

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 16 July 2014 at 7.45pm at 1 Buckingham Court.

Present:

Councillors: S Pewsey (in the Chair)
I Lawrence J Mahoney H Mann
S Murray (from Min No 156.2)

C P Pond (as substitute for J Jennings)
D Wixley (as substitute for J Angold-Stephens)

Officers: E K Walsh (Town Clerk)
P Bryce (Administrative Assistant)

RG152 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Jennings, J Angold-Stephens and K Angold-Stephens. The Town Clerk reported that Cllr C P Pond had been nominated as Cllr Jennings' substitute and Cllr Wixley as Cllr J Angold-Stephens' substitute for this meeting.

RG153 Declarations of Interest

Cllrs Mahoney and Pewsey declared a non-pecuniary and non-prejudicial interest in Agenda item 7, Financial Assistance - Christmas Lights as members of the Loughton High Road Town Centre Partnership.

RG154 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Resources and General Services Committee held on Wednesday 9 April 2014 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RG155 Public Representations

None were received.

RG156 Matters for Report

156.1 Christmas Card Competition

The Committee NOTED the report of the 2013 competition and CONFIRMED that the competition should continue for 2014. Councillors would be invited to volunteer to deliver posters and application forms to local schools and other organisations in early September.

Cllr Murray joined the meeting during the next item

156.2 Insurance – Min no EH109.11.1

The Committee AGREED to increase the level of insurance cover to include the cemetery contents once the security improvements had been completed at a cost of £106.00 per annum including insurance premium tax.

156.3 Local Government Transparency Code

Members' attention was drawn to this code published by the Department of Communities and Local Government on 1 May 2014 which applied to all local councils with gross annual income or expenditure exceeding £200,000.

The Committee NOTED that, whilst the code was not mandatory, the Council already complied with most of the requirements. The Town Clerk would ensure that a copy of the Council's staff organisation chart, including the spinal column points for the posts, was provided on the website. The provision of regular information regarding expenditure items over £500 would in future include those over £250.

RG157 Pensions – Employer LGPS Discretionary Policies

The Committee NOTED that under the Local Government Pension Scheme (Benefits, Membership and Contributions Regulations 2008), each Employing Authority was required to formulate, publish and keep under review a policy statement in relation to the exercise of a number of discretions under the LGPS.

The Chairman reported on his attendance at an Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) pension training event in Great Dunmow on 15 July 2014.

The Strategy and Staff Group were invited to prepare a draft policy for consideration by the Committee at its next meeting together with details of any cost implications.

RG158 Financial Assistance – Christmas lights

The Committee AGREED in principle to support a request for financial assistance of up to £4,000 from the Broadway Town Centre Partnership for the Christmas lighting displays this coming winter, subject to the receipt of satisfactory paperwork and accounts. The grant would be paid under the LGA1972 s145.

The Chairman reported on comments made by the Loughton High Road Town Centre Partnership in this regard. The matter would be reported to the Council meeting on 30 July 2014.

RG159 Flexible Working

The Committee NOTED that from 30 June 2014 every employee had the statutory right to request flexible working, not just parents and carers. Employees must have worked for the same employer for at least 26 weeks to be eligible.

The Strategy and Staff Group were asked to draft a policy for consideration by the Committee.

RG160 Finance

160.1 Internal Audit – Min no RG132.1

The Committee NOTED that the final inspection by the internal auditor for 2013/14 had been carried out on 23 April 2014 and a copy of his report circulated to all members of the Council. This confirmed that no significant issues had arisen during 2013/14.

Members also noted that page 4 of the Annual Statement of Accounts, the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2013/14, had been completed and signed by the auditor.

160.2 Financial Position

The Committee NOTED the end of year financial report for 2013/14 and the transfers to and from the Committee's earmarked reserves.

Confirmation was received that the first instalment of the 2014/15 precept, £290,850, had been received from Epping Forest District Council on 25 April 2014 together with the full amount of the Local Council Support Grant, £58,358.

A note of the Council's current bank balances and most recent reconciliations were circulated at the meeting.

160.3 Accounts and Audit

The Committee NOTED the Council's annual accounts and governance statement for 2013/14 were approved by full Council on 16 April 2014 and took this opportunity to review the Committee reports. No issues arose.

160.4 Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – A Practitioners' Guide (England), March 2014

The Town Clerk reported that the 2014 guidance had recently been published and superseded the 2010 guide. The Council would regard it as proper practices for its accounting statements with effect from 1 April 2014.

160.5 Cheque Signatories

The Committee NOTED the current Council policy that the cheque signatories on the Council's bank accounts were any two members from the pool of councillors comprising the Town Mayor, Deputy Town Mayor and four committee chairmen and that the Bank Mandates were to be amended to include Cllr Jennings, the new Deputy Town Mayor for 2014/15.

To facilitate the prompt payment of invoices, the Committee CONFIRMED that Cllr C P Pond should remain as an additional signatory for this financial year but AGREED that Councillors C C and C P Pond were not to be used for the same cheque list.

The authorised signatories for 2014/15 were to be as follows:

Cllrs J Angold-Stephens, Jennings, Pewsey, C C Pond, C P Pond, Weston and Wixley.

160.6 Fidelity Insurance Cover

The Committee AGREED that the level of fidelity guarantee insurance cover, currently set at £1.4 million, was sufficient for its needs.

160.7 Councillor Checks on Finances – Min no RG113.3

The Committee CONFIRMED that it wished to continue the practice of appointing a councillor to carry out checks on the Council's financial transactions and Cllr Mahoney AGREED to take on the responsibility for 2014/15.

The Committee thanked Cllr Lawrence for undertaking this work during 2012/13 and 2013/14.

