

**Minutes of the meeting of the
GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
held on Monday 8th April 2024 at 7:05pm
at the Rochford Day Centre, 33a Back Lane, Rochford**

Committee Cllrs present: Chairman R Gardner, L Fane, T Hargrave, Mrs L Massey (from 7:08pm), S May, A MacPherson, Mrs J Strubel, M Strubel & Mrs M Weir.

Also present: One member of the public.

GP 24/43 Receive apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

Cllr Mrs L Dalby had given apologies.
Members received the apologies tendered.

GP 24/44 Declarations of any:

- a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interest;**
- b) Other Registrable Interest**

on any matter on the agenda for 8th April 2024:

Members made no declarations.

GP 24/45 Public Forum:

One member of the public was present.

GP 24/46 Approve Minutes of the meeting held on the 12th February 2024 and to approve the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting:

It was **resolved** that the minutes from the meeting held on 12th February 2024 were approved as a correct record. Members agreed to the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting.

Cllr Mrs L Massey entered the Chambers at 7:08pm

GP 24/47 Action Update List (April 2024):

- 24/47.1** Members were referred to Agenda item 7a (Minute GP 24/49a).
- 24/47.2** The Clerk had made enquiries with Clements Hall Leisure Centre to see if they had a Bleed Kit. They had confirmed they did not have any kits but would be receptive to Council providing one. Hockey Parish Council had also been contacted but had yet to reply.
- 24/47.3** Members were referred to Agenda item 7b (Minute GP 24/49b).
- 24/47.4** Members were referred to Agenda item 7c (Minute GP 24/49c).
- 24/47.5** Members were referred to Agenda item 8 (Minute GP 24/50).
It was **resolved** that Members noted and accepted the Action Update List and agreed to the removal of the closed items.

GP 24/48 Financial Report – March 2024:

The Clerk reported the General Purposes budget was 97.5% spent at year end, with some end of year adjustments due.

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

GP 24/49 Ideas under consideration:

a) Christmas nativity display:

Members noted the research carried out by Cllr L Fane. Members discussed using silhouettes to avoid any bias and/or stereotypes which may occur by adding details that

some could view as being offensive and/or non-inclusive. Members **agreed** to adding traditional animals such as camels and donkeys. A template design with the three wise men riding camels was approved by Members, along with a donkey. It was anticipated The Men Shed Association (UKMSA) would be carrying out the work to create the designs. It was further **agreed** that the Clerk re-contact the Baptist Church to see if they would like a similar Christmas nativity display; the Clerk had already made contact but had not had a response.

b) Remembrance display:

Members noted the research carried out by Cllr L Fane. The Clerk had tried to contact Rochford District Council (RDC) regarding obtaining permission for having a display on the White Hart village green but had experienced difficulties finding an appropriate contact. Cllr S May volunteered to come up with some possible designs and it was anticipated the UKMSA would make the wooden structures.

Members **agreed** that any display should be temporary, to offer commemoration during the Remembrance period. Members discussed adding a poppy garden but no decisions on location or how to go about managing that were made; the Clerk advised Members more planning was required.

c) Main road shopping parade baskets:

The Clerk had contacted the landlord's land managing agent to obtain permissions for the planters but had not received a response to date. Members noted the quotes provided and agreed to opt for quote two, the half barrier basket at 1.27m from Amberol. It was further agreed four baskets be purchased, subject to permissions being granted. Soil and plants would need to be arranged at a later date, and it was noted the White Hart Garage had given permission to Council to use their outside tap for any watering.

GP 24/50 Notes of Harvest Festival Fayre Working Group:

Members received the notes. Cllr L Fane had also prepared a project plan, which was distributed during the meeting.

Cllr T Hargrave left the Chambers at 7:32pm.

Members enquired how the event would be run and it was noted no plans had been drawn up or that the event had been discussed in any detail at the current stage; dates had been proposed and these would need to be presented to Hawkwell Village Hall (HVV) to see if they would have any availability for hire on those dates; it was noted preference had been given for 28th September 2024, which the Clerk would relay to the HVV.

Cllr T Hargrave returned to the Chambers at 7:35pm.

Members discussed holding the event in the car park and hall, using both the inside and outside. Consideration was also given to the event times, with suggestions the event should run from 11am to 5pm. A Member felt it would be necessary to prepare an events plan under RDC's remit, but it was unclear if that would be required; the Clerk would find out more.

The Chairman impressed the importance of ensuring momentum with the HFFWG and that meetings were organised swiftly; it was noted the intention was to hold the event in 2024 and that time was of the essence, with a considerable amount of work required.

GP 24/51 Cllr Mrs M Weir – Consider the future of The Freight House:

Members noted the letter from Cllr Mrs M Weir. Cllr Mrs M Weir explained that some residents had requested The Freight House be retained and be classed as a Community Asset, which had enabled the community six months to try to save the building and delayed any potential sale or demolition. It was noted that some meetings had taken place to ask the community whether they would want to save the building. It was further noted RDC had indicated there would also be a consultation about The Freight House. The Clerk explained there were several Facebook groups which had been set up to support saving The Freight

House. Cllr Mrs M Weir requested Council use its Facebook page to support the groups and the Clerk enquired if any of the groups set up were political in their nature, reminding Members that any political stance on the matter should not be supported or endorsed; Cllr Mrs M Weir assured Members the community were behind the campaign to save The Freight House.

It was **agreed** that Council's Annual Parishioners' meeting on the 13th May 2024 have time allocated to asking Hawkwell parishioners about saving The Freight House to become a community centre, including a museum, with the intention the community would run the building. It was further agreed the meeting would need to be well publicised; this would therefore be advertised on Council's Facebook page, noticeboards and in the newsletter, on the proviso there would be space in the next edition.

GP 24/52 Summary of decisions:

- Template design agreed for Emmanuel Church nativity display; UKMSA to carry out creation of structure. Clerk to re-contact Baptist Church to see if they would like a similar nativity display.
- Cllr S May to prepare designs for the Remembrance display. Clerk to contact RDC to obtain permissions to have a temporary annual display. Members to plan the poppy garden if permission to be granted.
- Baskets for Main Road shopping parade car park area to be purchased if permission is granted from the landlord.
- Clerk to contact HVH about a potential Harvest Festival Fayre. Preferred date of Saturday 28th September agreed. Clerk to make enquires with RDC about possible event plans. Members to organise another meeting.
- Annual Parishioners' meeting on 13th May 2024 to include an item on engaging with the community about the future of The Freight House with the possibility of having it as a Community Asset, to be run by the community. Meeting to be publicised using Council's usual channels.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7:54pm

Chairman