

**Minutes of the Meeting of
HAWKWELL PARISH COUNCIL**
held on Monday 2nd February 2026 at 7:30pm at
The Hockley and Hawkwell Day Centre, Southend Road,
Library Car Park, Hockley SS5 4PZ

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

Also present: Five members of the public.

The Chair politely requested that members of the public muted their phones during the meeting. The Chair offered thanks to Cllr Mrs M Weir for allowing Council to host its meetings at the Rochford Day Centre for many years, and welcomed those present to the new venue.

FC 26/134 To receive apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

Apologies were received from Cllrs Mrs A Petrescu and Cllr A MacPherson, District Cllr Mrs J Gooding and Essex County Councillor (ECC) Mrs L Shaw.

FC 26/135 Declarations of any of the following interests on any matter on the agenda for 2nd February 2026:

a) **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest;**

b) **Other registrable interests**

None were declared.

FC 26/136 Public Forum & Information Reports from District Cllrs for Hawkwell Parish:

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

b) **Information Reports from District and County Councillors:** Members were referred to Agenda item 12 (Minute FC 26/145.1).

FC 26/137 To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Hawkwell Parish Council meeting held on 12th January 2026 and to destroy the notes in respect of the meeting:

It was **resolved** that the minutes from the Full Council meeting held on 12th January 2026 were approved as a correct record and Members **agreed** to the destruction of the notes in respect of that meeting.

FC 26/138 Financial Report (January 2026):

The Clerk reported the overall budget was 84% spent against a benchmark of 83%. The Finance Committee was overspent, along with the General Purposes Committee. Parks Committee was on target. The Clerk informed Members there would be some large expenditure over the coming months.

There were no questions and it was **resolved** that Members accepted the Financial Report.

FC 26/139 Action List Update (February 2026):

26/139.1 Council's current website provider was still making amendments to the website. The Clerk explained the website must meet government Accessibility Standards in accordance with Council's annual audit. It was also noted that Council's Accessibility Statement would need to be updated on the website.

- 26/139.2** The Clerk had set up a Council-owned mailbox for the Neighbourhood Plan Feasibility Working Group (NPFWG) and emailed all participants, as instructed. Members were also referred to Agenda item 7 (Minute FC 26/140).
- 26/139.3** There were no updates on the Rochford District Council (RDC) Community Governance Review.
- 26/139.4** A further reminder had been sent to ex-Cllr R Gardner, requesting information on his preferred charity for donation. It was agreed that if no response had been received by the end of March, no donation would be given. Members agreed to close item.
- 26/139.5** Council had submitted an Expression of Interest (EOI) to RDC regarding the Hawkwell Common and land adjacent to the playing fields, west of Reynolds Gardens. There had been no further updates.
- 26/139.6** Council's precept requirements for 2026-27 had been submitted to RDC for 2026-27. Members agreed to close the item.
- 26/139.7** The Clerk was awaiting notes of the last Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils (RHALC) meeting. The Secretary had informed the Clerk that no other parish councils had expressed interest in jointly running the Freight House. The Design Cabin's contract to manage the Freight House would expire at the end of February. Members noted the minutes from RDC's Economic Development, Regeneration and Tourism Committee and that significant investment had been allocated to renovate the building. Some Members expressed their individual opinions about the Freight House management. Members felt it was prudent to allow RDC to conduct its due process regarding the renovations and onboarding of any new or existing management company. It was noted any community involvement would require significant commitment and expertise. It was **resolved** that Members accepted the Action List update and agreed to the removal of closed items.

FC 26/140 Neighbourhood Plan Feasibility Working Group (NPFWG):

The Clerk had emailed the NPFWG members; 17 in total, with two responses still due. The purpose had been to obtain permissions under General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) for the sharing of email details among the group, and for those interested to notify Council which roles they may want to undertake, i.e. Chair, Vice Chair and Administrator(s). Members were both disappointed and concerned that no members of the public from the NPFWG were present, and therefore felt it was inappropriate to vote on the positions. It was noted that as part of the email, the Clerk had also suggested an informal meeting, but only one resident had responded to support that idea. It was agreed the role of Administrator(s) was a vital role but nobody had volunteered for that/those position(s). The Clerk reminded Members of the Terms of Reference (ToR) which gave information on the formation and purpose of the NPFWG.

