

**Minutes of the Meeting of
HAWKWELL PARISH COUNCIL
held on Monday 6th October 2025 at 7:30pm
in the Rochford Day Centre, 33a Back Lane, Rochford**

Councillors present: Chair S May, J Dunkley, L Fane, T Hargrave, A MacPherson, Mrs L Massey, C Morris, Miss M Ward & Mrs M Weir.

Also present: Three members of the public (including one for a co-option interview, until 8:26pm).

FC 25/82 To receive apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

Apologies were received from Essex County Councillor (ECC) Mrs L Shaw.

FC 25/83 Declarations of any of the following interests on any matter on the agenda for 6th October 2025:

a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interest;

b) Other registrable interests

None were declared.

FC 25/84 Public Forum & Information Reports from District Cllrs for Hawkwell Parish:

a) Public Forum: Three members of the public were present (P1-P3). P1 asked Members if work was still underway for the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) feasibility work and, if so, how many volunteers were required and how many had come forward. The Chair informed P1 information on the NP would be discussed at Agenda item 12 (Minute FC 25/93).

b) Information Reports from District and County Councillors: ECC Cllr Mrs L Shaw had sent in information to the office regarding the Locality Fund; there was no longer funding available for Council. The allocation for Hawkwell had been given to Holt Farm School for a sensory room.

Members were also referred to Agenda item 15 (Minute FC 25/96.3).

FC 25/85 To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Hawkwell Parish Council meeting held on 8th September 2025 and to destroy the notes in respect of the meeting:

It was **resolved** that the minutes from the Full Council meeting held on 8th September 2025 were approved as a correct record and Members **agreed** to the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting.

FC 25/86 Co-option interviews:

One candidate underwent a Q&A session. Following the interview, the candidate remained until 8:26pm.

FC 25/87 Membership:

a) Resignation of Cllr R Gardner: Members **agreed** to send a letter of appreciation to Cllr R Gardner, noting he had served Council for 11 years. It was also **agreed** a donation of £25 be made to a local charity of Mr Gardner's choice.

b) Ratification of the co-option of two new Members:

Members confirmed the co-option of Cllrs J Dunkley and C Morris.

FC 25/88 Financial Report (September 2025):

The Clerk reported the overall budget was 52.8% spent and on target. The Finance Committee was 57.1% spent and included an unbudgeted expense of £6k for the Parish Poll; the Parks Committee was 52.8% spent and the General Purposes Committee was 44.7% spent.

There were no questions and it was **resolved** that Members accepted the Financial Report.
Cllr Mrs L Massey and one member of the public left the meeting at 7:52pm.

FC 25/89 Action List Update (October 2025):

- 25/89.1** The Clerk was still in the process of adding support guardians to The Circuit. Cllr R Gardner's resignation from Council meant another Member was required to assist with the defibrillator checks. Cllr J Dunkley offered to assist. It was agreed Cllrs J Dunkley, L Fane and S May meet the following day for Cllr S May to show them how to carry out the checks. Cllr L Fane would video the procedure so it could be kept on file for future reference.
- 25/89.2** Council's current website provider was still making amendments to the website.
- 25/89.3** A Neighbourhood Feasibility Working Group (NFWG) had been established. Members were referred to Agenda item 12 (Minute FC 25/93).
- 25/89.4** An annual security summary report was still to be put on Council's website. The Clerk felt the information was not legible enough so would contact the security company.
- 25/89.5** Members were no longer required to think of eligible projects for potential Locality Fund funding as funds had now been allocated to Holt Farm School for a sensory room.
- 25/89.6** Members were to let the Clerk know if they would be interested in attending Councillor training alongside Rochford Parish Council (RPC). It was noted that RPC were now a training hub for Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) and Cllrs Miss M Ward, J Dunkley and C Morris had signed up for new Councillor training. Unfortunately, this had been cancelled due to numbers not being met; 10 Councillors were required for the training to go ahead. The Clerk had contacted EALC to express disappointment at the notification of the course cancellation and advised that the marketing for the course had been below standard and had not reached the local Parish Councils successfully. The Clerk was waiting to hear if the course would be rescheduled locally.
- 25/89.7** Following the decision to move to Council-owned emails, Council's IT contractor had hosted a workshop for Members who required assistance setting up the new email accounts. A test email would be sent to Members before officially transitioning to the new addresses. Some Members still had not set up their addresses.
- 25/89.8** A further Devolution and Local Government Reform (LGR) meeting would be held on the 20th November. Members were referred to Agenda item 10 (Minute FC 25/91).
- 25/89.9** The Clerk had contacted Rochford District Council (RDC) about their anti fly-tipping initiatives. Anti fly-tipping posters had been put up along Magnolia Road. RDC would also be making enquires with the Rugby Club regarding CCTV following repeated fly-tipping.
- 25/89.10** The Clerk had been instructed to enquire if funding would be applicable for a NP via the ECC Locality Fund; confirmation had been received NPs would not meet the criteria.
- 25/89.11** The Clerk had been requested to find out more information about 'Sifted Sites' at RDC. Members noted the information in the email chain.
- 25/89.12** The Clerk had been asked to find out about possible social media training at RDC. A response was awaited.
- 25/89.13** The agenda item relating to the review of office resources had been referred to the original source (Personnel Committee.)
It was **resolved** that Members accepted the Action List update and agreed to the removal of closed items.

