

Parks Committee Meeting Minutes

8th June 2026 at 7:49pm

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

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

Also present: One member of the public.

P 26/14 To receive apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

No apologies were received.

P 26/15 Declarations of any:

a) Disclosable Pecuniary interests;

b) Other Registerable interests.

Cllr Mrs L Massey declared an interest by virtue of her spouse being Council's regular contractor.

P 26/16 Public participation session:

One member of the public was present. P1 noted that Hawkwell Common benches were aged and in poor condition and enquired how often they were inspected and if the Parish Council carried out a wood assessment. The Clerk informed the resident they were a Rochford District Council (RDC) asset.

P1 enquired if Elizabeth Close playground was still shut and if a notification could go on the gate. The Chair confirmed the playground was still shut. The Clerk informed P1 there was a sign on the gate. The Chair explained it was not possible to discuss Elizabeth Close playground until it would be on a Parks Committee agenda. P1 asked when that would be. P1 noted the long grass in the play area. The Chair confirmed works were ongoing to bring the space back to standard.

P 26/17 To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on 18th May 2026 and to destroy the notes in respect of that meeting:

The minutes of the meetings held on 18th May 2026 were approved.

P 26/18 Financial Report (May 2026)

The Clerk reported that the budget was 23% spent against a benchmark of 16%, this was due to the Church Strip fencing which would be funded from General Reserves. Removing this element from the report, the budget was 11% spent. A Member enquired if the General Reserve movements happened at the end of year; the Clerk confirmed

that was the case.

The financial report was approved.

P 26/19 Action update list (June 2026)

26/19.1 Members were referred to agenda item 8 (Minute P26/21).

26/19.2 The additional tree survey for Magnolia Park and Nature Reserve, which had been agreed, would be carried out in 2026-27.

26/19.3 Members were referred to agenda item 7 (Minute P26/20).

26/19.4 Members had attended a site visit at Magnolia Park playground to address the low level risk items. Some Members would carry out painting works.

26/19.5 Cllr A MacPherson had been booked on the playground inspection course which would be held on the 10th June 2026.

26/19.6. Residential works had commenced at Glencrofts; with access being granted to Glencroft Open Space. No issues had arisen to date. The Clerk had received an email from the adjoining resident asking for the same permissions as they had a contractor who would need to carry out wall repair works too. It was agreed the Clerk and some Members would need to meet the resident and contractor to discuss the same terms as had been agreed with the current contractor who was on site.

26/19.7 The Essex County Council Public Rights of Way (PRoW) Officer was aiming to undertake a site visit regarding the issues with the Magnolia Nature Reserve bridlepath diversion. Furthermore, the formal process of bridlepath diversion needed to be completed; guidance would be given to Council on the matter by the PRoW.

26/19.8 The Clerk had contacted RDC Woodland's Team to ask about the products used on the wood carvings at Hockley Woods, as requested by Members. RDC had not been able to recall who had done the carvings so could not get the information. They had advised Members to use a wood oil. The Clerk would purchase linseed oil and Cllr J Dunkley would carry out works. The Clerk advised the posts to be fenced off after the oil had been applied to mitigate any risk or damage to the public and animals. It was agreed the first post to paint/treat would be the one situated in Spencers Park.

26/19.9 A site visit to Spencers Park had taken place on 28th May. Members were referred to agenda item 9 (Minute P26/22).

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

P 26/20 Councillor action update list:

26/20.1 Members had carried out the first site visit to Magnolia Park playground to address the low-risk playground items. Members agreed the estimate for works provided by Reliant Leisure. A Member enquired if the works included plugging the holes in the basketball; the Clerk confirmed those works could be carried out by Council.

26/20.2 Members of the Spencers Park nature board group had not carried out any agreed actions relating to the project. Cllr S May would look to see if they had information from Cllr L Fane about Spencers, recalling something had been sent on email or WhatsApp. The Clerk would inform Cllr Miss Ward of the date Council took over Spencers to help her in her research fact finding.

