

**Minutes of the Meeting of
HAWKWELL PARISH COUNCIL
held on Monday 12th January 2026 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, Mrs A Petrescu, Miss M Ward & Mrs M Weir.

Also present: 16 members of the public. *(15 from 7:30pm and one from 7:36pm)*

FC 26/117 To receive apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

Apologies were received from Essex County Councillor (ECC) Mrs L Shaw and District Cllrs I Wilson, Mrs J Gooding and M Webb.

FC 26/118 Declarations of any of the following interests on any matter on the agenda for 12th January 2026:

a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interest;

b) Other registrable interests

None were declared.

FC 26/119 Public Forum & Information Reports from District Cllrs for Hawkwell Parish:

a) Public Forum: 16 members of the public were present. No questions were raised. **b)**

Information Reports from District and County Councillors: Members were referred to Agenda item 13 (Minute FC 26/129.3).

FC 26/120 To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Hawkwell Parish Council meeting held on 3rd November 2025 and to destroy the notes in respect of the meeting:

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

FC 26/121 Financial Report (December 2025):

The Clerk reported the overall budget was 77% spent against a benchmark of 75%. The Finance Committee was 80% spent; the Parks Committee was 77% spent and the General Purposes Committee was 76% spent. The Clerk expected to be on target by year end. There were no questions and it was **resolved** that Members accepted the Financial Report.

FC 26/122 Action List Update (January 2026):

26/122.1 Cllr L Fane was still due to send in a video of the defibrillator checking procedure so it could be kept on file for future reference. The system updates on The Circuit for Support Guardians were complete. Members **agreed** to close the item.

26/122.2 Council's current website provider was still making amendments to the website. The Clerk would speak to the contractor, when possible, to find out how things were progressing.

26/122.3 Members were referred to Agenda item 10. (Minute FC 26/126).

26/122.4 An annual security summary report was now ready for the website. Members **agreed** to close the item.

25/122.5 The Clerk had submitted Council's request to reduce the number of seats from 17 to 15 in line with the Community Governance Review consultation. The Clerk reported it was expected to not hear anything for a few months.

- 26/122.6** A letter had been sent to Cllr R Gardner, requesting information on his preferred charity. The Clerk would make one more attempt to contact him. Members agreed to close the item.
A member of the public entered the Chambers at 7:36pm.
- 26/122.7** Members were referred to Agenda item 9 (Minute FC 26/125).
- 26/122.8** Council had submitted an Expression of Interest (EOI) to Rochford District Council (RDC) regarding the Hawkwell Common and land adjacent to the playing fields, west of Reynolds Gardens. An acknowledgment had been received.
It was **resolved** that Members accepted the Action List update and agreed to the removal of closed items.

FC 26/123 2026-27 Precept paper:

- a) Recommendation from Finance Committee regarding setting the precept for 2026-27:** It was **resolved** that Members approve the recommendation from the Finance Committee that the total budget for 2026-27 be set at £221,980.00. Following receipt of the final tax base figure from RDC, this yielded a precept of £210,803.71. The resulting shortfall of income over planned expenditure would be £11,176.00 and for the first time the interest earned from Council's reserves would be used to offset the increase in planned expenditure. The increase in precept represented an increase of 0.55%.
- b) Adoption of the precept and approval to notify RDC:**
It was **resolved** that Council **approve** a precept of £210,804.00 for the year 2026-27; the resulting average band D figure being £45.38. Council instructs the Clerk to advise RDC of the approved precept.

FC 26/124 Local Government Reorganisation (LGR):

- a) Community Asset Transfer (CAT) - Update:** The Clerk reported that an Expression of Interest (EOI) had been submitted. No official response had been received to date.
- b) Email from the Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils (RHALC):**
Members noted the email and proposal to put in a bid for taking over the running of the Freight House. Members felt it would be prudent to understand how the proposal would fit in with RDC and if there would be a shared future vision. It was felt it would be important to understand the situation with the existing company running the opened section of the building. Members also felt it would be beneficial to know if there would be a financial burden for such a management proposal, noting the building also still required significant investment to get it up to full operating standard.
It was **agreed** the Clerk would email the RHALC secretary to ascertain what feedback had been received from other Parish Councils about the proposal and if any further information would be available. Once that information was obtained, the Clerk would bring the matter back to a relevant meeting for Members to consider further.

FC 26/125 Consider changing Parish Council meeting venue on a trial basis to Hockley & Hawkwell Day Centre:

Members were grateful for the use of the Rochford Day Centre to date but agreed a change to another part of the parish could attract more parishioners to the meetings, would offer more facilities such as a speaker system, Wi-Fi, etc. Members also noted the potential logistical difficulties ahead if Council continued to use the Rochford Day Centre. Members discussed whether it was a legal requirement to hold parish council meetings in the parish, but the Clerk advised them that was not the case; it was noted the Hawkwell Village Hall was not available when Council required the space.
It was **agreed** to trial run the Hockley and Hawkwell Day Centre for Council's new meeting venue for six months.

