

**Minutes of the meeting of the
GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
held on Monday 16th September 2024 8:02pm
at the Rochford Day Centre, 33a Back Lane, Rochford**

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

Also present: Two members of the public.

GP 24/20 Receive apologies for non-attendance at meeting:
Members received apologies from Cllr Mrs L Dalby.

GP 24/21 Declarations of any:
a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interest;
b) Other Registrable Interest
on any matter on the agenda for 16th September 2024:
Members made no declarations.

GP 24/22 Public Forum:
Two members of the public were present.

GP 24/23 Approve Minutes of the meeting held on the 29th July 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 29th July 2024 were approved as a correct record and Members agreed to the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting.

GP 24/24 Action Update List (September 2024):

24/24.1 The UK Men's Shed Association (UKMSA) were working on the nativity displays. The Clerk informed Members that priority had been given to the Remembrance figures and the UKMSA were currently working on them. Cllr T Hargrave had received conflicting information and was concerned that no work was being carried out. The Clerk would call her UKMSA contact to find out more but offered assurances that all was on track.

24/24.2 The Clerk had sourced part-funding for the bleed kits and was awaiting the outcome. The Clerk informed Members that Locality Fund offered by ECC was also possibly able to offer further funding.

24/24.3 Members were referred to Agenda item 7 (Minute GP 24/26).

24/24.4 The flower baskets at the Main Road shopping parade had been installed and planted. Cllr T Hargrave gave an update to Members about the flowers. Members agreed to trial planting winter flowers. A discussion ensued about how best to plant the plants; it was agreed it would be more practical to plant on site as removing the planters was quite difficult. Cllrs L Fane and A MacPherson would assist Cllr T Hargrave with the planting.

24/24.5 The Harvest Fayre had been cancelled and 50% of the deposit had been returned from the Hawkwell Village Hall.

24/24.6 Members had been encouraged to fill in the Rochford District Cultural Consultation questionnaire by the 19th September, noting it included the Freight House. Cllr Mrs L Massey had shared the QR Code at work and had encouraged colleagues to fill it in. Cllr R Gardner had also shared the link on Facebook and reported receiving many responses.

Cllrs S May and Mrs M Weir had attended the RDC Workshop and had found it to be disappointing, noting focus had been on how to encourage people to the district with little attention given to the Freight House.

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

GP 24/25 Financial Report – August 2024:

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

GP 24/26 Remembrance Garden Project:

The Clerk suggested it would be beneficial to find out what the UKMSA would be willing to do to assist with the project. Cllrs L Fane and T Hargrave volunteered to help with the erection of the display, subject to being available. Members discussed the structures and how they would fit into the ground. It was suggested 2ft stakes be attached to the structures and staked into the ground. The Clerk would source imitation barbed wire and Members were asked to think about how that would be secured. A Member enquired if a health and safety sign need be erected. The Clerk informed Members that would not be necessary; a risk assessment had been conducted.

Members discussed the placement of the figures and it was agreed a further site visit was needed to ascertain what distance apart the figures should be.

The Clerk informed Members the Royal British Legion (RBL) were now providing female soldier figures. The Clerk was also chasing the group knitting poppies for the display.

Cllr Mrs L Massey informed Members the matter of creating poppies was on her workplace agenda in two weeks' time; she would report back following that meeting.

Cllr T Hargrave would report back to the Clerk following his meeting with the UKMSA on the Wednesday.

All necessary information would need to be available for the next meeting on the 14th October 2024.

GP 24/27 Consider items for inclusion in the 2025-26 budget:

A Member suggested more money be set aside for Christmas lights, specifically requesting lights be installed along the shopping parade at the top of Ashingdon hill. It was noted that permission would need to be obtained from the shop owners. The Clerk also reminded Members of the importance of ensuring value for money for residents and suggested any costings for Christmas lights should be sourced from Council's Reserves. Members also enquired if a Christmas tree was possible; the Clerk reminded Members of the historic failed Christmas tree project. Members enquired about additional lights at the British Legion but it was agreed the existing lights were not particularly successful given the white background and choice of colours.

GP 24/28 Receive notes of the Christmas Parcels Working Group (CPWG) meeting held on the 9th September 2024:

Members received the notes of the CPWG meeting held on the 9th September 2024.

Members discussed various offers available. It was noted the Christmas cards were now on order.

The packing date for the parcels was changed to Thursday 5th December at 10:30pm, due to the lack of availability of the annex on the previous agreed date.

Cllr T Hargrave left the Chambers at 8:39pm.

The office staff would be able to carry out the packing, but greater assistance was required for the deliveries

Cllr T Hargrave returned to Chambers at 8:41pm

GP 24/29 Summary of decisions:

- Clerk to contact UKMSA for an update on the Remembrance figures project.
- Clerk to chase knitting group for an update on the knitted poppies.
- Clerk to source imitation barbed wire.
- Members to carry out a site visit to ascertain placement of figures etc. More information to be provided at the next meeting on the 14th October 2024.
- Cllr Mrs L Massey to update Members following her work meeting about providing poppies via the children.
- Cllr T Hargrave to report back to Clerk about any updates from the UKSMA.
- Budget increase to be considered for Christmas lighting, specifically at the top end of Ashingdon Hill shops; permissions to be obtained in first instance.
- Christmas parcels packing date changed to Thursday 5th December 2024 at 10:30pm.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8:42pm

Chair