



## **SOUTHMINSTER PARISH COUNCIL**

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### **Minutes**

#### **The Meeting of Southminster Parish Council**

**7<sup>th</sup> July 2025 at 19.00, held at Memorial Hall, High Street, Southminster Essex.**

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

**In Attendance:** J Jeffery (Parish Clerk/RFO) and 11 members of the public.

#### **25/152 Apologies for absence.**

Cllr Harrold, Cllr Pratt and Mr Neall.

#### **25/153 To receive and approve Minutes of the Parish Meeting held 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025.**

Council Fluker was concerned that with regards the Clerks Report the following narrative and resolve was not recorded correctly in the minutes.

That following an update from the Clerk/RFO Cllr Fluker said said "That given the time expired, the health and safety risks involved and the absence of a satisfactory and timely response from the contractor to the Clerk the Council should consider asking the contractor to remove the defective covers and refund the council in full" - "Following a discussion by members the Council resolved to agree by assent with no abstentions that the Clerk immediately writes to the contractor asking them to remove the defective covers and issue the Council with a full refund"

The minutes with the above addition were proposed by Cllr Melhuish and seconded by Cllr Fluker.

**RESOLVED:** The minutes of the meeting held 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025, were duly signed by Cllr Mische.

#### **25/154 To receive and note any declarations of interest:**

To disclose the existence and any nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests. Other Registrable Interests and Non-Registrable Interests relating to items of business on the agenda having regard to paragraph 9 and Appendix B of the Code of Conduct for Members.

(Members are reminded that they are also required to disclose any such interests as soon as they become aware should the need arise throughout the meeting.)

25/163 Allotments -Cllr McKee – Pecuniary Interest

25/173 Community Hall 2 - Cllr Mische – Non-Registerable Interest

#### **25/155 Public Session – Opportunity for Members of the Public to speak regarding items on the agenda only**

Restricted to 15 minutes across both public sessions.

A resident asked when the fence at Pump Mead Allotments would be reinstated, The Clerk informed that the Allotments Chair has offered to assist with installation, however he would not be available until after the showing season had finished. Members agreed to obtain quotes.

It was reported there is a broken drain cover between the 7 a side and 9 a side pitches at King George V Memorial Field, the Clerk will ask the Parish Warden to take a look/repair.

A homeowner spoke regarding item 25/169 Boundary issue at Pump Mead allotments, the Clerk informed that Pump Mead is registered to Moat Housing, whilst there has been a discussion regarding transfer of ownership to Southminster Parish Council, Moat Housing have asked that any discussions are on hold until the transfer of Burnham Allotments has been completed. The homeowner was advised to contact Moat Housing as the Landowners.

**25/156 Planning**

Week ending: 13<sup>th</sup> June 2025

25/00535/PADADD PP-14066727

Prior approval for the enlargement of an existing dwellinghouse by the construction of an additional storey with a maximum height of 7.67m

Moorhill Kennels Tillingham Road Southminster Essex

Southminster Parish Council recommend the GRANTING of planning permission.

**FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

**Appeals Advised**

**Site Address:** Glebe Meadow Adjacent King Georges Field Station Road Southminster Essex

**Proposal:** .Application for planning permission to create 36 no. One, two, three and four bedroom houses and maisonettes, associated landscaping, roads, parking and drainage infrastructure, plus a new area of public open space and the addition of a footway to the east of Vicarage Court.

**Application Ref:** 24/00017/FULM PP-12610893

**Appeal Ref:** APP/X1545/W/25/3367409

**Appeal Start Date:** 18 June 2025

**In person hearing to be held at Maldon District Council offices at 10am, Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2025.**

**Appeal Decisions**

**Appeal Reference:**

**Proposal:**

**Address:**

**APPEAL DISMISSED**

**25/157 To discuss and agree the proposal of Chair, Vice Chair and Cllr Fluker responding to planning applications on behalf of Southminster Parish Council during the period 08<sup>th</sup> July 2025 to 14<sup>th</sup> September 2025, to accommodate no August parish council meeting.**

Members agreed that should any major planning applications be brought forward between 8<sup>th</sup> July 2025 and 14<sup>th</sup> September 2025 an Extraordinary meeting of Southminster Parish Council would be convened.