FC 25/90 Consideration of holding future Council meetings at the Hockley & Hawkwell Day Centre (HHDC) – Clerk’s report:

Members discussed trialling the meetings at the HHDC with the option to return to the Rochford Day Centre should the trial period be unsuccessful.

A Member felt Council should be supporting the return of meetings at the Freight House and cited reference to the historic investment Council made to the Freight House. The Clerk reminded Members that there had never been any official agreement but RDC had assured Council there would be space for meetings if the venue were to be improved.

Members noted criticism had been received from the public about the current meeting venue location and the Clerk recommended HHDC as a new venue, aiming to give Council more visibility and more of a chance for residents in the west ward to attend. It was further noted Council meetings had always been in the east with minimal attendance from the public.

P1 interjected and gave their view if Council were to move venues it would be premature based on public opinion, pointing out that he was the only resident present and was not even a Hawkwell resident.

Members **agreed** to stay at the Rochford Day Centre for the remainder of the year and would revisit the proposal at the January meeting.

FC 25/91 Local Government Reorganisation (LGR):

a) Survey response report on LGR: Members noted the information. Cllr Mrs M Weir requested a hard copy of the response.

Cllr T Hargrave left the meeting at 8:20pm.

b) Update from RDC on Community Asset Transfer (CAT) report from Strategy, Finance & Policy Committee: Members noted the information and discussed possible interest in managing green spaces and play spaces within Hawkwell, namely the Hawkwell Common.

Cllr T Hargrave returned to the meeting at 8:22pm.

The Clerk noted any new management control would require office and ground maintenance resources.

Members discussed Council’s existing leased sites and that they were taken on around 30 years ago under a 125-year lease term. Questions were raised about who would manage the lease following LGR and Devolution.

A member of the public left the meeting at 8:26pm.

It was **agreed** that an item be included on the November meeting to include submitting an Expression of Interest (EOI) to RDC for the Hawkwell Common along with a review of other RDC Hawkwell assets with a view to possibly registering further EOIs.

FC 25/92 RDC Community Governance Review (CGR): HPC to consider participation in relation to the number of Council seats – timetable for review attached:

Members raised concerns that reducing the seats could be detrimental should the membership continue to increase.

Members **agreed** to submit a request to reduce the number of seats for Hawkwell Parish from 17 to 15 on the proviso that the request could be withdrawn. The Clerk would make the necessary enquiries with RDC.

FC 25/93 Neighbourhood Plan Feasibility Working Group (NPFWG):

a) Report and draft ToR for approval: Members **approved** the ToR.

b) Update on the level of community interest in the NPFWG: The Clerk reported that eight members of the public were required. To date, there had been five come forward, with three more required. Members reiterated the importance of having the public included, noting that NPs were community-led initiatives. Members were concerned that the numbers had not been met despite several pushes to advertise for residents.

P1 enquired if eight was the redline and if the figure had been derived from a formula used by other Councils. It was explained thought had gone into the numbers, to also mitigate against possible absenteeism of the NPFWG, to ensure a quorum could be met to enable the group to progress. Concern was raised that despite the community demanding a NP, there was insufficient support to even investigate if a NP would be possible.

A Member enquired if non-Hawkwell residents could apply, namely Hockley residents given the proximity to Hawkwell. Chair S May informed Members he would be setting up a meeting with the Chair and Vice Chair of Hockley Parish Council to include himself and Vice Chair L Fane to discuss the NP situation between parishes.

P1 was asked if they would be willing to join the NPFWG; P1 informed Members they were signed up to join Hockley Parish Council's NP group so could not join Hawkwell's. It was **agreed** there should be one last call for residents with a deadline of 31st December 2025. P1 enquired if there would be an interview process for residents to join the group; it was confirmed no interviews would be necessary at the current stage.