FC 26/126 Neighbourhood Plan Feasibility Working Group (NPFWG):

The Chair read out parts of the Clerk's report. A discussion ensued about the number of residents who had registered their interest, noting ten had come forward when only eight had been required. It was **agreed** to formally establish the NPFWG and to increase the public participation element to 10 as this could provide a more flexible working arrangement and potentially enable more meetings to be quorate.

It was noted there was no expertise in the field and that training could be beneficial going forward. Members referred to the Terms of Reference (ToR) and noted a Chair and Vice Chair would need to be agreed by Full Council. Cllr L Fane indicated he no longer would be able to take up the role as Chair and suggested the roles could be given to members of the public who were part of the NPFWG. It was **agreed** the Clerk would set up a mailbox, email all members of the NPFWG, outlining the roles and next steps and that the roles would need to be put forward at the next Full Council meeting.

FC 26/127 Notification the Leader of RDC has requested to attend Council's March Full Council meeting: The information was noted.

FC 26/128 Private Security Patrols – November/ December 2025: Members were pleased the security company had responded to the Clements Hall gate issues. Members were reminded the company did not have set times for patrols. The reports were noted.

FC 26/129 Correspondence:

26/129.1 RHALC – Meeting minutes from 16th October 2025: The information was noted.

26/129.2 Bar 'n Bus:

a) Introduction to new Communications and Fund Raising Manager:

b) First Newsletter: Members were impressed by the improvements.

26/129.3 Emails from Essex County Councillor (ECC) Cllr Mrs L Shaw:

a) ECC £300,00 highways winter damage repair plan: The information was noted.

b) New strategy to improve air quality across Essex, Southend and Thurrock: The information was noted.

c) Hall Road, Main Road Hawkwell and road closures (two emails): The information was noted.

d) ECC statement on provisional Local Government Finance Settlement: The information

e) Essex Highways Highlights Bulletin: The information was noted.

26/129.4 National Association of Local Councils (NALC) – Open letter to Parish and Town Councils: The information was noted.

26/129.5 RDC:

a) Rochford Community grant scheme supports local organisations across the district: The information was noted.

b) How planning decisions are made at RDC: The information was noted.

26/129.6 Essex Police – Essex Police Dispatch (Dec-Jan): The information was noted.

26/129.7 CouncilWise – Council courses for Jan & Feb: The information was noted

FC 25/130 Representatives Reports:

Rochford Old Peoples Welfare Committee – The minutes were due.

Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils (RHALC) – There would be a meeting on Tuesday 13th January; Cllr Mrs M Weir informed Members she would attend.

Hawkwell Village Hall (HVH) – A meeting was due next month.

Ashingdon & East Hawkwell Memorial Hall (AEHMH) – Cllr J Dunkley had agreed to be a Representative but has since had to withdraw from the position. This was due to the historic set up of their trustee board, with the financial responsibility clause still present. This made the position unviable. Cllr J Dunkley informed Members he would happily take up the role if the clause would be amended to remove the risk of financial burden.

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 25/131 Receive Committee/Working Party Reports since last meeting:

Parks Committee: It was **resolved** that Members accept the minutes of the meeting held on the 10th November 2025.

General Purposes Committee: It was **resolved** that Members accept the minutes of the meeting held on the 10th November 2025.

Planning Committee: It was **resolved** that Members accept the minutes of the meeting held on the 10th November and 16th December 2025.

Finance Committee: It was resolved that Members accept the minutes of the meeting held on the 8th December 2025.

FC 25/132 Payment of accounts

It was **resolved** that the payment of accounts paid since the last meeting (November & December) were approved together with agreement to pay any accounts due before the next meeting.

FC 25/133 Summary of decisions taken:

- Precept for 2026-27 agreed; Clerk to notify RDC.
- EOI for Hawkwell Common and land by Reynold Gardens submitted to RDC.
- Clerk to email the RHALC secretary to ascertain what feedback had been received from other Parish Councils about the Freight House proposal. Information to be given to Members for further consideration at future meeting.
- New meeting venue agreed for a six-month trial.
- NPFWG officially established. Public element increased to ten members. Clerk to set up mailbox and email all members of group with information relating to Chair, Vice Chair positions, and others if required. Council to appoint Chair and Vice Chair positions at the February meeting.
- RDC Leader to attend March Full Council meeting.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8:15pm

Chair