



Rochford Town Council

Members of the General Purposes Committee are summoned to attend an Extraordinary meeting to be held at the Town Rooms on **Wednesday, 7th October 2026 at 7.00 pm**

The Agenda is set out overleaf.

Other Councillors are welcome to attend this meeting if they wish to do so.

If there are any items on the Agenda for which members will require further information, please notify the Clerk by 1pm on the preceding working day to enable it to be ready for the meeting.

Emma Terris

Emma Terris
Clerk to the Council

Membership for 2026/27:

Councillors Arthur Williams, Rodd Hubbard, Gunilla Edwards, Derek Brown, Graham Whitehead, James Edmunds, Denise Crosbie, Linda Thomas, Errol Huston-Bailey, Mike Stepoe and Laureen Shaw

Terms of Reference for General Purposes Committee:

1. To work within delegated powers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 101) within the delegated budget to provide and manage the following Services:
2. Management of the Allotments
3. Management of Rochford Lawn Cemetery
4. Street Furniture
5. Doggetts Wildlife Area
6. Highways Matters
7. Town Clock
8. War Memorial
9. Management of Back Lane Public Toilets
10. To submit regular budgetary reports to the Finance Committee
11. To consider other initiatives which would benefit the Community of Rochford.
12. To recommend an annual budget to Full Council
13. To deal with any further matters which Full Council may delegate from time to time.
14. To consider any planning applications received where required

Agenda

1. **To receive apologies for absence.**
2. **To receive any Declaration of Interests**
3. To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on **Wednesday, 9th September 2026** as a true record of that meeting.
4. **Doggetts Wildlife Area**
 - a) To receive Fishing licensee proposal for emergency works.
 - b) To discuss alterations to the gate leading onto Doggetts Close.
 - c) To confirm placement locations of Lifebuoys and Danger Deep Water signs.
5. **Allotments**
 - a) To receive a report the allotment renewals and invoicing delay
 - b) To receive a verbal report of the tree works being undertaken by Arbescape Tree and Ground Ltd.
6. **Rochford Lawn Cemetery**
 - a) To receive a verbal update including
 - Number of burials
 - Maintenance of Cemetery
 - Complaints
7. **Back Lane Public Toilets**
 - a) To receive a quotation from Wellgate to service the soap and water dispensers in the public toilets.
 - b) To receive complaints about the door lock at the doctor's side restroom and action being taken



Rochford Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee Held on Wednesday, 9th September 2026 at The Parish Rooms, Rochford at 7.30 pm

In Attendance: James Faulkner, Clayton Barber

Councillors: Derek Brown (Chair)
James Edmunds
Linda Thomas
Denise Crosbie
Laureen Shaw

Clerk: Emma Terris

-
- 13/26 To receive apologies for absence**
13/26.1 Apologies were received for Cllrs Williams, Huston-Baily, Edwards, Whitehead and Hubbard.
- 14/26 To receive any Declarations of Interest**
14/26.1 Cllr Thomas declared an interest in the allotments.
14/26.2 Cllr Crosby declared an interest in Doggetts Wildlife Area as she knows Clayton Barber personally.
- 15/26 To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 10th June 2026 as a true record of the meeting.**
15/26.1 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.
- 16/26 Co-option onto General Purpose Committee.**
16/26.1 It was proposed by the Cllr Brown to co-opt Mike Steptoe onto the committee. A vote was held and all were in favour.
16/26.2 It was proposed by Cllr Brown to co-opt Laureen Shaw onto the committee. A vote was held and all were in favour.
- 17/26 Doggetts Wildlife Area**
17/26.1 Clayton Barber was introduced to the committee.

- 17/26.2 A report was received about the fish mortality incident. Mr Barber gave an explanation as to why it happened and the risks of each action that could be taken to manage the situation.
- 17/26.3 A report was received on Mr Barber's proposal to create an accessible parking area, access improvements and an accessible angling facility. A discussion was held and it was agreed to defer the decision to Full Council.
- 17/26.4 A report on the Council's insurance position and advice received from Gallagher was received. Mr Barber also provided copies of his insurance documents for the Council's records.
- 17/26.5 A verbal report on the council's governance documents were received. Examples of the Wildlife area weekly inspection reports, Landlord approval register, Licensee obligation schedule and a non-compliance log were received.
- 17/26.6 It was agreed to reinstate the Doggetts Wildlife Area joint management committee and to invite Clayton Barber, Rochford District Council and the Squires to attend twice a year.
- 17/26.7 A discussion was held about quotes received for the new design on the information boards. It was agreed that we approach an artist that Cllr Edmunds knows to receive a quote.
- 17/26.8 It was proposed by Cllr Edmunds that £2,529.60 be set aside to purchase up to 10 Lifebuoys. Mr barber will give us a recommendation of locations and a quote to fit them. Furthermore, notices to be placed on the Lifebuoy's case asking not to miss use. This was seconded by Cllr Crosbie. A vote was held and all were in favour.

