

**Minutes of the Meeting of
HAWKWELL PARISH COUNCIL
held on Monday 13th June 2022 at 7:31pm
in the Rochford Day Centre, 33a Back Lane, Rochford**

Councillors present: Mrs L Dalby, R Gardner, S May, M Strubel, M Vallance & Mrs M Weir.

Also present: District Cllr Mrs T Carter & four members of the public.

FC 22/24 To receive apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

Cllr Mrs E Gadsdon and Cllr R Patient had given apologies along with Essex County Councillor (ECC) Mrs L Shaw and District Cllr Mrs J Gooding. Members received the apologies tendered.

FC 22/25 Declarations of any:

a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interest;

b) Other Pecuniary Interest; or

c) Non-Pecuniary Interest on any matter on the agenda for 13th June 2022:

Chairman M Strubel declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to Agenda item 7. (Minute F 22/30)

FC 22/26 Public Forum & Information Reports from District Cllrs for Hawkwell Parish:

a) Public Forum: Five members of the public were present. (One member was in attendance as a co-option interviewee and also in their capacity as District Cllr.)

b) Information Reports from District and County Councillors: District Cllr T Carter referred to correspondence received from Essex County Councillor (ECC) Mrs L Shaw which informed Members she had been allocated 36 potholes in the District; this meant those reported to her would be passed on to ECC with the aim the worst ones would be filled. Members were requested to think of any significant pothole issues in the parish. The Clerk had received the same correspondence that day and would email the information to Members.

ECC Cllr Mrs L Shaw had submitted a report to the Clerk who informed Members she had now become Deputy Portfolio Holder for Highways at ECC. The Locality Fund was available along with a 'Levelling-up Fund' which was aimed at 16–25 year-olds who were unable to obtain employment and families who were in need, amongst others; if Council were aware of any suitable groups they were requested to let her know.

FC 22/27 To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Hawkwell Parish Council held on 9th May 2022 and to destroy the notes in respect of the meeting:

It was **resolved** that the minutes from the Annual Meeting of Hawkwell Parish Council held on 9th May 2022 were approved as a correct record and Members agreed to the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting.

FC 22/28 Financial Report (May 2022):

The Clerk reported that at month two the budget was 16% spent and on target. Finance was 22% spent with some substantial expenditure in April. General Purposes was underspent, and Parks was 11.5% spent. A Member enquired if the Grounds

Maintenance budget went out to private tender. It was noted Council used a regular contractor along with additional contractors and some District Council services. There were no further questions and it was **resolved** that Members accepted the Financial Report.

FC 22/29 Action List Update (June 2022):

- 22/29.1** The defibrillator publicity event would be held at the Hawkwell Baptist Church on Thursday 23rd June at 7pm. Members were requested to indicate whether they would be attending to gauge the level of support; Cllrs S May and M Vallance indicated they would attend. The defibrillator for the White Hart Service Station would be installed soon. The Clerk would be publicising the event on Facebook the following day. The Clerk requested Members that would be attending aim for a 6.30pm arrival to allow time to set-up.
- 22/29.2** A meeting of the Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) would be held soon. It was noted the Clerk had received one quote and had put out a bulletin via the Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) asking for recommendation for companies who could conduct a suitable 'Climate Emergency Audit' but had not received any responses.
- 22/29.3** The Clerk had sent Members the online form regarding the application for double yellow lines; Members would need to fill in the forms as residents to try and address the issues at the junctions of Rectory Road/Rectory Avenue and Hawkwell Park Drive/Park Gardens as advised by ECC Cllr Mrs L Shaw. There was no update from Members with no applications submitted. It was agreed to close the item.
- 22/29.4** The investments, leases and asset registers had been checked by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman with no issues arising. It was agreed to close the item.
- 22/29.5** The Clerk was in the process of finding suitable companies to contact following Council's decision to pursue the employment of a security company for the Parish. The Clerk informed Members she had put out a bulletin via EALC asking for recommendations. It was noted one recommendation which had been received was for the company Council had trialled. The Clerk explained that the security companies she had investigated did not include patrolling in their remit, with focuses more on premises and alarm systems. The Clerk would continue to pursue the matter and bring any further information back to the next meeting.
- It was **resolved** that Members accepted the Action List update and agreed to the removal of closed items.

