



SOUTHMINSTER PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held at Southminster Memorial Hall, High Street, Southminster on the 19th May 2025.

Present: Cllr Cleary, Cllr Fluker, Cllr Harrold, Cllr McKee, Cllr Melhuish, Cllr Mische, Cllr Pratt, Cllr Wilcox and Cllr Wyn-Davies.

In attendance: J Jeffery (Parish Clerk/RFO) and 8 members of the public.

25/101 Election of Chairman

Propose and elect Chairman for Municipal Year 2025/26.

Cllr Fluker proposed Cllr Harrold as Chairman for municipal year 2025/2026, seconded by Cllr Miche.

RESOLVED: Cllr Harrold was duly elected as Chairman for municipal year 2025/2026.

25/102 Elected Chairman to sign Acceptance of Office

RESOLVED: Cllr Harrold duly signed the acceptance of office.

25/103 Election of Vice Chairman

Propose and elect Vice Chairman for Municipal Year 2025/2026

Cllr Wyn-Davies proposed Cllr Mische as Vice Chairman for municipal year 2025/2026, seconded by Cllr Wilcox.

Resolved: Cllr Mische was duly elected as Vice Chairman for municipal year 2025/2026.

25/104 Apologies for absence.

There were none.

25/105 To receive and approve Minutes of the meeting held 14th April 2025.

Proposed by Cllr Wilcox, seconded by Cllr Mische.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held 14th April 2025 were duly signed by Cllr Harrold.

25/106 To receive and note any declarations of interest:

Cllr Pratt 25/110 The Hawthornes Non-Pecuniary Interest

Cllr Wilcox 25/116 Highways/Village lighting Non-Pecuniary Interest

Cllr Mische 25/110 Land Adjacent Theedhams Farm Non-Pecuniary Interest

25/107 Members reminder to review their Register of Interests

NOTED

25/108 Election of Parish Council Members to committees and organisations.

1. Allotment Committee – Cllr Fluker, Cllr Harrold, Cllr Mische

2. Performance, Governance and Audit Committee – Cllr Cleary, Cllr Fluker, Cllr Harrold, Cllr Melhuish
3. Cheque Signatories/Internet Banking – Cllr Fluker, Cllr Harrold, Cllr Melhuish, Cllr Mische, Cllr Pratt, Cllr Wilcox, Cllr Wyn-Davies.
4. D.H.G.P.C - Cllr Harrold, Cllr McKee, Cllr Mische
5. Emergency Committee – All Members
6. Footpaths and PROW – Mr Neale
7. F.O.S.C.O.S.to be removed
8. Henry Gilder Drake Trust – Cllr Pratt
9. King George V Playing Field Committee/Strategic Development Committee – Cllr Cleary, Cllr Harrold, Cllr Melhuish, Cllr Mische, Cllr Pratt, Cllr Wilcox and Mr Dibben
10. Memorial Hall – Cllr Wyn-Davies
11. Employer Committee Cllr Cleary, Cllr Fluker, Cllr Harrold, Cllr Mische
12. Grievance and discipline – Allocated when necessary
13. Planning Committee to be removed
14. Public Transport – Cllr Harrold
15. Events Committee – Cllr Fluker, Cllr Harrold, Cllr McKee, Cllr Melhuish, Cllr Mische, Cllr Wyn-Davies, Mrs Smith, Miss Lyle and M Southwell-Sander

25/109 Public Session – opportunity for members of public to speak:

Mrs Smith commented that the Competitive Music Festival had been poorly supported by Parish Councillors, it had been a great success and those Councillors and volunteers that did attend needed support to have breaks.

A resident commented there is a lack of pathways heading onto the marshes, no safe pavements at Goldsands Road and a lack of lighting. There have been a few near misses by Hillside Nursery. Concerns were raised regarding safety.

25/110 Planning

To discuss and respond to the following planning applications.

Week ending: 11th April 2025

Cllr Pratt left the meeting at 7.24pm.

25/00230/FUL PP-13849409

Erection of new single storey detached stable building incorporating attached tack room

The Hawthornes Scalby Road Southminster Essex

Southminster Parish Council recommend the GRANTING of planning permission, subject to the inclusion of condition that all animal waste is disposed of to satisfy the Environment Agency.