18/26 Allotments

- 18/26.1 A report on the number of people on the waiting list was received.
- 18/26.2 A report on the number of vacant plots was received.
- 18/26.3 A report cover maintenance at the allotment site was received.
- 18/26.4 Quotes for Fencing options at the allotments were received. It was proposed by Cllr Edmunds that we take this to the long-term strategy meeting to discuss making this a part of a multiyear plan.

- 18/26.5 A report was received discussing if local allotment site have plot deposit schemes. It was proposed that the office find out from Southend City Council how successful their pursuing of a plot deposit and the legality around it.
- 18/26.6 A discussion took place regarding the increasing practice of plot holders adding secondary holders to their allotment plots, which may enable individuals to obtain a plot without joining or progressing through the waiting list process. It was proposed by Cllr Brown that secondary plot holders should not automatically be granted the right to take over a plot when the primary holder relinquishes it. Any transfer of a plot to a secondary holder should only be permitted where prior dispensation has been granted by the Council. A vote was held and it was unanimously agreed.
- 18/26.7 An update was received that RALGA did not have their summer show and so permission for the bouncy castle was not needed.
- 18/26.8 The Committee was informed of advice received from the National Allotment Society that it is recommending banning all fires on allotment sites. A discussion was held and it was proposed by Cllr Shaw and seconded by Cllr Brown that fires on site should be banned going forward without express permission from the Council. A vote was held and it was agreed unanimously.

19/26 Rochford Lawn Cemetery

- 19/26.1 A report was received with the number of burials, maintenance and complaint was received.
- 19/26.2 A request was received to ask to use of a Paradso Granite headstone. It was proposed by Cllr Edmunds to decline the request. This was seconded by Cllr Shaw. A vote as held and all were in favour.

20/26 Back Lane Public Toilets

- 20/26.1 A verbal report that public toilets are compliant with the equality act was received.
- 20/26.2 A verbal report on the broken window at the public toilets was received.

21/26 Bus Stops

- 21/26.1 A verbal update to cleaning and repairing the bus stop on Southend Road.

21/26.2 It was proposed by Cllr Shaw that we investigate if we can get a grant from Essex County Council and Cllr Shaw would pass on contact details.

22/26 Back Lane Public Toilets

22/26.1 The draft business case for an asset transfer was received.

22/26.2 Cllr Williams proposed that the Parish Council ask the District Council to redecorate the Back Lane toilets before the Parish Council would formally accept the asset transfer. This was seconded by Cllr Edmunds. A vote was held and all were in favour.

23/26 Signage

23/26.1 A verbal update on the VAS Sign was received.

23/26.2 A verbal update was received on the maintenance to the brick boundary sign at the bottom of South Street.

24/26 Extending the Committee Meeting

24/26.1 it was proposed by Cllr Edmunds that we extend the meeting to finish the agenda. This was seconded by Cllr Crosbie. A vote was held and all were in favor.

25/26 Exclusion of the Press and Public

25/26.1 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.

26/26 Doggetts Wildlife Area

26/26.1 A report was received.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.50 pm

RESTORATION REPORT: LITTLE BOBBIN LAKE

Executive Summary

Little Bobbin Lake, a waterbody measuring approximately 1 acre, has experienced a severe 90% water loss due to the extreme weather of 2026. This unprecedented drought triggered a catastrophic oxygen crash and subsequent high number of fish fatalities. The receding water has exposed a minimum of 2 feet of deep silt, which currently exhibits quicksand-like characteristics, presenting an immediate, high-risk safety hazard to the general public.

To restore the lake's ecological viability and eliminate public liability across the approximately 1-acre site, immediate intervention is required. This report evaluates two restoration strategies alongside mandatory perimeter tree management.

Current Site Hazards & Environmental Status

- **Public Safety Threat:** The exposed 2-foot silt layer across the basin is unstable and structurally identical to quicksand.
- **Ecological Collapse:** The 2026 oxygen crash caused a high number of fish fatalities, decimating the resident aquatic life. The remaining shallow pools are stagnant and incapable of supporting a healthy ecosystem.
- **Perimeter Overgrowth:** Dense tree cover around the entire perimeter, particularly invasive and established willow species, exacerbates water loss via evapotranspiration and blocks prevailing winds, preventing natural water aeration.

Evaluation of Restoration Options

Option 1: Full Silt Removal (Dredging)

This option involves mechanically excavating the minimum 2-foot silt layer across the entire approximately 1-acre bed to restore original depths and increase overall water volume capacity.

- **Methodology:** Requires contracting a specialized silt management firm utilizing amphibious dredgers, or deploying heavy civil machinery (long-reach excavators, tracked dumpers, and high-capacity pumps) alongside a specialized labor force.
- **Advantages:** Completely removes decades of organic waste and nutrient-rich sludge. Permanently increases depth by at least 2 feet, creating a cooler, more stable thermal refuge for future fish stocks.
- **Disadvantages:** Highly expensive capital expenditure for a lake of this scale. Logistically complex, requiring substantial land access for heavy machinery and silt drying beds. High disposal costs if the silt cannot be spread on-site.

