

General Purposes Committee Meeting Minutes

18th May 2026 at 7:50pm

**at Hockley & Hawkwell Day Centre,
Southend Road Library Car Park, Hockley SS5 4PZ**

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

Also present: Cllr A MacPherson and one member of the public.

GP 26/1 Election of Chair for the Civic Year 2026-27:

Cllr T Hargrave nominated Cllr Mrs L Massey which was seconded by Cllr S May. There were no further nominations and Cllr Mrs L Massey was elected Chair of the General Purposes Committee for 2026-27.

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

Cllr J Dunkley nominated himself which was seconded by Cllr Mrs L Massey. There were no further nominations and Cllr J Dunkley was elected Vice-Chair of the General Purposes Committee for 2026-27.

GP 26/3 To receive apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

No apologies were received.

GP 26/4 Declarations of any:

- a) Disclosable Pecuniary interests;**
- b) Other Registerable interests.**

No interests were declared.

GP 26/5 Public participation session:

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

GP 26/6 To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on 13th April 2026 and to destroy the notes in respect of that meeting:

The minutes of the meetings held on 13th April 2026 were approved.

GP 26/7 Action update list (May 2026)

26/7.1 The summer flowers had been planted in the Main Road troughs. Thanks were passed to Cllrs T Hargrave, Miss M Ward and J Dunkley.

26/7.2 Members were referred to agenda item 11 (Minute GP26/11).

26/7.3 The next meeting of the Environmental Working Group (EWG) was to be organised in Summer 2026.

26/7.4 Members were referred to agenda item 10 (Minute GP 26/10).

It was resolved that Members noted and accepted the Action Update Report and agreed to the removal of any closed items.

GP 26/8 Councillor action update list – May 2026:

26/8.1 Members had been tasked with researching ideas for a Christmas tree. Members were referred to agenda item 11 (Minute GP 26/11).

26/8.2 Members of the Environmental Working Group (EWG) were still to arrange a meeting in the Summer to go through the Eco-Audit report.

26/8.3 Members of the Phone Box Working Group (PBWG) were referred to agenda item 10 (Minute GP 26/10).

P 26/9 Financial Report (April 2026)

The financial report was approved, with no questions raised.

P 26/10 Phone Box restoration project proposal – Clerk's report:

Cllr T Hargrave had worked with the local artist to present a first sketch of the design concept for the museum information board which was shown to Members. Members agreed a Perspex sheet would need to cover the artwork board. Cllr C Morris had cut out a wooden board for the artist to work on.

The importance of getting the content ready was expressed, noting the artist would need an adequate amount of time to produce the artwork. Members agreed to arrange a Phone Box Working Group (PBWG) meeting via WhatsApp to iron out the final design idea. The results would be brought back to the next General Purposes meeting.

Members noted the correspondence from Rochford District Council (RDC) regarding the licence for the phone box and that it could not be guaranteed the licence would be ready by July. The Clerk had contacted the phone box restoration company and they had agreed to hold on to the phone box until mid-September without additional costs, if required.

It was noted that within the licence terms the location of the phone box was incorrect; the placement was not where Council had agreed to site the box. The Clerk would revert to RDC to understand why the position had been shown incorrectly. Members agreed their first choice was of preference, but should that not be possible, the location shown would be acceptable.

Members agreed not to appoint a solicitor and approved the terms set out in the RDC licence agreement, subject to the clarification of the phone box location as drawn on the map.

GP 26/11 Christmas lighting project:

It was noted RDC had refused Council's request to site a Christmas tree on Hawkwell Common for 2026.

Members approved new multi-colour festoons at Golden Cross and Main Road shopping parade at a cost of £7k. The Clerk informed Members there was £5,900 in the Earmarked Reserves (EMR) and that any overspend could be vired from those reserves.

GP 26/12 Christmas nativity figures – request by Cllr T Hargrave to make additional silhouettes:

Members agreed permission for additional figures needed to be obtained from Emmanuel Church. If obtained, Members further agreed to make three Wise Men and noted that two angels and a camel had already been made.

GP 26/13 Summary of decisions

- Cllr Mrs L Massey elected Chair for 2026-27.
- Cllr J Dunkley elected Vice Chair for 2026-27.
- Members of the PBWG to arrange a meeting to draw up final sketch for museum content. Content to be ready for next GP meeting. Wooden board cut out by Cllr Morris, ready for artist to use. Agreed to add Perspex board to cover artwork upon completion.
- RDC licence agreement for phone box agreed; Clerk to ascertain location of phone box and if Council could have the terms amended to show first request for location. Agreement reached not to employ a solicitor.
- Christmas tree for Hawkwell Common refused by RDC.
- New multi-colour festoons approved for Main Road and Golden Cross shopping parades.
- Additional silhouettes for Emmanuel Church approved, subject to permissions granted church – three Wise Men. Additional figures already made (two angels and a camel.)

Meeting closed: 8:19pm