

**Minutes of the meeting of the
GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
held on Monday 13th October 2025 at 7:45pm
at the Rochford Day Centre, 33a Back Lane, Rochford**

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

Also present: Cllrs J Dunkley, C Morris & Mrs A Petrescu and one member of the public.

- GP 25/21 To elect a new Chair following the existing Chair's resignation from Council:**
Cllr S May nominated Cllr Mrs L Massey which was seconded by Cllr L Fane. There were no further nominations and Cllr Mrs L Massey was elected Chair for the remainder of the civic year 2025-26.
- GP 25/22 To elect a new Vice-Chair:**
Cllr T Hargrave nominated Cllr L Fane which was seconded by Cllr Mrs L Massey. There were no further nominations and Cllr L Fane was elected Vice Chair for the remainder of the civic year 2025-26.
- GP 25/23 Receive apologies for non-attendance at meeting:**
All Members were present.
- GP 25/24 Declarations of any:**
a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interest;
b) Other Registrable Interest
on any matter on the agenda for 13th October 2025:
Members made no declarations.
- GP 25/25 Public Forum:**
One member of the public was present. No questions were raised.
- GP 25/26 Approve Minutes of the meeting held on the 14th July 2025 and approve the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting:**
It was **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 14th July 2025 were approved as a correct record; Members agreed to the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting.
- GP 25/27 Action Update List (July 2025):**
- 25/27.1** The Men's Shed (UKMSA) had provided an update on the progress of the wooden Christmas display for Emmanuel Church and on new figures for the Baptist Church; there was still a lot of work to do, focus had been on the Remembrance Garden silhouettes.
- 25/27.2** The UKMSA were still working on the new wooden silhouettes for the Remembrance Garden. Cllr A MacPherson was working on the additional poppies. Assurances had been given the silhouettes would be ready in time. However, last year's figures could be used if needed. Cllr L Fane offered to assist the UKMSA if they were finding it hard to get the work done; the Clerk would relay the message to the UKMSA. Cllr J Dunkley offered some wood, if required.
- Members **agreed** to erect the display on Thursday 30th October. Council's regular contractor had offered to assist. Committee Cllrs Mrs L Massey, Miss M Ward and S May

would aim to assist. Cllrs S May, T Hargrave and Miss M Ward also volunteered to take down the display on the 12th November.

25/27.3 The planters along Main Road would be replanted for winter around mid-November. It was **agreed** Cllr T Hargrave take the lead given his success with the previous seasonal plantings. Plants would continue to be sourced from Potash Garden Centre. Members enquired if festive lights could be put in the trees by the planters; the Clerk informed Members that would not be permitted given the trees were on the highway. Members felt a Council identity plaque/sticker needed to be added to the planters to give Council recognition. Cllr J Dunkley offered to donate some free daffodil bulbs and also offered access to his garden trade books, if so required.

25/27.4 Members were referred to Agenda item 10 (Minute GP 25/30).

25/27.5 The next meeting for the Environmental Working Group (EWG) was still to be organised.

25/27.6 Hawkwell Baptist Church had given permission to place the phone box on its land. Rochford District Council (RDC) had also given permission in principle, conditional on certain agreements being reached. A discussion ensued about the location of the phone box but it was **agreed** a decision could be made at a later date, priority should be given to the museum content.

Cllr S May was still to visit the Southend phone box museum and report back.

Members discussed the idea of changing the content to keep the museum more appealing and to draw continual interest. Members considered running a poll to see what content people would want. The Clerk suggested Members set up a Working Group to start scoping out ideas but this was declined; it was **agreed** all Members think up two or three ideas and present these at the next meeting where Members could filter the results for decision.

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

GP 25/28 Financial Report – September 2025:

The Clerk reported that the budget was slightly underspent. Members were pleased the criminal damage budget remained underspent.

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

GP 25/29 Adoption of the Social Media Policy (Referred from Full Council)

It was **resolved** to adopt the Social Media Policy.

Cllr T Hargrave left the Chambers at 8:22pm.

GP 25/30 Letter from Council's lighting contractor following a visit to Hawkwell Common – Christmas tree and festive frames at the British Legion:

The Clerk explained the issue to Members; there was not enough time to have a Christmas Tree on the common given the work and permissions required.

Cllr T Hargrave returned to Chambers at 8:23pm

Members discussed the positive aspects of having a tree for Christmas and **agreed** that work should commence to ensure a tree for 2026; it was expected this would take place as early as January 2026 to ensure the success of the project.

Members noted the issues with the lighting frames at the British Legion, predominately that the erection of the lights posed a danger to the contractors who had indicated they would no longer take risks when putting up the lights. Members considered if the lighting frames could go on the Golden Cross walls. It was **agreed** advice would need to be obtained from the lighting contractor about the re-siting of the existing frames.

GP 25/31 Email received re. Bosworth Close Alleyway – Email trail attached:

Members noted the emails and a discussion ensued about who owned the alleyway. It was noted the alleyway appeared to be under no ownership. Council occasionally cut the foliage back when aware it posed a potential hazard. Members raised concerns about taking on the maintenance of the alleyway in terms of setting a precedence; the Clerk reported that it was only this alleyway that people complained about.

Members noted Cllr J Dunkley's offer to volunteer to maintain the alleyway for approximately one hour a month as a resident volunteer; it was noted the work would not fall under the responsibility of Council.

GP 25/32 Notes of the Christmas Parcels Working Group (CPWG)

Members received the notes of the CPWG meeting held on the 6th October 2025. Cllr T Hargrave asked the notes to be amended to show he would not be purchasing any products. Cllr S May also informed Members he would not be available for purchasing, but only for packing and delivery.

It was noted an email had been sent to Members about the products required.

GP 25/33 Summary of decisions:

- Cllr L Fane to assist the UKMSA for the Remembrance silhouettes, if needed; Clerk to relay message to UKMSA. Cllr J Dunkley to donate wood, if required.
- Display to be erected on Thursday 30th October. Council's regular contractor to assist, along with Mrs L Massey, Miss M Ward and S May. Cllrs S May, T Hargrave and Miss M Ward to assist taking down display on 12th November.
- Cllr T Hargrave to replant Main Road planters with winter plants around mid-November. Plants to be sourced from Potash Garden Centre.
- Council identity badges/plaques to be added to the planters along Main Road.
- EWG still to be organised.
- Members to bring back two or three ideas for museum content for phone box project for next meeting. Cllr S May to still visit Southend phone box museum and report back at next meeting.
- Social Media Policy approved.
- Work for a Christmas tree on Hawkwell Common to start as soon as possible to ensure success for 2026.
- Advice to be sought from lighting contractor about re-siting the White Hart Christmas lighting frames on Golden Cross walls.
- Council not to take on responsibility for Bosworth Alley; volunteer to carry out works as and when necessary.
- CPWG to start purchasing goods.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8:50pm

Chair