160.8 Section 137

The Committee NOTED that the 2014/15 limit of expenditure per head of relevant population under Section 137 of the 1972 Local Government Act was £7.20. The relevant population referred to the total number of electors in the town on 1 April 2014.

160.9 Accounts Paid

The Committee NOTED that Payments totalling £239,796.17 as detailed on payments schedules nos 156 – 162 had been made since the report to the meeting on 9 April 2014. The schedules and accompanying invoices were available at the meeting for inspection.

RG161 Review of Standing Orders / Financial Regulations

The Committee NOTED that the NALC had recently published updated versions of the model Standing Orders and Financial Regulations for local councils.

The Committee asked the Strategy and Staff Group to undertake a full review of the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations for consideration by this Committee and presentation to full Council.

RG162 Think Loughton

The Committee AGREED to continue with the current arrangements for the design, printing and delivery of Think Loughton, the Council's newsletter.

RG163 Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth

The Committee CONFIRMED that Loughton Town Council should take part in this event and purchase the Commonwealth flag from the official supplier, J W Plant & Co Ltd, at a cost of £43.50 inclusive of delivery and VAT.

It was AGREED that the Town Mayor should raise the flag at a small ceremony at Buckingham Court on Commonwealth Day at 10am on Monday 9 March 2015.

RG164 Training and Conferences

The Committee APPROVED the attendance of:

- i. Cllrs Abraham, Lawrence and Pewsey at the Code of Conduct training to be held at the Civic Offices, Epping on Friday 12 September 2014;
- ii. Cllrs Jennings and Weston at the Chairman's Training Day 1, run by the Essex Association of Local Council in Great Dunmow on Thursday 11 September 2014; and
- iii. Cllr Jennings at the Chairman's Training Days 2 and 3, run by the Essex Association of Local Council in Great Dunmow on Thursdays 9 October and 6 November 2014

to enable them to claim travel expenses should they wish to do so.

RG165 Staffing

165.1 Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Committee RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the next item under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as it contained confidential information relating to personnel matters.

165.2 The Committee CONFIRMED the actions of the Town Clerk, taken under delegated powers in discussion with the Strategy and Staff Group, to meet the staffing needs of the Council in recent months.

This included arrangements for the Planning Committee Clerk to act up as Deputy Town Clerk in her absence and the employment of an additional part-time project officer at a net cost of £3,000. Staffing levels and the associated budgetary implications would be kept under review.

Should further assistance be required in relation to allotment management, the Town Clerk was authorised to appoint an officer on spinal column point 29 for up to 7 hours per week under a six-month temporary contract.

RG166 Future Work of the Committee

166.1 Quality Council Status

The Committee NOTED that the publication of the revised scheme was anticipated shortly after which the Council would have three months to seek reaccreditation. The Committee was advised that new policies may be required including a Community Engagement policy.

Signed.....

Date: 8 October 2014

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 8 October 2014 at 7.45pm at 1 Buckingham Court.

Present:

Councillors: S Pewsey (in the Chair)
J Angold-Stephens J Jennings I Lawrence
J Mahoney E Stacey
D Wixley (as substitute for K Angold-Stephens)

Officers: E K Walsh (Town Clerk)
Shirley Haynes (Deputy Town Clerk)

1 member of the public

RG167 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs K Angold-Stephens, Mann and Murray. The Town Clerk reported that Cllr Wixley had been nominated as Cllr K Angold-Stephens' substitute for this meeting.

RG168 Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were received.

RG169 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Resources and General Services Committee held on Wednesday 16 July 2014 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RG170 Public Representations

As a member of the public wished to address members concerning Agenda item 6, Financial Assistance – Christmas Lights, the Committee AGREED to bring this item forward.

RG171 Financial Assistance – Christmas Lights

The Committee NOTED that in recent years the seasonal lighting on lamp columns in both The Broadway and the High Road had been arranged by the Town Centre Partnerships and financed through grant funding totalling £8,000 per annum from the Town Council. These lights were in addition to the illuminated Christmas tree on Kings Green provided by the Town Council.

In recognition of the amount of work involved in organising this lighting, the Committee offered its thanks to former partnership chairmen, the late David Stannard, Peter Sheen and the late Mike Wardle, and Becky Elliott, the current chairman of the High Road TCP. Members also thanked former councillor Lance Leonard and deputy chairman of the Broadway TCP, Luke Lowrie, for their work to date on this year's plans.

The Committee AGREED to suspend Standing Orders 1(f) and 1(k) to allow Mr Leonard to make his presentation and answer questions from members.

In order to progress the plans for the 2014 lighting and in view of the short time frame to organise this, the Committee AGREED to:

- i. vire the £8,000 financial assistance budget allocated for this item to the street furniture budget of the Environment and Heritage Committee; and
- ii. authorise Council officers to finalise plans as a matter of urgency in discussion with representatives from the TCPs.

It was reported that the events to mark the switching of the Christmas lights would be held as follows:

- i. High Road – Thursday 27 November 2014.
- ii. The Broadway – Friday 28 November 2014.

RG172 Matters for Report

172.1 Insurance – Min no RG156.2

It was reported that the cemetery buildings' contents had been insured at a cost of £57.78 including insurance premium tax for the period up to 31 March 2015.

172.2 Staffing – Min no RG165.2

The Committee NOTED:

- i. the appointment of Mrs Susan Latchford as Allotment Officer on a six-month temporary contract for seven hours per week with effect from 28 July 2014, as agreed at the last meeting; and
- ii. that the annual staff appraisal meetings had been held and action and training plans agreed. No significant issues had arisen.

