

**Minutes of the meeting of the
GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
held on Monday 20th May 2024 at 7:05pm
at the Rochford Day Centre, 33a Back Lane, Rochford**

Councillors present: Mrs L Dalby, L Fane, R Gardner, T Hargrave, A MacPherson, Mrs L Massey, S May & Mrs M Weir.

Also present: Two members of the public.

GP 24/1 Elect a Chair for the civic year 2024-25:

Cllr S May nominated Cllr R Gardner which was seconded by Cllr Mrs L Dalby. Cllr T Hargrave nominated Cllr S May; Cllr S May declined the nomination. There were no further nominations and Cllr R Gardner was elected Chair for the civic year 2024-25.

GP 24/2 Elect a Vice-Chair for the civic year 2024-25:

Cllr R Gardner nominated Cllr Mrs L Massey which was seconded by Cllr Mrs L Dalby. There were no further nominations and Cllr Mrs L Massey was elected Vice-Chair for the civic year 2024-25.

GP 24/3 Receive apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

Members received apologies from Cllrs Mrs J Strubel and M Strubel.

GP 24/4 Declarations of any:

a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interest;

b) Other Registrable Interest

on any matter on the agenda for 20th May 2024:

Members made no declarations.

GP 24/5 Public Forum:

Two members of the public were present.

GP 24/6 Approve Minutes of the meeting held on the 8th April 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 8th April 2024 were approved as a correct record and Members agreed to the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting.

GP 24/7 Action Update List (May 2024):

- 24/7.1** An additional template design had been agreed for Emmanuel Church nativity display which included Three Wise Men and a donkey. The Men's Shed Association (UKMSA) would be creating the structure and a representative from the UKSMA would consult with Cllr T Hargrave about the additional template design. The Clerk had spoken to the reverend at the Hawkwell Baptist Church to see if they would like a similar nativity display.
- 24/7.2** There had been no response from Hockley Parish Council regarding the bleed kits. Cllr R Gardner would provide further research on the types of bleed kits for the next meeting. The Clerk informed Members there was funding available that may assist towards the purchase cost of the kits.

24/7.3 A site visit with a Rochford District Council (RDC) Officer had taken place on the 29th April 2024. Permission for a display had been granted in principle; the Officer requested a detailed plan, when available. Cllr S May was to draw up designs for Members approval. It was anticipated the UKMSA would create the design out of wood. Members discussed options for providing poppies. Cllr Mrs L Massey would talk to Holt Farm Infant and Junior schools to see if children would be interested in making poppies which could be used for the poppy garden. Cllr L Fane would do the same in respect of Westerings School, through a relative who worked there. Cllr Mrs L Massey would also make enquiries via a contact for potential knitting patterns for poppies. Members discussed what would be permitted in the garden, including whether wreaths would also be allowed; it was anticipated people would not lay wreaths given the proximity to the British Legion where there was an evident wall for wreaths.

It was **agreed** Members would need to decide how to make the poppies available to the public, subject to the information received from Cllrs L Fane and Mrs L Massey.

24/7.4 Approval for the flower baskets at the Main Road shopping parade had been granted by the landlord on the condition all liability and responsibility fell to Council. The Clerk would proceed with the order for the baskets. There were funding options which the Clerk would also explore.

24/7.5 The village hall had been booked for 28th September 2024 and a deposit had been paid. The Harvest Festival Fayre Working Group (HFFWG) would need to progress plans as a matter of priority. It was noted the group had not made any progress to date and that there had been difficulties arranging an online meeting. The Clerk would re-contact the village hall to ensure the car park area could also be used for the event; Members anticipated the event would have several outdoor stalls and activities. It was agreed the event needed to be well-publicised and Members felt social media channels would be an effective way to spread the word. A Member enquired about the budget for the event and the Clerk reminded Members the event had not been budgeted for and that any costs would be funded from Council's reserves. It was **agreed** Cllr T Hargrave would arrange a meeting that week, via Zoom, so matters could be progressed.

24/7.6 Several District Cllrs and Parish Cllrs had attended the Annual Parishioners' meeting where the future of the Freight House had been discussed. Those Cllrs present had requested support from HPC for their plan to have the Freight House designated as an Asset of Community Value (ACV); Members were referred to Agenda item 9 (Minute 24/9).

Cllr T Hargrave left the chambers at 7:29pm

It was **resolved** that Members accepted the Action List update and agreed to the removal of closed items.

GP 24/8 Financial Report – April 2024:

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

Cllr T Hargrave returned to chambers at 7:32pm.

GP 24/9 To consider giving formal support to the proposal for a cross-party/cross-parish initiative to 'Save the Freight House' by having it defined as an Asset of Community Value (ACV):

Members noted Rochford Parish Council would be meeting on the 30th May 2024 to discuss the future of the Freight House to ascertain the public support within the Rochford parish.

It was noted the Hawkwell Annual Parishioners' Meeting had been attended by Rochford Parish Councillors and District and County Councillors who were in support of retaining

the building and having it as a community asset. Members raised concerns about potential political maneuvers in respect of the building, noting topical issues raised on social media. Members stressed the importance of not being involved in any political agenda, and agreed the focus was to support residents who wanted to retain the building as a community asset. Members noted the aim was to have the building registered as an AVC which Cllr Steptoe informed them would be set in motion. It was **resolved** that Council formally support the campaign to 'Save the Freight House,' and the community's aim to have it defined as an AVC.

GP 24/10 Summary of decisions:

- Cllr R Gardner elected Chairman for 2024-25.
- Cllr Mrs L Massey elected Vice-Chair for 2024-25.
- Cllr R Gardner to provide further research on the types of bleed kits for the next meeting.
- Cllr S May was to draw up designs for the Remembrance Garden structure for Members approval.
- Cllr Mrs L Massey to find out if Holt Farm Infant and Junior school would be able to make poppies for the White Hart Poppy Garden. Cllr L Fane to do the same in respect of Westerings School.
- Cllr Mrs L Massey to obtain the knitting patterns for poppies.
- Members to decide on way forward for White Hart Poppy Garden following receipt of information from Cllrs S May, L Fane and Mrs L Massey.
- Clerk to proceed with order for White Hart shopping parade flower baskets; possible funding to be researched.
- Cllr T Hargrave to arrange a Zoom meeting for the HFFWG as a matter of priority; Clerk to re-contact Hawkwell Village Hall to ensure the car park can be used for the Harvest Festival Fayre.
- Council to formally support community in trying to retain the Freight House as a community asset.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8:40pm

Chair