

**Minutes of the Meeting of
HAWKWELL PARISH COUNCIL
held remotely on Thursday 3rd December at 3:32pm
using the online Zoom meeting platform**

Councillors present: Chairman R Patient, Mrs E Gadsdon, R Gardner, S May (from 3:48pm), Mrs N Shaw, T Manyika (from 3:56pm), M Strubel & Mrs M Weir.

Also present: District Cllr Mrs J Gooding & Cllr P Shaw.

Chairman R Patient informed Members the meeting would be recorded but a correction was made; previous recordings had been temporary and for the sake of the Minutes. It was noted the meeting would only be recorded if there would be an issue where the Administrative Assistant lost connection and was unable to take the Minutes. Chairman R Patient also reminded Members to raise their hands during the meeting before speaking.

28. To receive apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

Cllr S May and T Manyika had given apologies for their late arrival at the meeting. Members received the apologies tendered.

29. Declarations of any:

a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interest;

b) Other Pecuniary Interest; or

c) Non-Pecuniary Interest on any matter on the agenda for 3rd December 2020:

There were no disclosures.

30. Public Forum & Information Reports from District Cllrs for Hawkwell Parish:

a) Public Forum

There were no members of the public present.

b) Information reports from District Councillors

Chairman R Patient noted the email update from District Cllr Mrs J Gooding which had been sent to Members prior to the meeting. District Cllr Mrs J Gooding further reported that she had been organising hampers for vulnerable families. Chairman R Patient felt there had been a good involvement in the Poppy Appeal.

District Cllr P Shaw informed Members there would be free parking on Saturdays in the lead up to Christmas in the Rochford District.

Chairman R Patient gave his personal thanks for the waiting restrictions which had been put in place for Harewood Avenue.

Members also noted the information from District Cllr T Carter than informed them she had been nominated for an award.

31. To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Hawkwell Parish Council meeting held on 16th September 2020 and to destroy the notes in respect of that meeting:

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th September 2020 were **approved** as a correct record and Members **agreed** to the destruction of the notes and recording in respect of that meeting.

32. Resignation of Angelina Rees-Jones:

Chairman R Patient expressed his sadness at Cllr Ms A Rees-Jones' resignation, noting she had been an extremely capable Councillor and had done an exemplary job as Vice Chair. The Clerk would send a letter of thanks to Ms A Rees-Jones on Council's behalf.

33. Elect a Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the 2020/21 Civic year:

Cllr Mrs N Shaw nominated Cllr R Gardner which was seconded by Cllr M Strubel. There were no further nominations and Chairman R Patient declared Cllr R Gardner as Vice-Chairman.

34. Financial Report (November 2020):

The Clerk reported that at month eight overall expenditure was underspent at 53.2% against an expected level of 66%. It was noted there would be further expenditure in December and that things were on track with no concerns.

There were no questions and Members **accepted** the Financial Report.

35. Action List Update (November 2020):

35.1 The Community Engagement Working Group (CEWG) had now been disbanded but it was noted the group was due to look at a Defibrillator publicity event. However, due to the Coronavirus Pandemic and the resulting restrictions, the event was temporarily on hold. Any future events would be reviewed accordingly by a suitable group. Cllr R Gardner informed Members that an additional defibrillator may be proposed and that he would be investigating the number of community accessible defibrillators in the Parish. Cllr R Gardner further reported that he was trying to get Cllr S May on board to assist with the defibrillator checks as the importance for checking the units had become greater due to a change in law; Cllr R Gardner told Members that those which were not checked weekly would be taken out of action.

35.2 Members had been tasked with finding ideas to improve the recruitment drive for Community Specials in Hawkwell. The Clerk had arranged for a FAQ document to be uploaded on the Council's website. There were no further updates. Cllr R Patient enquired if there was an advertisement in the Newsletter but there had not been space in the edition. The Clerk asked everyone present if they had all received the latest newsletter and it was noted Cllrs R Patient, Mrs E Gadsdon and District Cllr Mrs J Gooding had not received a copy. The Clerk requested that Cllr Mrs E Gadsdon enquire with her neighbours if they had received the newsletter and Mrs E Gadsdon said she would check.

Cllr R Patient informed Members he had received a call from a resident regarding dog walking in Magnolia Park on the back of an article in the newsletter but had not been able to answer the resident's concerns as he was unaware of the article; he had advised the caller to ring the Clerk, but the Clerk confirmed she had not yet received a call of that nature.

35.3 The Finance Committee would be reviewing Ashingdon Parish Council's (APC) application for a donation for King George's Playing Fields toilets. HPC had agreed to give a donation but required the necessary paperwork and costings before deciding on an amount.