172.3 Standing Orders Review – Min no RG161

The Committee considered the report and agreed to RECOMMEND to full Council that, in order to address the amendment to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 ('the 1960 Act') made by the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 ('the 2014 Regulations'), Section 1(r) of the current Standing Order be replaced with the following:

- r A person may not orally report or comment about a meeting as it takes place if he/she is present at the meeting of the Town Council or its committees, but otherwise may;*
- a film, photograph or make an audio recording of a meeting;*
- b use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings at a meeting as it takes place or later; and*
- c report or comment on the proceedings in writing during or after a meeting or orally report or comment after the meeting.*

RG173 Finance

173.1 Accounts and Audit 2013/14 – Min no 138

The Committee NOTED that confirmation had been received from PKF Littlejohn, the Council's external auditors, that they had completed the audit of the Annual Return for Loughton Town Council for the year ended 31 March 2014. Section 3 of the Annual Return, the external auditor certificate and opinion, confirmed that, in their opinion, "*the information in the annual return was in accordance with proper practices and no matters*

had come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had not been met”.

For information, the “Notice of Conclusion of Audit and Right to Inspect the Annual Return” had been displayed on the noticeboards together with a copy of the Annual Return since 16 September 2014 and remained in place for more than 14 days as required by the legislation.

173.2 Internal Audit – Min no RG132.1

Noting that the first visit of the internal auditor for the current financial year was to be on Wednesday 15 October 2014, the Committee asked him to examine the allotment records during this visit as this was a new responsibility for the Council.

173.3 Internal Financial Check

The Committee NOTED that Cllr Mahoney had undertaken a routine inspection of the Council's financial records on 27 August 2014. Included in his checks were the insurance records and the football bookings papers.

The Committee recorded its thanks to Cllr Mahoney for his work in this regard.

173.4 Investments

The Santander Business Bond had matured on 1 October 2014 and the funds of £507,007.62, including the gross interest, transferred to the Town Council's Santander Business Reserve Account.

The Committee AGREED to reinvest £500,000 in a new Business Bond with Santander at a rate of 1.10 per cent gross/AER fixed for 12 months.

173.5 Financial Position

The Committee's financial position as at 30 September 2014 was NOTED. Details of the Council's current bank balances together with a copy of the most recent bank reconciliations were circulated at the meeting.

Confirmation was received that the second and final instalment of the 2014/15 precept, £290,850, had been paid by Epping Forest District Council on 26 September 2014.

173.6 Accounts Paid

The Committee NOTED that Payments totalling £169,683.44 as detailed on payments schedules nos 163 – 168 had been made since the report to the meeting on 16 July 2014. The schedules and accompanying invoices were available at the meeting for inspection.

It was also NOTED that details of all Council payments in excess of £250 were now provided on the Council's website on the strategic documents page.

RG174 Quality Council Status

The Committee CONFIRMED the action of the Town Clerk, taken after discussions with the Chairman and Vice Chairman, to put Loughton Town Council forward as one of the pilot councils for the new Quality Council Scheme aiming to achieve gold status.

The Town Clerk reported that the Council appeared to meet the majority of the requirements set out in the draft criteria but that where necessary policies and other documents would be added to the website.

Noting that paper copies of the key policies had been included in the Councillor Handbook provided to all members after the last elections, the Committee asked for a list of all the Council's policies to be provided for Councillors to assist in their work.

RG175 Environment and Sustainability Policy

Members reviewed the Council's Environment and Sustainability Policy originally adopted in October 2009.

The Committee AGREED that the policy met its needs with the exception of one amendment to the final line of the first paragraph on Water Policy, which was now to read:

Water Policy

Water usage at all Council facilities will be reviewed with a view to introducing conservation measures where appropriate. Businesses and residents will be encouraged to do likewise. The Council's contractors will be expected to minimise water use. Drought-resistant species will be considered for any new planting schemes.

RG176 Equality Act 2010

In addition to the existing Equal Opportunities Policy which formed part of the Staff Handbook, the Committee AGREED to adopt the following statement regarding Equality and Diversity:

Loughton Town Council acknowledges its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and the obligations of the Public Sector Equality Duty in Section 149.

The Council is fully committed to recognising and embracing diversity in the local community and pursuing an equal opportunities approach in the employment of its staff and the way in which services are provided for the public.

RG177 Community Engagement Strategy

The Committee CONFIRMED the Council's Community Engagement Strategy as follows:

The Town Council recognises that it is uniquely placed to represent the views of its constituents and provide community leadership. This strategy sets out how it engages with the local community to identify its needs and aspirations and how it can improve community engagement to give people a voice and involve them in decisions affecting their quality of life.

1. Loughton Town Council aims to:

- *Represent and promote the interests of Loughton and its people of all ages in all its activities;*
- *Provide the best possible amenities and services by the efficient use of available resources;*
- *Actively involve local people in decisions affecting activities in the local area;*
- *Promote equality of opportunity and oppose discrimination;*

- *Be open and accountable in all it does;*
- *Enhance quality of life by protecting and enhancing Loughton's ecological and environmental assets.*

2. In order to achieve these aims, the Council will:

- *Work closely with residents, local businesses and community groups;*
- *Engage with as many people as possible who want to participate in decision making, monitoring services and planning for the future (particularly those hard to reach groups);*
- *Ensure, that through the use of a wide range of approaches to public involvement and community engagement, we actively encourage the involvement of residents to capture their views and learn their concerns, and effectively use those views as an integral part of the decision-making process;*
- *Ensure that residents have opportunities to be heard at every stage, and the capacity to be effective citizens.*

3. Defining the community

The Town Council considers the community of Loughton to consist of:

- *All residents of the town;*
- *Users of the Town Council's services;*
- *Those who work or own businesses within the town;*
- *Young people who live and/or go to school and/or college within the town; and*
- *Local voluntary organisations, clubs and societies and any group or organisation that represents some or any of the members of the above sections of the community.*

Additionally, the Town Council recognises that there are certain bodies that are crucial to the quality of life in Loughton and aims to maintain excellent working relationships with these bodies, including Epping Forest District Council, Essex County Council, the Police and the neighbouring town and parish councils.