Signed by Cllr Harrold  
15<sup>th</sup> September 2025

Cllr Melhuish proposed Chair, Vice Chair and Cllr Fluker responding to planning applications on behalf of Southminster Parish Council during the period 08<sup>th</sup> July 2025 to 14<sup>th</sup> September 2025, to accommodate no August parish council meeting, seconded by Cllr Wilcox.

**RESOLVED: Chair, Vice Chair and Cllr Fluker responding to planning applications on behalf of Southminster Parish Council during the period 08<sup>th</sup> July 2025 to 14<sup>th</sup> September 2025, to accommodate no August parish council meeting.**

## **25/158            Events Committee**

To receive an update from Cllr Mische

Cllr Mische informed of the following events and lead person responsible,  
VJ Day, 16<sup>th</sup> August 2025, Mr Monks  
Health and Wellbeing Event, 13<sup>th</sup> September 2025, Cllr McKee  
Fireworks, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2025, Cllr Fluker  
Remembrance Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2025, Cllr Harrold  
Christmas Lights Switch On, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2025, Cllr Wyn-Davies  
Competitive Music Festival, 25<sup>th</sup> April 2026, Cllr Wyn-Davies.

To adopt minutes of meeting held 18<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

Cllr Fluker proposed the adoption of the minutes of the Events Committee meeting held 18<sup>th</sup> June 2025, seconded by Cllr Melhuish.

**RESOLVED: The minutes of the Events Committee meeting held 18<sup>th</sup> June 2025 were duly adopted.**

The Events Committee makes the following recommendation to Council “That given the costs of delivering the Southminster Music Festival on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2026 will fall mostly into the fiscal year 25/26 that the Council makes the necessary provision to cover these costs and agrees in principle to maintain the current budget for 26/27”

To discuss and pass any resolution as necessary.

Cllr Fluker reported that even allowing for the additional VJ event, that the 2025/2026 events budget was likely to be underspent. Following a general discussion, it was agreed that subject to the consideration of the Councils overall budget the Events Committee Budget for 2026/2027 would subject to inflation and any other events being added remain unchanged.

Cllr Fluker proposed the acceptance of the recommendation to council “That given the costs of delivering the Southminster Music Festival on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2026 will fall mostly into the fiscal year 25/26 that the Council makes the necessary provision to cover these costs and agrees in principle to maintain the current budget for 26/27”, seconded by Cllr Melhuish.

**RESOLVED: Southminster Parish Council will make the necessary provision to cover the costs of the Southminster Music Festival and agrees in principle to maintain the current budget for 26/27.**

Christmas Lights – To receive an update from Cllr Wyn-Davies

- Cllr Mische informed that Cllr Wyn-Davies would be applying to Essex County Council for consent to erect the Christmas lights, subject to receiving all documentation from Lamps and Tubes.

**25/159 Finance Matters: -**

- a: To receive and approve payment and receipts reports for June 2025, proposed by Cllr Mische, seconded by Cllr Melhuish.
  - b: To approve payments and to sign cheques, proposed by Cllr Mische, seconded by Cllr Melhuish.
  - c: To receive and approve the budget status for June 2025, proposed by Cllr Melhuish, seconded by Cllr Fluker.
  - d: To receive and approve the Bank Reconciliation Statement to 30th June 2025, proposed by Cllr Mische, seconded by Cllr Melhuish.
- To discuss and pass any resolution as necessary.

**25/160 To receive recommendations from Performance, Governance and Audit Committee**

To adopt minutes of meeting held 5<sup>th</sup> March 2025, to note cancelled meeting 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025.

Cllr Fluker proposed the adoption of the Performance, Governance and Audit Committee meeting held 5<sup>th</sup> March 2025, and the noting of the cancelled meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025 seconded by Cllr Melhuish.