35.4 Cllr R Gardner, as the Parish Council Representative for the Ashingdon & East Hawkwell Memorial Hall (AEHMH), updated Members that the group had now had several meetings and they were making good progress. It was noted there was still a lot of outstanding debt, but that progress was being made sorting those issues out, namely with the utility companies. It was further noted they AEHMH had received a grant from Rochford District Council (RDC). The committee had also worked hard to keep the hall open during the pandemic and that all was Covid compliant. Cllr R Gardner further reported that they had held a Halloween drive-thru event which had met with great success. Another drive-thru event was planned for Christmas and would take place on the 11th and 12th December 2020. Included in the event would be a choir who would use sign language. Cllr Mrs E Gadsdon enquired about the time of the event; Cllr R Gardner would email Cllrs Mrs E Gadsdon and District Cllr Mrs J Gooding with details of the timings of the event. *Cllr S May joined the meeting at 3:48pm and District Cllr Mrs J Gooding left the meeting at 3:50pm.*

35.5 Members were referred to Agenda item 12a-c (Minute 39a-c).

Members **accepted** the Action List update and **agreed** to the removal of closed items.

36. Budget setting for 2021-22 and recommendation that Hawkwell Parish Council adopt the Fiscal Policy when setting the budget for 2021-22:

Members **agreed** to adopt the Fiscal Policy.

37. Future Full Council Meeting Dates for 2020-21: Current Time Limited Coronavirus Regulations (until May 2021) – way forward:

Members noted the Clerk's report and the new Regulations.

Cllr Mrs E Gadsdon noted that some Members had been unable to attend recent daytime meetings due to work commitments, and therefore wanted to return to the Monday evening meetings. She informed Members of her own attendance at the Monday evening meetings, remarking it had been good. Cllr S May expressed concern for the safety of the Clerk, noting that reverting to the evening meetings in the winter period would mean the Clerk would have to return to an empty office and a car park which was very dark. It was noted the Regulations had allowed Councils to change their Standing Orders to add flexibility and to consider many people's circumstances had changed during the pandemic. Cllr S May felt daytime meetings should continue.

Cllr R Patient expressed his view that some Members had left Council because they were unable to make meetings. It was noted during interviews candidates were told of the commitment required for Monday evening meetings. Cllr R Patient listed some Members who had left Council; it was noted that while some had not been able to attend daytime meetings, they also had ended up unable to make Monday evening meetings too.

Members noted that the Clerk's personal wi-fi connection was unstable at home and that she would therefore have to carry out the meetings in the office. Cllr R Gardner expressed concern about the Health and Safety implications of making the Clerk return alone to the office in the evening hours and felt that a flexible approach was vital during the current unprecedented time. Cllr R Gardner reminded Members that the staff's wellbeing and safety was of the utmost importance and that Council had a duty to protect staff where possible.

Cllr R Gardner proposed a compromise be made which would allow the Clerk to work from the office on a Monday evening but that the start time of the meeting be brought forward so there would be less chance of being left in the office until the late hours of the evening. Cllr

Mrs E Gadsdon stated that it was currently dark outside, but Cllr S May pointed out that it would be considerably darker and more of a safety concern late at night.

Cllr T Manyika joined the meeting at 3:56pm and District Cllr Mrs J Gooding re-joined the meeting at 4:00pm.

Cllr Mrs N Shaw also felt that asking the Clerk to return to a dark office was reason for concern and that she would not feel safe herself in such circumstances and understood if the Clerk had reservations about such a suggestion.

Cllr R Patient enquired with the Clerk and Administrative Assistant (AA) about the need for additional equipment to carry out meetings. The Clerk re-confirmed that the office would be a more practical location given her poor and unreliable internet service at home. The AA confirmed she was happy to continue to work from home using her own equipment and that her wi-fi currently had performed well.

Cllrs Mrs E Gadsdon and T Manyika offered to chaperone the Clerk on the Monday evenings if the Full Council meetings reverted to a 7:30pm start time. The Clerk informed Members that Cllr Mrs M Weir had sometimes had to come into the office to attend meetings. Cllr Mrs M Weir was often without the online functionality and technical know-how which allowed her to join remote meetings at home. Cllr Mrs M Weir's attendance in the office was often challenging for the Clerk and Cllr Mrs M Weir given there was sound feedback issues which meant that Cllr Mrs M Weir had to access the meeting using the office laptop but that no audio could be connected. That would mean when Cllr Mrs M Weir would need to speak, she would have to do so either through the Clerk or to move to access the Clerk's computer. Cllr R Gardner reminded Members that they would not be able to attend the meeting in the office due to the Covid regulations and need for Social Distancing and that any chaperoning would mean Members would have to return to their own homes in time for the start of the meeting and then return when the meeting had ended and the Clerk was ready to leave.

The Clerk asked Members if there would be any compromise, with the meetings to start earlier at 6:00-6.30pm just for the winter months as she would feel more comfortable with this meeting time. Cllr Mrs E Gadsdon asked where the Clerk lived, and it was noted the Clerk lived outside of the Hawkwell Parish and therefore would have to travel back to the office. Cllr Mrs E Gadsdon told the Clerk that the time she had proposed would interfere with family dinner times.

Some Members raised concerns that the Clerk would have to finish in the office and then return several hours later. Cllr R Patient proposed that the Clerk adjust her working hours to accommodate not having to return home but to stay in the office ready for the 7:30pm start time.