Option 2: Structural Elevation (Clay Bunding & Outlet Modification)

This option focuses on engineering the lake's geography to retain more water by raising the boundaries and modifying the primary outflow.

- **Methodology:** Import and compact high-grade clay to raise the banking at both ends of the lake. Simultaneously, elevate the structural height of the outlet weir located at the road end of the lake.

- **Advantages:** Significantly more cost-effective than mass silt excavation for an approximately 1-acre area. Guarantees an additional 4 feet of water retention during winter months, building a massive hydrological buffer ahead of the summer seasons. Leaves the hazardous silt safely submerged, neutralizing the public quicksand asset risk without excavation costs.

Direct Comparison Matrix

Assessment Criteria	Option 1: Silt Removal	Option 2: Raise Banks & Outlet (Recommended)
Financial Feasibility	Prohibitively High <i>(Extensive contractor & specialist disposal costs)</i>	Highly Cost-Effective <i>(Utilizes standard earthworks materials)</i>
Water Retention Gain	+2 feet minimum depth	+4 feet significant depth advantage <i>(Maximizes winter storage)</i>
Public Safety Resolution	Slow & hazardous handling of wet quicksand material	Immediate & secure encapsulation <i>(Safely submerges hazard)</i>
Disruption & Complexity	Severe <i>(Heavy machinery access, drying beds, site damage)</i>	Minimal <i>(Targeted works restricted to lake boundaries)</i>
Project ROI & Delivery	Low <i>(Diminishing returns due to extreme excavation overheads)</i>	Excellent <i>(Fast delivery time with immediate hydrological payback)</i>

Mandatory Work Phase: Perimeter Tree & Willow Management

Regardless of the chosen engineering option, 100% perimeter tree removal is mandatory, with particular emphasis on completely eradicating all willow trees around the water's edge, to prevent a recurrence of the 2026 ecological collapse.

- **Hydrological Benefit:** Willow trees are notorious water-consumers with aggressive, deep root systems that drink thousands of liters of water daily. Removing all willows immediately stops this massive, ongoing drain on the water table during high-heat periods.
- **Aeration Benefit:** Clearing the dense willow canopy removes the physical windbreaks. Allowing prevailing winds to strike the open water surface creates natural wave action, forcing vital oxygen back into the water to safeguard future fish stocks.
- **Organic Load Reduction:** Willows drop significant amounts of leaves, twigs, and organic debris directly into the lake. Halting this annual leaf-drop prevents further rapid decomposition, which is the primary catalyst for the toxic 2-foot quicksand silt buildup.

Historical Significance & Naming Heritage

Beyond its current environmental challenges, **Little Bobbin Lake** holds a dark and profound place in local history. The name 'The Bobbin' does not stem from the textile trade, but rather from a grizzly chapter of the region's past during the witch-hunting crazes of the 1500s and 1600s.

"The Bobbin" is the name of the fishing ponds on Doggetts Nature Reserve. The name comes from the fact that witch hunters were said to have used the ponds to prove the guilt of women and men accused of witchcraft or sorcery. Today, the ponds are a tranquil area... [but they] have a grizzly past."

The waterbody was natively known as 'The Bobbing Pond' due to the horrific process of 'dunking' or 'swimming' those accused of witchcraft.

"There was a pond on Doggett's farmland in Rochford called The Bobbing Pond, which was used to test people for witchcraft. The process involved attaching the person to a stool or chair on a long pole, lowering the person into deep water, and holding the person underwater for some time. If the person was still alive when brought up, they were found guilty of witchcraft and executed."

Over the centuries, 'The Bobbing Pond' morphed linguistically into 'The Bobbin.' While it has since evolved into a peaceful community asset for walkers and anglers, it remains a vital, irreplaceable piece of local history.

Urgent Appeal to the Council

We must not let it be this current council that allows the ultimate demise of Little Bobbin Lake.

Given the severe 90% water loss and total ecological collapse experienced in recent times, the lake is heading toward complete destruction. It has survived centuries of history, transforming from a site of historical tragedy into a treasured local nature reserve. If immediate funding and structural restoration actions are not approved by this council, the direction it is currently heading means **it will be permanently lost**. The council has a civic duty to protect our shared heritage and environment; passive delay will mean the permanent extinction of a landmark that defines our local identity. Intervention must happen now before the lake disappears forever.

1 Out let
areas That
need raising

Joggetts Cl

St Clare Meadow

Essex Leisure Fisheries



Executive Management & Operations Report: 4-Year Fishery Restoration

Fishery: Digger's Fishery | Period of Management: 4 Years (2022-2026)

Prepared by: Fishery Management

Executive Summary

Over the past **four years**, Digger's Fishery has undergone a comprehensive transformation. Transforming from a state of severe historic neglect, parts of the facility have been successfully restored into a safe and ecologically balanced angling venue.

This turnaround has been achieved through hundreds of hours of arduous manual labor, substantial personal funding, and **continuous on-site security enforcement to manage poaching, illegal campfires, and unauthorized encampments**. The entire operation has been personally funded by management, with all labor, machinery, and materials provided out-of-pocket, firmly laying the groundwork for a secure, asset-protected, and thriving commercial venue.