4. How community engagement is facilitated

The Town Council provides the following:

- *A website with full details of the Council's work;*
- *A quarterly newsletter, Think Loughton, and annual report delivered to all residents and businesses across the town and also available from libraries and on the website;*
- *Regularly updated noticeboards promoting the work of the Council, its partners and other local organisations;*
- *Residents may contact the Town Council offices in person and by telephone Monday to Thursday 9am – 5pm and Friday 9am – 4.45pm with an answerphone provided for messages outside these hours.*
- *Details of how to contact the Town Clerk's office and Councillors are provided in the newsletter and on noticeboards and the website;*
- *Ensuring all meetings of the Council are open to the public and press with a period set aside for residents to speak;*

- *Community forums are held to address important issues affecting the community;*
- *Consultation events provide opportunities for residents to give their views on plans for new facilities or services in the town;*
- *Additional public meetings are arranged to address controversial issues;*
- *Holding a wide range of community events which provide opportunities to engage with the public and raise community spirit;*
- *Press releases to manage the media effectively to promote and defend the Council;*
- *Use of the Council logo to promote the work of the Council;*
- *Good internal communications – making sure staff and members are informed and give out consistent messages and representations on behalf of the community.*
- *Town Councillors represent the Council on various outside bodies to ensure good two-way communication with regular reports of these meetings made to the Council.*
- *Councillors hold regular surgeries and provide other informal opportunities for residents to speak to them.*

5. Improving community engagement

The Town Council will:

- *Publicise the positive results from working with the community and other partners;*
- *Work closely with Epping Forest Youth Council to ensure the views of young people are taken into account.*
- *Identify new opportunities to work with local community groups;*
- *Make full use of modern communication methods;*
- *Review the Community Engagement Strategy annually to ensure its relevance.*

RG178 Health and Safety Policy

The Committee REVIEWED the Council's Health and Safety Policy and AGREED that the policy met its needs with the exception of one amendment to item III, Arrangements, point 2, which was now to read:

- 2 *Detailed policies, procedures, systems and practices in respect of health and safety will be drawn up as necessary for specific aspects of the Council's activities to ensure compliance with the relevant legislation and guidelines. They will form annexes to this policy.*

RG179 Training – A Statement of Intent

The Committee reviewed the Council's Training Policy and CONFIRMED that it met the Council's needs.

RG180 Crime and Disorder Policy

Noting that under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, parish and town councils have a duty to consider the impact of all their functions and decisions on

crime and disorder in their local area, the Committee reviewed the Council’s Crime and Disorder Policy and CONFIRMED that it met the Council’s needs.

The Committee also AGREED to:

- i. add a monitoring clause to all policies where appropriate. This would be enabled through the use of a reporting table on agendas, particularly for new projects.
- ii. work towards a consistent formatting of policies.

The Committee AGREED to suspend Standing Order 1(ff) and finish the meeting by 9.45pm.

RG181 Flexible Working Policy

The Committee CONFIRMED the Flexible Working Policy to be added to the Employee Handbook as presented in the agenda with one amendment to Section F(1) to extend the discussion period to 56 days, now to read:

1) Discussion with Employee

A discussion regarding the application will be held with the employee within 56 days of the application, unless the employer notifies the employee in writing of agreement to the variation. The time and place of the discussion will be convenient to both employer and employee.

The Strategy and Staff Group would be asked to make recommendations with regard to the implementation of this policy.

RG182 Local Government Pension Scheme – Employer Policy Discretions

The Committee CONFIRMED the following Policy Statement to explain how the Council will exercise the discretions available to it under revised 2014 Local Government Pension Scheme regulations.

Regulation	Policy
R16(2)(e) & R16(4)(d) R17(1) RTP15(1)(d) Shared cost additional pension scheme.	The Town Council will not set up a shared cost APC or AVC scheme. The only circumstances under which the Town Council will contribute, as required, is where an employee chooses within 30 days following a period of authorised unpaid leave of absence, to purchase pension.
R30(6) & TP11(2) Flexible retirement	The Town Council will consider employee requests to take flexible retirement on a case by case basis after taking into account business needs and costs that may apply.
R30(8) Waiving of actuarial reduction on flexible retirement	The Town Council will not waive actuarial reductions on a flexible retirement for both active, deferred members and suspended tier 3 ill health pensions.
R30(8) Waiving of actuarial reduction before normal pension age	The Town Council will not waive, in whole or part, the actuarial reduction on benefits where a member voluntarily elects to draw his or her benefits before normal pension age.
TPSch 2, paras 1(2) and 2(2)	The Town Council will not “switch on” the 85 year rule for a member voluntarily electing to draw benefits on or after age 55

Power of the employing authority to 'switch on' the 85 Year Rule	but before age 60.
TP3(1), TPSch 2, paras 2(1) and 2(2), B30(5) and B30A(5) Waiving of any actuarial reduction on pre and/or post April 2014 benefits.	The Town Council will not waive actuarial reductions on pre and or post April 2014 benefits.
R31 Power of employing authority to grant additional pension	The Town Council will not award additional pension to any member.

In addition, the Council reserves the right to

- a) Deal with any other discretions which may apply under the LGPS on their merits on an individual basis; and
- b) Amend any of the policies if in its opinion this would be appropriate given the special circumstances of an individual case.

RG183 Future Work of the Committee

The Committee NOTED that the Council's Financial Regulations would be reviewed at the next meeting in light of the new model recently published by the National Association of Local Councils.

Signed.....
Date: 3 December 2014

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 3 December 2014 at 7.45pm at 1 Buckingham Court.