The Clerk informed Members she had tried to find the most practical solutions for meeting times during the pandemic and that she did not oppose returning to an evening meeting; she reiterated her request for a compromise to have the meetings just start slightly earlier than set out in the Standing Orders. The Clerk asked Members if there was any regard for her health and safety when it came to her request for a compromise. Cllr Mrs E Gadsdon accused the Clerk of using emotional blackmail following this question.

Cllr R Patient moved that Council revert to holding Full Council Meetings on a Monday evening at 7:30pm. This was seconded by Cllr Mrs E Gadsdon. Following some confusion over a lack of clarity of the votes, Chairman R Patient refused further discussion and recorded the votes as three in favour and three against. Cllr R Patient, in his capacity as Chairman, used his casting vote and the motion was **approved**.

38. Correspondence:

1. Essex Police – Community Safety & Engagement Officer (CSEO):

a) Local Update Newsletter (Issue 3): Members noted the newsletter. Cllr R Gardner enquired why there had been so many issues with the youth and Chairman R Patient told him to contact the CSEO.

b) Fraud Prevention Presentation for the Elderly: Members noted the information.

2. Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils (RHALC) – Minutes of the Meeting held on the 15th October 2020: Members noted the Minutes. It was noted the Rochford Parish Clerk had retired.

3. Essex County Council (ECC) – South Essex Parking Partnership (SEPP) Traffic Regulation Order: Members noted the information.

4. Southend Borough Council – Southend Conservation Area Appraisal Consultation: Members noted the information. Members were asked if they had any suggestions to let the Clerk know.

39. Receive Committee/Working Party Reports since last meeting:

Social Media Working Group (SMWG):

a) Receive Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 4th November 2019;

Members received and **accepted** the Minutes.

b) Receive Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 12th October 2020;

Members received and **accepted** the Minutes

c) Receive Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 19th November 2020.

Members received and **accepted** the Minutes

i. Choice of photos for HPC Facebook page for consideration:

Cllr T Manyika, in his capacity as Chairman of the SMWG, gave Members an update about the meetings held. It was noted the main actions of the SMWG had been to agree a name for the Facebook page, agree the information to be placed on the profile page, contact details and to come up with a photo collage for the cover photo on Council's Facebook profile. Cllr T Manyika drew Members' attention to the selection of photographs contained within their papers and requested four or five photographs be selected so a collage could be formed. Cllr T Manyika asked if the decision should be made by Full Council or the SMWG; Chairman R Patient told Cllr T Manyika the SMWG should make the decision. Cllr Mrs N Shaw praised the work carried out and selections of photographs provided but pointed out the Hawkwell Common Playground was a Rochford District Council playground and therefore not suitable for Parish Council representation.

Cllr R Gardner pointed out his name had been incorrectly spelt on the Minutes and Cllr T Manyika apologised for the error.

40. Personnel Committee:

a) Cllr R Gardner moved the Minutes of the Personnel Committee meetings held on the 5th October 2020 and 23rd November 2020 which were **accepted**.

b) Ratify the annual staff pay increases for 2020-21:

Members ratified the annual staff pay increases for 2020-21.

Parks Committee:

Cllr S May moved the Minutes of the Parks Committee meeting held on the 15th October 2020 which were **accepted**.

Planning Committee:

Cllr Mrs M Weir moved the Planning Responses to Rochford District Council from 30th June to 3rd September which were **accepted**.

General Purposes Committee:

Cllr R Gardner moved the Minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on the 26th November 2020 which were **accepted**.

41. Representatives Reports:

Hockley & Hawkwell Old Peoples Welfare Committee – There were no updates.

Rochford Old Peoples Welfare Committee – There were no updates.

Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils (RHALC) – There were no updates.

Hawkwell Village Hall (HVH) – There were no updates.

Ashingdon & East Hawkwell Memorial Hall (AEHM)– Members noted Cllr R Gardner had already given an update. (Minute 35.4)

Public Transport Liaison Group – There was nothing to report.

Robert Sudbury – There was nothing to report.

Information Reports: Community Meetings – Cllr M Strubel reported that there had been an online meeting, but he had not received prior notification of it.

42. Payment of Accounts:

Chairman R Patient enquired about the £100 paid to Clever Clogs for Christmas cards expressing his view it was a substantial cost. The Clerk reminded him that the Christmas Parcels Working Party had discussed this and agreed that the playgroup design cards this year for the Christmas Parcels for the Elderly initiative.

There were no further questions and the payment of accounts paid since the last meeting (Sept/Oct/Nov payments 2020) were **approved together with agreement to pay any accounts due** before the next meeting.

43. Summary of Decisions Taken:

- Fiscal Policy adopted for setting the budget for 2021-22
- Full Council Meetings to revert to Monday evenings at 7:30pm; Clerk to host meeting from office. Cllrs Mrs E Gadsdon & T Manyika to chaperone Clerk in car park, if required.
- SMWG to select photos for Facebook cover photo (collage).

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 4:34pm.

Chairman