

**EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE
AYTHORPE RODING PARISH COUNCIL
CONVENED BY THE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL
UNDER ITEM 6A OF
THE STANDING ORDERS**

Date: Monday 22 June 2026

Time: 7.30 pm

Location: Bill Reeve Pavillion, Roundbush Green, Dunmow CM6 1PY

Members to be present:

Cllr P C Whittaker (Chair)

Cllr S Lander (Vice Chair)

Cllr R Lister

Cllr J Newstead

Cllr G Sykes

Cllr ~~Walton~~ Radbourne.

Members of the Public and Councillors were asked to **NOTE** that in accordance with Standing Orders 3 (i) and the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, photographing, recording, broadcasting, transmitting or otherwise reporting the proceeding of a meeting may take place.

Councillors were asked to **NOTE** that in the exercise of their functions, they must take note of the following: equal opportunities; crime and disorder; human rights; health and safety and biodiversity

1. FC001/26 - ELECTION OF A CHAIR (S. 15 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972)

Cllr Sykes nominated and Cllr Lister seconded the election of Cllr Coward-Whittaker as Chair for 2026/27 and Cllr Coward-Whittaker was duly appointed and executed the declaration of acceptance of the office of Chair to the Council

1. FC002/26 - ELECTION OF A CHAIR (S. 15(6) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972)

Cllr Sykes nominated and Cllr Lister seconded the election of Cllr Lander as Vice Chair for 2026/27 and Cllr Lander was duly appointed and executed the declaration of acceptance of the office of Vice Chair to the Council

1. **FC003/26 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from the Clerk/RFO

1. **FC004/26 - ANY OTHER ABSENCE**

None

1. **FC005/26 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

1. **FC006/26 - MINUTES**

The minutes were not available and the matter was deferred

1. **FC007/26 - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None

1. **FC008/26 - REPORT OF THE INTERNAL AUDITOR**

Members **NOTED** the emailed comments of the Internal Auditor - 2025/2026 (**Appendix 2**) and **AGREED** that improvement was necessary. It was **AGREED** that training was required for staff and Councillors and this would be undertaken. The Clerk would be asked to arrange this.

1. **FC009/26 - AGAR REPORT FROM THE CLERK/RFO**

Members did not hear the report on the AGAR including the explanation of variances between 2025/26 and 2024/25 Total Receipts, Staff costs and Other payments figures and **AGREED** to request a written report from the Clerk/RFO for consideration at the next meeting

1. **FC010/26 - STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2025 - ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2025/26**

To **REVIEW** and **APPROVE** if appropriate the statement of Internal Control signed by the Chair - the matter was deferred

1. **FC011/26 - THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2025/26 (AGAR 2025/26) - CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION - FORM 2**

Members were advised that, under guidance notes on completing Form 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26 (**Appendix 3 - page 3**), it must be returned to the External Auditor.

Members **AGREED** to **DECLARE** the Council exempt from the requirement for a limited assurance review. Authority was delegated to the Chair to return the form to the Clerk/RFO and Internal Auditor for submission to PKF Littlejohn. Councillors requested confirmation of submission be circulated to all councillors by the Clerk/RFO

1. FC012/26 - THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2024/25 (AGAR 2025/26) SECTION 1 AND SECTION 2

Members are advised that, under guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2026/26, Sections 1 and 2 must be completed, approved and signed by the authority. The authority must comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR and the Certificate of Exemption. Proper Practices are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end.

The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts. The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references, even where approved on the same day. The Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 (Appendix 3 - page 5)

Members **APPROVED** Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 which was signed by the Council Chair on behalf of the Council. The Clerk was absent and will sign confirming the approval has been minuted

Section 2 – Accounting Statement 2025/26 (Appendix 3 - page 6)

The 2025/26 Accounts have recently been closed. The unsigned Accounting statement was circulated to all councillors by the Clerk/RFO on 12 June 2026

Members **APPROVED** the Accounting Statement signed by the Clerk/RFO will be signed by the Council Chair.



1. FC013/26 - PUBLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Members **NOTED** that the authority must inform the electorate of a single period of 30 working days during which public rights may be exercised. This notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited must be published at least one day before the inspection period commences; The inspection period must include the first 10 working days of July 2025. The matter remained with the Clerk/RFO to address

1. FC014/26 - APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

Members **CONSIDERED** the need to appoint an internal auditor for the period 2026/27 and **AGREED** to seek recommendations from other Councils

1. FC015/26 - BANK MANDATE

The system of internal control requires a review of the bank account signatories. Members are invited to indicate if they want to be a signatory and, if so, which **THREE** member will serve in this role. The Clerk should be an authorised person but not a signatory. It was **AGREED** the signatories would be Cllr Sykes, Cllr Coward-Whittaker and Cllr Lander and the bank has been notified the Clerk is not an authorised signatory

1. FC016/26 - REVIEW OF COUNCIL SUBSCRIPTIONS

The council presently subscribes to the following:

Essex Association of Local Councils
National Association of Local Councils

Members **REVIEWED** and **AGREED** these subscriptions for the year 2026/27
(Appendix 4)

1. FC017/26 - PAYMENTS

Members **REVIEWED** the available proposed payments for May and June and **APPROVED (Appendix 5)**

1. FC018/26 - LAND AND ASSETS REGISTER REVIEW

The Parish Council's Standing Orders require that an inventory of land and assets, Is annually reviewed by council.