Adoption of Biodiversity Policy

Adoption of Reserves Policy

Cllr Fluker proposed adoption of the Biodiversity Policy and the Reserves Policy, seconded by Cllr Cleary.

To approve items 25/160.01, 25/160.02, 25/160.03 and 25/161

Cllr Fluker commented that as the minutes of the Performance, Governance and Audit Committee meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2025 had neither been published to members of the working group or approved by the Performance, Governance and Audit Committee and no recommendation for said minutes to be adopted by Council had been made items 25/161.01, 25/161.02, 25/161.03 and 25/162 are held over to next meeting.

The Clerk commented that an Extraordinary meeting would need to be called in August, to meet the External Auditor's timescales. Cllr Fluker recommended that a meeting is set for Performance, Governance and Audit Committee to approve the minutes of 25<sup>th</sup> June 2025 and an Extraordinary meeting is set for August 2025. The clerk agreed given the urgency of the situation they would publish the draft minutes of the PGA Committee as soon as possible.

**Resolved; Adoption of Biodiversity Policy and Reserves policy.**

**25/161.01 To consider Internal Auditor's report**

To discuss and pass any resolutions as necessary.

**Action: To be held over to next meeting.**

**25/161.02** To approve and sign section 1, the Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2024/25 (appendix 4).

**Action: To be held over to next meeting.**

**25/161.03** To approve and sign section 2 of the Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2024/25 (appendix 5).

**Action: To be held over to next meeting.**

**25/162 Action Plan**

Signed by Cllr Harrold  
15<sup>th</sup> September 2025

To receive Action Plan to address Internal Auditor's comments.  
To discuss and pass any resolution as necessary.

**Action: To be held over to next meeting.**

**25/163 Allotments  
Rent 2025/2026**

2024/2025 Income £1836.00, Expenditure £446.00.

Current EMR £2896.34, additional proposed £99.00, Total £2995.34

An Allotment holders meeting was held Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2025, the following proposal is asked to be considered by Members.

Due to the current high reserve, Allotment Holders propose no increase in fees for 2025/2026.

To discuss and pass any resolution as necessary.

It was informed that Cllr Fluker and Cllr Wilcox had visited Fisher Farm to view the parish machinery.

Cllr Fluker asked that any costs are brought forward to the Extraordinary meeting along with quotes for Pump Mead fence. The Clerk informed that historically the allotments were buffered with monies from the precept. When the Clerk joined in 2017 she informed Members and the Allotment Holders that precept monies were for the majority of the parish and not the minority and that the allotments needed to be self-funding. The Clerk subsequently attended an Allotments Course at Essex Association of Local Councils and brought back from the course, that a standing one year's notice must be given for any increase to allotment fees, this was implemented and is now a standing item at the Allotments holders annual meeting. When precept monies were withdrawn, Allotment holders at Pantile Hill decided to carry out grass cutting themselves, this therefore reduced the expenditure. Pump Mead allotments do not have any grass. Subscription to the National Allotment Society is paid for by Southminster Parish Council due to the subscription offering legal advice to the Parish Council should there be a need and does not offer any benefits to the allotment holders. The Clerk informed that at the present time the only expense the allotment holders incur is for water usage on both sites. The trailer is emptied by Mr Fisher at no charge and historically Southminster Parish Council have never charged the allotment holders for the Clerks time.

Cllr Fluker stated that it was impossible to make an informed decision unless all of financial information was made available to members for example the Clerk had informed the Vice Chairman that at times a considerable amount of their time was taken up by allotment issues those costs need to be clarified likewise the cost of maintaining and insuring the tractor. The matter of mitigating the costs of removing the Japanese Knot Weed at Pump Mead was discussed likewise the long-term removal and replacement of the temporary building at Pantile Hill.

Cllr Fluker stated that on reflection he agreed that the 'Allotment Year' should reflect the growing year and not the Councils Fiscal Year.

**Freedom of Information Act 2000 – request for information**

A request for information has been made to Southminster Parish Council from an Allotment Holder.

