Hawkwell Parish Council
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Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Hawkwell Parish Council

11th May 2026 at 7:30pm
at Hockley & Hawkwell Day Centre,
Southend Road Library Car Park, Hockley SS5 4PZ

Present Cllrs: Cllr J Dunkley, Cllr L Fane, Cllr T Hargrave, Cllr A MacPherson, Cllr Mrs L Massey, Cllr S May, Cllr C Morris, Cllr Miss M Ward and Cllr Mrs M Weir.

Also present: One member of the public and District Cllr M Webb.

FC 26/1 Election of Chair for the Civic Year 2026-27 and execute the Declaration of Acceptance of Office for Chair of the Council:

Cllr Mrs M Weir nominated Cllr S May which was declined by Cllr S May. Cllr T Hargave nominated Cllr Mrs L Massey which was seconded by Cllr J Dunkley. There were no further nominations and Cllr Mrs L Massey was elected Chair for the Civic Year 2026-27. The Clerk offered thanks to Cllr S May for his tenure as Chair; Members gave him a round of applause.

FC 26/2 Election of Vice-Chair for the Civic Year 2026-27:

Cllr Mrs L Massey nominated Cllr L Fane as Vice-Chair which was seconded by Cllr Mis M Ward. There were no further nominations and Cllr L Fane was elected Vice-Chair for the Civic Year 2026-27.

FC 26/3 Update of Register of Members' Interest/General Notice of Registrable Interests:

Members were instructed by the Clerk to fill in a new Register of Members' Interest/General Notice of Registrable Interest and to sign their documents after Agenda Item 8 (Minute FC 26/8) to ensure they had included any new outside bodies representative positions.

FC 26/4 To receive apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

Apologies were received from District Cllr I Wilson.

FC 26/5 Declarations of any:
a) Disclosable Pecuniary interests;
b) Other Registerable interests.

No interests were declared.

FC 26/6 Governance – Review of Key Documents:

a) Adoption of Standing Orders 2026 (No amendments from 2025):

It was resolved to adopt the Standing Orders for 2026.

b) Adoption of Financial Regulations 2026:

It was resolved to adopt the Financial Regulations 2026.

c) Consider Strategic Plan for 2026-2030:

Members noted the existing Strategic Plan for 2023-2026. The Clerk would bring sections of the plan back to the Committee meetings so the Committee Members could review the relevant sections. Once reviewed and/or amended, these changes would be brought back to Full Council.

d) Review of Committee Terms of Reference (ToR):

It was agreed to reduce the Personnel Committee membership from nine Members to six. It was further agreed the Planning Committee reduce its membership from nine Members to six. The amended ToR for the Planning Committee was accepted; meetings would be called for planning applications that were to be presented to Rochford District Council's (RDC) Development Committee, along with any applications that Members felt would require comment. Members of the Planning Committee would be sent a list of weekly applications and would alert the Clerk if they felt the applications need to be added to an appropriate Planning Committee agenda.
Members approved all ToR as set out.

e) Review and confirm Councillor Allowances Policy for 2026-27:

It was resolved to accept the Councillor Allowances Policy for 2026-27.

FC 26/7 Agree Committee & Working Group structures and appointment of Members:

a) Finance Committee:

Cllrs J Dunkley, L Fane, A MacPherson, Mrs L Massey, S May, Miss M Ward and Mrs M Weir formed the Finance Committee, with no changes from 2025-26. Two vacancies remained.

b) General Purposes Committee:

Cllrs J Dunkley, L Fane, T Hargrave, Mrs L Massey, S May, C Morris, Miss M Ward and Mrs M Weir formed the General Purposes Committee, with no changes from 2025-26. Four vacancies remained.

c) Planning Committee:

Cllrs J Dunkley, L Fane, Mrs L Massey, C Morris, Miss M Ward and Mrs M Weir formed the Planning Committee. No vacancies remained.