P 26/21 Church Strip – Clerk’s update:

Members noted the Clerk’s written report which was read out by the Chair.

The Chair noted the newly installed fence would require ground works to make up the gap that was under the newly installed gates. The current drop pins did not reach the ground. The Chair suggested two concrete tubes be installed for the ground pins and a form of ground ramp to solve the problem, such as using scalplings or earth etc.

Cllr J Dunkley briefly left the meeting at 8:16pm and shortly returned.

The Clerk was awaiting to hear from church if they wanted the bench which had been removed from Church Strip.

The solicitor had requested money on account to proceed with the Caution at First Registration (CAFR) work; the Clerk had provided all the necessary information to date. Payment to the solicitor would be made in June. Once the process would start, the Clerk would enquire with the solicitor if any third party could rent the land during the period of Adverse Possession(AP).

The fortnightly inspections had started and were being carried out by Cllrs J Dunkley and Mrs L Massey.

Council’s regular contractor would be left to manage the area as a wildlife haven.

A suitable cost centre had been created for Church Strip for accounting purposes.

Members were reminded they had agreed to review the use of Church Strip in around one to two years.

P 26/22 Spencers Park ideas – verbal update from Members following site visit:

Members had attended a site visit and looked at the possibility of additional pathing along the perimeter stretch, to join up with the existing pathway. They had decided not to pursue the idea of wild flower seeding.

Members felt the pathing should carry on around the entire park and look the same as the current path, with type one and the top dust. The Clerk suggested this be considered for the September budgeting. A Member asked if the monies could be taken from the reserves, noting there was £12k in the parks Ear Marked Reserves (EMRs); the Clerk informed the Member that was money not spent from previous budgets. The Clerk told Members she had not received any complaints about the boggy conditions at Spencers. A Member felt it was not practical to put things off if the monies were available. The Clerk informed Members work was stacking up in the office; a quote would be sought in September for Members to review.

P26/23 Resident request regarding e-bikes issue in Magnolia Nature Reserve:

Members noted the complaint and further noted that Council's regular contractor had made several complaints about the same issue. Members agreed that the matter was of concern and that it needed to be reported to the police. It was further agreed to consult with Council's security company to see if patrols could be focussed around the area. Members noted the issues seemed to occur during the afternoons and early evenings.

P1 informed Members they were aware of a police initiative that was targeting the illegal use of e-bikes; if the matter was reported to the police, then they would carry out targeted enforcement. P1 suggested Council escalate the matter to the police. P1 would forward the details to the Clerk.

The Clerk advised the bridlepath could not have any speed bumps or barriers installed due to the need for it to cater for multiple users such as horse riders, walkers etc.

P26/24 Review of Parks Committee element of the current Strategic Plan:

Members went through the current Strategic Plan for 2023-26 and looked at the existing elements relating to the Parks Committee. It was agreed to tighten up the wording relating to working with the police and local authorities. Members agreed to keep all remaining sections the same, with no new additions.

P 26/25 Summary of decisions

- Clerk and some Members to attend site visit with contractor for Glencroft Open Space wall work.
- Clerk to purchase linseed oil and Cllr J Dunkley to paint/treat Jubilee posts. Spencers Park post to be first post to be painted/treated.
- Estimate for works for low-risk playground items for Magnolia playground agreed. Basketball holes to be plugged.
- Cllr S May to see if he had information from Cllr L Fane about Spencers. Clerk to inform Cllr Miss Ward of the date Council took over Spencers.
- Ground works for Church Strip gate to be carried out.
- Clerk to enquire with solicitor if Church Strip can be rented during period of AP.
- Clerk to obtain quote for new pathway in Spencers Park in September.
- Matter relating to e-bikes to be passed to police. Security Company to also be notified with the intention patrols will be increased/focussed in that area.
- Strategic Plan – Parks Committee element agreed with one small edit.

Meeting closed: 8:36pm