Present:

Councillors: S Pewsey (in the Chair)
J Jennings I Lawrence J Mahoney
S Murray (from Min No 186)
C C Pond (as substitute for J Angold-Stephens)

Also in attendance:

Councillors: D Wixley

Officers: E K Walsh (Town Clerk)
S Haynes (Deputy Town Clerk)

RG184 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs J Angold-Stephens and K Angold-Stephens. The Town Clerk reported that Cllr C C Pond had been nominated as Cllr J Angold-Stephen's substitute for this meeting.

RG185 Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were received.

Cllr Murray joined the meeting during the next item

RG186 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2014 amended from those circulated to read at Min no RG173.1, "For information, the Notice of Conclusion of Audit and Right to Inspect the Annual Return had been displayed on the noticeboards, together with a copy of the Annual Return.....", were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RG187 Public Representations

None were received.

RG 188 Matters for Report

188.1 Financial Regulations – Min no RG183

The Committee AGREED that the current financial regulations continued to meet the needs of the Council. However, officers would review the new model regulations published by the National Association of Local Councils in preparation for the Council moving to automated payments at some date in the future.

188.2 Strategy and Staff Group

The Committee NOTED that the Strategy and Staff Group had met on 17 November 2014. The topics discussed at that meeting included staffing and a flexible working procedure, alternative office provision to reduce costs, the use of social media and a redesign of the website.

188.3 Flexible Working Policy – Min no RG181

The Committee CONFIRMED the recommendation from the Strategy and Staff Group that the Town Clerk should, under her existing staff management responsibilities, undertake the initial consideration of applications made by staff under the Flexible Working Policy.

If, in her opinion, the request was likely to have a negative impact on the Council's day to day operation it would be referred to the Strategy and Staff Group for further consideration and if necessary to this Committee. The time frame of fifty-six days set within the policy allowed for this extended consideration. Should an appeal be necessary, the Grievance Hearing Panel would be convened.

RG189 Finance

189.1 Internal Audit

It was NOTED that the Council's internal auditors, Auditing Solutions, attended the Council offices on 15 October 2014 and a copy of their report had been circulated to all members.

The report concluded that, in the areas examined to date, the Council continued to operate effective control systems to help ensure that transactions were free from material misstatement and that they would be reported accurately in the Annual Return and detailed Statement of Accounts for the financial year.

The auditors also acknowledged that Council members and officers continued to operate a sound, pro-active approach to risk management and corporate governance issues, together with the development and management of effective internal controls and procedural documentation.

The Committee noted that the next Auditor's visit was scheduled for 6 January 2015.

189.2 Internal Financial Check

Cllr Mahoney reported that he would shortly undertake a routine inspection of the Council's financial records and report back to a future meeting of the Committee.

189.3 Bad Debt Policy

The Committee NOTED that, after following the Council's Bad Debt Policy, the Town Clerk had taken the decision to write off a debt of £49.44 including VAT overdue on Murray Hall invoice no C1680.

189.4 Investments

It was NOTED that the bond certificate had been received from Santander confirming that the Town Council had invested £500,000 in a one-year Business Bond at a gross interest rate of 1.1 percent. The Bond would mature on 31 October 2015.

189.5 Financial Position

The Committee's financial position as at 26 November 2014 was NOTED. Details of the Council's current bank balances together with a copy of the most recent bank reconciliations were circulated at the meeting.

189.6 Accounts Paid

The Committee NOTED that payments totalling £141,324.52 as detailed on payments schedules nos 169 – 172 had been made since the report to the meeting on 8 October 2014. The schedules and accompanying invoices were available at the meeting for inspection.

It was also noted that details of all Council payments in excess of £250 were provided on the Council's website on the strategic documents page.

RC190 Staffing

190.1 2014-16 Pay Scales & Allowances

It was reported that notification had been received from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) of the agreement reached by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) on the rates of pay applicable from 1 January 2015 reflecting a pay increase of 2.20%.

Non-consolidated payments were also to be paid in December 2014 for staff on spinal column points 8-49 who would receive an additional one-off payment of £100. In April 2015 those staff on SCPs 26-49 would receive an additional one-off payment of between £3 and £93.

The London Weighting Allowance for the Inner Fringe Area would also rise from £806 to £824 with effect from 1 January 2015.

The Town Clerk reported that these increases and payments would be applied to staff salaries under the terms of their contracts.

190.2 Allotments Officer

It was NOTED that Mrs Susan Latchford, Allotments Officer, would be leaving the Council on 12 December 2014. Now that allotment management procedures were in place and tenancy agreements issued to all existing tenants, it was intended to absorb the duties of this post within other staff responsibilities. This arrangement would, however, be kept under review.

The Committee thank Mrs Latchford for her work in this regard. The Chairman of the Environment and Heritage Committee also added his thanks on behalf of that Committee.

190.3 Staffing 2015/16

The Committee CONFIRMED the recommendation from the Strategy and Staff Group that the Central Personnel budget for 2015/16 would include a provision for a new part-time post whose duties would include town and community development work. The budget allowed for an appointment of two days a week on a 12-month contract at spinal column point 29 plus inner fringe London Weighting Allowance.

RC191 Parish Basic Allowance

The Committee reviewed the level of Parish Basic Allowance and RECOMMENDED to the Council there should be no increase to the current level of £108 per annum for 2014/15.

RC192 Subscriptions Review

The Committee reviewed the current list of organisations of which it is a member and AGREED to continue to support those listed in the agenda without amendment.

