SOUTH HANNINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Council Meeting held on Thursday 23rd July 2026 in Ramsden Heath Village Hall.

Present: The Chairman and Councillors Huntington, Burgess, Walker, Thurgood and Graves. Brian Adams and six Parishioners were also in attendance, and the Clerk kept the minutes.

1. **Apologies for Absence –** Councillors Metcalfe, Lewis and Elms.

2. **Co-option of Brian Adams** – Brian read and signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office. The Chairman welcomed Councillor Adams to South Hanningfield Parish Council.

3. **Disclosure of Interests –** Councillor Huntington Declared a non-pecuniary interest on agenda item 6.5. The Clerk read the following from the Chairman regarding agenda 6.5:
Request to South Hanningfield Parish Council for dispensation to remain in their meeting on Thursday 23rd July 2026 when the Council is considering the planning application for development on land adjoining 71A Park Lane, Ramsden Heath – My Register of Interests shows that I own a property at 80 Park Lane, which is diagonally opposite 71A Park Lane and some 50m from it. I do not believe that the proposed development will have any financial effect on my own property and therefore my interest is an "Other Registerable History" and not a "Disclosure Pecuniary Interest". As laid down in the Parish Council's Code of Conduct I seek permission to remain in the meeting whilst this application is discussed but not to vote on any decision on it. I request that I am able to speak at the meeting as, under Section 13H (ii) of the Code of Conduct I believe that it is in the interests of persons living in the council's area, as the application has wider implications on the retention of the Green Belt in the Parish. Members were all in favour to allow Councillor Whitehead to participate in this application but not to vote.

4. **Public Participation –** The six Parishioners present came to discuss planning applications at Park Lane, land adjacent to number 71, 12-14 School Road and the current water leak outside 18 Park Lane. The Chairman thanked them for attending this evening.

5. **Approval of Minutes dated the 25th June 2026 –** Proposed as a true record by Cllr Graves, Seconded Cllr Thurgood.

6. Planning –

6.1 26/00754/PIP – Land North of Chickdene Farm, Windsor Road, Downham – Permission in Principle for development of between 6 and 9 dwellings – Object, it is sited in the Green Belt which surrounds the villages of Ramsden Heath and Downham and development would detract from the openness of the surrounding fields and woods. To the best of the knowledge of the Parish Council this is not "Previously Developed Land" but a green field directly to the rear of the large houses in Downham Road, which are within the defined settlement. It was shown in the City Council's SHELLA dated 27th November 2024 under reference CFS41 and marked as "Red" for development. It is close to a site in Windsor Road shown in the City Council's SHELLA under reference CFS40 and this is an industrial site used for car breaking and very suitable for development. The Parish Council supported including that site in the Local Plan, but it was not included despite it being very suitable for new housing. This appears to be a speculative development submitted before the City Council's amended Local Plan, which is examined by the Planning Inspectorate this Autumn. The amended Local Plan covers the temporary reduction of the 5-year land supply in the city, which has been fully covered by new sites which are not in the Green Belt. The Parish Council is aware of similar speculative applications which seek to challenge the many Green Belt areas of the city and believes that no precedent be set by allowing this application for Permissible in Principle.

6.2 26/00808/FUL – 34 Norton Place, Ramsden Heath – Loft conversion with three front facing roof lights and rear dormer with two Juliet balconies – No comment.

6.3 – 26/00805/FUL – Hawkswood Lodge, Brock Hill, South Hanningfield Proposed car port **–** No comment.

6.4 26/00789/REM – 12-14 School Road, Downham – Application for reserved matters relating to 24/00890/OUT (Outline application for the demolition of the existing commercial properties and redevelopment of 5 residential dwellings. Access being sought, all other matters (appearance, landscaping, layout & scale reserved) The details relate to appearance, landscaping, layout and scale included in the conditions of the outline consent – The Parish council previously commented on this application indicating that it would not object to development of the site but that five properties would be overdevelopment and that three dwellings would ensure that there was sufficient parking for both the occupiers but also for those visiting/delivering to them. The site is close to a notorious junction in Downham which has been the subject of

many accidents over the years and whilst it is accepted that lorries have used this site when in commercial ownership, they were used to the site and the difficult access. Essex Highways have given a very detailed set of comments and conditions, but the constraints of the site would be better served by a reduction in the number of properties being built. With the increase in size of modern motor vehicles the Parish council believes that reducing the number of dwellings would ensure that the safety of the new residents and those who deliver to them.

