

**Minutes of the Meeting of
HAWKWELL PARISH COUNCIL
held on Monday 8th September 2025 at 7:30pm
in the Rochford Day Centre, 33a Back Lane, Rochford**

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

Also present: 11 members of the public & District Cllr Mrs J Gooding & Essex County Councillor (ECC) Cllr Mrs L Shaw. (Including 2 members present for co-option interviews.)

FC 25/62 To receive apologies for non-attendance at meeting:
Apologies were received from Cllr T Hargrave and District Cllr I Wilson.

FC 25/63 Declarations of any of the following interests on any matter on the agenda for 8th September 2025:
a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interest;
b) Other registrable interests
None were declared.
A member of the public entered the Chambers at 7:32pm

FC 25/64 Public Forum & Information Reports from District Cllrs for Hawkwell Parish:
a) Public Forum: 11 members of the public were present. P1 expressed their opinion that notices for meetings on noticeboards were ineffective, not well positioned and felt that Council's communication efforts could improve. Reference to Council's Planning Committee was made, where P1 felt the notification methods fell below par and they were disappointed as an application included on the agenda was of particular interest to a related resident. The Chair explained the reasons for the meeting and the short timeframe Council had to respond to the applications.
b) Information Reports from District and County Councillors: ECC Cllr Mrs L Shaw reminded Members the deadline for applications for the Locality Fund would be in December, with a minimum spend of £300. It was noted ECC would not be removing the flags that had been illegally placed on street furniture unless they posed a danger. ECC Cllr Mrs L Shaw enquired if there were any Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) in Hawkwell; if any were present and broken, ECC were offering a free repair service. It was further noted the Local Highways Panel (LHP) would be dissolved due to a lack of funding. Members were also referred to Agenda item 14 (Minute FC 25/75.5).
ECC Cllr Mrs L Shaw left the meeting at 7:38pm
District Cllr Mrs J Gooding informed Members she was present to represent residents of Hawkwell and referenced Agenda item 9. The Chair gave permission for District Cllr Mrs J Gooding to speak at that agenda point.

FC 25/65 To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Hawkwell Parish Council meeting held on 14th July 2025 and to destroy the notes in respect of the meeting:
It was **resolved** that the minutes from the Full Council meeting held on 14th July 2025 were approved as a correct record and Members **agreed** to the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting.

FC 25/66 Co-option interviews:

Two candidates underwent a Q&A session. Following the interview, the candidates remained for the rest of the meeting.

FC 25/67 Financial Report (August 2025):

The Clerk reported the overall budget was 41.9% spent and on target. All committee budgets were on track. There were no questions and it was **resolved** that Members accepted the Financial Report.

FC 25/68 Action List Update (September 2025):

- 25/68.1** The defibrillators needed to be added to a new system called The Circuit. The Clerk was in the process of adding support guardians. Cllr R Gardner reported one of the units was still showing as inactive and was in the process of contacting The Circuit. The outcome was to be reported to the Clerk.
- 25/68.2** Council's current website provider was making amendments to the website.
- 25/68.3** A Neighbourhood Feasibility Working Group (NFWG) had been established. An informal meeting between Members had taken place. Members were referred to Agenda item 9 (Minute FC 25/70).
- 25/68.4** The inspection of leases and deeds had taken place.
- 25/68.5** An annual security summary report was still to be put on Council's website.
- 25/68.6** Members were to think of eligible projects for potential Locality Fund funding. A suggestion for part funding for materials to make poppies for Hawkwell Common's Remembrance Garden had been put forward. ECC Cllr Mrs L Shaw thought the materials would not reach the £300 minimum grant. It was noted any projects would need to be put forward and agreed before Christmas to be eligible.
- 25/68.7** The Clerk had prepared and sent a Community Asset Register to the Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils (RHALC) for its meeting in July. It was unclear if RHALC would be collating for all parishes.
- 25/68.8** Members were to let the Clerk know if they would be interested in attending Chair training alongside Rochford Parish Council.
- 25/68.9** Following the decision to move to Council-owned emails, some Members had not responded to the IT contractor, asking if they required assistance setting up the new email accounts. The Clerk informed Members a response was required from all Members as the contractor would be holding a workshop session in the office to try and assist those who were unable to set up the emails themselves.
- 25/68.10** The new IT policy had been adopted by Council. Members were requested to keep their copies. The new Members would receive a copy accordingly following co-option.
- 25/68.11** The updated ICO Publication Scheme had been adopted by Council.
- 25/68.12** There had been a Devolution and Local Government Reform (LGR) meeting in July. Members were referred to Agenda item 8 (Minute FC 25/69).
- 25/68.13** The Clerk had attempted to contact the Rugby Club regarding possible CCTV following repeated fly-tipping but had not received a reply.
It was **resolved** that Members accepted the Action List update and agreed to the removal of closed items.

