

**Minutes of the Meeting of
HAWKWELL PARISH COUNCIL
held on Monday 15th January 2024 at 7:30pm
at the Rochford Day Centre, 33a Back Lane, Rochford**

Councillors present: Chairman M Strubel, S May, T Hargrave, A MacPherson, Mrs L Massey, Mrs J Strubel & Mrs M Weir.

Also present: District Cllr N Booth and one member of the public.

FC 24/82 To receive apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs L Dalby, R Gardner, and R Patient. Apologies were also received from District Cllrs Mrs D Squires-Coleman and Mrs J Gooding.

FC 24/83 Declarations of any of the following interests on any matter on the agenda for 15th January 2024:

- a) **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest;**
- b) **Other registrable interests**

No declarations were made.

FC 24/84 Public Forum & Information Reports from District Cllrs for Hawkwell Parish:

a) **Public Forum:** One member of the public was present for a co-option interview.

b) **Information Reports from District and County Councillors:** District Cllr N Booth had nothing to report. Members were referred to Agenda item 12 (Minute FC 24/93).

FC 24/85 To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Hawkwell Parish Council meeting held on 6th November 2023 and to destroy the notes in respect of the meeting:

It was **resolved** that the minutes from the meeting held on 6th November 2023 were approved as a correct record and Members agreed to the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting.

FC 24/86 Financial Report (December 2023):

The Clerk reported that at month nine the budget was 70% spent against an expected 75%. The Finance budget was 77% spent, General Purposes Committee was 65% spent and the Parks Committee budget was 62% spent.

There were no questions and it was **resolved** that Members accepted the Financial Report.

FC 24/87 Action List Update (January 2024):

24/87.1 The next meeting of the Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) would be arranged imminently.

24/87.2 Members were referred to Agenda item 9 (Minute FC 24/90).

FC 24/88 Co-option interview:

The Clerk had recommended Members ask five questions outlined in the paperwork; the candidate underwent a Q&A session accordingly. (Noted separately.)

FC 24/89 Private Security Patrols – January report:

Members noted some of the reports were a log of what the patrol guards witnessed on their patrols and not necessarily crime related. Members enquired if there had been an improvement in reports of vandalism since the engagement with the security company. The Clerk informed Members that information was unavailable as the police did not provide those statistics. The Clerk pointed out that in relation to vandalism to Council's assets, there had been a reduction in the number of incidents.

FC 24/90 Email from Corporate Services at Rochford District Council (RDC) regarding the Highway Ranger Service (HRS):

The Clerk reminded Members of the HRS and the enquiry made by RDC. It was noted RDC had not been able to provide the information requested and that there had been insufficient time for Council to consider whether to support the proposal. The Clerk felt that there was very little the HRS could do in the parish in relation to Council's work. Members **agreed** that given the lack of information and response from RDC, it would not be prudent to support the proposal of the HRS.

FC 24/91 Precept 2024-25:

a) **Confirmation of tax base for 2024-25;** Members noted that RDC had set the final tax base for Hawkwell for 2024-25 at 4780.4, an increase of 15.5 from 2023-24 in Band D equivalents.

b) **Recommendation from Finance Committee regarding setting the precept for 2024-25:**

It was **resolved** that Members accept the Finance Committee's recommendation to increase the Band D figure from £39.54 for 2023-24 to £41.88 for 2024-25. Using the final tax base figure from RDC, this results in a precept of £199,964.13, yielding a shortfall of income over planned expenditure of £360.87. Members agreed the shortfall could be sourced from the General Reserves, if required. The increase in precept represents a 5.8% increase.

c) **Adoption of the precept and approval to notify RDC:**

It was **resolved** that Members approve a precept of £199,964.13 and an average Band D figure at £41.88 for the tax year 2024-25. Council also instructed the Clerk to advise RDC of the approved precept.

FC 24/92 Essex Police request to place trail cameras in Magnolia Nature Reserve – formal ratification of Members' agreement following email dated 22-11-23:

Members unanimously **agreed** to give permission to Essex Police to place trail cameras in Magnolia Nature Reserve.

FC 24/93 Correspondence:

24/93.1 Emails from Essex County Councillor (ECC) Mrs L Shaw:

a) **'Tell ECFRS' – share your views on your fire service:** The information was noted. *Cllr T Hargrave left the Chambers at 7:54pm.*

b) **Information about Essex road maintenance over the next 10 years:** A Member reported a pothole under the bridge on Rectory Road, but felt it was too dangerous to get a suitable photograph. The Clerk would convey this to ECC Cllrs Mrs L Shaw on the Member's behalf.

