



**Minutes of the meeting of the Full Council of  
Rochford Parish Council held on  
Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> July at 6.30 pm  
at the Parish Rooms, Rochford**

**In Attendance:**

**Councillors:** James Edmunds (Chair)  
James Cottis  
Denise Crosbie  
Daniel Efde  
Mark Hammond  
Robert Howat  
Paul Nash  
Shelly Taylor  
Linda Thomas  
Mark Vallance  
Myra Weir  
Graham Whitehead  
Arthur Williams (Vice Chair)

**Clerk:** Emma Terris

**In Attendance:** Laura Buckely-Hills

One member of the public was present for part of the meeting.

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- 34/25 To receive apologies for absence**  
23.25.1 Received from Councillors Brown and Hanser.
- 35/25 To receive any Declarations of Interests**  
24/25.1 Cllrs Williams and Efde declared an interest in any matters relating to Rochford District Council.  
24/25.2 Cllrs Edmunds and Crosbie declared an interest on agenda item 38/25.8. The Vice Chair to chair the meeting for this agenda item.
- 36/25 To approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meetings**  
The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2025, and the Extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2025 were **agreed** by all Councillors and signed by the Chair.

37/25

**Finance**

37/25.1

**Minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2025**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2025 were received.

37/25.2

**To receive an update on the Annual Governance Statements for 2024/2025**

The Clerk advised that the annual governance statements for 2024/2025 have been shared with the external auditors and the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights commenced on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2025 and will end on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2025.

37/25.3

**To confirm the following signatories for Metro Bank**

- It was **agreed** to remove Sally Faulkner and Arthur Williams as a signatory from the bank mandate.
- It was **agreed** that the following are the named signatories on the account: Emma Terris, Paul Nash, and James Edmunds.
- It was agreed that any two signatories are required to authorise payments.

38/25

**Clerk's Report**

38/25.1

**Name Badges**

Following agreement at the last meeting, photos were taken prior to the start of the meeting. Once all photos have been obtained, an order will be placed for the name badges.

38/25.2

**Business Cards for the Clerk**

It was **agreed** to order business cards for the Clerk at a cost of £60.00 for 500 cards. It was further **agreed** to order generic business cards for councillor use.

38/25.3

**Parish Flag**

The Clerk advised that due to the design of the flagpole, only flags purchased from Flagtrax can be used. It was agreed to purchase two flags at a cost of £100 each.

38/25.4

**The Parish Rooms**

Cllr Efde declared an interest in this item and withdrew from the meeting.

The Clerk advised that Nicolas Law have reviewed the lease and there is no way out of the lease before the end of the term as there is no 'break clause' allowing an early exit. Nicolas Law have suggested that underletting of the whole premises could be a feasibility although consent would be required from the landlord before entering into an agreement.

A discussion took place regarding the poor condition of The Kings Head and it was agreed that the Clerk writes to the landlord, with a copy sent to the Estates Team at Rochford District Council, to request that the defects are addressed and corrected.

**38/25.5 Chairman's Chain of Office**

The Clerk advised that a small silver chain has been purchased. A discussion took place regarding how the chain should be stored. It was agreed that the Clerk and Chair to work together to come up with a protocol.

It was **agreed** that a small bag is purchased in which to place the chain.

**38/25.6 Scribe Accounts**

The Clerk advised that she had a demonstration with Scribe Accounts. The Chair was in the office and joined the first part of the demonstration. The Clerk advised that the accounts, cemeteries, allotments and bookings were shown and the packages would be of great benefit to the council. The Clerk advised that the accounts are entered on a payments and receipts basis and converted to Income and Expenditure accounts at the year-end. The package is able to produce a report showing payments outstanding and reports presented in a clearer and easier to understand. The cemeteries and allotment package includes a mapping tool to map out the plots as well as sending out invoices and renewals automatically. The Clerk shared a copy of the presentation with Councillors and advised that as she currently uses Scribe with another council, Scribe have offered a a 25% discount. The Clerk advised that there would be an initial payment of £2,649 + VAT plus a monthly payment of £240. The Clerk advised that this is significantly cheaper than the existing accounting package of Rialtas and by using Scribe will address many of the issues raised in the report from the internal auditor. The Clerk advised that all training and support costs are included within the monthly payment. Following a detailed discussion, the Chair proposed that Scribe is purchased and is used as the council's main accounting package. This was seconded by Cllr Nash and unanimously carried.

**38/25.7 Internal Audit Action Plan**

The Clerk shared the Internal Audit Action Plan that has been produced in response to the recent internal audit. It was **agreed** that the action plan would feature as a standing agenda item.

**38/25.8 Grant Application**

The Chair declared an interest in this agenda item. At 8.15 pm, the Chair withdrew from the meeting. The Vice Chair, Cllr Williams chaired the meeting.