FC 22/30 Co-option candidate interviews:

The Clerk advised that Members arrange suitable questions to ask the candidates; the same four questions were selected for each candidate and five members underwent individual Q&A sessions. (Noted separately.)

FC 22/31 Non-attendance by a Councillor for six months:

Members raised concerns about the potential uptake of new Councillors and their ability to join Committees if a Cllr who was unable to attend meetings was holding a space on those committees. It was noted that currently there were spaces available on all committees, but that concern should be acknowledged.

Members **accepted** the reason for absence and noted that Cllr R Patient had been a long-standing Councillor for the parish. Members felt it was improper to not allow an extension to the six-month rule given Cllr R Patient's commitment to Council. It was therefore **resolved** that Cllr R Patient be given a further six-months extension in respect of his attendance.

FC 22/32 Receive and note the Internal Audit Report (Final) for 2021-22:

Thanks were given to the Clerk and Assistant for their work and it was noted Council had once again been given a clean bill of health with no issues arising following the audit. It was **resolved** that the Internal Audit Report for 2021-22 be noted.

FC 22/33 Accept and approve for despatch the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2021-22 and sign the Annual Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2022:

- a) Review the effectiveness of the system of internal control and consider any findings:** Members reviewed the document provided by the Clerk and agreed the system of internal control was effective.
- b) Annual Governance Statement: Section 1 of the AGAR:**
 - i. Approve the Annual Governance Statement by resolution:** The Chairman read the Annual Governance Statement from items one to nine (with nine being 'not applicable') and Members agreed to each item.
Members **approved** the Annual Governance Statement by resolution. The Chairman and Clerk signed Section 1 of the Annual Return, witnessed by Members.
- c) Accounting Statements: Section 2 of the AGAR:**
 - i. Consider the Accounting Statements by the Members meeting as a whole:** Members were referred to the Financial Statements prepared by DCK Accounting Solutions Ltd. This was **accepted** by all Members.
 - ii. Approve the Accounting Statements by resolution:** Members **approved** the Accounting Statements by resolution.
 - iii. Ensure the Accounting Statements are signed and dated by the person presiding at the meeting at which that approval is given:** The Chairman signed the Accounting Statements, witnessed by Members.
- d) Chairman and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) to sign the Annual Accounts for 2021-22:** A Member raised a question about the properties listed under 'freehold' within the accounts. The Clerk explained it did not relate to the park leases and that Council had paid a small amount for Elizabeth Close and that Magnolia Park's compound was built by Council using a public works loan at the time. A Member also questioned why the value of Council's truck had not had depreciation applied to it and the Clerk reminded Members this question had been asked several times before; the Clerk would retrieve the information and send to Members again.
The Chairman and RFO signed the Annual Accounts, witnessed by Members.

FC 22/34 Correspondence:

- 22/34.1 Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) – 2022 training calendar:** Members interesting in attending any of the courses were requested to let the Clerk know. The Clerk also informed Members she was in receipt of information about the Chairman's training being held on Saturdays; she would circulate the information accordingly.
- 22/34.2 Bar 'n' Bus Youth Work – AGM invitation:** The information was noted and Members were reminded the group held a session at Magnolia Park on Wednesdays.
- 22/34.3 Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils (RHALC) – Minutes of the meeting held on the 21st April 2022:** The information was noted.
- 22/34.4 The Old People's Welfare Committee for Rochford and District – Minutes of the meeting held on the 19th May 2022:** The information was noted.
- 22/34.5 ECC – Climate Emergency Webinar:** Cllr Mrs L Dalby would attend.

22/34.6 Rochford District Council (RDC) – Code of Conduct/Standards Member Training:
Cllr R Gardner would be attending the 7.30pm session. Cllr Mrs L Dalby would contact the Clerk the next day to see if she would also be available to attend.