1. Aquatic Vegetation Control & Ecological Management

Years of venue neglect resulted in a major, invasive weed and overgrown reed crisis. Left unchecked, excessive aquatic vegetation chokes out a fishery by blocking sunlight, trapping organic debris, and critically depleting oxygen levels at night or during warm weather.

- **Manual Weed Removal:** Management and bailiffs executed intensive manual weed extraction mainly during peak growth over the warmer months across all four years. This grueling work was essential to keep the swims physically fishable and protect local wildlife.
- **Light Suppression:** To break the cycle of unchecked growth, specialized aquatic blue dye was deployed annually. This safe application filters out the specific light spectrum required for photosynthesis, successfully suppressing weed regeneration from the lake bed, at a commercial cost of £1,020 pa.
- **Targeted Reed Removal:** Overgrown reed beds were strategically cleared and managed. When left to decay naturally, excessive weed biomass sinks to the lake bed, creating thick silt that consumes vast amounts of dissolved oxygen during decomposition. Removing this mass directly mitigated severe oxygen crash risks.
- **Current Status:** Following four years of continuous treatment, the weed and reed crisis is now officially under control, stabilizing the habitat for fish and native wildlife.
- **Avian Habitat Enhancement:** The introduction of strategic bird nesting boxes around the perimeter of the lakes has successfully established thriving nesting sites for native blue tits, which have successfully reared young and enhanced the venue's overall ecosystem.

2. Fish Stock Management & Biosecurity

Transforming the lake required significant management to balance the venue's population, combat population imbalances, and protect water quality.

- **Restocking Program:** A minimum £13,000 personal investment was injected directly into a major restocking program for Digger's Main Lake, securing a high-quality, sustainable population of large fish for years to come.
- **Catfish Regulation & Population Control:** Left unmanaged, catfish multiply rapidly, outcompete other species, and destroy balanced lake recruitment. Management successfully navigated the strict procedures for obtaining official licenses required to hold catfish. Binomial occupancy status is protected by a thriving program to keep their numbers at an ecologically safe level.
- **Aeration System Deployment:** To permanently combat low-oxygen disasters caused by atmospheric shifts, high-temperature spikes, and decaying plant matter, management purchased and deployed full, commercial-grade aeration systems in the main lakes.
- **Anti-Poaching & Stock Security:** Implemented vigilant bailiff presence to successfully combat illegal fishing and prevent the theft/poaching of specimen fish stocks by unauthorized individuals, safeguarding the venue's key biological assets.

3. Infrastructure, Estate Improvements & Site Security

Upon arrival four years ago, the banks were defined by dangerous, slippery, and muddy areas. The estate required extensive structural overhauls to ensure angler safety, protect wildlife, enforce security, and prevent severe erosion degradation.

Projects Completed	Description & Operational Impact
Swims Construction	Built permanent, safe, and erosion-proof angling platforms to replace unsafe, muddy banks.
Bank Erosion Repair	Stabilized collapsing shorelines to prevent siltation and maintain lake integrity.
Gravel Pathway Network	Created an all-weather gravel walk network around the venue to maximize sweeping access.
Hazardous Tree Management	Conducted emergency tree-felling and deadwood removal to eliminate high-wind hazards safely above angling swims.
Pathway Maintenance	Continuous clearance and cutting back of overgrown lakeside vegetation to maintain clear walk paths and walking lines.
Grounds & Waste Management	Management and bailiffs perform near-daily litter picks and rigorous upkeep of lakeside bins, maintaining a pristine environment and preventing local wildlife from scavenging.
Wildlife Welfare Interventions	Regularly patrolled and cleared hazardous snagged tackle, successfully rescuing entangled ducks and geese from tethered lines.
Fire Mitigation & Enforcement	Intervened and stopped unauthorized campfires on the grounds, eliminating severe fire hazards to the woodland and fishery estate.
Estate Security & Trespass	Successfully cleared unauthorized encampments of vagrants from the meadow area, eliminating severe anti-social behavior and restoring site safety.

4. Financial & Labor Commitment Summary

The restoration of Digger's Fishery has been treated as a full-time operational duty, despite operating at a significant financial loss.

- **Capital Expenditure:** £23,000+ explicitly spent on main lake restocking, alongside thousands more spent on machinery (leases), fuel, timber, gravel, weed-cutting tools, and continuous aeration treatments.
- **Subsidy Model:** Ticket sales alone have failed to cover basic upkeep. Management has personally financed every shortfall over the 4-year tenure, leaving the operator substantially out-of-pocket to preserve the venue's future.
- **Resource Logistics:** All forms of labor, technical oversight, heavy machinery, and raw materials were entirely sourced and managed independently by the manager.

Conclusion & Future Outlook

Through four years of intense physical labor and substantial personal investment, Digger's Fishery has been successfully rescued from decline. The venue is now ecologically stable, structurally safer, legally compliant, and secure against external threats, setting it up as a high-standard angling facility for the long term.

