



ROCHFORD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting
Held on Wednesday, 29th July 2026 at 6.30 pm
At The Parish Rooms, Rochford

Members Present: Cllr Derek Brown
Cllr Leona Bryceland
Cllr James Edmunds
Cllr Rodd Hubbard
Cllr Paul Nash
Cllr Laureen Shaw
Cllr Mike Steptoe
Cllr Linda Thomas
Cllr Graham Whitehead
Cllr Arthur Williams

In Attendance: Mrs Emma Terris – Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
Mr James Faulkner – Admin Assistant

There were no members of the public present

46/25

Councillor Co-Option

Members considered the application received from Mr Mike Steptoe.

The Chair welcomed Mr Steptoe to the meeting and invited him to introduce himself. Mr Steptoe outlined his background, experience and reasons for wishing to serve on the Council. Members commented on the quality and comprehensive application and agreed his knowledge and experience would be an asset to the Council.

The Chair proposed that Mr Steptoe be co-opted onto Rochford Town Council.

Resolved: That Mr Mike Steptoe-be co-opted onto Rochford Town Council.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Mr Steptoe signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and joined the meeting as a full voting member of the Council.

- 47/25 To receive apologies for absence**
Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Cottis, Crosbie, Edwards and Houston-Bailey. Cllr Callaghan was absent.
- 48/25 To approve the Minutes of the Previous Meeting**
The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 24th June 2026 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.
- 49/25 Questions from members of the public who are registered on the Electoral Roll as residents of Rochford Town Council (maximum of 15 minutes, Chairman only to reply)**
There were no members of the public present.
- 50/25 To receive reports from County/District Councillors (maximum of 10 minutes, Chairman only to reply)**
- County Councillor Report**
There were no County Councillors present
- District Councillor Report**
Cllr Williams advised that a meeting had been arranged to discuss the closure of Rochford Post Office however, the meeting was cancelled shortly before it was due to begin. Members noted that the Post Office will be closing on Saturday, 1st August 2026 and the nearest alternative Post Office is in Eastwood or Ashingdon. Members expressed concern regarding the impact this would have on residents.
- 51/25 Clerk's Report**
The Clerk's report was received and noted.
- 52/25 To receive a verbal update from Members of Rochford Parish Council on activities undertaken since the last meeting**
The Chair reported that he attended the Chairman of Rochford District Council's Garden Party and that the event raised approximately £2,500 for the Chairman's chosen Charity. It was noted that Cllrs Williams, Shaw and Steptoe also attended the event, together with the Clerk.
- 53/25 Strategic Action Plan**
Members considered arrangements for developing a strategic plan for the Council.
- A member queried whether it was too soon to undertake strategic planning given the Government's Local Government Reorganisation proposals. Members acknowledged the ongoing changes and noted that Parish and Town councils would continue to have an important role and, if anything, responsibilities would likely increase.
- It was suggested that the Council should develop a 'live' Strategic Action Plan that could be periodically reviewed and amended to reflect changing priorities.
- Following discussion, the Chair proposed that a dedicated session is arranged for September, with all members and officers invited to attend.
- Resolved:** That a Strategic Planning Session be held during September to develop a Strategic Action Plan for Rochford Town Council.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

54/25 Finance

54/25.1 To receive the bank reconciliations for June 2026

The bank reconciliations for June 2026 were received, agreed and signed by the Chair of Finance.

54/25.2 To receive payments for authorisation

The following payments were approved for payment:

Supplier	Total £
NPower	308.47
SSE Energy Solutions	154.01
Council Wise Dunmow	1,588.00
J&P Prior	318.10
Around Rochford	362.00
Neatwork Services Ltd	1,350.00
Peninsula Business	344.49
Winfield Clearance	280.00
EDF Energy	120.30
ParaBar Developments	2,500.00
TBS Hygiene	378.00
P.F. Ahern (London) Ltd	253.31
Cloudy IT	1,105.06
Starboard Systems Limited	288.00
Ernest Doe & Sons	47.97
SSE Energy Solutions	88.17

54/25.3 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 for the year to date was received.

54/25.4 To consider the recommendation of the Finance Committee to reappoint Helen Symmons of Legra Internal Audit Service to undertake the Council's Interim and year-end audits for the 2026/2027 financial year.

Members considered the recommendation of the Finance Committee for Legra Internal Audit Services to be reappointed to undertake the Council's interim and year-end internal audits.

Resolved: That Legra Internal Audit Services be reappointed to undertake the Council's interim and year-end internal audits for the 2026/2027 financial year.

54/25.5 To note the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/2026 was submitted to the external audit on 25th June 2026, prior to the statutory deadline, and that the Notice of Public Rights was duly published and that the period of exercise of the public rights commences on 1st July 2026 and concludes on 11th August 2026.

Members noted that:

- The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) had been submitted to the External Auditor on 25th June 2026; and
- The statutory Notice of Public Rights had been published in accordance with legislation.

55/25

To consider requests for dispensations

At 7.19 pm, Cllr Edmunds left the meeting due to his declared interest and the Vice-Chair took the Chair for this item.

Members considered the Clerk's report regarding Cllr Edmunds request for dispensations. Cllr Edmunds had submitted four requests for dispensations but prior to the meeting withdrew his request for a dispensation to be issued for matters dealing with The Freight House.