22/34.7 Correspondence from ECC Cllr Mrs L Shaw:

- a) **Rayleigh tip telephone booking number:** The information was noted.
- b) **Essex Explorer magazine link:** The information was noted.
- c) **ECC Highways Cabinet Member meeting/speech invitation:** The Clerk would enquire what times/dates had been proposed and once in receipt of the information revert to Members.
- d) **ECC Locality Fund update:** The Clerk reminded Members she had informed them of the fund information earlier in the meeting. The Clerk also reminded Members the fund had been used before to help part fund the defibrillators, but the criteria had now changed. A question was raised about using the fund towards the Christmas Parcels initiative, but the Clerk pointed out an agreed budget had been set and that it would not be appropriate to ask for funds when it was likely the budget would be adequate.
- e) **Role update:** The information was noted.

22/34.8 Hawkwell Parish Council – Committees/Working Groups summary table:
Members were in receipt of the most up to date information, for their reference.

FC 22/35 Representatives Reports:

Rochford Old Peoples Welfare Committee – meeting last week. Cllr Mrs Weir reported the Committee had received £200 to go towards a tea party for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and that would be held on the coming Saturday.

Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils (RHALC) – There would be a meeting in July.

Ashingdon & East Hawkwell Memorial Hall – No representatives.

Hawkwell Village Hall (HVH) – Cllr M Vallance reported the Chairman of the HVH had mentioned the matter relating to Council's rent payment. The Clerk informed Members that the HVH had been informed Council would revert to the HVH once it had been possible to visit the Essex Records Office. Cllr M Vallance further reported that the HVH would now be allowing the White Hart Service Station to park up to six vehicles in the car park for a cost of £50, or around £600 per annum. It was felt the matter had been pushed through the Committee with speed. Cllr M Vallance had raised concerns about how the agreement would be policed. Members also raised concerns about how the arrangement would affect events such as the U3A meetings as the car park was often in disarray during those times with incidents of cars needing to leave or enter but being unable to do so due to poor and inappropriate parking. It was further reported that a member of the HVH would be in touch with the office to ascertain what internet service user was being used.

Public Transport Liaison Group – There had been no meetings.

Robert Sudbury Trust – There had been no meetings.

Information Reports:

Community Meetings – Chairman M Strubel reported he was in receipt of crime statistics which he would pass on to the Clerk for onward distribution to Members.

- FC 22/36 Receive Committee/Working Party Reports since last meeting:**
Parks Committee:
 It was **resolved** that Members accepted the Parks Committee minutes of the meeting held on the 16th May 2022.
 A Member raised their opinion about the matter relating to the goldfish. The Clerk reminded Members the matter would need to be discussed properly at the Parks Committee under an appropriate agenda item and no decisions had been made.
- FC 22/37 Payment of Accounts**
 There were no questions and it was **resolved** that the payment of accounts paid since the last meeting (May payments) were approved together with agreement to pay any accounts due before the next meeting.
- FC 22/38 Resolution within Standing Order 3d "that in view of the confidential and special nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw." Standing Order 11 and 19f also apply:**
 The one member of the public left the Chambers.
- FC 22/39 Consider Co-option of new Councillors (For Decision):**
 Members discussed the potential candidates. Chairman M Strubel left the Chambers temporarily when a candidate was discussed in relation to his non-pecuniary interest. (Minute FC 22/25). A secret ballot was held and it was **agreed** to co-opt all five candidates. The Clerk would inform all candidates of Council's decision the next day.
- FC 22/40 Summary of Decisions Taken:**
- Cllrs S May and M Vallance confirmed they would attend the Defibrillator event. All those attending requested to get to venue at 6:30pm to allow for set-up.
 - Clerk to continue to research suitable security companies for next meeting.
 - Internal Audit Report (Final) for 2021-22 noted.
 - Cllr R Patient given a further six-months extension in respect of his attendance.
 - AGAR for 2021-22 approved.
 - Annual Accounts for 2021-22 approved and signed.
 - Members interesting in EALC training to let Clerk know.
 - Cllr Mrs L Dalby to attend ECC Climate Emergency Webinar.
 - Cllrs Mrs L Dalby and R Gardner to attend RDC Code of Conduct training.
 - Clerk to revert to ECC Cllr Mrs L Shaw to enquire about proposed meeting dates regarding meeting with ECC Cabinet Member for Highways.
 - Chairman M Strubel to pass on crime statistics to Clerk for onward distribution.
 - Members agreed to the co-option of five candidates; Clerk to inform them of Council's decision the next day.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9:04pm.

Chairman