Essex Fish Kills & Ecological Crises Report (2026)

A comprehensive summary of documented fish kills, ecological disasters, and emergency aquatic rescues across Essex water bodies during this year's severe environmental conditions.

1. Weather-Driven Crises & Algal Blooms

- **Canvey Lake (Canvey Island):** A severe ecological crisis driven by extreme heat, drought, and toxic blue-green algae blooms. Severe oxygen depletion resulted in high mortality rates for both fish and wild fowl. Public health warnings were issued instructing visitors to avoid water contact.
- **Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park Lake (Rochford):** Prolonged dry weather caused water levels to drop drastically, trapping fish in shallow mud. A massive multi-agency rescue successfully relocated roughly 4,000 fish and eels to a safe holding lake to avert a total collapse.
- **Canewdon Riverside Village Holiday Park Lake:** Plummeting water levels due to intense summer heat caused a rapid environmental shift, leading directly to the death of hundreds of fish.
- **Friars Park Lake (Shoeburyness):** Extreme shallow water conditions left fish gasping in low-oxygen margins. The Environment Agency was unable to deploy standard aeration pumps due to the risk of churning up toxic bottom silt in the shallow remains.

2. Total Oxygen Crashes & Pre-Emptive Rescues

- **SEEFAS Waters (Canewdon):** Experienced a catastrophic, total ecosystem wipeout. The fishery suffered a sudden, complete dissolved oxygen crash during the early hours of the night, giving operators no time to deploy emergency mitigation.
- **Langtons Gardens Lake (Hornchurch):** Water temperatures spiked rapidly, causing a critical drop in oxygen levels. A mass die-off was successfully averted by an emergency deployment from local authority fishery squads, who completely evacuated and relocated the lake's fish stocks.

3. Structural Failures & Water Contamination

- **Southchurch Park Lake (Southend-on-Sea):** This freshwater lake suffered a massive wildlife disaster, leaving hundreds of fish and eels dead. Investigations revealed that three critical underwater valves failed completely, allowing high volumes of dense seawater to infiltrate the lake and rapidly poison the freshwater species.

4. Monitored River Systems

The Environment Agency has deployed widespread emergency aeration and monitoring equipment along vulnerable river stretches across Essex experiencing identical heat-related oxygen drops. Heavily impacted networks include the **River Can, River Chelmer, River Colne, and River Blackwater.**

EMERGENCY REPORTING HOTLINE

C BARBER GROUNDWORKS

Rectory Road
Rochford
Essex
Ss4 1ug
01702 831168 / 07400559556

Quote

Quote No: 3796
Date: 13/09/2026

For: Rochford Parish Council
deputy@rochfordparishcouncil.gov.uk

Description	Amount
Project Plan: Little Bobbin Water Project	£9,800.00
Goal: Hold more water in the Little Bobbin so it does not dry up during hot summers.	
1. repair the Banks	
What to do: Replace lost earth at both ends of the Little Bobbin using clay.	
Why: To create higher walls that hold back more water and stop leaks.	
2. Raise the Water Outlet	
What to do: Lift the overflow outlet pipe/gate by 4 to 5 feet (or as high as possible).	
Why: To safely raise the maximum water level inside the bobbin.	
3. Add Inflow Pipes	
What to do: Install pipes at one end of the Little Bobbin.	
Why: To make sure water can easily flow in when needed.	
4. Clear the Willows	
What to do: Cut down and remove 90% of the willow trees along the bank.	
Why: Willows suck up massive amounts of water, causing the bobbin to dry out.	
Subtotal	£9,800.00
VAT 0%	£0.00
Total	£9,800.00
CIS 20%	£0.00
Total	£9,800.00

ROCHFORD PARISH COUNCIL
REPORT

COMMITTEE	General Purpose
DATE OF MEETING	7 th October 2026
SUBJECT	Little Bobbin Water Retention, Fish Welfare and Environmental Improvement Works
AUTHOR	Clerk's Assistant
CIRCULATION	Full Council

Background

The Council has received a request from Clayton Barber, Fishing Licence Holder and Bailiff at Doggetts Wildlife Area, seeking approval to undertake works to the Little Bobbin.

The request follows concerns regarding:

- Low water levels.
- Fish mortality events.
- Reduced oxygen levels.
- Fish welfare concerns.
- Long-term environmental management of the pond.

The applicant has advised that the proposed works are necessary to prevent a recurrence of recent fish deaths and to improve the long-term resilience of the waterbody.

The estimated cost of the works is **£9,800**.

Proposed Works

The proposal includes:

Bank Repairs

- Replace earth lost through erosion.
- Rebuild sections of the banks using clay.
- Improve the pond's ability to retain water.

Overflow Modification

- Raise the overflow outlet by approximately 4-5 feet.

Purpose:

- Increase the operational water level of the pond.
- Reduce the likelihood of future low-water conditions.

Inflow Infrastructure

- Install inflow pipes into the Little Bobbin.

Purpose:

- Improve the ability to supplement water levels.

Tree Removal

- Remove approximately 90% of the willow trees adjacent to the pond.

