



Rayleigh Town Council

The Pavilion, King George V Playing Field, Rayleigh, SS6 8JD
www.rayleightowncouncil.gov.uk

**Minutes of the Full Town Council meeting
held on Monday 9th February 2026 at 7:30pm
at The Pavilion, King George V Playing Field, Rayleigh, SS6 8JD**

Members Present:

- Cllr D Balding
- Cllr N Gallop
- Cllr L Knell
- Cllr R Lambourne
- Cllr R Linden
- Cllr J Lumley
- Cllr R Milne
- Cllr B Newport
- Cllr J Newport
- Cllr L Newport
- Cllr M O Leary
- Cllr S-J Page
- Cllr C Roe
- Cllr D Sperring
- Cllr M Sutton
- Cllr M Vernon – Chairman of Council
- Cllr I Ward
- Cllr I Wilson
- Cllr V Wilson

In Attendance:

- S Fishenden – Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
- Three members of the public

Item 1: Designation of Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer to Rayleigh Town Council: To formally designate Shaun Fishenden PSLCC as Proper Officer under S112 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Responsible Financial Officer under S151 of the Local Government Act 1972

It was agreed to formally designate Shaun Fishenden PSLCC as the Council's Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer.

PROPOSED: Cllr Vernon. SECONDED: Cllr Page. All in favour.

Item 2: Apologies for Absence: To receive and accept apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Stanley, Cllr N Knell and Cllr Brewer.

The Chairman of Council also reported that Cllr Jamie Burton had resigned from the Town Council. His service to the Council was noted.

Item 3: Declaration of Members' Interests: To receive declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests for this meeting

Cllrs. J Newport and J Lumley declared a non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to Essex County Council due to being elected members.

Cllrs. R Lambourne, R Linden, J Newport, L Newport, M O'Leary, S-J Page, M Sutton, I Ward, I Wilson and V Wilson declared a non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to Rochford District Council due to being elected members.

Item 4: Minutes of Previous Meeting: To approve the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 10th November 2025 as an accurate record

The minutes of the previous Full Council meeting held on 10th November 2025 were approved.

Item 5: Public Session & External Reports

5.1 Public Session

A member of the public raised concerns around the proposed Town of Culture bid and whether the Town Council had the capacity to deliver this given other internal priorities.

5.2 Rochford District Councillors

There were no reports given.

5.3 Essex County Councillors

Cllr Lumley reported on the letter received regarding the Fairglen Interchange project delays which had been circulated to all Councillors by the Town Clerk.

Cllr J Newport reported on the Pothole Fund that was currently available.

Item 6: Chairman's Updates: To receive a verbal report from the Chairman of Rayleigh Town Council

The Chairman of Town Council has attended the following events:

- 15th Oct - RTC Awards Presentation evening at Fitzwimarc School
- 30th Oct - Halloween for Little Havens charity by Dexter Gallop (age 12)
- 9th Nov - Remembrance Sunday services and wreath layings
- 26th Nov - Rayleigh Country Market at the WI hall
- 27th Nov - RTC Christmas Light Switch On event

- 27th Nov - RODS (Rayleigh Operatic and Dramatic Society) Panto at The Mill Hall
- 28th Nov - Christmas Tree Festival at Holy Trinity Church
- 7th Dec - RRAVS (Rayleigh, Rochford and District Association for Voluntary Service)
- Christmas Carol Service at Holy Trinity
- 9th Dec - Ukrainian Community Christmas Eve at The MegaCentre
- 18th Dec - Palmers Solicitors Christmas Concert at Holy Trinity
- 22nd Dec - RTC Best Dressed Christmas windows presentations with Palmers
- 23rd Dec - South Essex Youth Symphony Orchestra (SEYSO) concert "A Christmas Hamper" at The Mill Hall
- 7th Feb - RDC Citizen of the Year Awards at The Freight House, Rochford

Item 7: Clerk's Report: To note a report of items for information from the Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer

The Clerk's Report was noted.

Item 8: Committee & Working Group Minutes: To note the minutes received

8.1 Open Spaces Committee – 19.01.26

The Open Spaces Committee minutes were noted.

Item 9: Financial Matters

9.1 Budget Monitoring: To note the report showing the Town Council's current financial position

The Town Council noted its current financial position.

9.2 Earmarked Reserves: To note the council's current reserves position

The Council's earmarked reserves were noted.

9.3 Bank Reconciliations: To agree a councillor to complete the monthly bank reconciliations (it cannot be a bank signatory or Chairman of Council)

It was agreed Cllr Linden would conduct the latest monthly bank reconciliations.