Cllr T Hargrave returned to the Chambers at 7:57pm.

c) **Information about a possible scam:** The information was noted.

d) **Information about ECC workers:** The information was noted.

- 24/93.2 Rochford District Council Open Space Volunteer survey:** The information was noted.
- 24/93.3 UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) – meeting information from 30th November 2023 and a request for feedback:** The Clerk informed Members that she felt there was nothing suitable for Council to apply for under the fund's eligibility criteria. It was anticipated Cllr Mrs M Weir would attend the next meeting.
- 24/93.4 ECC Local Walking and Cycling Routes Survey:** The information was noted.
- 24/93.5 Hawkwell Village Hall Management Committee (HVHMC) – minutes of the meeting held on the 9th November 2023:** It was noted that the HVHMC had made enquiries about adding lighting to the entrance of the car park and had indicated they may want financial assistance from Council.
- 24/93.6 Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) - training calendar for Nov 2023 to Mar 2024:** Any Members interested in training were to let the Clerk know.
- 24/93.7 Old People's Welfare for Rochford and District Day Centre Committee:**
- a) **Minutes of the meeting held on the 23rd November 2023:** The information was noted.
 - b) **Minutes of the meeting held on the 14th December 2023:** The information was noted.
- 24/93.8 Letter of thanks from Essex & Herts Air Ambulance following donation:** The information was noted.
- 24/93.9 Email from RDC Civic Officer – events in 2024 Holocaust Memorial Day, Citizen of the Year and Chairman's Civic Dinner:** A Member raised concerns about security at the Holocaust Memorial Day event; the Clerk would make the appropriate enquiries with RDC.

FC 24/94 Subscription: Essex Wildlife Trust (EWT) - £40:
Members approved the annual subscription to EWT for £40.

FC 24/95 Representatives Reports:

Rochford Old Peoples Welfare Committee – Members were referred to Agenda item 12 (Minute FC 24/93.7a&b).

RHALC – There would be a meeting on Thursday 18th January 2024. It was noted that the police had attended the last meeting and were encouraging people to mark valuable belongings with an invisible marker and to make a note of the serial numbers in case of any thefts.

Ashingdon & East Hawkwell Memorial Hall (AEHMH) – No representatives.

Hawkwell Village Hall – Members were referred to Agenda item 12. (Minute FC 24/93.5)

Public Transport Liaison Group – No meetings.

Robert Sudbury Trust – There was nothing to report.

Information Reports:

Community Meetings – There had been no meetings.

FC 24/96 Receive Committee/Working Party Reports since last meeting:

Planning Committee: It was **resolved** that Members accepted the minutes of the meeting held on 6th November 2023 and 4th December 2023.

Personnel Committee: It was **resolved** that Members accepted the minutes of the meeting held on 13th November 2023.

Parks Committee: It was **resolved** that Members accepted the minutes of the meeting held on 13th November 2023.

General Purposes Committee: It was **resolved** that Members accepted the minutes of the meeting held on 13th November 2023.

Finance Committee: It was **resolved** that Members accepted the minutes of the meeting held on 4th December 2023.

FC 24/97 Payment of Accounts

There were no questions and it was **resolved** that the payment of accounts paid since the last meetings (December payments) were approved together with agreement to pay any accounts due before the next meeting.

FC 24/98 Post interview Co-option discussion & decision:

Members discussed the candidate and it was unanimously **agreed** to co-opt the candidate.

FC 24/99 Summary of decisions taken:

- CCWG to be arranged imminently.
- Agreement not to support the HRS as set out by RDC.
- Approval of a Precept of £199,964.13 and an average Band D figure at £41.88 for the tax year 2024-25; the Clerk to advise RDC of the approved precept.
- Approval for Essex Police to install trail cams in Magnolia Nature Reserve.
- Clerk to report pothole under railway bridge along Rectory Road to ECC Cllr Mrs L Shaw on Member's behalf.
- Members interested in any training at EALC to let Clerk know.
- Clerk to enquire with RDC about security measures for Holocaust Memorial Day.
- Approval of annual subscription to EWT for £40.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8:17pm.

Chairman