FC 25/69 Local Government Reorganisation:

- a) Unitary proposals to be presented to Government:** Members noted the information.
- b) Consider requesting Rochford District Council (RDC) review the number of Councillors for Hawkwell parish under RDC's Community Governance Review (CGR):** The Clerk suggested reducing the number of Councillors for Hawkwell following many years of never having the full complement of 17 Councillors. Members debated the

idea, with some concerned that future changes could benefit the need for 17 Councillors. It was noted, however, that the small membership had caused several issues, namely resulting in inquorate meetings which therefore had to be cancelled. The Clerk raised concerns about this matter and explained the difficulties of business not being able to be transacted without the meetings. The Clerk proposed the number be reduced to 15 to amend the quorum to five.

It was **resolved** the Clerk seek the information on the CGR deadline before making a decision at the next Full Council meeting.

FC 25/70 Neighbourhood Plan Feasibility Working Group (NPFWG):

District Cllr Mrs J Gooding asked the following questions:

- 1.) Have the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Neighbourhood Plan impact assessment been agreed?
- 2.) What was the timetable for reporting back on the impact assessment?
- 3.) How long before Council starts a Neighbourhood Plan (NP)?
- 4.) How can the community get more pace and urgency?
- 5.) Does Council have enough volunteers?
- 6.) What skills and commitment are required?
- 7.) Could HPC work with other parishes to ease the burden?

It was **agreed** Council proceed with the agenda items as some of the questions would be covered. Any that were not, would be answered by Cllr L Fane.

- a) Report and draft ToR for approval:** It was noted there had been some interest from residents, but not enough to meet the proposed ToR; eight residents were required to join the four Councillors. Council still required six residents, with only two having come forward.

Cllr Mrs L Massey left the Chambers at 8:17pm.

Cllr L Fane gave an overview of the NPFWG and stressed the importance of its purpose. It was noted that the estimated initial planning phase would be between two-four months with weekly meetings. Currently, the missing piece was that not enough residents had volunteered so the group could not progress. No skills were requested at the current stage, just a need for residents to have time and dedication.

Cllr Mrs L Massey returned to the Chambers at 8:20pm.

It was noted a resident had prepared their own Feasibility Study. However, analytical work from Council was pivotal to ensure success of a NP should Council decide to carry one out in the future. It was agreed Chair S May would contact the Chair of Hockley Parish Council to ascertain their position regarding their own feasibility analysis and if there would be ways the parishes could work together. It was noted that there were many contributory factors that could pose a problem with collaborating with other parishes; these considerations, such as LGR and Devolution etc., would need to be addressed by the NPFWG.

Cllr Mrs M Weir wanted it noted she had not attended the first meeting of the NPFWG as she had been unaware of it, despite the Clerk's efforts to alert her about the meeting. Cllr Mrs M Weir enquired if the ECC Locality Fund could help fund NPs; the Clerk would check the eligibility criteria.

Members noted further information received from District Cllr Mrs J Gooding about 'sifted sites' and would try to obtain more clarity around those from RDC.

- b) Letter to Chairs of Hawkwell and Hockley Parish Council from a Hockley resident:**

Members noted the letter.

- c) 'Neighbourhood Planning Conference' proposal (Cllr L Fane):** Members noted Cllr L Fane's idea to have a conference/forum where experts in the field of NPs would be able to talk to Councillors and the community and would be a way to bring everyone together. The initiative would be driven by the Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils

(RHALC). Members **agreed** the concept was a good idea and should be presented to the RHALC accordingly.

P4 gave their view it would be beneficial to have multiple parish councils/community groups who have been through NPS and those who haven't.

FC 25/71 Council's use of Social Media/Facebook:

- a) **To note feedback regarding the use of Facebook – report attached:** Members noted the report and the complaints received after Council's Planning Committee meeting regarding not using Social Media to publicise the meeting.
- b) **To adopt a Social Media Policy (updated):**
Members **agreed** to refer the Social Media Policy to the General Purposes Committee for review.
District Cllr Mrs J Gooding informed Members RDC offered social media training to Cllrs. The Clerk would investigate details of that training.
- c) **To agree how to deal with press enquires:**
Members would deal with this matter at the next General Purposes Committee meeting.

A member of the public left the Chambers at 8:44pm

FC 25/72 Freight House updates:

Members noted the Freight House had now been officially registered as an Asset of Community Value.

FC 25/73 Private Security Patrols – July & August 2025:

Members noted the reports.

A member of the public returned to the Chambers at 8:49pm.

Members revisited the issue of fly-tipping, noting the problems were not localised but were a national problem. District Cllr Mrs J Gooding informed Members the matter was being investigated at RDC and the Clerk could obtain more information from RDC.

FC 25/74 Office resource – Referred from Personnel Committee;

Members noted the volume of work for the office was increasing and thought it prudent to consider if there were adequate resources.

It was **agreed** to re-refer the item to the Personnel Committee for review.

FC 25/75 Correspondence:

25/75.1 Hawkwell Village Hall Management Committee – Minutes of meeting held 10th July 2025: The information was noted.

25/75.2 National Association of Local Councils (NALC): The information was noted.

- a) **Chief Executive Bulletin – 7th August 2025:** The information was noted.
- b) **Chief Executive Bulletin – 14th August 2025:** The information was noted.
- c) **Chief Executive Bulletin – 21st August 2025:** The information was noted.
- d) **Chief Executive Bulletin – 28th August 2025:** The information was noted.