6.5 26/00821/FUL – Land adjacent to number 71 Park Lane, Ramsden Heath – Erection of 5 dwellings – The design and layout were not considered as the application challenges the Green Belt in the village of Ramsden Heath and these comments reflect that. The Parish Council strongly objects to this planning application on the following grounds. The Green Belt boundary starts next to 71A Park Lane. This property was built on garden land next to 71 Park Lane, just within the defined settlement. Park Lane from 71A consists of sporadic development with open views in the Green Belt. By allowing this speculative application it would, in the view of the Parish Council, set a precedent that would see further development in the Green Belt along Park Lane. Development was allowed on the old stables at the end of Park Lane, but this was under the "Previously Developed land" rules. The open nature of the lane makes it attractive. The whole of the lower part of Park Lane, from Short Lane, is used for recreation, with stables and a number of footpaths regularly used by local residents and walking groups. The site proposed for housing is an attractive field which enhances the Green Belt and has been used to house various animals, including sheep. It does not include, as far as the Parish Council is aware, any previous development. The applicant mentions that the City Council does not have a 5-year land supply and that the current Local Plan can be ignored, but an amended Local Plan has been submitted to Government showing additional sites which will more than cover the current shortfall. None of these new sites show that development in the Parish of South Hanningfield would be agreed, given its position in the Green Belt. There are over 10,000 sites in the City of Chelmsford which already have planning permission but have not been developed yet. It is suggested in the applicant's letter that the site adjacent to 71A Park Lane could fall under the government's recent changes to planning laws to be classified as "Grey Belt", but it is quite the opposite, being part of the open landscape of this attractive village. There is considerable "Grey Belt" land, much of it previously developed, within the village on sites which were used by car breakers and the contrast between this and the land in Park

Lane could not be greater. The Parish Council repeats its objection on the grounds that giving planning permission to the development of the Green Belt site would be both against the Local Plan and set a precedent in this and other villages nearby. It is relevant that a similar application was made some years ago and refused both by the then Borough Council and the Planning Inspectorate following an appeal. The comments make almost exactly the same points that the Parish Council, and local residents, are making now. A copy of these is given below.

"Application to build three houses on the land next to 71 Park Lane"

Borough Council's Refusal

"It is considered that the proposed development, if permitted, would be contrary to these policies in that it would result in the consolidation of a loose knit ribbon of development to further detriment of this rural area. The proposal, if permitted, would be a precedent for further development of a similar nature in the locality contrary to the Local Authority's policy for this area."

Planning Inspector's Decision following an appeal by the applicant

7. I consider that it would undesirably consolidate the loose scatter of buildings in the area and thus detract from the natural character of the Extended Metropolitan Green Belt, away from the main village development at Ramsden Heath. In my opinion the existence of houses on the western side of Park Lane, opposite the site, does not warrant the proposed development on the eastern side of the road.

8. I have considered all the other matters mentioned in the representations, including the availability of public services, and housing which was allowed after an appeal in 1972 on land at the corner of Short Lane and Church Road. In my opinion there are different circumstances in the present case, particularly as the Review Development Plan and the Structure Plan have been approved since that time. In my opinion none of these matters are sufficiently strong to outweigh the above considerations leading to my decision that your client's proposal should not be allowed.

9. For the above reasons, and in the exercise of the powers transferred to me, I hereby dismiss your clients' appeal."

To save the Green Belt in Ramsden Heath the Parish Council asks that the application be refused.

6.6 26/00883/CLEUD – Beebrook Farm, Dowsett Lane, Ramsden Heath Certificate of Lawfulness to regularise the maintenance and improvement of existing agricultural building – The Parish Council request photographic evidence from the landowner on the previous structure, as we believe this did not exist. We therefore request an

extension to the consultation, until this evidence has been provided. We currently object subject to lack of information supplied.

6.7 26/00479/FUL – Stables at Dowsett Farm, Dowsett Lane, Ramsden Heath – Two dwellings to replace existing stables and containers and associated works including landscaping and parking – Strongly Object, this is overdevelopment of the site and is Green Belt land. This is not previously developed land, and this exceeds the existing footprint.

7. Finance –

7.1 Ratify online payments; cheques; direct debits and credit card payments – Proposed by Cllr Burgess, Seconded Cllr Graves –

RATIFICATION		
Ernest Doe & Sons Ltd	Brush cutter P3	£ 549.95
BFS Ltd	Fuel	£ 249.01
Downham Hall	Refund	£ 100.00
Paul James	Maintenance	£
Julie Moule	Salary	£
Essex Pension Fund	Pension	£
HMRC	Tax & NI	£
Ralph Thomason	Salary	£
Anthony Moule	Maintenance	£
Mylene Linwood	Admin Assistance	£
CHEQUES		
Cash	Petty Cash	£ 37.80
BARCLAYCARD		
Adobe	Monthly Subs	£ 16.64
Amazon	S/Pav paper towels	£ 18.79
Selco	Grip Gloves	£ 46.80
Amazon	S/Pav toilet rolls	£ 25.28
B&Q	Fence Life	£ 74.00
Amazon	Danish Oil	£ 22.94
Amazon	Address Labels	£ 7.88
Amazon	A4 Copy Paper	£ 33.96
John Lewis	Printer	£ 316.95
Amazon	Resin Adhesive	£ 14.99
Summerhill	War Memorial Plants	£ 299.00
	Total	£ 877.23