The Clerk advised that an application for grant funding has been received from the Design Cabin Community C.I.C asking for £1,5000 to supporting he purchase of cleaning supplies, a cleaning robot, a digital lock and a 50-inch Marketing display screen for The Freight House. Councillors voted 7 against and 1 in favour in agreeing the application and the application was declined. However, Councillors agreed to provide support with advertising and to allow the use of the Parish bollards and noticeboards.

At 8.25 pm, the Chair returned to the meeting and Chaired the meeting from this point.

**39/25**

**Correspondence**

**39/25.1**

**Correspondence received since the last meeting**

The following correspondence was sent/received since the last meeting:

- Invitation for two Councillors and the Clerk to attend a meeting on Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation on Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> July at the Chamber, Civic Suite, Rayleigh.
- Letter from Councillor Belton introducing herself and advising that she is looking to engage with all Parish and Town Councils and would like to attend upcoming meetings. It was **agreed** that the Clerk would share the dates of upcoming Full Council meetings.
- The agenda and associated papers for the Rochford Association of Local Councils meeting which is being held on Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2025 was shared with Councillors.
- Received an application from Gunilla Edwards who would like to be considered for co-option. It was **agreed** that the Clerk would invite Gunilla to the next Full Council meeting.

**40/25**

**Questions from members of the public who are registered on the Electoral Roll as residents of Rochford Parish**

(Maximum of 15 minutes, Chair only to reply)

There were no members of the public present.

**41/25**

**To receive reports from County/District Councillor**

(Maximum of 15 minutes, Chair only to reply)

**41/25.1**

The report from the District County Councillor was received

**42/25**

**To receive reports from Councillors on Council activities undertaken since the last meeting**

**42/25.1**

The Chair advised that he attended the Hemps consultation regarding the proposed 2000 house development on Doggetts Farm, represented the council at the Armed Forces Day flag rising at the Mill Hall and represented the council at the Chairman's Garden Party.

**42/25.2**

Councillor Williams advised that he attended Rochford Primary School's production of Annie with Cllr McPherson.

**43/25**

**Councillor Training**

**43/25.1**

**To receive details of any training undertaken since the last meeting**

Cllr Williams advised that he and Cllr Steptoe has attended training delivered by Rochford District Council.

**43/25.2**

**To note any training to be arranged or confirmed**

The Clerk advised that she will be attending cemeteries training on 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> July 2025.

The Clerk advised that she is currently arranging for Councillors to receive Office 365 and SharePoint training and a date regarding this will be communicated in due course.

**43/25.1** The EALC training calendar was received.

**44/25 Reports from Committees**

**44/25.1 Community Projects Committee**

The draft minutes of the Community Project Committee held on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2025 were received.

**44/25.2 General Purposes Committee**

The draft minutes of the General Purposes Committee held on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2025 were received.

**45/25 Reports from Representatives to Outside Bodies**

**45/25.1 Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils**

It was noted that the next meeting will be held on Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2025.

**45/25.2 Rochford Supporters Group**

Cllr Crosbie advised that the application for The Freight House to be granted as an Asset of Community Value has been submitted and the first stage been approved. Cllr Crosbie expressed her appreciation to Councillors for their support.

**46/25 Planning Matters**

**46/25.1 Planning Applications Received**

There were no planning applications to be considered.

At 9.00 pm, The Chair proposed to continue with the meeting. This was **agreed**.

To consider any matters of a confidential nature.

(SO: 23:1 the public and press shall be admitted to all meetings of the council or of a committee which may, however, temporarily exclude the public or press or both by means of the following resolution, viz: “That in view of the special nature of the business about to be transacted, it is the opinion of this Council advisable in the public interest that the public (and press) be temporarily excluded and they were instructed to withdraw”)

**48/25 To receive the draft minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2025**

**48/25.1** The draft minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2025 were received.

**To receive an update on the handover of the new clerk**

**48/25.2** An employee raised a verbal complaint regarding the Clerk/RFO regarding the financial management of payroll and processing of personal data. Cllr Taylor proposed that with immediate effect, Emma Terris, the newly appointed Clerk/RFO is to be the only member of staff with access to the council’s financial and payroll records. This was seconded by Cllr Crosbie and unanimously carried.

Cllr Taylor further proposed that legal and HR advice is sought before any further action is taken. This was seconded by Cllr Crosbie. This was carried by a majority vote with one abstention.

As the meeting had overrun, it was agreed that an extra-ordinary meeting of the Full Council will be held on Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> July at 6.30 pm where the remainder of tonight’s agenda will be completed.

With there being no further business to discuss, the Chair thanked everyone for attending. The meeting closed at 9.40 pm