The remaining requests were considered which included, The King Edmund School, St Mark's Hall and The Design Cabin Community CIC.

During discussion, a member commented on the importance of ensuring that councillors, particularly those holding the office of Chair, did not create any perception that preferential treatment was being sought or received.

Members also considered the practical implications of a dispensation not being granted, including the potential impact on the quorum for meetings where Cllr Edmunds would otherwise be required to declare an interest, withdraw and take no part in the discussion or decision.

Having considered the requests and the matters raised during the discussion, members concluded that the potential impact on the quorum did not provide sufficient justification for granting a dispensation.

Resolved: For the reasons set out above, the requests for dispensation relating to The King Edmund School, St Mark's Hall and The Design Cabin Community CIC are not granted.

56/25

St Mark's Hall

Members considered the Clerk's report regarding the three quotations received for the remedial works at St Mark's Hall. Members discussed the fire safety requirements, outstanding compliance matters and the essential repairs necessary to ensure the building remained safe and compliant. It was agreed that, at this stage, priority should be given to essential safety and compliance works only.

Resolved: That only essential works are undertaken at this stage and that the following quotations are accepted:

- Turner Bros - £7,375.00 plus VAT, for the replacement of the kitchen door, installation of a disabled access ramp to the rear garden and works to the rear door/fire escape.
- Blake Fire Safety - £6,544.50 plus VAT for the specialist fire safety works identified within the quotation.

It was agreed that any further non-essential works would be considered separately by the Council as required.

At 7.45 pm, Cllr Edmunds returned to the meeting and chaired the meeting from this point.

57/25 The Parish Rooms

The Health and Safety Report for the Parish Rooms was received and the actions arising from the report noted.

58/25 Review of Council Accommodation

Members considered whether the Council should relocate from The Kings Head back to the Parish Rooms. Members discussed the accommodation requirements of the Council, the likely costs involved, the necessary improvement required including the installation of air conditioning.

Cllr Williams proposed that the Clerk investigate the implications of relocating back to the Parish Rooms and prepare a full report with costings. This was seconded by Cllr Brown.

Resolved: That the Clerk investigate the practical and financial implications of relocating the Council offices back to the Parish Rooms and present a report, including relevant costings to a future meeting.

The resolution was carried unanimously. Cllr Edmunds abstained.

59/25 Reports from Committees

59/25.1 Community Projects

There was no update.

59/25.2 General Purposes

There was no update.

59/25.3 Staffing Committee

The minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 22nd July 2026 were received.

60/25 To receive reports from representatives to outside bodies

60/25.1 Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 16th July 2026 were received.

60/25.2 Old Peoples Welfare Committee

No update

At 8.00 pm Cllr Bryceland gave her apologies and left the meeting

61/25 Councillor/Clerk/Employee Training

61/25.1 To receive details of training undertaken since the last meeting

It was noted that:

- CouncilWise provided Councillor Refresher training for members on Wednesday, 8th July 2026.
- The Clerk and Chair had recently attended Martyn's Law training.
- Cllr Steptoe had attended EALC training.

61/25.2

To consider any future training to be arranged

It was agreed that the Clerk would investigate arranging Chair's training.

62/25

Planning Applications

The following planning applications were considered.

Planning Reference	26/00506/ADV
Applicant:	Umdasch Storemakers Limited
Location:	Car Dealership D2, Rochford Business Park, Cherry Orchard Way, Rochford
Description:	Instal 2 No internally illuminated fascia signs
Comment:	No comment

Planning Reference	26/00437/FUL
Applicant:	Mrs Y Akinleye
Location:	46 The Drive, Rochford, SS4 1QE16
Description:	Erect a single storey rear extension to home office to create a ground floor studio flat.
Comment:	Objection on the grounds of overdevelopment

Planning Reference	26/00499/FUL
Applicant:	Mr and Mrs D&A Heim
Location:	111 Rochford Garden Way, Rochford, SS4 1QJ
Description:	Proposed single storey front and side extensions
Comment:	No comment

63/25

Date and time of next meeting

Wednesday, 30th September 2026 at 6.30 pm at The Parish Rooms, Rochford

64/25

Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved: That, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item(s) of business on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

65/25

St Mark's Hall

The Clerk reported that she was still awaiting legal advice from Wellers LLP in relation to St Mark's Hall and would report back to members once advice had been received.

66/25

Staffing Matters

66/25.1

Maintenance Officer

Following a recommendation from the Staffing Committee, members considered the extension of the Maintenance Officer's fixed-term contract.

Resolved: That the Maintenance Officer's contract be extended for a further six months with effect from 1st August 2026.

66/25.2

HR Policies and Procedures

Following a recommendation from the Staffing Committee, members considered the adoption of the draft HR Policies and Procedures.

Resolved: That the HR Policies and Procedures are adopted and that their implementation and ongoing administration is delegated to the Clerk, in consultation with the Staffing Committee.

66/25.3

Clerk's Working Hours

Following a recommendation from the Staffing Committee, members considered making the temporary increase in the Clerk's contracted working hours from 25 hours to 35 hours a week permanent.

Resolved: That the Clerk's contracted working hours be permanently increased from 25 hours to 35 hours a week, with effect from 1st August 2026.

With no further business to discuss, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.21 pm.