RC193 Committee Priorities

193.1 As part of its overall plan and to complement the budget-making process, the Committee reviewed its priority list for 2015/16 and AGREED on the following:

Resources and General Services		
Priority	Main Function	Greater Detail/Current Position
Current activities		
High	New council accommodation	Review and research for opportunities to improve office location for public access
High	Publicity and website	Website to be upgraded 2015/16
High	Seeking external funding sources	Targeted action
Medium	Investigate bank alternatives	To be kept under review
Low	Honours Board	Completion 2015/16
Low	Council structure	Continuing reviews
On-going activities		
High	Running the Committee	
High	Admin for whole council	
High	Council and committee agendas and minutes	
High	All council finances, end of year accounts, audit etc.	
High	Management of Buckingham Crt	
High	Personnel and employment matters, staff management	Staff Handbook reviews required
High	IT and office equipment	
High	Civic matters	Civic Service incl Citizenship Awards
High	Annual Report	Preparation and printing
High	Newsletter	Editorial, printing and distribution
High	Noticeboards	Maintenance and installation
High	Annual Town Meeting	Arrangements and admin
High	Christmas card competition	Arrangements and admin
High	Emergency Plan	Amendments and circulation
High	Financial Assistance Scheme	Admin and finance
High	New legislative requirements	
High	Responding to consultations	Variable
High	Policy reviews	On-going
High	Responding to consultations	Variable
High	Contract reviews	On-going
High	Training Strategy	Annual review
High	Any other matters within the committee's terms of reference	
Low	Community Forum	Arrangements and admin

193.2 The Committee AGREED the following item for consideration by the Planning and Licensing Committee, as being suitable for a developer's Section 106 contribution should the opportunity arise:

- i) Noticeboards

RC194 Estimates for 2015/16

194.1 The Committee AGREED the fees and charges would increase by 2.3% from 1 April 2015 for the following:

- 1) Hire of Council Chamber at Buckingham Court

It was further AGREED to keep the current rate of 60p per sheet of A4 for items on the Publication Scheme.

194.2 Rolling Programme

The Committee AGREED to the Rolling Programme as presented in the Agenda.

194.3 The estimates for 2015/16 as presented in the Agenda were AGREED such that the net figures were as follows:

	£
Total budget expenditure (including committee recharge)**	201,200
Income	<u>6,000</u>
Net expenditure	195,200
Less income from earmarked reserves*	<u>-9,700</u>
Total net expenditure	£185,500

*Details of transfers from earmarked reserves:

<i>Noticeboards</i>	1,000
<i>Office equipment</i>	2,000
<i>Central personnel</i>	5,000
<i>Honours board</i>	700
<i>Website improvements</i>	<u>1,000</u>
	9,700

** **NB:** The total budget expenditure currently included a service recharge of -£241,400 (the 2014/15 figure). The 2015/16 figure would be confirmed by this Committee at its next meeting and a revised budget provided if appropriate.

The Town Clerk and her staff were thanked for their work in this regard.

194.4 General Reserves Policy

The Committee discussed this policy in which the Council maintained its General Reserves at around 75%, within the range 70 – 80% of net budgeted annual running costs, and AGREED that it should be reviewed at its next meeting. The Town Clerk was asked to prepare options for consideration.

RG195 Child Protection Policy

The Committee APPROVED the following draft policy and noted that a more detailed procedural document would be prepared for future consideration by this meeting.

1. The Council believes that children* must be protected from harm at all times and that every child should be valued, safe and happy.
2. We want to make sure that children we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
3. We want children who use or have contact with the Council to enjoy our facilities in safety.
4. We want parents and carers who use or attend our playgrounds, recreation grounds and council events to be supported to care for their children in a way that promotes their child's health and well-being and keeps them safe.
5. We will achieve this by following national and local guidance.
6. If we discover or suspect a child is suffering harm we will notify social services or the police in order that they can be protected if necessary.
7. This child protection policy applies to all councillors, staff and volunteers at Loughton Town Council and anyone carrying out any work for us or using our premises.
8. This policy will be reviewed at least every 2 years to make sure it is still relevant and effective.

** For the purpose of this policy a child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children's Act 1989). However, this policy may also be used to protect vulnerable adults.*

RG196 Future Work of the Committee

No items were raised.

Signed.....

Date: 14 January 2015

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 14 January 2015 at 7pm at 1 Buckingham Court.

Present:

Councillors: S Pewsey (in the Chair)
J Angold-Stephens K Angold-Stephens J Jennings
I Lawrence J Mahoney S Murray
C C Pond (as substitute for H Mann)

Also in attendance:

Councillors: P Beales D Wixley

Officers: E K Walsh (Town Clerk)
P Hoy (Services Manager)

RG197 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mann. The Town Clerk reported that Cllr C C Pond had been nominated as Cllr Mann's substitute for this meeting.

RG198 Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were received.

RG199 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2014 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RG200 Public Representations

None were received.

RG201 Matters for Report

201.1 Financial Assistance

The Committee CONFIRMED Cllr Murray as the third member of the working group to join the Chairman and Vice Chairman of this Committee in considering the financial assistance applications for 2015/16. The group was to meet on 26 January 2015 to prepare recommendations for consideration by the Committee at its next meeting on 11 February 2015.

201.2 The Local Council Award Scheme – Min no RG169

The Committee welcomed the news that the Town Council had received Quality Gold accreditation in this new award scheme. Members expressed their thanks to the Town Clerk and her staff for their work in this regard.

RG202 Council-wide Priorities

The Committee reviewed the lists of priorities from the spending committees and AGREED that:

1. the Environment and Heritage Committee was to be asked to review the priorities shown in its list for flower baskets and town signs.
2. the Council-wide high priority list should be as shown below:

Ranking	Committee	Activity
1	Recreation	Roding Valley Recreation Ground improvements
2	Environment and Heritage / Planning and Licensing	Neighbourhood Plan and protection of green spaces
3	Recreation	Playgrounds
4	Environment & Heritage	War Memorial, Kings Green
5	Resources & General Services	Council accommodation

RG203 Estimates for 2015/16

The Committee considered the report and, in particular, NOTED:

- a. the increase in the tax base from the 2014/15 figure of 11,828.2 to 11,938.2.
- b. that the Local Council Tax Support Grant of £49,529 was still a provisional figure, which would be confirmed by Epping Forest District Council on 19 January 2015.