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d) Parks, Open Spaces, Conservation and Footpaths Committee:
Cllrs J Dunkley, L Fane, T Hargrave, A MacPherson, Mrs L Massey, S May, C Morris, Miss M Ward and Mrs M Weir formed the Parks, Open Spaces, Conservation and Footpath Committee, with no changes from 2025-26. Three vacancies remained.

e) Personnel Committee:
Cllrs J Dunkley, L Fane, A MacPherson, Mrs L Massey, and Mrs M Weir formed the Personnel Committee. One vacancy remained.

f) Health & Safety Sub-Committee:
Cllrs J Dunkley, L Fane, A MacPherson, Mrs L Massey, S May and Mrs M Weir formed the Health & Safety Sub-Committee. No vacancies remained.

g) Policy Committee:
Cllrs J Dunkley, L Fane, T Hargrave, S May, C Morris and Mrs M Weir formed the Policy Committee, with no changes from 2025-26. Three vacancies remained.

FC 26/8 Appoint representatives to outside bodies:

a) Rochford Old People's Welfare Committee (ROPWC):
It was agreed Cllrs S May and C Morris be representatives for the ROPWC for 2026-27.

b) Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils (RHALC):
It was agreed Cllrs S May, C Morris and Mrs M Weir be representatives for RHALC for 2026-27.

c) Ashingdon and East Hawkwell Memorial Hall (AEHMH):
Cllr J Dunkley volunteered to join the AEHMH once the Committee had sorted out the issues relating to the trusteeship.

d) Hawkwell Village Hall Management Committee (HVHMC):
It was agreed Cllrs Miss M Ward and Mrs M Weir be representatives for HVHMC for 2026-27.

e) Public Transport Liaison Group (PTLG):
It was agreed Cllr C Morris be representative for the PTLG for 2026-27.

f) Robert Sudbury Charity Trust:
It was agreed Cllrs S May and Mrs M Weir continue to be members of the Trust for 2026-27.

FC 26/9 Receive draft and unaudited income & expenditure accounts for 2025-26:
A Member enquired why the figures in the draft and unaudited income and expenditure accounts differed from the accounts presented under agenda item 19 (Minute FC 26/19). The Clerk invited the Member in to the office to go through the figures.

FC 26/10 To accept the record of attendance for preceding year:
Members accepted the record of attendance for 2025-26.

FC 26/11 **Receive dates for Full Council and Committee meetings for 2026-27:**

Members approved the dates for meetings for 2026-27. Members agreed to set the Full Council meetings at 6:45pm for 2026-27. It was further agreed that some Full Council meetings may be cancelled if the Clerk felt there would be insufficient business.

FC 26/12 **Set a date for the inspection of investments, leases and asset register and inventory:**

It was agreed the Chair and Vice Chair liaise with the Clerk to arrange a suitable date.

FC 26/13 **Public participation session:**

a) Public forum:

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

b) Information reports from District and County Councillors:

District Cllr M Webb gave his personal views following the recent election results at RDC, relaying his concerns about the current future of the administration and noting his views of the successful year passed. It was noted RDC's Full Council meeting would be held on Tuesday 19th May 2026 where a new Leader would be decided.

FC 26/14 **To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Hawkwell Parish Council meeting held on 2nd March 2026 and to destroy the notes in respect of that meeting:**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2026 were approved.

FC 26/15 **Financial Report (April 2026)**

The Clerk reported that at month one, the budget was 9.4% against a benchmark of 8.4%. It was noted a large grant had been awarded. A Member enquired what the credits related to on the accounts; the Clerk confirmed they were accruals for 2025-26.

FC 26/16 **Action update list (May 2026)**

26/16.1 The new website would be launched in May. There were a few elements still to work on, but overall things were in good shape.

26/16.2 The Neighbourhood Plan Feasibility Working Group (NPFWG) updates were addressed at agenda item 20 (Minute FC 26/20).

26/16.3 The second phase of the RDC Community Governance Review (CGR) would be a further consultation. This would be live from 11th May 2026 to 5th July 2026. Following that consultation, RDC would make a final decision.

26/16.4 The RDC Transfer of Assets (TOA) were addressed at agenda item 21 (Minute FC26/21).

26/16.5 Councillor training was addressed at agenda item 22b (Minute FC 26/22b).