Cllr Pratt returned to the meeting at 7.26pm.

Week ending: 18th April 2025

25/00046/FUL PP-137 04047

Retrospective application for erection of Poly tunnel to store vegetation inline with needs of business.

Land Adjacent Theedhams Farm Steeple Road Southminster Essex

Southminster Parish Council recommend the GRANTING of planning permission, a poly tunnel of some design has been in situ for some time.

Signed by Cllr Harrold, Chair 16th June 2025

Week ending: 25th April 2025

25/00255/FUL PP-13669543

Permanent siting of No. 9 mobile homes for seasonal agricultural worker accommodation.

New Moor Farm Tillingham Road Southminster Essex

Southminster Parish Council recommend the GRANTING of planning permission.

25/00264/FUL

Change of use from gate house sui generis to E(f) day nursery/pre-school

Land at Colleton Foxhall Road Southminster

Southminster Parish Council recommend the GRANTING of planning permission subject to meeting the parking standards and satisfies the requirements of Highways.

Week ending: 2nd May 2025

25/00246/FUL PP-13561595

Demolition of existing garage, stable building and former piggery. Change of use to Cattery and erection of cattery building with associated parking and access.

Land at Three Willows Old Heath Road Southminster

Southminster Parish Council recommend the GRANTING of planning permission.

Week ending: 9th May 2025

HOUSE/MAL/24/00896 PP-13500595

S73A application for installation of an air source heat pump

29 Cherry Orchard Southminster Essex

Southminster Parish Council recommend the GRANTING of planning permission subject to satisfying Environmental Health Noise Output.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 199 (as amended)

REQUEST FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCOPING

OPINION

Application No: ESS/36/25/MAL/SPO

Proposal: Proposed southern extension to Asheldham Quarry for the extraction, processing, sale and distribution of sand and gravel and subsequent restoration using inert materials.

Location: Asheldham Quarry, Tillingham Road, Asheldham, Essex CM0 7DZ

Southminster Parish Council does believe that an Environmental Impact Assessment is required.

Planning

Decisions

Week ending: 11th April 2025

24/00760/HOUSE

Two storey rear extension with single storey side and rear wrap around extension.

25 Queenborough Road Southminster Essex CM0 7AB

APPROVE

Week ending 2nd May 2025

25/00122/FUL

Proposed dwelling with associated private amenity space and parking on land associated with 15 Pump Mead Close. Revised parking arrangement for donor dwelling.

Land at 15 Pump Mead Close Southminster Essex

REFUSE

Appeals advised:

Site Address:

Proposal:

Application Ref:

Appeal Ref:

Appeal start date:

Appeal Decision

Site Address:

Proposal:

Application Ref:

Appeal Ref:

25/111

Finance Matters: -

- a: To receive and approve payment and receipts reports for May 2025 defer to next meeting.
- b: To approve payments and to sign cheques, proposed by Cllr Mische, seconded by Cllr Cleary.
- c: To receive and approve the budget status for May 2025, defer to next meeting.
- d: To receive and approve the Bank Reconciliation Statement to 30th April 2025, defer to next meeting.

25/111.01 To discuss and agree insurance proposal for 2025/2026, the Clerk informed that the proposal received needs further review. Cllr Fluker proposed that the Chair, Vice-Chair and Clerk are allowed to review and proceed with the Insurance negotiations, agreed by all.

RESOLVED: Chair, Vice-Chair and Clerk to review and proceed with Insurance negotiations.

25/111.02 To discuss and agree the Fixed Asset Register.

Cllr Fluker asked why the Village Pump was not included on the Fixed Asset Register, it was agreed that it should be included and that we should check to make sure the vegetation is cut back and consider re-installing the posts and rails.

Cllr Wilcox proposed the acceptance of the Fixed Asset Register, seconded by Cllr Fluker.

RESOLVED: Fixed Asset Register was agreed.

25/111.03 To discuss and agree creation of savings for new community

building specialist fees, Cllr Fluker stated that this was not required as we have an annual budget and allocated reserves for the "New Build Project" and that the draw down from the reserve would be confirmed under the standing agenda item 'Supplementary Estimates, Virements, Procurement Exemptions and use of Reserves.

