

SOUTH HANNINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Friday 16th May 2025 in Ramsden Heath Village Hall.

Present: Councillors Black, Whitehead, Huntington, Burgess, Thurgood, Graves, Vallis, Coveley, Walker, Metcalfe and Lewis. Guest Speaker, Adam Pipe and thirty-three Parishioners were also in attendance, and the Clerk kept the minutes.

1. Welcome from the Chairman, Councillor Kevin Black – Councillor Black welcomed everyone to this evening's Annual Meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence – Councillor Elms.

3. Approval of Minutes dated the 26th April 2024 – Proposed as a true record by Cllr Graves, Seconded Cllr Huntington.

4. Report from the Finance Chairman, Councillor Roy Whitehead – Cllr Whitehead reported we tried to keep costs down during the year. We had unplanned expenditure due to trees within the Parish. We are currently in a good position with reserves in hand. He thanked the Clerk who produces the accounts and he confirmed that we are financially in a good position. The Chairman thanked Cllr Whitehead for his report.

5. Report from the Sports Field Chairman, Councillor Kevin Black – Cllr Black reported it had been another busy year. We have four regular football clubs who hire our grounds. Work had to be done on the goalmouths due to poor weather conditions. He thanked Cllr Whitehead for securing a grant for the resurfacing of the tennis courts. Play in the Park was a great success, as always. He thanked his committee, the grounds staff and the Clerk and her assistant for their efforts during the past year.

6. Report from the Parks & Open Spaces Chairman, Councillor Bob Burgess – Councillor Burgess reported that the Parish Council are responsible for 27 acres of land. The Parks & Open Spaces Working Party meet 3-4 times each year with the Clerk. They walk around the 3 villages looking at hedges, play equipment, bus shelters, rubbish bins, the Dovecote, South Hanningfield Tye, the War Memorial, Norton Meadows, Dowsett Ride, Bofor's Strip, dog bins, picnic tables, trees, ground surfaces

and much more. Sadly, Oak Processionary Moth was found in South Hanningfield, we hope this does not spread into the rest of the Parish. We have had to contact the Forestry Commission. A drone was used to inspect the top of the Dovecote, we hired a cherry picker for our grounds staff to use to conduct the repairs. He thanked Councillors Coveley and Whitehead for securing a grant towards the basketball resurfacing. He thanked his fellow working party members, the grounds staff and the Clerk for their help over the past year. The Chairman thanked Cllr Burgess for his report.

7. Annual Report from the Chairman, Councillor Black – Councillor Black thanked everyone for attending this evening. This time last year we did not have a full complement of Councillors, but I am happy to report that in July, we recently co-opted Christina Metcalfe and Hayley Lewis, who both represent the Downham Ward. All council members do not represent any political party and none of whom claim allowances or expenses. I wish to mention the sad passing of our City & County Council Member. Ian Grundy. He often attended these meetings and was known as “Mr Stock” for all the work he did there. He usually came to take questions, especially on potholes and followed these up. He is sadly missed. His successor as one of our two City Councillors is Gillian Bonnett, who served on our Parish Council for many years. Your other City Councillor is Roy Whitehead, our Vice-Chairman. Our New County Councillor is Sue Dobson, who I am delighted to welcome here this evening. You have already heard from the Chair of the Finance, Sports Field and Parks & Open Spaces, so I will not repeat the details of their activities over the past twelve months, but to simply thank them for all their hard work. It has been a busy year for planning matters with 65 applications coming to our meetings, compared to 56 last year. Traffic matters have too kept us busy, and my thanks go to Councillor Peter Thurgood who has worked hard to get speed reductions put in and chasing the Local Highways Panel and the Cabinet of Highways, both he and our Clerk liaise on these matters. Flooding in Downham Road, a problem for many years, is to be dealt with this summer, which is good news for everyone. A group of resident volunteers have received their necessary training from the Police and have started work over the past few months. They still need some more volunteers, but can I thank them for their valuable work. The two buses which came to Ramsden Heath, the 256 and the 552 were both sadly discontinued, due to a lack of use. The Parish Council has a new email and website address to comply with Government regulations, and the website has lots of new information

about local clubs and societies. The Luncheon Club takes place twice a month in Ramsden Heath Village Hall and the Ramsden Community Cuppa and Cake ladies who provide excellent tea and cakes at very reasonable prices once a month. It is very popular and it celebrated fifteen years operation in 2024 and both it and the Luncheon Club are run by local residents who give up their time for free. The Parish Council gives an annual grant to the Luncheon Club at Christmas, and this has taken the place of Christmas Cheer. The Christmas tree lighting was very well attended, thanks go to the Clerk and her assistant for organising and to our grounds staff and P3 Team for erecting the tree. We have seen an increase in fly-tipping, if you see any please go to the Parish Council's website, as there is a direct link for you to report it. The Allotments in Ramsden Heath continue to be well used, but in the past few months a number have become vacant. Please contact the Clerk if you are interested. All three of our village halls are thriving and the Parish Office is inside Ramsden Heath Village Hall. Many Parishes do not have offices at all and the Clerks work from home. There are proposed changes by the Government for local government. They have decided that a Mayor for Essex will be elected next year to head up what is known as a Combined Authority and that in 2028 the existing District and City councils will be merged into new Unitary Authorities, which will include Essex County Council as well as Thurrock and Southend. We are told that Parish councils will not be affected. Finally, I would like to thank the work of our wonderful Clerk, Julie Moule, who supervises her Assistant Mel Linwood and the Grounds Staff tremendously well. A big thank you for all their hard work and dedication during the past twelve months. Our powers are limited and I am unsure if the forthcoming Local Government reorganisation will give us new ones, but I am proud to have been the Parish Council Chairman for the past twelve months and must give a huge thank you to our Councillors, our Clerk and staff for all their hard work. Councillor Black presented Julie with a gift voucher to say thank you for her hard work over the past year.

8. Guest Speaker Adam Pipe, Head of Roads Policing at Essex Police followed by any questions – Adam joined Essex Police in 2001 and nine years ago he was promoted to Head of Roads Policing in Essex. Essex Police cover the areas from Chigwell to Manningtree. There are 83 PC's who cover this widespread area. There were 116 road deaths in 2003 which has diminished to 49 last year. From January 2025 there have been 27 road deaths, 6 of those being cyclists. Cannabis and cocaine are a bigger risk than drink driving. Adam is liaising with Essex Highways to make roads

more sympathetic with more 20mph speed limits and more speed enforcement. Community Speed Watch colleagues visit ten different sites every day. Operation Tramline was set up to cover the A12, M11 and M25. The amount of heavy goods vehicle drivers who use their mobile phones is alarming. AI cameras can now detect mobile phone users. Adam reported that he knows there is a problem in Hawkswood Road with boy racers, anti-social behaviour, after two warnings have been given, their cars will be ceased. Adam then took questions. The Chairman thanked Adam for supplying a very detailed report and thanked him for attending this evening.

9. Report from County Councillor Sue Dobson followed by any questions – Councillor Dobson reported she was elected in December, after the sad passing of Ian Grundy. Work is intense and she is still learning the ropes. She is trying to attend every Annual Meeting within her area. Potholes are a major issue, and electric cars making an impact on these, as the cars are much heavier and damaging the roads surface. If anyone has any issues, they wish for her to take up, email the Clerk, who will pass on the details. The Chairman thanked Councillor Dobson for attending this evening.

10. Matters for Information –

10.1 A resident asked if the Clerk could remind Chelmsford City Council to empty the dog bin behind Ramsden Heath Village Hall. For some reason this is being missed.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 21.28pm.

Approved as a true record.

Signed.....Dated.....