- c) **'Neighbourhood Planning Conference' (Cllr L Fane):** Members noted that Cllr L Fane had scoped out an agenda for the conference with some adjustments required. It was hoped the conference would be one evening towards the end of November; no dates had been confirmed. The aim of the conference would be educational. Cllr L Fane confirmed he had obtained support from both the Leader of RDC and the Planning Department. The proposed venue would be the Mill Hall in Rayleigh and the event would be led by the Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils (RHALC).

FC 25/94 Freight House updates:

There were no updates.

FC 25/95 Private Security Patrols – September 2025:

Members noted the reports.

FC 25/96 Correspondence:

25/96.1 Essex Police:

a) **Essex Police Dispatch 1st Sep – 7th Sep 2025;** The information was noted.

b) **Rochford newsletter cancellation and reasons why.** The information was noted.

25/96.2 Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) – Countryside news; Neighbourhood Plans, Grey Belt etc. The information was noted.

25/96.3 Emails from Essex County Councillor (ECC) Cllr Mrs L Shaw:

a) **Calls to put communities at the heart of LGR;** The information was noted.

b) **Residents to share views on Essex bus services:** The information was noted.

25/96.4 Rochford District Council (RDC):

a) **RDC backs LGR Best4Essex Business case;** The information was noted.

b) **Budget and Priorities Survey;** The information was noted.

c) **Citizens of the Year Award – Nominations open.** The information was noted.

25/96.5 National Association of Local Councils (NALC):

a) **Chief Executive Bulletin –18th September 2025;** The information was noted.

b) **Chief Executive Bulletin –25th September 2025.** The information was noted.

25/96.6 Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC):

a) **News bulletin w/c 22nd September 2025.** The information was noted.

25/96.7 Essex County Council Highways:

a) **Essex Highways Highlights August 2025.** The information was noted.

25/96.8 Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE):

a) **Essex Warbler October 2025;** The information was noted.

b) **Water Literacy training.** The information was noted.

FC 25/97 Representatives Reports:
Rochford Old Peoples Welfare Committee – Members noted the Day Centre was still in need of a minibus driver. The new Treasurer had compiled account information.
RHALC – The next meeting would take place on the 16th October 2025.
Ashingdon & East Hawkwell Memorial Hall – No representatives. Cllr J Dunkley registered an interest in being a representative.
Hawkwell Village Hall – The next meeting was on the 16th October 2025; both representatives indicated they would be in attendance.
Public Transport Liaison Group – There were no updates.
Robert Sudbury Trust – There had been no meetings. The trust was explained for the benefit of new Members.
Information Reports:
Community Meetings – There was nothing to report.

FC 25/98 Receive Committee/Working Party Reports since last meeting:
Finance Committee: It was **resolved** that Members accept the minutes of the meeting held on the 8th September 2025
Parks Committee: It was **resolved** that Members accept the minutes of the meeting held on the 8th September 2025.
Planning Committee: It was **resolved** that Members accept the minutes of the meeting held on the 29th September 2025.

FC 25/99 Payment of Accounts
The £5,232.17 cost for the unbudgeted Parish Poll was noted.
There were no questions and it was **resolved** that the payment of accounts paid since the last meeting (September payments) were approved together with agreement to pay any accounts due before the next meeting.

FC 25/100 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.

P1 left the meeting at 9:13pm.

FC 25/101 Post Interview Co-option discussion and decision.
Members **agreed** to co-opt the candidate.

FC 25/102 Summary of Decisions Taken:

- Letter of appreciation to be sent to R Gardner.
- Donation of £25 to be made to a local charity guided by R Gardner's request.
- Cllrs J Dunkley and C Morris officially appointed as Cllrs.
- Cllrs J Dunkley, L Fane and S May to be shown how to check defibrillators by Cllr S May. Cllr L Fane to video the procedure so it could be kept on file for future reference.
- Remaining Members who have not set up Council-owned email addresses to do so.
- LGR meeting with RDC to be held on 20th November; Members who will be attending to confirm.

- Members agreed to remain at the Rochford Day Centre for Council meetings until the end of the year; to revisit the option of holding them in the west ward, at the HHDC at the January meeting.
- Hard copy of the LGR survey response to be given to Cllr Mrs Weir.
- An item be added on the November meeting agenda to include submitting an Expression of Interest (EOI) to RDC for the Hawkwell Common along with a review of other RDC Hawkwell assets with a view to possibly registering further EOIs.
- A request to be submitted to RDC for its CGR to reduce the number of seats for Hawkwell Parish from 17 to 15 on the proviso that the request could be withdrawn. Clerk to make the necessary approach.
- NPFWG ToR approved.
- One last call for residents to join the NPFWG with a deadline of 31st December 2025.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 9:16pm

Chair