Purpose:

- Reduce water uptake from the pond.
- Improve long-term water retention.

Recent Fish Mortality Incident

Members should be aware that a fish mortality event has recently occurred at Doggetts Wildlife Area.

The Fishing Licence Holder has advised that:

- Water levels had reduced significantly.
- Oxygen levels within the waterbody had fallen.
- Fish losses subsequently occurred.

More recently, the Fishing Licence Holder has reported that an individual was observed moving fish from one pond to another within Doggetts Wildlife Area.

The Fishing Licence Holder believes that this activity may have disturbed pond-bed sediment, resulting in the release of toxins and negatively affecting water quality. He has advised that this disturbance may have contributed to the fish mortality event.

The Fishing Licence Holder has also raised concerns regarding the introduction of unauthorised fish species, including koi carp, into the ponds.

At the time of writing:

- The Council has not independently verified the cause of the fish mortality event.
- No formal determination has been made regarding the source of the incident.
- The Fishing Licence Holder has advised that he has been in contact with the Environment Agency.

Members should therefore note that the explanation currently remains the opinion of the Fishing Licence Holder and should not be regarded as a confirmed cause.

Fishing Licence Responsibilities

The Fishing Licence places several responsibilities upon the Licensee.

These include:

Clause Responsibility

- 4.8 Maintain the banks and swims in a safe condition
- 4.8 Carry out major maintenance works where serious erosion is present
- 4.19 Monitor water quality
- 4.19 Monitor fish welfare
- 4.19 Monitor habitat condition
- 4.20 Undertake fish, insect and plant surveys
- 4.21 Assess pollution impacts and identify sources
- 4.22 Identify restocking requirements
- 4.23 Monitor erosion and arrange reconstruction where necessary

Members may therefore wish to consider whether some elements of the proposal fall within existing responsibilities of the Fishing Licence Holder.

Lease Considerations

Doggetts Wildlife Area is leased by Rochford Town Council from Rochford District Council.

The lease requires approval from the freeholder for alterations to the site and certain works affecting the land.

The Council sought advice from Rochford District Council regarding the proposal.

Rochford District Council Response

The Council has received a response from Amy Offord, Estate Officer, Rochford District Council.

The District Council has advised that:

"Landlord's consent will be required for the proposed works."

The District Council further stated that it is:

"likely to be supportive in principle"

however, a number of matters must be resolved before any consent can be granted.

The District Council has advised that:

Planning

It is likely that planning permission will be required for some or all the works.

Consultation

Consultation should be undertaken with:

- Environment Agency.
- Natural England.

Biodiversity

A Biodiversity Net Gain assessment may be required if planning permission is necessary.

Contractor Information

Prior to commencement of any approved works, contractors should provide:

- Risk Assessments and Method Statements (RAMS).
- Health and Safety documentation.
- Public Liability Insurance.

Ecological Assessment

The District Council has specifically recommended ecological assessment due to:

- The scale of proposed tree removal.
- The proposed alterations to the waterbody.
- Potential impacts on habitat and biodiversity.

Insurance Considerations

Advice has been obtained from the Council's insurance broker.

The broker has confirmed that the Council's Public Liability Insurance would generally provide cover for the Council's responsibilities as manager of Doggetts Wildlife Area.

The broker has advised that:

- Written risk assessments should be in place.
- Inspection programmes should be documented.
- Inspection frequencies should be achievable.
- Maintenance records should be retained.
- Defect management procedures should be maintained.

The broker has also confirmed that future infrastructure can generally be accommodated within the Council's insurance arrangements.

Members should note that activities taking place **on or in water** continue to require further clarification with insurers.

Officer Observations

Having reviewed the proposal, there appears to be a distinction between:

Potential Maintenance Works

Examples include:

- Repairing banks.
- Replacing lost material.
- Addressing erosion.

These activities may be consistent with the existing maintenance obligations contained within the Fishing Licence.

Potential Alterations and Improvements

Examples include:

- Raising the overflow level by 4-5 feet.
- Installing new inflow pipes.
- Removing a substantial number of trees.
- Altering the operation and water retention characteristics of the pond.

These works appear to go beyond routine maintenance and may require planning, ecological assessment and formal landlord consent.

Financial Considerations

The quotation submitted is:

£9,800

Members should note that the quoted figure does not appear to include:

- Planning application costs.
- Ecological assessment costs.
- Biodiversity Net Gain assessments (if required).
- Professional fees.
- Environmental surveys.

The overall project cost may therefore exceed the submitted quotation.

No alternative quotations have been submitted.

Matters for Committee Consideration

Members may wish to consider:

1. Whether the proposal should be supported in principle.
2. Whether sufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate the necessity of all proposed works.
3. Whether some elements should be regarded as maintenance and others as improvements.
4. Whether the proposal should be deferred pending:
 - Environment Agency feedback;
 - Ecological advice;
 - Planning advice.
5. Whether additional quotations should be sought.
6. Whether some works are already covered by the responsibilities of the Fishing Licence Holder.
7. Whether Rochford District Council's requirements should be addressed before any approval is granted.

