

Planning Committee Meeting Minutes

2nd June at 1:45pm

at Hawkwell Parish Council Office,
Hawkwell Village Hall, Main Road, Hawkwell SS5 4EH

Present Cllrs: Chair C Morris, Cllr J Dunkley, Cllr Mrs L Massey & Cllr Miss M Ward

Also present: 18 members of the public.

Cllr C Morris offered his condolences on the passing of HPC's long standing Planning Committee Chair, Cllr Mrs M Weir and Members observed a minute silence.

PL 26/8 Election of Vice-Chair for the Civic Year 2026-27:

There had been a mistake in electing the Vice-Chair at the last meeting; the candidate proposed and accepted was not on the Planning Committee.

Cllr Mrs L Massey nominated Cllr J Dunkley, which was seconded by Cllr Miss M Ward.

There were no more nominations and Cllr J Dunkley was elected Vice-Chair for 2026-27.

PL 26/9 To receive apologies for non-attendance at meeting:

No apologies had been received.

PL 26/10 Declarations of any:

a) Disclosable Pecuniary interests;

b) Other Registerable interests.

No interests were declared.

PL 26/11 Public participation session:

18 members of the public were present.

P1 requested the public participation session be deferred to agenda item 6. The Chair felt it more practical to hear the public's points of view before discussing matters.

P2 requested the Chair and Committee introduce themselves; the Chair gave a summary of himself. All other Members and the Clerk confirmed their names.

P3 requested Council clarify if Mount Bovers was classed as Brownfield and not Green Belt. The Chair was not aware the land had been officially designated as Brownfield.

P1 noted the future appeal on the Mount Bovers development. The question had been raised if Hawkwell Parish Council (HPC) should apply for Rule 6 status in relation to the Mount Bovers appeal. P1's opinion was that there should be a strong, sharp defence against the developers and avoid duplication at the appeal. It was noted the Mount Bovers Community Group (MBCG) had applied for Rule 6 status already. The element of

risk when attempting to go against the developers under appeal was noted; especially when it came to financial implications should an appeal pass in favour of the developer. P1 enquired if HPC would be willing to stand as a key witness at the appeal, noting the Kings Counsel (KC) would cross-examine those representing. P1 felt that anyone willing to stand would need to answer questions swiftly and accurately. The Chair felt HPC did not have the ability, need or capacity to stand as a key witness and explained that HPC were in the dark when it came to knowing what Rochford District Council (RDC) would bring in their submission. The Chair expressed his view that HPC would want to support the community against the development and suggested HPC's original submission document be updated.

P4 felt too many applicants under Rule 6 could cause contradiction at the appeal which could jeopardise proceedings.

P3 enquired about the deadline dates leading up to the Mount Bovers appeal.

P5 noted HPC was a key stakeholder and felt there should be representations from HPC at the appeal. The Chair felt that would hold more weight from RDC, noting HPC's limited resources.

P6 asked if there was a different silo at HPC to RDC and the MBCG. P6 felt a collaborative approach would be better. The Clerk explained that HPC were as much in the dark as the MBCG and that all information between groups should be shared to create a united front.

P7 suggested HPC look at the Statement of Appeal (SOA) from the developer. P7 advised HPC focus on the Green Belt argument having assessed the SOA themselves.

P8 advised HPC look on the online planning portal as there was a wealth of information, including Officer and applicant emails. It was noted there had been 7,000 objections; 3,500 of which were new since the notification of the appeal.

P7 again stressed the importance of looking at the information on appeal and to draw key elements from the developer's angle where there were weaknesses in argument. It was suggested HPC use AI to assist. P7 offered to meet with HPC to share information they had recently obtained from their own analysis.

P8 re-iterated that there needed to be collaboration to a certain level. The Chair confirmed they personally had shared anything of technical use throughout the process and would continue to do so.

PL 26/12 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 were approved.

PL 26/13 Mount Bovers Planning Appeal (Ref. APP/B1550/6008332): consideration of a further representation to Council's previous submission

Members agreed to update its existing submission, noting there had been no new technical information but there would need to be a new focus and any updates would need to demonstrate something different for a further representation to hold weight.

PL 26/14 Review of Planning Committee element of the current Strategic Plan

Members agreed to defer the item.

P8 enquired if people were required for the Neighbourhood Plan Feasibility Working Group (NPFWG). It was noted that the numbers had been achieved but the NPFWG had been unable to arrange an official meeting; there had been problems getting the people together. An informal meeting had taken place.

P2 asked what the decision had been relating to agenda item 6 (Minute PL 26/13). The Clerk confirmed that HPC would work on further representation with assistance from others.

Meeting closed: 2:12pm