FC 26/17 **Ratification of Councillor resignation – Mrs Ali Petrescu:**

Members noted the resignation of Mrs A Petrescu.

FC 26/18 Internal audit:

a) Appointment of internal auditor for 2026-27:

Members considered the two provided independent auditors and after review agreed to appoint Legra Internal Audit Service for 2026-27.

b) Receive and note the internal audit report (final) for 2025-26

Members received and noted the internal audit report (final) for 2025-26.

FC 26/19 Accept and approve for despatch the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025-26 and sign the annual accounts for the year ending 31st March 2026.

a) Review the effectiveness of the system of internal control:

Members reviewed the document provided by the Clerk and agreed the system of internal control was effective.

b) Approve by resolution Section 1 Annual Governance Statement of the AGAR:

The Chair read the Annual Governance Statement from items one to nine (with nine being 'not applicable') and Members agreed to each item.

Members approved the Annual Governance Statement by resolution. The Chair and Clerk signed Section 1 of the Annual Return, witnessed by Members.

c) Approve by resolution Section 2 Accounting Statements of the AGAR:

Members were referred to the Accounting Statements prepared by DCK Accounting Solutions and approved these by resolution.

d) Chair and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) to sign the Annual Accounts for 2025-26:

The Chair and RFO signed the Annual Accounts for 2025-26, witnessed by Members.

FC 26/20 Neighbourhood Plan Feasibility Working Group (NPFWG):

a) Update from the NPFWG:

A Member who resided on the NPFWG informed Council that no official meeting had gone ahead due to the group not being able to fulfil the quorum. It was noted there had been great difficulty in getting all members of the NPFWG together in a room; a hybrid style of meeting using online facilities had been recommended. Informal meetings had gone ahead and those present had expressed a willingness to get on with the work. The Clerk impressed the importance that the group need to focus on the Feasibility Study at this stage, nothing more. Members were concerned about what appeared to be a change in lack of commitment.

Cllr T Hargrave left the Chambers at 8:49pm.

Further concerns were raised that the group had been unable to meet and that none of the NPFWG were present to provide updates and understand how things need to progress in line with Council's objectives and general business.

Cllr T Hargrave returned to Chambers at 8:50pm.

It was agreed it would be prudent to provide the group with information relating to Council's timeline of business, e.g. budgeting rounds etc, for the group to work to a suitable timetable and allow them to present requests at the correct time. It was agreed the Clerk provide Cllrs C Morris and J Dunkley with printed ToRs so they could remind the NPFWG at its next meeting that they needed to be read, signed and adhered to.
Cllr J Dunkley left the Chambers at 8:55pm and returned at 8:56pm.
Cllr S May confirmed he would be stepping away from the NPFWG.

b) Request from NPFWG Chair to add a sub-domain to Council's subscription to enable the use of SharePoint which will be under Council's control:
It was agreed that until the NPFWG had their first meeting in line with the agreed ToR it would not be appropriate to approve any requests from individuals of the group. Members impressed the importance of having the group properly formulated.

FC 26/21 Local Government Reform (LGR) / Asset transfers – update from Rochford District Council (RDC):
The information provided by RDC was noted. Members were reminded that an Expression of Interest (EOI) had been submitted for Hawkwell Common, at their request. Meetings were scheduled at RDC to progress this matter.

FC 26/22 Subscriptions:
a) Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) £1,537:
Members approved the annual subscription to EALC which includes the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) subscription, of £1,537 for 2026.
b) Consider annual subscription to CouncilWise for Member/staff training £500:
Members agreed it was not financially beneficial to sign up for the training given not many Members attended training courses. It was noted that Council would still be able to sign up to CouncilWise for training but the courses would be full price.

FC 26/23 Consider removal of formal correspondence item from Full Council agendas:
It was agreed to remove the correspondence item from the Full Council agendas going forward. Any correspondence received by the office and relevant to Members would be emailed on.

FC 26/24 Private security patrols report:
Members noted the security reports for March and April 2026.
Cllr L Fane gave apologies and left the meeting at 9:02pm.