Conclusion

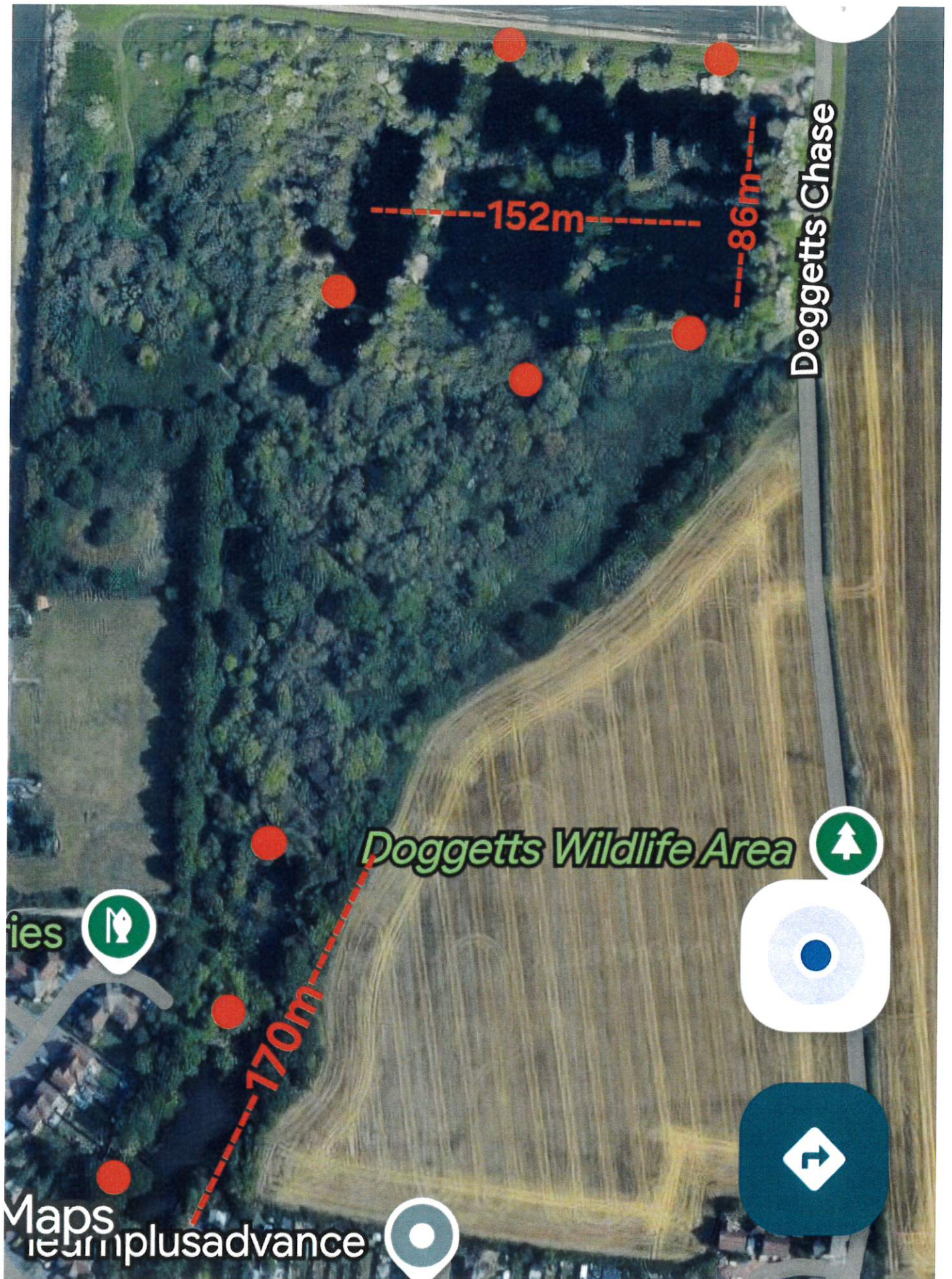
The Council has received a request from the Fishing Licence Holder seeking approval for works valued at £9,800 to improve water retention and fishery resilience within the Little Bobbin.

Whilst Rochford District Council has indicated that it is likely to support improvements in principle, formal consent has **not** been granted, and a number of planning, ecological and environmental matters remain outstanding.

Recent fish mortality events and allegations that fish were moved between ponds have highlighted the need for effective fishery management. However, the cause of the fish mortality incident has not been formally established.

Members should note that aspects of the proposal may constitute alterations to the waterbody rather than routine maintenance, and further information may be required before a fully informed decision can be made.

The Committee is therefore invited to consider the information contained within this report and determine whether further information, assessments or consultations should be obtained prior to making any funding or approval decision.