It was agreed that the request was now addressed to Southminster Parish Council but was the same request as previously submitted to a Parish Councillor, Members agreed that the request had been debated and the same response, with direction to the February 2025 Parish Council minutes would be given.

In accordance with due process the request and the Councils response would be posted on the Councils website.

**25/164      Supplementary Estimates, Virements, Procurements Exemption and use of reserves.**

- a)      **Supplementary Estimates**, there were none.
- b)      **Virements**, there were none.
- c)      **Procurement Exemption**, there were none.
- d)      **Use of Reserves**, there were none.

To discuss and pass any resolution as necessary.

A debate ensued as to the costs of the new building project and why given the amount of work that had already taken place no monies had been drawn down from reserves or elsewhere.

The Clerk confirmed that Barkers the Consultants had carried out tender processes on behalf of the council the following were the winning tenders:

Infiltration Test – Chelmer Global Ltd - £3860 plus VAT plus 10% Barkers Handling fee.

Noise Impact Assessment – Encon - £2950 plus VAT plus 10% Barkers Handling fee.

**25/165      Highways**

To receive an update.

The Clerk informed that despite information from Essex Highways informing the speed sign on Scotts Hill is to be repaired, it remains broken.

The Clerk informed that a social media post had prompted the Clerk to inform Maldon District Council of fly tipping on the Marshes, the Clerk informed that the fly tipping had been removed, however a resident informed that whilst it had been removed, there was still lots of debris and additional fly tipping in the bushes. Cllr Fluker asked residents to email him so he could carry the concerns forward.

**25/166      Clerks Update**

Tillingham Veterans have confirmed pitch use for 2025/2026 football season

Picnic benches have been painted in King George V Play area

Fly tipping reported to Maldon District Council 23/06/2025 - Southminster Marshes

Water Leak reported to Essex and Suffolk water 30/06/2025 Station Road – Informed Essex County Council as due to resurface the road tonight.

High Street toilets reclaim submitted to Maldon District Council £1797.95

VAT Return submitted £2527.17

Horse Manure from Queenborough Road pavement was cleared by the Parish Warden following a resident's complaint.

DBS Checks update - quote has been requested from Essex County Council for 12 x enhanced DBS checks.

Outstanding – no official letter has been received from Southminster United FC, the Clerk informed the letter has now been received and circulated to all Members.

Meter reading remains outstanding for Southminster Preschool, 2 emails sent. The Clerk informed the meter reading has now been received.

The Clerk informed that as per the resolution of last meeting she had asked the contractor to remove the heater covers at Community Hall 2 and issue a refund, the contractor asked that a meeting was held with Southminster Parish Council, the Clerk did circulate this to Members for a response, however due to limited replies the Clerk has informed the contractor that the recommendation was a resolution of Council and therefore the request must still stand.

Quotes will be sourced for heaters, guards and other issues during the summer holidays.

The Clerk confirmed that following the resolution of Council the Police had not been invited to attend a future meeting of Council

Signed by Cllr Harrold  
15<sup>th</sup> September 2025

The Clerk confirmed that all of their outstanding actions from the Events Committee minutes would be completed by them prior to going on annual leave and that an update would be sent to the committee

The Clerk confirmed that the adoption of the TOR of reference of the Events Committee should have been included in the agenda of this meeting

A discussion took place as to the general resilience of the Council during the Clerks/RFO's period of extended leave

Members were concerned that there would be no face-to-face interaction with members of the public during the period.

The pitch booking forms were still outstanding

## **25/167          Dist Cllr's Report**

### **Report from Cllr Adrian Fluker**

#### **Maldon District Council Ward Member for Southminster**

##### **PLANNING**

MDC is currently considering applications for large scale developments at Spratts Farm Queenborough Road and land to the West of David Fisher Way and north of Scott's Hill.

The council no longer has a 5-year housing land and is therefore open to speculative applications

The local Highways Authority have objected to the Spratts Farm development due to highways connectivity issues at Queenborough Road

##### **WASTE AND RECYCLING**

The council is starting to process the review the contract. A public consultation will take place. It is not anticipated that the current format will change.