FC 26/25 Receive Committee reports since last meeting:
a) Planning Committee – note minutes of the meeting held on the 9th March 2026, 13th April 2026 and 29th April 2026:

The Planning Committee minutes of the meetings held on the 9th, 13th and 29th April were noted.

b) Finance Committee: note minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2026 and 13th April 2026:

The Finance Committee minutes of the meetings held on 2nd March and 13th April 2026 were noted.

c) Parks Committee : note minutes of the meeting held on 13th April 2026:

The Parks Committee minutes of the meeting held on 13th April 2026 were noted.

d) General Purposes Committee: note minutes of the meeting held on 9th March 2026 and 13th April 2026:

The General Purpose Committee minutes of the meeting held on the 9th March 2026 and 13th April 2026 were noted.

FC 26/26 Representative Reports:

a) Rochford Old People's Welfare Committee (ROPWC):

A meeting had been cancelled due to being inquorate. A meeting was due in June.

b) RHALC:

Cllr C Morris reported Southend Airport were aiming for two million passengers a year, with its operating hours to be extended.

c) AEHMH:

There were no updates.

d) Hawkwell Village Hall (HVH):

Cllr Miss M Ward had attended the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and had raised concerns about the trusteeship set-up, noting that the newly appointed Chair was not a Trustee. She had advised they investigate the matter. It was noted that some of the recent minutes were also incorrect; Cllr Miss Ward had abstained from the position votes given the issue with the trusteeship, which had not been recorded correctly. Cllr Miss Ward also felt HVH were reluctant to spend money which she felt went against the premise of being a community asset.

e) Public Transport Liaison Group (PTLG):

There were no updates.

f) Robert Sudbury Trust:

There were no updates.

g) Community meetings:

There were no updates.

FC 26/27 Payment of accounts (April)

The Clerk reported the first tranche of the precept had been received and explained the payments report showed several transactions of that money being transferred to the

Metro Bank Deposit Account. A Member enquired why £250 had been paid to Hullbridge Parish Council; the Clerk confirmed that was for the bi-annual cut and collect service in Glencroft Open Space. Hullbridge were able to carry out this service as they had the appropriate equipment. There were no further questions and it was resolved that the payment of accounts paid since the last meeting (April payments) were approved together with agreement to pay any accounts due before the next meeting.

FC 26/28 Summary of decisions

- Cllr Mrs L Massey elected Chair for 2026-27.
- Cllr L Fane elected Vice Chair for 2026-27.
- Formal adoption of Financial Regulations and Standing Orders for 2026-27.
- Strategic Plan to be divided into Committees; Committees to review at their next meeting.
- Committee ToR approved for: Personnel Committee to reduce to 6 appointments; Planning to reduce to 6 appointments and have a new working method: meetings to be arranged when Members call in any planning applications and if any applications appear on RDC's weekly list and are to go to the RDC Development Committee.
- Cllr Allowance Policy approved for 2026-27.
- Committee membership set for 2026-27.
- Cllr representation for outside bodies agreed for 2026-27.
- Draft and unaudited Income and Expenditure Accounts for 2025-26 accepted.
- Record of attendance received for 2025-26.
- Schedule of meetings agreed for 2026-27; Full Council to have a new start time of 6:45pm.
- Chair and Vice Chair to arrange date with Clerk to inspect investments, leases etc.
- Resignation of Cllr Mrs A Petrescu ratified.
- Legra Internal Audit appointed for 2026-27 audit.
- Internal audit for 2025-26 noted.
- AGAR for 2025-26 approved for submission and publication.
- Annual accounts for 2025-26 accepted and signed.
- Clerk to give NPFWG important dates/timeline so the group can work according around Council's objectives and timeline. Cllrs J Dunkley and C Morris to remind NPFWG of its duty to sign the ToR at the group's first meeting; copies to be given to both Cllrs. Cllr S May to step away from group. Request for SharePoint declined until NPFWG meet in accordance with the ToR and agreed regulations.
- Subscription of £1,537 to EALC/NALC approved for 2026.
- Subscription to CouncilWise declined.

- Correspondence segment of Full Council agendas to be removed; correspondence to be sent to Members as and when relevant.

Meeting closed: 8:07pm