C.Barber Groundworks Professional Groundworks & Site Services

QUOTATION

Date: 12/09/2026

Quote No: CBG-2026-089

barberclay@hotmail.co.uk

07400559556

Client / Invoice Address:

Rochford Parish Council
Parish Council Offices
Rochford, Essex

Project Location:

Doggetts Wildlife Area
Doggetts Chase
Rochford

Project Scope & Specifications

Installation of life ring posts as per map position layout. Works include excavating placement holes, pouring concrete footings to firmly secure the posts in position, and mounting the life ring brackets. **Note:** The client (Rochford Parish Council) is to supply the life ring units/housings only. All structural materials, machinery, concrete, and labor are fully covered within this quotation.

Item Description	Qty	Unit Price	Total
Excavate hole, pour concrete footing & install post (As per mapped layout locations)	8	£100.00	£800.00

Total Estimated Cost:

£800.00

Council Meeting Amendment Note

Important Note regarding the 10 units discussed in the council meeting:

This quotation formally details the initial 8 positions visually marked on the provided site plan map within the recommended 100m distance apart. If the Parish Council wishes to proceed with the full **10 units** as agreed upon during the recent council meeting, **please notify us where you would like the additional 2 units positioned**. These additional installations will be billed at the same fixed commercial rate of **£100.00 per unit**, bringing the revised project total to **£1,000.00**.

Terms & Conditions

1. Rochford Parish Council is responsible for supplying the physical life ring units/housings to the site prior to deployment.
 2. Terms of payment: in full on completion of works
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ROCHFORD PARISH COUNCIL	
REPORT	

COMMITTEE	General Purpose
DATE OF MEETING	7 th October 2026
SUBJECT	Allotment Renewals and Invoicing Delay
AUTHOR	Clerk's Assistant
CIRCULATION	General Purpose Committee

The annual allotment renewal process is normally undertaken through Scribe Allotments using the system's bulk renewal functionality. This allows multiple tenancies to be renewed together and the associated charges to be transferred to Scribe Accounts for invoicing.

During this year's renewal exercise, the office have experienced difficulties with the bulk renewal process, including the interaction between Bulk Renewal and the "Send to Account" function.

Scribe has subsequently confirmed that there is currently a temporary issue affecting Bulk Renewal when the "Send to Account" option is selected.

Impact on the Renewal Process

The technical difficulties have affected both the processing of allotment renewals and the subsequent transfer of charges for invoicing.

The original intention was to process the annual renewals in bulk. However, issues with the bulk renewal functionality have meant that the process has not operated as expected and additional checking and manual intervention have been required.

Scribe has advised that, as a workaround, Bulk Renewal can be undertaken with "Send to Account" unticked, with the invoices then transferred separately using the "Send to Account" option under Actions.

However, due to the difficulties encountered during the renewal process and renewals that had already been processed, the office have had to work through affected allotment records and plots individually to ensure that each tenancy has been correctly renewed and the appropriate invoice can subsequently be raised.

This has resulted in the overall renewal process taking significantly longer than would normally be expected.

Additional Administrative Work

The individual processing required as a result of the system issues is considerably more time-consuming than the normal bulk renewal procedure.

The office is checking individual records to ensure:

- the tenancy has been correctly renewed;
- the correct tenant is recorded against the appropriate plot;
- the correct annual rent and any associated charges have been applied;
- the renewal has not been duplicated;
- the appropriate charges are successfully transferred to the accounts system;
- the correct invoice is subsequently issued to the tenant; and
- the allotment and financial records remain consistent.

These checks are particularly important because using a manual workaround increases the potential for individual records to be missed or duplicated if the process is not carefully monitored.

Reason for the Delay

The delay in sending renewal documentation and invoices to tenants has therefore not solely been caused by an invoicing issue.

There have been difficulties with the bulk renewal process itself, together with the confirmed issue affecting Bulk Renewal when using the "Send to Account" option.

This has meant that a process which would normally be completed largely through bulk actions has, in affected cases, required records to be reviewed and processed on an individual plot-by-plot basis.

The additional work required to verify each renewal, and invoice has consequently delayed the point at which renewal invoices can safely be issued to tenants.

Current Position

The office is continuing to work through the affected allotment records individually to ensure that outstanding renewals and invoices are completed correctly.

Scribe has confirmed that the issue with Bulk Renewal and "Send to Account" is temporary and has advised that it will provide an update once the issue has been resolved. In the meantime, the available workaround is being used to progress the outstanding renewals.

While the delay in issuing renewals is regrettable, it is considered preferable to undertake the necessary individual checks rather than risk incorrect renewals, duplicate charges or inaccurate invoices being issued to tenants.

Members are asked to note:

1. the technical difficulties experienced with the Scribe Allotments Bulk Renewal process;
2. the confirmed temporary issue affecting Bulk Renewal when the "Send to Account" option is selected;
3. that the issues have affected both the processing of renewals and the subsequent issuing of invoices;
4. that the office is consequently having to undertake additional manual checks and, where necessary, process affected records on an individual plot-by-plot basis;
5. that the additional administrative work has resulted in the annual renewals taking longer to complete and has delayed the issuing of renewal invoices to tenants; and
6. that office will continue progressing the outstanding renewals using the available workaround while awaiting resolution of the system issue.

No decision is required at this stage. The report is for Members' information.