DIRECT DEBITS		
EE	Mobile	£ 20.80
EON	S/Pav Electricity	£ 188.33
BT	Office Line Rental	£ 64.74

7.2 Authority to Issue online payments and cheques – Proposed by Cllr Huntington, Seconded Cllr Graves –
ONLINE PAYMENTS

Ernest Doe & Sons Ltd	P3 Brush knives	£ 108.23
SHTS	Willow tree removal	£ 1299.50

7.3 30th June 2026 Month-End Accounts – The Clerk reported that the accounts look very healthy. This is due to the £47100.00 credit in respect of the bus grant. ECC sent us the money, instead of directly to the bus company. She was concerned this would affect our 2026/27 AGAR, bringing us to over £200,000. The Chairman asked the Clerk to contact our internal auditor for advice, as he feels we should be exempt.

7.4 Discuss the Internal Auditor's 2025/26 Report – The Clerk reported that the Internal Auditor recommends we adopt a statement of internal control. This will be drafted and discussed at the next finance meeting. The Internal Auditor states we have no Data Protection Policy in place, but this is incorrect and it is listed on our website. The comments regarding General Reserves were noted. Unfortunately, we did not manage to hold a finance meeting before the year end to agree transfers. This will be actioned at the next finance meeting.

8. Authority for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to deal with any planning/urgent matters during recess – Proposed by Cllr Adams, Seconded Cllr Thurgood, all in favour.

9. Oak Processionary Moth – Update from Councillor Burgess – Sadly we now have two diseased trees on South Hanningfield Tye. Both trees have been cordoned off, and details have been presented on our face book page. We will have to wait to hear back from the Forestry Commission.

10. Discuss the 2026 Christmas tree lighting event – The Clerk reported that she would like to hold the Christmas tree lighting event at Ramsden Heath Village Hall this year. She would still like a tree at the War Memorial,

but would also like to donate a tree to Ramsden Heath Village Hall and hold the official lighting there. It is much safer and the Hall Committee have kindly donated the hall free of charge; all we need to pay for is the cleaning. Ramsden Pre School will also be holding their Christmas Bazaar that evening. Members were all in favour.

11. 2027 Annual Parish Meeting Guest Speaker suggestions – Cllr Adams said he would ask his wife, as she knows some Beekeepers who give presentations. This will be carried over to September's meeting.

12. Matters for Information –

12.1 Cllr Graves reported that a branch on one of the oak trees on the Tye may need cutting back.

12.2 Cllr Thurgood updated members on the 10a bus service which is commencing on 27th July. Sadly, no maildrops have been made and he is chasing the bus company direct. There will be three return visits into Billericay, Monday to Friday. The Clerk thanked Cllr Thurgood for all his hard work securing this service.

12.3 Cllr Thurgood reported he attended the seminar at Essex & Suffolk Water yesterday and updated members on the proposed aeration works.

12.4 Cllr Thurgood reported that ECC have advised the P3 Team not to work during the current heat conditions.

12.5 Cllr Thurgood reported that the "Ramsden Heath" sign in Church Road, coming from Ramsden Bellhouse has rotted. He reported this to ECC, as too the Clerk, but they are still insisting it is not urgent. He has emailed Cllr Clark and if no response is received, he will contact Cllr Mark Webster direct.

12.6 The Clerk reported that there has been a short delay in the commencement of the mains fed water system at the Sports Pavilion. This will now commence on the 27th July 2026.

12.7 The Clerk reported that she is awaiting to hear back from our Insurers regarding the vandalised bench at South Hanningfield Tye.

12.8 The Clerk reported that the play area at South Hanningfield Tye will be closed this weekend due to play equipment maintenance.

12.9 The Clerk updated members on the recent Community Speed Watch Report.

12.10 Cllr Huntington advised members that our Chairman, Roy Whitehead, was recently granted the Freedom of the City of Chelmsford, one of the highest and rarest honours that Chelmsford City Council can bestow. It is reserved for individuals who have made an outstanding

contribution to the city and its local communities and has only been given twice in the past 20 years. In fact, he is only the 16th person to receive the honour since the early 1900's. During his 16 years as leader of CCC, key projects included the development of Bond Street, with the first ever John Lewis store in Essex, the redevelopment of Riverside Leisure Centre, the development of Beaulieu Village, the first medical school in Essex at Anglia Ruskin University, the first railway station in Essex for more than 100 years, the introduction of recycling of plastics and food waste and in 2012 the granting of City Status to be the first City in Essex. He congratulated Roy on his well-deserved honour. All in favour, such a fabulous achievement.

13. Date of next meeting – The Clerk confirmed this will be Thursday 10th September 2026 commencing 7.45pm in Ramsden Heath Village Hall.

14. Resolution for the exclusion of the public RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and/or as amended the public be excluded from the meeting for the specific agenda items on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within paragraphs 3 and 6 of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Act – All in favour.

Approved as a true record.

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