##### **LOCAL (DEVELOPMENT) PLAN**

The emerging plan was considered at an extraordinary meeting of Council on 17th June. At that meeting it was agreed that the council would agree and formally scope growth options and start to build its evidence base. It was agreed that the scoping for growth would be directed towards the larger towns and villages including Althorne and Stow Maries.

##### **PLANNING APPEAL & VICARAGE MEADOW**

Persons who have previously objected to this application should consider writing to the planning inspectorate reiterating the reasons for their objections.

SPC should respond in relation to appellants comments regarding the connectivity to the east.

##### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM**

Essex councils have submitted their bids to the Government. A final decision on the size and number of local Authorities will be made by the government in late 2025 early 2026. Elections for members of the new unitary authorities and a new Essex wide Mayor will take place in May 2026 with the new bodies taking overall control from May 2027 after which time existing District, City, Borough and unitary Councils will no longer exist.

##### **MDC NEWS**

##### **Where Quality of Life Matters Grant Scheme**

Signed by Cllr Harrold  
15<sup>th</sup> September 2025

This will be considered and agreed at Council on 10<sup>th</sup> July.

Application will be open to all organisations in Maldon District details to follow or via the MDC website.

## **MDC UPCOMMING EVENTS**

### **Maldon Festival**

Art and Musci Prom Park 21<sup>st</sup> June to 12<sup>th</sup> July

### **Pop up Outdoor Gym**

9<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> July at the Prom Park Maldon next to the lake

### **UFEST**

15<sup>th</sup> August 2025 Prom Park

More information from Ben Horner at MDC

### **Street Arts Project**

Prom Park Street Arts Project

14<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> July

### **Burnham Family Activity Day**

Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> July includes a community skate park event between 12-5pm Green Space games, sport hall will be open for table tennis etc, community bike marking etc etc.

Cllr Fluker informed that the appeal referred to a footpath from the site to the East boundary (i.e. King George V Playing Field) and that a fully informed response is needed from Southminster Parish Council regarding the planning appeal for Vicarage Meadow. An objection should make it clear that no such footpath exists and never has and that the Council has not granted permission to anyone to cross their boundary into the playing fields.

There is connection to the west side but none to the King George V Memorial Field. The Clerk informed that she has not previously prepared any planning responses to the Planning Inspectorate and asked if Cllr Fluker would be willing to assist. Cllr Fluker informed he was too busy with other work matters and to read the appeal and respond.

Cllr Fluker is now assisting with the response, following a discussion with Cllr Harrold.

Cllr Fluker asked that the Clerk speaks with Maldon District Council regarding summer events being hosted in Southminster.

## **25/168 Strategic Development Committee**

To receive an update from Cllr Mische.

Site infiltration report from Chelmer Global Limited on 19th June 2025 at a cost of £3860 plus VAT, plus 10% Barkers handling fee.

The results confirmed that the underlying soil has poor permeability and is therefore unsuitable for infiltration -based SuDS. Consequently, the proposed permeable car park and below ground crate tanks will be designed to provide attenuation only, with no reliance on infiltration.



Signed by Cllr Harrold  
15<sup>th</sup> September 2025

Barkers to provide 3 quotes on CCTV footage search to identify where the leak is (email 26th June)

Barkers followed up with Encon on 10th and equipment set up on 11th to 16th June. Once Encon provide their report the planning condition can be closed off

Jo emailed again on 30th June to see if there was any further update for our meeting on 1st July.

Community toilets – Cllr Mische informed that she had been speaking with a company for 1 x male and 1 x female/disabled/baby changing toilet, the block is approximately 12ft x 8 ft, Members felt that the stainless-steel fittings would add a premium but may be beneficial in the long run. Cllr Mische informed she is awaiting answers on additional questions she has submitted to the company. Lead time would be around six to seven weeks and additional works such as electrics; plumbing and groundworks would need to be costed. Members asked that a definitive costing for the toilets be brought to the September 2025 meeting.