In the absence of a Land and Asset Register, Members **AGREE** to delegated authority to Cllr Radbourn to investigate the matter and report back to Full Council

1. **FC019/26 - CONFIRMATION OF INSURANCE COVER**

It is requirement that the Insurance Cover is reviewed for the year 2026/27 at the Annual Council Meeting

Members were note able to **REVIEW** and **APPROVE** the Insurance Policy for continuation during the year 2026/27 as no copy was available. The Chair was given authority to request a copy of the schedule from the insurance company and the matter was **DEFERRED (Appendix 6)**

1. **FC020/26 - STANDING ORDERS REVIEW**

It is requirement that the Standing Orders are reviewed and adopted for the year 2026/27 at the Annual Council Meeting

Members **CONSIDERED** and **APPROVED** the draft Standing Orders (2026) for adoption for 25/26, **(Appendix 7)**

1. **FC021/26 - FINANCIAL REGULATIONS REVIEW**

It is requirement that the Financial Regulations are reviewed and adopted for the year 2026/27 at the Annual Council Meeting

Members **CONSIDERED** and **APPROVED** the draft Financial Regulations (2026) for adoption for 26/27, **(Appendix 8)**

1. **FC022/26 - CODE OF MEMBER CONDUCT - LOCALISM ACT 2011, S28**

The Localism Act 2011 requires Parish Councils to adopt a Code of Member conduct, which confirms the conduct expected of the membership.

Members **CONSIDERED** and **APPROVED** the Aythorpe Roding Parish Code of Member Conduct for adoption during the year 2026/27 **(Appendix 9)**

1. **FC023/26 - COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE REVIEW**

It is requirement that the Complaints Policy is reviewed and adopted for the year 2026/27 at the Annual Council Meeting

Members are now asked to **CONSIDER** and **APPROVE** the adoption of the Complaints Procedure (**Appendix 10**)

1. **FC024/26 - MEDIA, COMMUNICATIONS AND EMAIL POLICY REVIEW**

It is requirement that the Media policy is reviewed and adopted for the year 2026/27 at the Annual Council Meeting

Members **CONSIDERED** and **APPROVED** the adoption of the Media, Communications and Email policy (**Appendix 11**)

1. **FC025/26 - DATA PROTECTION POLICIES**

It is requirement of the Standing Orders that the Data Protection Policy is reviewed and adopted for the year 2026/27 at the Annual Council Meeting

Members **CONSIDERED** and **APPROVED** the adoption of the Data Protection policy for 2026/27 (**Appendix 12**)

1. **FC026/26 - EMPLOYMENT POLICIES**

It is requirement of the Standing Orders that the Employment Policies are reviewed and adopted for the year 26/27 at the Annual Council Meeting

Members **CONSIDERED** and **APPROVED** the adoption of the employment policy for 2026/27 (**Appendix 13**)

1. **FC027/26 - IT POLICY**

It is requirement of the AGAR that the IT Policy is reviewed and adopted for the year 2026/27 at the Annual Council Meeting

Members **CONSIDERED** and **APPROVED** the adoption of the IT policy for 2026/27 (**Appendix 14**)

1. **FC028/26 - SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR 2026/27**

It is requirement of the Standing Orders that the schedule of meetings for 2026/27 is reviewed and adopted for the year 26/27 at the Annual Council Meeting

Members **CONSIDERED** and **APPROVED** the attached schedule for meetings in 2026/27 (**Appendix 15**)



1. **FC029/26 - MATTERS TO BE BROUGHT FORWARD OR FOR DISCUSSION WITH NO DECISION**

Maintenance of Drury Lane
Update on staff matters
Update on Governance matters
Update on Finance matters

1. **FC030/26 - DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

28 July at 7.30 pm

1. **FC031/26 - EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

Members **CONSIDERED** and **AGREED** the following motion to be proposed by the Chair:

"That the public and the press be excluded from the meeting, the Council believing that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be discussed."

1. **FC032/26 - FINANCE MATTERS**

Members discussed matters relating to ongoing finance and historical spend and **AGREED** a full internal review would be necessary. Council delegated authority to Cllr Sykes to carry this out

1. **FC033/26 - GOVERNANCE MATTERS**

Members discussed the AGAR process and other governance matters and **AGREED** outside advice may be sought in future relating to matters arising

1. **FC034/26 - EMPLOYMENT MATTERS**

Members noted a grievance had been received although insufficient detail had been provided to allow for investigation and **AGREED** the matter would be managed by the Chair who would report back to Full Council