

**Minutes of the meeting of the
GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
held on Monday 11th November 2024 7:35pm
at the Rochford Day Centre, 33a Back Lane, Rochford**

Cllrs present: Vice-Chair Mrs L Massey, L Fane, T Hargrave, A MacPherson, S May & Mrs M Weir.

GP 24/39 Receive apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

Members received apologies from Chair R Gardner & Cllr Mrs L Dalby.

GP 24/40 Declarations of any:

a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interest;

b) Other Registrable Interest

on any matter on the agenda for 11th November 2024:

Members made no declarations.

GP 24/41 Public Forum:

One member of the public was present.

GP 24/42 Approve Minutes of the meeting held on the 14th October 2024 and to approve the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting:

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 14th October 2024 were approved as a correct record and Members agreed to the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting.

GP 24/43 Action Update List (November 2024):

24/43.1 The UK Men's Shed Association (UKMSA) were due to work on the nativity displays.

24/43.2 The Bleed Kit for outside the Baptist Church was being funded by the Essex County Council (ECC) Locality Fund. The Clerk received notification from the PFCC Safer Streets Fund that the grant submission had been successful, subject to their due diligence; a Safeguarding Policy had been requested which Council did not have so a draft policy had been drawn up and had been submitted in that form. They also had requested sight of Council's bank balances. The Clerk would inform Members of the result once known. Should funding be unsuccessful, Council would pay for the additional kit. It was noted maintenance would be ongoing for the kits.

24/43.3 Members were referred to Agenda item 7 (Minute GP 24/45).

24/43.4 Cllr T Hargrave gave apologies for being too busy to replant the Main Road planters. As soon as the Christmas plants were received at Potash, he would plant the planters. He hoped that it would be over the coming few weeks. Cllr S May volunteered to assist.

24/43.5 A Member reported there would be a meeting about the Freight House at the Rochford Parish Rooms on Friday 15th November at 7:30pm. Cllrs Mrs Weir and S May would attend. It was unclear what the meeting would be about and who had organised it. Members expressed their disappointment at not being invited and having no knowledge about the developments to save the Freight House. Cllr Mrs M Weir pointed out more people from Hawkwell parish needed to be involved and show support. The Clerk reported Rochford District Council (RDC) had a meeting recently regarding the Freight House and once the minutes were available, she would circulate to Members. It was **resolved** that Members accepted the Action List update and agreed to the removal of closed items.

GP 24/44 Financial Report – October 2024:

The Clerk reported the General Purposes Committee budget was 40% spent which was typical for the time of year.

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

GP 24/45 Remembrance Garden Project:

Cllr Mrs L Massey had arranged for children at the school where she worked to make plastic poppies. She had received the poppies and had scattered them among the existing knitted poppies.

Members were pleased with the fact the garden had not been vandalised and had been well-received. It was noted the garden had been a trial run and Members suggested next year's version could be bigger and better, with larger figures. The Clerk reported the garden would be dismantled the following day and the parts kept at the Magnolia store. Members requested the Clerk thank the UK Men's Shed Association (UKMSA) for all their work in making the figures. It was noted the Clerk had already thanked the knitting group for the poppies and they had indicated they would like to assist with any future projects. Members suggested adding netted poppies to the railings within the parish. Suggestions included the railings near the White Hart pub or by the planters in the Main Road shopping parade area.

It was **agreed** the matter be brought back in 2025 for consideration/decision.

GP 24/46 Christmas Parcels Project – verbal update:

The Clerk informed Members of the products she had purchased to date. Cllr Mrs L Massey had labelled all the cards and returned them to the office. The Clerk gave thanks for her single-handedly taking on that task. Cllr Mrs L Massey would look to purchase tea, mince pies and ham. She would report back to the office by the end of the month with her progress.

GP 24/47 Agree General Purposes Budget 2025-26 (Bid 1) for recommendation to the Finance Committee:

Members noted the budget prepared by the Clerk.

Members discussed the Christmas lights budget and the Clerk reminded Members there were monies set aside in Earmarked Reserves should they feel more lights were required.

Members felt the lights on the British Legion were not very impressive due to the white background. A Member suggested looking at the existing areas where Council had Christmas lights and adding/improving those. A Member suggested adding lights to Emmanuel Church's fence. Members felt it may be a good idea to consider a Christmas tree on Hawkwell common. The Clerk reminded Members of the unsuccessful history planting a tree on the common, but it was noted a tree would not need to be planted.

It was **agreed that** the matter be revisited in 2025.

Members **approved** the General Purposes budget for 2025-26 of £19,700 for recommendation to the Finance Committee.

GP 24/48 Summary of decisions:

- Clerk to inform Council of PFCC Safer Streets Fund grant decision. Should the grant be unsuccessful, Council to fund an additional bleed kit for Clements Hall Leisure Centre.
- Cllr T Hargrave to plant Main Road planters with winter plants; Cllr S May to assist, if required.

- Cllrs Mrs M Weir and S May to attend meeting on 15th November 2024 at the Rochford Parish Rooms at 7:30pm regarding the future of the Freight House. Clerk to circulate RDC minutes regarding the future of the Freight House once available.
- Clerk to thank UKMSA for their work on the Remembrance Garden. Project to be reviewed in 2025.
- Cllr Mrs Massey to purchase tea, mince pies and ham for the Christmas Parcels initiative; to report back to the office by the end of the month.
- General Purposes budget of £19,700 for 2025-26 agreed; to be referred to Finance Committee for recommendation.
- Consideration of additional Christmas lights, Christmas tree etc to be reviewed in new year (2025).

The Vice-Chair declared the meeting closed at 8:01pm.

Chair