

**Minutes of the meeting of the
GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
held on Monday 10th November 2025 at 7:45pm
at the Rochford Day Centre, 33a Back Lane, Rochford**

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

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

Chair Mrs L Massey reminded Members to raise their hands when wanting to speak during the meeting.

GP 25/34 Receive apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

Cllr Mrs M Weir had given apologies.

GP 25/35 Declarations of any:

a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interest;

b) Other Registrable Interest

on any matter on the agenda for 10th November 2025:

Members made no declarations.

GP 25/36 Public Forum:

One member of the public was present. No questions were raised.

GP 25/37 Approve Minutes of the meeting held on the 13th October and approve the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting:

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 13th October 2025 were approved as a correct record; Members agreed to the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting.

GP 25/38 Action Update List (November 2025):

25/38.1 The Men's Shed (UKMSA) would need assistance for the erection of the Christmas displays at Emmanuel Church for the 3rd December 2025. Cllrs T Hargrave, L Fane, C Morris, and J Dunkley offered to assist. Figures for the display at Hawkwell Baptist Church were also being worked on by the UKMSA.

25/38.2 Members were referred to Agenda item 8 (Minute GP 25/41).

25/38.3 The planters along Main Road would be replanted for winter on the 19th November by Cllr T Hargrave and Cllr Miss M Ward. Plaques for the planters were due to be delivered. Cllr J Dunkley volunteered to affix the plaques to the planters.

25/38.4 Council's lighting contractor had advised there was insufficient time to gain the necessary permissions and additional stress testing to consider utilising the lighting frames at Golden Cross. The lighting contractor would try to re-site the Poppy illumination to make it fit on the wall. It was **agreed** Members were to consider other sites for 2026 for the frames which would no longer be used on the British Legion wall.

25/38.5 The next meeting for the Environmental Working Group (EWG) was still to be organised. It was agreed to aim for a meeting early in the new year.

25/38.6 Members were referred to Agenda item 9 (Minute GP 25/2).

25/38.7 Work to provide a Christmas tree on Hawkwell Common was to commence in January 2026 to try to guarantee success for 2026. A Member enquired if consideration of donations towards a tree had been given. The Clerk reported that had not occurred yet and would be something that could be looked at in early 2026. A Member enquired if the asset

transfers with Rochford District Council (RDC) would cause complications for the siting of a Christmas tree. The Clerk was yet to obtain permission from RDC; this also would be done in the new year.

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

GP 25/39 Financial Report – October 2025:

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

GP 25/40 Agree General Purposes budget 2026-27 (bid 1) for recommendation to the Finance Committee:

Members discussed the fact Council currently had high reserves, and the Clerk advised it would be prudent to use those monies for any substantial projects to save residents having to bear costs via the precept. Members noted that the advice was that Council's should also allow 3-6m operating/expenditure costs when considering its reserves and that levels should not exceed Council's annual precept.

Members were pleased with the positive impact the security company had; reduction in criminal damage was noted in the General Purposes budget.

Members **agreed** to fund the Phone Box restoration project from General Reserves.

Members **agreed** to fund the Christmas tree from Earmarked Reserves (EMR).

Members **agreed** a General Purposes budget for 2026-27 of £19,900 for recommendation to the Finance Committee.

GP 25/41 Remembrance Garden Project:

Cllr S May was pleased with his design of the silhouettes. Members noted the garden had been a success for a second year and that the silhouettes were improved. Members noted the display would be taken down on the 12th November 2025. The Clerk would consult with Council's regular contractor to see if they would be willing to assist. The Clerk thanked all those involved in erecting the display.

GP 25/42 Phone Kiosk restoration project:

a) **Information on the Southend phone box museum – Cllr S May:** Cllr S May relayed to Members that the Southend museum had different displays in the box and that it was not accessible to the public. Information was available on an interactive board.

b) **Content ideas from Members:** Members discussed the advantages and disadvantages of having the phone box open, along with ways to involve local groups such as the local schools; whether to include an actual phone; if the glass panels could be used as a display tool; if a timed lock be added and if power would be available. It was agreed that a considerable amount of work and thought was still required to finalise the content, design and implementation of those ideas. Members **agreed** to form a Phone Box Working Group (PBWG) consisting of Cllrs J Dunkley, L Fane, T Hargrave, Mrs L Massey, S May, Mrs A Petrescu, and Miss M Ward. Members were to arrange a meeting.

GP 25/43 Summary of decisions:

- Cllrs T Hargrave, L Fane, C Morris and J Dunkley to assist UKMSA with Emmanuel Christmas display on 3rd December.
- Cllrs T Hargrave and Miss M Ward to plant Main Road planters on 19th November. Cllr J Dunkley to affix new plaques to planters.
- Members to consider new sites for British Legion Christmas lighting frames for 2026.

- General Purposes budget of £19,900 for 2026-27 agreed for recommendation to Finance Committee. Funding for phone box project to be sourced from general reserves; funding for Christmas tree to be sourced from EMRs.
- EWG meeting to be arranged in new year.
- Christmas tree project to commence early 2026.
- Clerk to liaise with Council's regular contractor to see if they would be willing to assist with dismantling of Remembrance Garden.
- PBWG established consisting of Cllrs J Dunkley, L Fane, T Hargrave, Mrs L Massey, S May, Mrs A Petrescu, Miss M Ward. Group to arrange first meeting.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8:13pm

Chair