Members agreed to defer to a future meeting.

- 25/111.04 To discuss and approve upgrade of Rialtas Accounting system from Alpha package to Omega package to reflect Southminster Parish Council now becoming a larger council. Accounts will now be presented as income and expenditure, no longer receipts and payments. Cost of £3603.00 plus VAT.
To discuss and pass any resolution as necessary.

Members felt that alternative packages may give cost savings.

Cllr Wilcox proposed the formation of a working group to consider software options in light of the Council moving towards a 'large council status', the impact of the new Community and Sports Pavilion and to look at the overall resilience and robustness of the administrative function of the Council, Cllr Fluker clarified this as the whole back office, not just the accounts package, Cllr Wilcox's proposal was seconded by Cllr Fluker. Working group will comprise the following Members, Cllr Harrold, Cllr Mische, Cllr Fluker, Cllr Cleary and Cllr Wilcox

RESOLVED: Working Group to consider software options in light of the Council moving towards a 'large council status', the impact of the new Community and Sports Pavilion and to look at the overall resilience and robustness of the administrative function (back office) of the Council.

- 25/111.05 To discuss the provision of enhanced DBS checks for all Staff and Members at a cost of £49.50 per person.
To discuss and pass any resolution as necessary.

The Clerk informed that the provision of DBS checks for Staff and Members is good practice, particularly for events. A discussion was had regarding Members and Staff who have DBS certificates in their other capacities. Cllr Pratt commented that anyone attending Southminster Parish Council events usually attend with their own responsible adult. Members felt that more information was needed and to defer the item to next meeting.

Cllr McKee left the meeting at 8.16pm.

25/112 Supplementary Estimates, Virements, Procurements Exemption and use of reserves.

To discuss and pass any resolution as necessary.

1. Supplementary Estimates – There were none.
2. Virements – There were none.
3. Procurement Exemptions

Cllr Fluker informed Council that there three loose boards on the North elevation of the Changing Rooms overlooking the Pre-School play area and that there was a concern that they may come adrift in inclement weather and therefore presented a health and safety issue with the users of the play area. It was anticipated that the boards were beyond repair and needed to be replaced urgently.

Cllr Fluker proposed that a Procurement Exemption is agreed to allow these works to be carried out as a matter of urgency and that he, Chairman, Vice Chairman and Clerk implement the exemption to allow for these works only, seconded by Cllr Mische.

Vote: 4 for, 3 against, 1 abstain.

RESOLVED: Cllr Harrold, Cllr Mische, Cllr Fluker and the Clerk to oversee works to Community Hall 2 and Pavilion.

4. Use of Reserves – No reserves were drawn down.

25/113 Clerks Report

Defib went offline 17/04/2025,

Manhole broken - Open Reach 2696082764

Signed by Cllr Harrold, Chair 16th June 2025

Light repaired at North End

Bees were swarming at the Pavilion w/c 12th May, however after monitoring for 24 hours they have moved on.

25/114 Dist Cllr's Report

25/115 Highways Report

Scotts Hill signage defect is to be repaired.

25/116 Highways/Village Lighting

Resident request for discussion regarding lighting and double yellow lines from High Street to Goldsands Road.

To discuss and pass any resolution as necessary.

The Clerk read an email received from a concerned resident regarding public safety.

After a brief discussion it was agreed, the Clerk would write to Essex County Council and Councillor Stamp expressing concerns raised.

Concerns were again raised regarding a work van and trailer parking on double yellow lines in the High Street, it was agreed the Clerk will forward information to County Councillor Stamp, County Councillor Bentley and South East Essex Parking Partnership.

25/117 Southminster Competitive Music Festival report

Update from Cllr Wyn-Davies

From a purely educational and well-being perspective, the Competitive Music Festival has been a huge success.

It has put Southminster on the map when it comes to promoting the musical talent of young people in the Dengie Peninsula and that saying, it is hoped, for years to come.