Members **agreed** to defer the decision to appoint the Chair, Vice-Chair and Administrator(s) until the next Full Council meeting. It was further **agreed** that the Clerk email the NPFWG again to arrange an informal get-together, with the aim members of the group, including Councillors, could get to know each other.

FC 26/141 External Audit Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) Assertion 10 changes 2025-26:

a) Adopt Data Audit Policy: It was **resolved** to adopt the Data Audit Policy.

b) Member and staff training GDPR – Members were reminded that part of Assertion 10 included the need for Members and staff to carry out training relating to GDPR. It was agreed the Clerk would sign up to the Nimble packages of courses and Members would carry out the training in their own time.

FC 26/142 Risk Management Control: Receive annual review report Local Council Risk Management System (LCRS):

It was **resolved** to accept the LCRS summary report. It was noted the full version was available in the office.

FC 26/143 Private Security Patrols – January 2026:

The reports were noted.

FC 26/144 Council training provider – launch of CouncilWise:

It was **agreed** Members let the Clerk know which courses they would be interested in attending and to bring the results back to the April Full Council meeting. Once known, Members would ascertain if it would be financially beneficial to take out a subscription with CouncilWise.

Cllr C Morris requested to attend the planning training on the 19th February; the Clerk would make the booking.

FC 26/145 Correspondence:

26/145.1 Emails from Essex County Councillor (ECC) Cllr Mrs L Shaw:

a) Essex secures over £68m in government funding to support bus services: The information was noted.

b) ECC will not be calling for a postponement of elections: The information was noted.

c) ECC reveals 2026-27 spending plans: The information was noted.

26/145.2 RDC:

a) Planning Policy Committee considers next steps for Rochford Local Plan: The information was noted.

b) Invitation to Parish Chair to the Civic Dinner March 2026: The information was noted.

c) Rochford Priority Fund supports communities across the district: The information was noted.

d) Chair's Charity Quiz Night 20th February 2026: The information was noted.

e) Local Plan – What is a Transport Assessment? The information was noted.

26/145.3 Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) – Training E-Bulletin new dates for May: The information was noted.

26/145.4 National Association of Local Councils (NALC):

a) Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments (SAAA) launches major project to digitalise the AGAR: The information was noted.

b) NALC welcomes new evidence on power of parish and town councils as Devolution agenda develops: The information was noted.

26/145.5 Passenger Transport Outcome of Local Bus Consultation: The information was noted.

FC 25/146 Representatives Reports:

Rochford Old Peoples Welfare Committee – There had been a meeting in January. Cllr S May reported the centre had received four out of five on the Food Standards scoring; it was noted a lot of the food staff were not trained.

Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils (RHALC) – The minutes were due.

Hawkwell Village Hall (HVH) – A meeting was due that month. Cllr Miss M Ward would not be able to attend. Cllr Mrs M Weir would be attending.

Ashingdon & East Hawkwell Memorial Hall (AEHMH) – 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 25/147 Receive Committee/Working Party Reports since last meeting:

Planning Committee: It was **resolved** that Members accept the minutes of the meeting held on the 12th January 2026.

FC 25/148 Payment of accounts

A Member enquired what the difference was between a weekly and annual playground inspection. The Clerk explained they were both required due to Health and Safety regulations.

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

FC 25/149 Summary of decisions taken:

- Decision to appoint the Chair, Vice-Chair and Administrator(s) of the NPFWH deferred until the next Full Council meeting. Clerk to email the NPFWG again to arrange an informal get-together, with the aim members of the group, including Councillors, could get to know each other.
- Data Audit Policy adopted.
- Clerk to sign up to Nimble courses portal for GDPR; all Members and staff to carry out training.
- LCRS approved.
- Members to let Clerk know which CouncilWise courses they would like to attend before April's Full Council meeting. Council then to decide if a subscription would be more financially beneficial.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8:21pm

Chair