25/73.3 RDC:

- a) **Nominations required for the Rochford Sports Awards:** The information was noted.
- b) **Residents' opportunity to consider all the LGR options:** The information was noted.
- c) **Council to pilot 30-minute free parking in its car parks:** The information was noted.
- d) **Annual Carol Service 5th December 2025:** The information was noted.

25/73.4 Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC):

- a) **News bulletin w/c 14th July 2025:** The information was noted.
- b) **News bulletin w/c 11th August 2025:** The information was noted.
- c) **News bulletin w/c 18th August 2025:** The information was noted.

- 25/73.5 d) **Annual General Meeting (AGM) - change to online format:** The information was noted.
Emails from ECC Cllr Mrs L Shaw:
a) **County council looks back on four years of achievement:** The information was noted.
b) **Essex Country Parks receive coveted Green Flag Award:** The information was noted.
c) **Housing growth plans set back as government cancels A12 improvements:** The information was noted.
d) **ECC Appoints ECR Hop On to Deliver New County-Wide Digital Transport mobile app:** The information was noted.
e) **Sharp drop in pothole reports following major investment in Essex roads:** The information was noted.
e) **A better-connected Essex: Have your say on new Essex transport strategy:** The information was noted.
f) **Innovative new technology to repair roads in Essex:** The information was noted.
g) **Essex Year of Opportunity backed by over £1m:** The information was noted.
- 25/73.6 **Essex County Council Highways:**
a) **Highways Bulletin – June 2025:** The information was noted.
b) **Highways Bulletin – July 2025:** The information was noted.
- 25/73.7 **Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE):**
a) **Oyster Magazine – Summer 2025:** The information was noted.
b) **RCCE Warbler – August 2025:** The information was noted.
- 25/73.8 **Old People’s Welfare for Rochford & District – Minutes of the meeting held on 17th July 2025:** The information was noted.
- 25/73.9 **Southend New Local Plan – Consultation open until 30th September 2025:** The information was noted.
- 25/73.10 **ECC Passenger Transport Supported Local Bus Services 2025 - Consultation request for support:** The information was noted.
- 25/73.11 **Rochford Hundred Local Association of Local Councils (RHALC) – Minutes of the meeting held on the 17th July 2025:** The information was noted.
- 25/73.12 **Essex Police:**
a) **Essex Police Dispatch 18th – 24th August 2025:** The information was noted.
b) **Rochford District Newsletter:** The information was noted.
- 25/73.13 **Satswana – Council update September 2025:** The information was noted.
- FC 25/76 Representatives Reports:**
Rochford Old Peoples Welfare Committee – Members were referred to Agenda item 14. (Minute FC 25/73.8)
RHALC – It was not known when the next meeting would take place.
Ashingdon & East Hawkwell Memorial Hall – No representatives.
Hawkwell Village Hall – There were no updates.
Public Transport Liaison Group – There were no updates.
Robert Sudbury Trust – There had been no meetings.
Information Reports:
Community Meetings – There was nothing to report.
- FC 25/77 Receive Committee/Working Party Reports since last meeting:**
Parks Committee: It was **resolved** that Members accept the minutes of the meeting held on the 14th July.
General Purposes Committee: It was **resolved** that Members accept the minutes of the meeting held on the 14th July.
Planning Committee: It was **resolved** that Members accept the minutes of the meeting held on the 23rd July 2025 and 21st August 2025.

Personnel Committee: It was **resolved** that Members accept the minutes of the meeting held on 21st August 2025.

FC 25/78 Payment of Accounts

There were no questions and it was **resolved** that the payment of accounts paid since the last meeting (July/August payments) were approved together with agreement to pay any accounts due before the next meeting.

FC 25/79 *Resolution within Standing Order 3d "that in view of the confidential and special nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw". Standing Order 11 and 19f also apply.*

All members of the public left the Chambers at 9:02pm.

Cllr R Gardner left the meeting at 9:04pm.

FC 25/80 Post Interview Co-option discussion and decision.

Members discussed the candidates and it was **agreed** to co-opt both candidates. The candidates were invited back to Chambers and informed of Council's decision.

FC 25/81 Summary of Decisions Taken:

- Cllr R Gardner to report back to the Clerk about the registration of defibrillator on The Circuit.
- Members still to respond to the IT contractor requested to do so; a workshop would be set up in due course.
- Clerk to find out CGR deadline and report back to Council so a decision on changing the total number of Councillors can be made.
- NPFWG ToR awaiting approval.
- Further information regarding 'sifted sites' to be obtained from RDC.
- Clerk to ascertain if Locality Fund will cover NPs.
- Neighbourhood Plan conference/forum idea approved by Council; RHALC to take the lead on potentially organising the event.
- Social Media policy referred to General Purposes Committee for review.
- Press Policy referred to General Purposes Committee for review.
- Clerk to investigate Social Media training opportunities for Cllrs with RDC.
- Office resources matter to be re-referred to Personnel Committee.
- Successful co-option of two candidates.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 9:08pm

Chair