I am truly grateful to Cllr. G. Harrold, Cllr. P. Melhuish, Mrs. E. Smith, Mrs. C. Morgan, Mrs. J. Pratt, Mr. P. Adams, Mr. L. Bundy, Mr. M. Bundy and the Staff at Mellows, Mrs. H. Bridge, Miss. I. Lyle, Mr. K. Mayes and Revd. P. Begley for their help and support on the day. Thanks also go to Cllr. R. Pratt who offered to help but was indisposed due to illness and to Cllr. McKee for attending the event.

With hindsight and the fact that nothing of significance went wrong, it was extremely well managed.

Sir John Whittingdale thoroughly enjoyed his afternoon with us and has already expressed an interest in attending next year's event.

The standard of the Junior Musician 12-18 years was exceptionally high and it was a pleasure to accompany the winner on the piano.

I have circulated an income and expenditure document for all. It is an interpretation of how I believe the financial situation currently stands.

Following our Events Committee meeting held on 30th April 2025, everyone agreed the event had been a success.

Here are the comments from the meeting.

The volunteers using the "walkie talkies" needed to ensure they had their phones with them at all times as without them there was a subsequent need for another volunteer to act as a "runner/informer" between the church and the Memorial Hall.

We were extremely fortunate to have Mr. L. Bundy's help at such short notice

Thank you to Mrs. E. Smith, who attended the event the entire day, and had relieved those with specific tasks from duties whenever was needed.

There were too many notices on display on the Power Point inside the church, many of which contained corporate information and those attending were not reading them.

It was proposed that the banner outside the church should display the date of the next music festival.

Revd. Peter Begley has already put the date of next year's music festival in the church diary.

We shall discuss at the next event committee meeting and I will bring the proposed date of next year's music festival to the attention of full council at the next full council meeting so it can be noted.

25/118 Events Committee

To adopt minutes of meeting held 19th March 2025 and 30th April 2025.

To receive an update.

To discuss and pass any resolution as necessary.

Minutes of meeting held 19th March 2025 were duly adopted.

Minutes of meeting held 30th April 2025 were deferred to next meeting.

Cllr Wyn-Davies asked that proposed date of 25th April 2026 be added to the next agenda for discussion for Competitive Music Festival 2026.

RESOLVED: Minutes of Event Committee meeting held 19th March 2025, were adopted.

25/119 Request for waiver of pitch fees

Europlaz have requested a waiver of pitch fee, £61.92 in support of their charity launch day supporting the Helen Rollason Cancer Charity to be held on Friday 23rd May 2025.

To discuss and pass any resolution as necessary.

Cllr Pratt proposed that an invoice is raised, but a donation of £61.92 is given to Europlaz, seconded by Cllr Harrold.

RESOLVED: Donation of £61.92 be made to Europlaz.

25/120 King George V Memorial Field Toilets

Update from Cllr Mische

To discuss and pass any resolution as necessary

Cllr Mische explained that various options have been explored for the upgrade of the toilet facilities. However, a quote at £151,000 has been received for the refurbishment of the current toilet block, which is unachievable. Further costings for a refurbishment of the current block are currently being sought,

25/121 Terms and conditions of hiring pitches at King George V Memorial Field.

To discuss and pass any resolution as necessary.

Terms and conditions of hire are to be created and brought to next meeting.

25/122 Renewal of agreement/Review of Charges - Car Park building – All Raw

Cllr Fluker to update.

To discuss and pass any resolution as necessary.

Cllr Fluker informed that in the absence of a signed agreement he would propose that the agreement is signed as a non-repairing agreement.

Cllr Fluker informed that the building is in good repair, and he does not envisage any major repairs in the future.

Cllr Cleary commented that the ALL RAW Food tenant may be being 'disingenuous' about the missing lease and was concerned that a precedent had been set by the tenant, an email exchange has been provided to give proof the tenant accepted the previous agreement, which was a full repairing agreement, and that rent had been paid with step changes as agreed.

Cllr Fluker referred to the Council's situation concerning the previous agreement and asked the Chairman's permission to report in depth on matters to date. Following the Chairman's agreement the following report was read by Cllr Fluker:

The original draft 'Agreement to Rent All Raw ' provided by the Council is not dated but is presumed to be in advance of September 2020 the starting date of the schedule of payments.

The Council has produced a short email trail that confirms a copy of the agreement was sent to the tenant. It should be noted that the agreement was sent by email and therefore can neither be original nor a signed copy.