After considering alternative options, the Committee AGREED that £107,100 could be taken from General Reserves to reduce the net requirement whilst leaving the General Reserves at 70.18% of the net running costs to meet the Reserves Policy.

The Committee RECOMMENDED to Council that the precept for 2015/16 be set at £587,100 with the budget details as follows:

Committee	Income		Expenditure	Including re-charges
	£			
Resources and General Services	6,000		442,600	201,200
Environment and Heritage	25,064		113,075	187,475
Recreation	112,560		551,950	691,950
Planning and Licensing	0		20,500	47,500
		143,624	1,128,125	1,128,125
Interest		14,500		
Use from earmarked reserves:				
Resources & General Services	9,700			
Environment & Heritage	30,900			
Recreation	165,700			
Planning and Licensing	20,000			
		226,300		
Local Council Tax Support Grant		49,529		
Use of General Reserves		107,100		
Total income		541,053		
Net requirement			587,072	587,072
Precept Recommendation (with rounding)			587,100	587,100

It was NOTED that this would result in a nil increase on the 2014/15 Band D charge of £49.18 with a slight increase on the overall precept of 0.93% (up from £581,700).

RG204 Annual Town Meeting

The Committee noted that this year’s Annual Town Meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 18 March 2015 commencing at 8pm in the Murray Hall.

It was AGREED to continue with the format of the Annual Town Meeting by inviting local organisations and voluntary groups, particularly those in receipt of Financial Assistance from the Council, to mount displays at the event to attract more public interest. The organisations that had been successful in their grant applications for 2015/16 would also be presented with a certificate by the Town Mayor.

It was AGREED to invite the Chief Constable of Essex Police as a guest speaker.

The meeting would conclude with refreshments and an opportunity for members of the public to speak informally with their councillors.

RG205 Meetings Schedule

The Committee AGREED the schedule of meetings for 2015/16 as follows:

2015 May	13	Wednesday	Annual Council
	27	Wednesday	Recreation
June	1	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	15	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	17	Wednesday	Environment and Heritage
	29	Monday	Planning and Licensing
July	8	Wednesday	Resources and General Services
	13	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	22	Wednesday	Council
	27	Monday	Planning and Licensing
August	17	Monday	Planning and Licensing
September	7	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	9	Wednesday	Recreation
	21	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	23	Wednesday	Environment and Heritage
October	5	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	14	Wednesday	Resources and General Services
	19	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	21	Wednesday	Council
November	2	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	4	Wednesday	Recreation
	16	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	18	Wednesday	Environment and Heritage
	30	Monday	Planning and Licensing

Resources and General Services Committee 2014-15

December	9	Wednesday	Resources and General Services
	14	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	16	Wednesday	Council
2016 January	11	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	13	Wednesday) Resources and General Services (Budgets) (7pm)) Recreation
	25	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	27	Wednesday) Council (7pm)) Environment and Heritage
February	8	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	10	Wednesday	Resources and General Services
	17	Wednesday	Council
	22	Monday	Planning and Licensing
March	7	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	9	Wednesday	Recreation
	16	Wednesday	Annual Town Meeting, The Murray Hall, Borders Lane at 8pm
	21	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	23	Wednesday	Environment and Heritage
April	4	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	6	Wednesday	Resources and General Services
	18	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	21	Thursday	Council (approval of accounts)
May	18	Wednesday	Annual Council

Until further notice all meetings will be held at in the Council Chamber, 1 Buckingham Court, at 7.45pm unless otherwise shown.

Signed.....
Date: **11 February 2015**

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 11 February 2015 at 7.45pm at 1 Buckingham Court.

Present:

Councillors: S Pewsey (in the Chair)
J Jennings I Lawrence J Mahoney (until Min no RG216)
S Murray (until Min no RG216) E Stacey
P Beales (as substitute for J Angold-Stephens)
T Downing (as substitute for K Angold-Stephens)
D Wixley (as substitute for H Mann)

Officers: E K Walsh (Town Clerk)
Shirley Haynes (Deputy Town Clerk)

8 members of the public

RG206 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs J Angold-Stephens, K Angold-Stephens and Mann. The Town Clerk reported that Cllrs Beales, Downing and Wixley had been nominated as their respective substitutes for this meeting.

RG207 Declarations of Interest

With regard to Agenda item 6, Financial Assistance, Councillors made the following declarations:

Cllr Mahoney declared a non-pecuniary and non-prejudicial interest in the applications for the 7th Epping Beavers, 7th Epping Cubs, 7th Epping Scouts, Epping Forest District Citizens Advice Bureau, Loughton Broadway Town Centre Partnership, Loughton Festival, Loughton Film Society, Loughton Youth Project, New Vistas, Reindeer Explorer Scout Unit and the St Clare Hospice.

Cllr Murray declared a non-pecuniary but prejudicial interest in the applications for the Loughton Methodist Church, Music@LMC and New Vistas and stated he intended to speak on these applications but would not take part in the vote.

Cllr Murray also declared a non-pecuniary and non-prejudicial interest in the applications for the 7th Epping Beavers, 7th Epping Cubs, 7th Epping Scouts, Reindeer Explorer Scout Unit, Restore Community Centre, Restore Community Church - Loughton Youth Activities and Restore Community Church - Noah's Ark Toddler Group.

