Apologies for absence received

Apologies had been received, and were noted, from: Town Councillor Cllr Castelino; SCDC Ward Member Cllr N. Warren-Green; and SCDC Community Development Officer M. Stan.

To approve the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 30th April 2024 as a true record of that meeting

A vote was held: Cllr Littlemore proposed and which was seconded by Cllr Owen; with 5 registered electors in the parish of Northstowe voting for and none against it was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 30th April 2024 as a true record of that meeting.

Annual Report: Report on activities during the previous year & looking forward.

Town Mayor, Cllr Paul Littlemore; with Councillors & staff

A presentation was given by the Town Mayor, Cllr Littlemore. This was followed by an overview of the finances for 2024-25 by the Responsible Financial Officer, following which the Town Council's Assets and Estates Manager provided an overview of the Town Council's preparations for managing the Unity Centre if approved by South Cambs. DC.

The Town Mayor, in his presentation, reviewed key developments in the year 2024-25. He mentioned changes to Councillor membership and recruitment of new members of staff. He also highlighted community services investments the Town Council had continued or started anew in the year, including the Northstowe Community Lounge, Northstowe-Longstanton ParkPlay and the Hope CIC Mobile Food Hub. He ended on the latest developments towards the recent submission of a Town Council bid to South Cambridgeshire District Council for Asset Transfer of the Unity Centre to the Town Council.

The RFO, in his presentation, provided an overview of the income and expenditure in 2024-25 against the original budget, and summarised the community grants given out to various organisations. He also provided a summary of the 2025-26 budget with details about the precept as set, and any key changes expected in terms of income and expenditure when looking ahead.

The Assets and Estates Manager, in his presentation, set out in more detail what the Town Council's plans are for managing the Unity Centre, were this to be transferred to the Town Council. He ended, explaining that he is shortly moving on from his position, wishing everyone all the best.

Questions from the floor

Several questions/observations were raised by attendees:

- Q: Context around the Market Manager having recently left the organisation.
 - A: Context was provided with an explanation that options for market continuation are being looked into.
- Q: Costs of managing the monthly markets and how this relates to income from traders.
 - A: It was explained that the Town Council continues to subsidise the market and that the income from market traders' pitch fees covers only a small percentage of the overarching costs, in particular when incorporating associated staffing costs.
- Q: Concerns raised around the costs of some of the products at the Hope CIC Mobile Food Hub.
 - A: Discussions have been held with the organisation following similar comments having been received by the Town Council, and that this matter is to be brought back to a future Town Council meeting.
- Q: A noticeboard at the Vistry development has gone up recently; suggested for possible future asset transfer to the Town Council
 - A: Thanks was expressed for the useful suggestion made.
- Q: Possibility of use of S106 Earmarked Reserves and/or General Reserve for Unity Centre management?
 - A: Use of the Earmarked S106 Reserves is quite limited and most may not be suitable for use for the Unity Centre; it is anticipated in the five-year financial plan submitted with the bid to SCDC that some of the Council's General Reserve is to be utilised.
- Q: Possibility of NTC not being awarded asset transfer of Unity Centre?
 - A: Yes, there is that possibility as this will ultimately be an SCDC Cabinet decision; but there have been many discussions between SCDC and NTC officers and Members to ensure that NTC's bid is attractive to SCDC, with due diligence and financial viability covered in the plans as submitted.

Reports from COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

To receive presentations from recipients of Northstowe TC's Community Grant scheme in 2024-25.

A series of short presentations were given by representatives from the following community organisations, all of whom have received funding in the 2024-25 financial year through the Town Council's Community Grant scheme:

- **Northstowe Running Festival (2024).** In a presentation, The event's successes were highlighted, also noting that the event has now received a Gold Standard. Feedback from participants that have taken place in the Running Festival included: *'it is the toughest terrain but the most enjoyable'*.
 - It was commented how the annual event has really helped putting Northstowe on the map.
- **Northstowe Arts:** Using a slide show presentation, the successes of the Light Up Northstowe event in November 2024 and the events running up to it were highlighted.
 - M. O'Neill was thanked by attendees for their excellent organisation of the event.
- **Northstowe News:** The increased running costs of the Northstowe News magazine were explained, and how the Council's community grant has helped support this. Further grants and support have been provided by several other organisations as well.
 - The Northstowe News volunteers were thanked for their work, and it was expressed how important it was to have Northstowe News for the Northstowe community.
- **Northstowe Hub (on behalf of Northstowe Foodbank):** In a presentation, the work of Northstowe Hub in the year was summarised, ending on the cooperation project with Northstowe Foodbank, to supply recently joined refugee families in Northstowe with bespoke/halal produce.

The Mayor gave thanks to the Asset and Estates Manager for all the hard work that was put into all the documents put together for Northstowe Town Council's bid for Unity Centre Asset Transfer and that there would be a lasting legacy of his work for the Town Council.

The Mayor thanked all speakers and attendees and invited everyone to continue talking to each other over a drink and snack.

The Chair closed the meeting at 8:30 PM.