It is presumed that once the parties agreed the terms of the agreement the Council would have given a signed copy to the tenant by hand for the tenant to sign after which each party would have retained a copy.

The Council cannot provide any evidence to show that the email sent to the tenant was followed up nor can it produce any further correspondence between itself and the tenant. The term of the agreement is shown as "twelve calendar months commencing on 26th August 2020". The review period states, "This term shall be renewable on an annual basis" However the rental payment schedule is in total conflict with that in so far as the schedule runs to 24th July 2022. In itself this gives weight to fact that the agreement was wrong and therefore in draft format.

The rental payment schedule and therefore the agreement expired in July 2022.

The agreement was due to be reviewed prior to July 2022.

The Council did not contact the tenant prior to July 2022 or afterwards and as a result no rent review was carried out.

In the absence of any engagement by the Council the tenant continued to pay the rent based on the July 2021 figure which has resulted in a substantial loss of income to the Council.

In the Summer of 2024 following concerns raised by Councillors it was confirmed that the Council had failed to carry out a rent review in 2022.

Following extensive searches of the Councils physical and electronic records, the Council has been unable to find a signed copy of the agreement.

In accordance with the resolve of Council Cllr Fluker contacted the tenant to initiate a rent review.

The tenant was unable to provide a signed copy of the agreement and stated that they did not believe they were ever given one.

During the rent review negotiations, it became apparent that due to the temporary nature of the building the tenant had not agreed to a full repairing agreement in 2020.

The tenant has now signed a new three-year agreement commencing on 1st January 2025 which includes a rent increase on commencement and at the end of year one. The tenant has returned the agreement to the council for counter signing.

Signed by Cllr Harrold, Chair 16th June 2025

Without the signed agreement and by virtue of the Councils lack of action in 2022 the Tenant has likely by default become a sitting tenant with the associated rights afforded. The new agreement does not include an external repairing clause.

The new agreement affords the council a greater level of security in so far as it is in an individual's name rather than a legal entities.

The building is in good condition and is unlikely to need any substantial repairs carried out during the term of the agreement.

It should be noted that none of the Councils other letting agreements are on a repairing basis.

Under the circumstances I propose that the Chairman and Clerk, engrosses the new agreement as signed by the tenant, and that once done I would return it by hand to the tenant. Cllr Fluker proposed under the circumstances that the Chairman and Clerk engrosses the new agreement as signed by the tenant and that once done he would return it by hand to the tenant, Cllr Wilcox seconded the proposal of a non-repairing agreement, a vote was taken,

For: Cllr Fluker, Cllr Wilcox, Cllr Mische, Cllr Pratt, Cllr Harrold

Against: Cllr Cleary, Abstain: Cllr Melhuish and Cllr Wyn-Davies.

The Clerk informed that rental of £500 had been paid January 2025. Cllr Fluker commented that the rental should be £472.50 per month and asked that a refund is made to the tenant.

RESOLVED: A non-repairing agreement is to be issued to All Raw for rental of the Car Park Building for a period of three years.

A Statement has been sent to the Tenant, over payment has been rectified, account is up to date.

25/123 Public Session

A resident commented that there is an issue with the heater guards and one heater not working in Community Hall 2.

It was also commented that the Pavilion and Community Hall 2 are in a bad state of repair.

A resident commented that a zebra crossing is needed outside the barbers on the High Street, Members informed that a zebra crossing had been explored previously but the pavements were too narrow.

It was reported the footpath behind Queenborough Road is overgrown.

It was reported that a Quiz night in aid of Southminster Flower show is to be held on 21st June 2025.

A discussion was had regarding the civilian war memorial plaque. It was also reported the flag stones at the war memorial need attention as they are slippery.

Mr Monks asked if there were any plans for a VJ event, it was commented there are none at present. Mr Monks confirmed he would be happy to assist.

A resident confirmed that DBS checks for all staff and Members is best practice.

It was asked for the following to be added to the next agenda: Drug problem in the community, village pump and lack of policing.

25/124 Date of the next meeting:

Parish Council meeting Monday 16th June 2025.

25/125 Close of business:

Signed by Cllr Harrold, Chair 16th June 2025

Meeting closed at 9.30pm.