



**Minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee
of Rochford Parish Council held on
Wednesday, 24th September 2025 at 7.30 pm
at The Parish Rooms, Rochford**

In Attendance:

Councillors: James Edmunds
Denise Crosbie
Daniel Efde
Paul Nash (Chair)
Shelley Taylor
Myra Weir
Arthur Williams
Graham Whitehead

Clerk: Emma Terris

One member of the public was present.

-
- 51/25 To receive apologies for absence**
51/25.1 There were no apologies for absence received.
- 52/25 To receive any Declarations of Interests**
52/25.1 Cllrs Williams and Efde declared an interest in regard to Rochford District Council.
52/25.2 Cllr Taylor declared an interest in agenda item 58/25.1.
52/25.2 Cllrs Williams and Efde declared an interest in agenda item 61/25 and advised that any decision or voting taken on information provided will not be used or determined at any future District Council meeting.
- 53/25 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 20th August 2025**
53/25.1 The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 20th August 2025 were **agreed**.
- 54/25 Bank Reconciliations**
54/25.1 **To receive the bank reconciliations to date.**
The bank reconciliations for all the council's bank accounts as at 31st August 2025 were received **agreed** and signed by Chair of Finance.

54/25.2 **To receive the summary of Receipts and Payments compared to budget for the year to date.**
The summary of Receipts and Payments compared to budget was shared
-

with Members. There were no issues or concerns raised.

54/25.3

To receive an update on the transition to Scribe Accounts

The Clerk advised that the transition is progressing well with the accounts. Scribe are currently working on reinstating the 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years. Notice has now been given to terminate Rialtas and the contract will end on 31st March 2026. The bookings database has been added and is being tested before going live when the new website is launched in early October.

55/25

Internal Audit Action Plan

55/25.1

To receive an update on the progress against actions on the Internal Action Plan

The Internal Audit Action Plan was shared with Councillors. The Clerk gave an update on the work that has been undertaken to date.

56/25

External Audit

56/25.1

To receive an update from the Clerk on the progress of the external audit

The Clerk advised that following queries raised on the AGAR Form 3 and supporting documentation, that subject to sign off by an engagement lead, the following except for' matters (qualifications) on the AGAR Form 3 will be raised. The following comments were received:

- *The AGAR was not accurately completed before submission for review:*
 - *Information received from the smaller authority indicates that assets purchased during the prior year have not been included in Section 2, Box 9.*
- *The smaller authority has disclosed that it made proper provision during the year 2024/25 for the exercise of public rights, by answering 'Yes' to Section 1, Assertion 4. However, as was reported last year, we are aware that it failed to do this and therefore should have answered 'No' to this Assertion. It has also disclosed that it took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit, by answering 'Yes' to Section 1, Assertion 7, which, on the basis of the above, is not correct.*
- *Section 1, Assertion 5, has been incorrectly completed. Information received from the smaller authority highlights that risk management arrangements were not reviewed and approved by the authority during the year. As a result, this assertion should have been answered 'No'.*
- *Section 1, Assertion 1 has been incorrectly completed, the council failed to publish statutory documents that breach the Transparency Code 2015 and ICO expectations under the Model Publication Scheme. This is consistent with the Internal Auditor's response to Internal Control Objective L*

- *Section 1, Assertion 3 has been incorrectly completed, the council failed to meet the statutory publication requirements under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. This is consistent with the Internal Auditor's response to Internal Control Objective N.*

57/25

Bank Accounts

57/25.1

To receive an update regarding updating the bank mandate at Unity Bank and CCLA

The Clerk advised that Sally Faulkner has now been removed from the bank mandate for Unity Bank and Emma Terris, has been added and now has full access to the bank account. The bank mandate for CCLA is currently in process of being amended.

57/25.2

To receive a report from the Clerk regarding suitable bank accounts for the council and possible agree to make a recommendation to Full Council to open additional current/savings account

Members received a report detailing suitable bank accounts. Cllr Edmunds proposed that the Finance Committee recommend to Full Council to consider and possibly agree to opening an additional current account with Unity Bank with a view to making this the main account for the council. This was seconded by Cllr Williams and unanimously carried.

The Clerk advised that work is continuing to identify suitable savings accounts.

57/25.3

To receive a report from the Clerk and possibly agree to changing from Square to Stripe for online payments

The Clerk informed Members that invoices are now being raised from Scribe, the council's accounting package. There is a function within Scribe that will allow invoices to be settled by credit or debit card via a link on the invoice. The Clerk advised that Square, which the council currently uses for online payment, is not compatible with Scribe. Stripe, which is comparable in price to Square, is fully compatible with the bookings and invoicing software. Following a discussion, it was agreed that there is a need to streamline the payment process, and it was **agreed** that the council moves from Square to Stripe to facilitate online bookings.

58/25

Budget Preparation

58/25.1

To receive and review the price lists for all council assets.

The price lists for all council assets were shared with Members for information. It was agreed that there is a need for a full review of charges to be undertaken for costs to be reflected in this year's budget planning. Members asked for detailed comparison of charges from similar providers to be shared with Members at the next meeting.

58/25.2

To receive and review possible grant increase to RALGA

This item was deferred until the comparison of income and expenditure is undertaken.

59/25

Mobile Phone/IT Equipment

59/25.1

To receive an update on upgrading the office mobile phone

The Clerk advised that a suitable phone has been identified at a cost of £38+VAT a month and will shortly be purchased.

59/25.2

To receive an update on the existing Windows 10 Office PC

Members **agreed** to delegate authority to the Clerk to upgrade the existing Office PC that is unable to support Windows 11, provided costs remain within her delegated limit of £300.00.

60/25

Policy Review

60/25.1

To receive and review the Investment Policy

The updated Investment Policy was shared with Members for review. It was agreed that a working party is established to review the policy prior to approval at Full Council.

60/25.2

To receive and review the Reserves

The updated Reserves Policy was shared with Members for review. It was agreed that a working party is established to review the policy prior to approval at Full Council.

60/25.3

To receive and review the updated Financial Regulations

The updated Financial Regulations was shared with Members for review. It was agreed that a working party is established to review the policy prior to approval at Full Council.

61/25

Planning Matters

36/25.1

Reference: 25/00570/OUT

Location: Land Adjacent to Ardleigh House, Hall Road, Rochford, Essex

Description: Outline application with all matters reserved for one detailed self-build dwelling.

Comment: Councillors had no objection or comment to make on this application.

Reference: 25/00623/FUL

Location: 76 West Street, Rochford, Essex, SS4 1AU

Description: Replacement of existing glazed wood casement windows with double glazed UPVC casement windows.

Comment: Councillors objected to this application due to the conservation area and the need to ensure the windows match the other properties windows.

Reference: 25/00581/FUL

Location: Green Shutters, Hall Road, Rochford

Description: Extension to existing garage

Comment: Members had no objection or comment to make on this application.

With there being no further business to discuss, the Chair thanked everyone for attending. The meeting closed at 8.56 pm

Minutes signed by: _____

Date: _____

DRAFT