Item 10: Governance and Policies

10.1 Suspension of Committees & Working Groups: To consider the report and its recommendations to suspend committee and

**working group meetings until May 2026 with the exception of the
Planning Committee and the Personnel Committee**

It was agreed to adopt the recommendations of the report to:

- To suspend meetings of the Communities Committee, Open Spaces Committee, Policy & Finance Committee until May 2026. To suspend all Working Groups with the exceptions listed below.
- To retain planned committee meetings for the Planning Committee, Personnel Committee and KGV Trust. To retain the Trinity Fair Working Group, Christmas Lights Working and LGR Working Group
- To hold monthly Full Town Council meetings on the first Monday of the month and to hold Planning Committee meetings on the second Monday of the month.

It was noted the schedule of meetings going forward would be as follows:

Monday 2 March 2026 at 7:30pm	Full Town Council
Monday 9 March 2026 at 7:30pm	Planning Committee
Monday 13 April 2026 at 7:30pm	Planning Committee
Tuesday 21 April 2026 at 11:00am	Personnel Committee
Tuesday 28 April 2026 at 7:30pm	Annual Town Meeting
Monday 11 May 2026 at 7:30pm	Annual Council Meeting

PROPOSED: Cllr Vernon. SECONDED: Cllr V Wilson. There were fifteen votes in favour, three against and one abstention. The motion was carried.

10.2 Internal Auditor for 2026-2027: To consider quoted received for internal audit providers for the 2026-2027 financial year

It was agreed to appoint Mulberry Local Authority Services as the Council's internal auditor from the 2026-2027 financial year.

It was agreed costs for Internal Audit would be capped up to the expenditure level incurred with the current audit provider.

PROPOSED: Cllr Vernon. SECONDED: Cllr Milne. All in favour.

10.3 Councillor-Officer Protocol: To consider adopting the draft councillor-officer protocol

It was agreed to adopt the Councillor-Officer protocol.

PROPOSED: Cllr Vernon. SECONDED: Cllr Balding. All in favour.

Item 11: Council Administration

11.1 Accounting and Allotment Software: To consider the quote to transition from Rialtas to Scribe from 1st April 2026

It was agreed to approve the Scribe allotment and accounting package from 1st April 2026, at a total cost of £1958 for the one-off costs and £185 per month as the ongoing cost.

PROPOSED: Cllr Vernon. SECONDED: Cllr I Wilson. All in favour.

11.2 Office Opening Hours: To consider the report and recommendations on proposed changes to office opening hours

It was agreed to adopt the recommendations of the report:

- That the Town Council office be open to members of the public from 9am-2pm from Monday to Thursday.
- That the Town Council office be closed to members of the public on Fridays

PROPOSED: Cllr Vernon. SECONDED: Cllr V Wilson. All in favour.

11.3 New Website: To consider the quotes received for a new council website

It was agreed to commission Aubergine to design and the host the new Town Council website, at a cost of £899 + VAT for the first year, and £399 + VAT per annum from year two onwards.

The Town Clerk & RFO would circulate examples of Aubergine produced websites to all councillors.

PROPOSED: Cllr Vernon. SECONDED: Cllr Gallop. All in favour.

11.3 Payroll Provider: To consider quotes received for payroll provider

It was agreed to appoint DM Payroll Services as the council's payroll provider from 1st April 2026, at a cost of £488 + VAT per annum and a £100 set-up fee.

PROPOSED: Cllr Vernon. SECONDED: Cllr Gallop. All in favour.

Item 12: Council Budget for 2026-2027

12.1 Budget: To consider the draft budget for the 2026-2027 financial year

The Chairman reported that the consideration of the draft budget would be deferred to be considered at an extraordinary Full Council meeting on the 16th February.

12.2 Precept: To agree the precept requirement for the 2026-2027 financial year

The precept was deferred as above.

Item 13: Local Government Re-organisation Working Group: To agree actions arising from the LGR Working Group relating to the forthcoming Local Government Re-organisation

The Terms of Reference for the Local Government Reorganisation Working Group were approved.

PROPOSED: Cllr Vernon. SECONDED: Cllr J Newport. All in favour.

Item 14: Motion from Cllr Linden – Town of Culture 2028: To consider submitting an expression of interest form for the UK Town of Culture 2028

It was agreed to explore the possibility of submitting a future Town of Culture bid with a feasibility study.

The meeting closed at 8:47pm