To adopt minutes of meeting 10th June 2025.

Cllr Mische proposed the adoption of minutes of meeting held 10<sup>th</sup> June 2025, seconded by Cllr Melhuish.

To discuss and pass any resolution as necessary.

**Resolved: Minutes of the Strategic Development Committee meeting held 10<sup>th</sup> June 2025 were duly adopted.**

**25/169            Boundary issue at Pump Mead Allotments**

To discuss information previously received regarding a boundary issue between Pump Mead Allotments and 10 High Street.

Members agreed that this item had been discussed in the public forum and the home owner should approach Moat Housing.

**25/170            Footpaths**

To receive an update from Mr Neall.

No update.

**25/171            King George V Memorial Field**

To discuss quote received for playground maintenance.

The Clerk informed that she had received three responses from contractors, one had provided a quote, one had sent costings for individual items to quote, and one had said they could not quote. There is still one quote outstanding which the Clerk is hopeful will be sent across in the coming days. Members asked the Clerk to speak with the contractor who had provided the quote to see what their lead time would be.

Cllr Mische asked that the Clerk shares the Parish Wardens contact details with her for continuity during the Clerks annual leave.

To discuss and approve pitch hire agreement.

The Clerk informed that she has been working with Cllr Harrold to produce a pitch hire agreement, this had been delayed due to Cllr Harrold's meeting over running. The Clerk informed that they are working on amalgamating two different agreements to produce an agreement which is fit for purpose for all users.

Members noted that the pitch hire agreements had been outstanding for three months and that the football season was due to start soon. It was further noted that the current users of the pitches now had 9 teams

Signed by Cllr Harrold  
15<sup>th</sup> September 2025

The Clerk informed that Tillingham Veterans have confirmed pitch hire for 2025/2026 season.  
To discuss and pass any resolution as necessary.

**25/172            Community Hall 2**

To discuss maintenance works carried out at Community Hall 2 – Cllr Cleary.

Cllr Cleary informed that for transparency and due process, trusted suppliers should offer an open book, allowing for a breakdown of invoice for materials and labour.

Cllr Cleary also informed that internal modifications to the building had not been approved by Council.

Cllr Fluker responded that a tender process had been followed with a full schedule of works being sent to interested parties. Tender documents sent in sealed envelopes had been received by the Clerk. The sealed envelopes were opened in the presence of the Clerk, Cllr Harrold, Cllr Mische and Cllr Fluker. The cheapest quote was agreed.

Cllr Fluker also commented that the contractor is under no obligation to breakdown the invoice.

Cllr Fluker confirmed that hard copies of the tender documents and responses were filed in the office and were available for scrutiny. Copies were also stored digitally.

**25/173            Public Session– opportunity for members of public to speak on items of mutual interest:**

A discussion was had regarding police presence in Southminster, Cllr Mische confirmed that she had seen Police presence in the High Street probably around mid-day on a Friday.

A resident informed that any new toilet block should have gender neutral toilets.

A resident informed that as the tractor is no longer at the allotments, no costings should be passed on to allotment holders.

It was commented that Fields in Trust would probably not give permission for access to King George V Memorial Field from Vicarage Meadows.

A discussion was had regarding planning conditions to breaking ground for the new community building, it was requested that Barkers are contacted to request an RIBA Schedule.

It was commented that dangerous/illegal parking is still happening on the High Street.

It was reported that fly tipping is regularly occurring from Southminster to the Middlewick Gates on the Marshes.

Southminster United Football Club spoke regarding teams for next season, movement of goals, barriers, pitch lining and the pavilion door handle, Cllr Mische asked that an email is sent to the Parish Office for response.

A resident informed that the War Memorial should be regularly weeded. Members asked that the Clerk sends a message to Cllr Harrold to let him know everyone was thinking of him tonight and that he was missed by all.

**25/174            Date of the next meeting:**

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2025 – Parish Council meeting.

**25/175            Close of business.**

Meeting closed at 8.57pm.