

**Minutes of the meeting of the
GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
held on Monday 19th May 2025 at 7:35pm
at the Rochford Day Centre, 33a Back Lane, Rochford**

Councillors present: R Gardner, T Hargrave, Mrs L Massey, S May, Miss M Ward & Mrs M Weir.

Also present: Two members of the public.

GP 25/1 Elect a Chair for the civic year 2025-26:

Cllr Mrs M Weir nominated Cllr R Gardner which was seconded by Cllr T Hargrave. There were no further nominations and Cllr R Gardner was elected Chair for the civic year 2024-25.

GP 25/2 Elect a Vice-Chair for the civic year 2025-26:

Cllr S May nominated Cllr Mrs L Massey which was seconded by Cllr T Hargrave. There were no further nominations and Cllr Mrs L Massey was elected Vice-Chair for the civic year 2025-26.

GP 25/3 Receive apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

Members received apologies from Cllr L Fane & Cllr A MacPherson.

GP 25/4 Declarations of any:

a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interest;

b) Other Registrable Interest

on any matter on the agenda for 19th May 2025:

Members made no declarations.

GP 25/5 Public Forum:

Two members of the public were present.

GP 25/6 Approve Minutes of the meeting held on the 3rd March 2025 and approve the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting:

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd March 2025 were approved as a correct record; Members agreed to the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting.

GP 25/7 Action Update List (May 2025):

25/7.1 Hawkwell Baptist Church had confirmed the Men's Shed (UKMSA) would be working on the additional figures for the display at Emmanuel Church in good time this year. Members agreed it would be prudent to keep communications open with UKMSA to ensure the display was erected in suitable time for Christmas. Members felt it would also be prudent to offer assistance when it came to putting up the display.

25/7.2 The silhouette templates for the Remembrance Garden were required by the UKMSA by July. Cllr L Fane had volunteered to source suitable templates and these were still awaited. Cllr S May was working on taller drawings with more definition and would bring those to the July meeting. Members enquired if the wood used in the silhouette's construction could be thinner. It was **agreed** Cllr S May would visit the UKMSA to make enquiries.

- 25/7.3** It had been agreed the planters along the Main Road would be kept in situ when the summer planting would be undertaken. Cllr L Fane and Cllr S May would assist Cllr T Hargrave at the time of planting. A Member enquired if a company could undertake the watering; the Clerk felt that would not be a cost-effective solution. Cllr Mrs M Ward would assist watering the plants.
- 25/7.4** Council's lighting contractor would be undertaking a site visit to Hawkwell Common, ideally with someone from St Mary's Church. This would be to ensure the site was suitable for a Christmas tree with lights, and that the set-up would not interfere with the Carols on the Green service hosted by St Mary's Church. The site visit would be undertaken as soon as possible.
- 25/7.5** An Eco-Audit Working Group (EAWG) had been set up consisting of Cllrs R Gardner, L Fane and Miss M Ward. The EAWG had been merged with the Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) and renamed the Environmental Working Group (EWG). Cllrs S May and Mrs M Weir were therefore now part of the group. The first meeting to address the Eco-Audit was still to be arranged; the Clerk reminded Members it was for them to organise a meeting and progress the matter.
- It was **resolved** that Members accepted the Action List update and agreed to the removal of closed items.

GP 25/8 Financial Report – April 2025:

It was **resolved** that Members accepted the Financial Report.

GP 25/9 Phone box Restoration Project proposal:

Members addressed several considerations:

- 1. Community Asset type:** Members agreed the phone box should be a museum and a seasonal seed bank. It was **agreed** that further consideration be given about how the seed bank would work, ensuring safety for the public using it. The Clerk advised a working group to be established to work through the ideas and agree content, when necessary.
- 2. Permissions for placement –** The Clerk suggested two locations: the White Hart Common and Hawkwell Baptist Church. Members did not have any other suggestions. It was **agreed** the Clerk would see if permissions could be obtained for both sites and a decision would be made following that.
- 3. Payment/donation to resident:** It was **agreed** Council offer £500 to the resident. The Clerk also noted that the resident had requested public recognition of the family; a plaque would need to be added to the phone box.
- 4. Costs of restoration:** It was estimated restoration costs would be in the range of £10k.
- 5. Timeline for project:** Members felt there was no rush to complete the project.
- 6. Placement in respect of structural base and power source:** Members agreed a suitable hard standing would be required. Thought also would need to be given to installation, especially if the phone box required bolting to the floor. Members agreed a battery pack for the lighting would be suitable.
- 7. Ongoing maintenance:** It was noted the phone box would need to be cleaned and free of rubbish. Cllr T Hargrave offered to assist, if required. It was **agreed** that the Clerk look into a cleaning company, once required.
- 8. Budget consideration:** Members agreed more planning was required before making a decision on whether to budget for the project in 2026-27 or if paying for the project should be sourced from Council's General Reserves.

Members **agreed** that the first choice of restoration company should be Remember When. It was noted that more internal structural pictures of the box were required for that company. The Clerk would obtain those pictures accordingly. It was **agreed** a site visit be arranged with the resident and Members interested in attending were to let the Clerk know.

GP 25/10 Summary of decisions:

- Cllr R Gardner elected Chair for 2025-26.
- Cllr Mrs L Massey elected Vice-Chair for 2025-26.
- Communications to remain open with UKMSA; Members to offer assistance with putting up the display at Christmas.
- Cllr S May to visit UKMSA. Drawings to be presented to Council at the July meeting; Cllr L Fane also to provide templates.
- Cllr Miss M Ward to assist Cllr T Hargrave with plant trough watering along Main Road.
- Council's lighting contractor to carry out site visit at Hawkwell Common with a representative from St Mary's Church to investigate power source for Christmas tree lighting.
- Members still to organise Environmental Working Group meeting to go through latest Eco-Audit.
- Phone Box restoration project updates: Phone box to be a museum and potentially a seasonal seed bank; Remember When selected for restoration; Clerk to provide internal structural pictures; Members to attend site visit; £500 to be offered to resident along with plaque for family recognition; estimated costs for project £10k with further decision required on where to source monies; Clerk to investigate cleaning companies when required; Clerk to investigate permissions for two proposed locations.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8:26

Chair