Cllr Pewsey declared a non-pecuniary but prejudicial interest in the applications for the Loughton Festival, Loughton Film Society and Love Loughton and stated that he would vacate the chair for these items as he was involved with these organisations.

Cllr Wixley declared a non-pecuniary and non-prejudicial interest in the applications for the Epping Forest District Citizens Advice Bureau, Loughton Festival, Loughton Film Society, Loughton Neighbourhood Watch, Loughton Youth Project, Restore Community Centre, The Red Balloon Family Foundation and Epping Forest District Citizens Advice Bureau. Cllr Wixley also stated that he intended to speak in support

of the Loughton Film Society but would not take part in the voting, being a member of this organisation.

The Committee AGREED to amend the order of the Agenda such that item 6, Financial Assistance, would follow item 4, as members of the public wished to address the Committee regarding their applications.

RG208 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2015 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RG209 Public Representations

The meeting was adjourned to hear representations from seven members of the public regarding Agenda item 6, Financial Assistance Applications, for the Epping Forest Sportability Club, Loughton Broadway Town Centre Partnership, Loughton Voluntary Care Association, Loughton Youth Project, St John Ambulance Community First Responders, The Red Balloon Family Foundation and Epping Forest District Citizens Advice Bureau.

RG210 Financial Assistance

210.1 The Committee RESOLVED to use the remaining balance of £2,581.00 from the 2014/15 general grant budget towards the 2015/16 applications.

210.2 General Applications 2015/16

The Committee RESOLVED to make the following contributions from the scheme by granting financial assistance to:

Organisation	Amount granted £	Power
Chigwell & District Physically Disabled Support Group*	650.00	LG(MiscProv)A1976 s19
Cruse Bereavement Care Epping Forest Branch	350.00	LGA 1972 s137
Epping Forest Sportability Club	1,000.00	LG(Misc Prov)A 1976 s19
7th Epping Beavers	300.00	LG(Misc Prov)A 1976 s19
7th Epping Cubs	300.00	LG(Misc Prov)A 1976 s19
7th Epping Scouts	300.00	LG(Misc Prov)A 1976 s19
Loughton Broadway Town Centre Partnership	1,500.00	LGA 1972 s145 & s137
Loughton Festival**	2,000.00	LGA 1972 s145
Loughton Film Society**	600.00	LGA 1972 s145
Loughton Methodist Church	1,500.00	LGA 1972 s145
Loughton Neighbourhood Watch	450.00	LG(Misc Prov)A 1976 s19
Loughton Voluntary Care Association	445.00	LG(Misc Prov)A 1976 s19
Loughton Youth Project	4,500.00	LGA 1972 s145
Love Loughton**	500.00	LGA 1972 s145

Music@LMC	400.00	LGA 1972 s145
New Vistas	375.00	LGA 1972 s145
Reindeer Explorer Scout Unit	700.00	LG(Misc Prov)A 1976 s19
Restore Community Centre	3,000.00	LGA 1972 s133
Restore CC - Loughton Youth Activities	1,000.00	LGA 1972 s145
Restore CC - Noah's Ark Toddler Group	800.00	LGA 1972 s145
Samaritans of Redbride	450.00	LGA 1972 s137
Spark	2,000.00	LGA 1972 s137
St Clare Hospice	600.00	LGA 1972 s137
St Mary's Church	800.00	LG(Misc Prov)A 1976 s19
The Alzheimer's Society EF Office	750.00	LGA 1972 s145
The Red Balloon Family Foundation	950.00	LGA 1972 s137
Vitalise	800.00	LGA 1972 s145
	27,020.00	

* subject to receipt of satisfactory financial information from the Group.

** Cllr Lawrence chaired the meeting for these three applications.

The St John Ambulance Community First Responders were unsuccessful in their application. However, the Committee was very supportive of the work of these volunteers and invited a new application once the project had developed.

210.3 Citizens Advice Bureau

The Committee RESOLVED to grant £8,000 to the Epping Forest District Citizens Advice Bureau under the Local Government Act 1972 s142.

RG211 Matters for Report

211.1 Christmas Card Competition – Min no RG156.1

The Committee CONFIRMED that the competition should continue in its present format for 2015 with the competition rules amended to include the following judging criteria:

- i. Overall artistic appeal
- ii. Quality of execution
- iii. Creativity and originality
- iv. Suitability for printing as a greeting card

Councillors would be invited to volunteer to deliver posters and application forms to local schools and other organisations in early September.

211.2 Annual Town Meeting – Min no RG204

The Town Clerk reported that Chief Inspector Denise Morrissey had confirmed her attendance as guest speaker at the meeting on 18 March 2015.

RG212 Finance

212.1 Internal Audit

The Committee NOTED that the Council's internal auditors, Auditing Solutions, had attended the Council Offices on 6 January 2015 for the second interim visit and that no significant issues had been identified. The auditor's report had been previously circulated to all members of the Council.

The auditor had offered one recommendation that, whilst noting the Council held a digital copy of all the Cemetery registers and maps, it should consider the use of a fireproof safe for those records to minimise the risk of them being destroyed. The Committee reviewed the level of risk and considered it appropriate to look at this again in the new financial year.

212.2 Internal Financial Check

It was NOTED that as part of the Council's system of internal controls, Cllr Mahoney had undertaken a routine inspection of the Council's financial records on 30 January 2015. Included in his checks were the November bank reconciliations, the petty cash and cemetery income. No issues arose during this visit.

The Committee thanked Cllr Mahoney for his work in this regard.

212.3 Bad Debt Policy

The Committee NOTED that in December 2014, Loughton Rovers, a local football club, had folded. This club had booked a pitch and changing rooms at the Roding Valley Recreation Ground for the whole season and agreed to pay in two instalments. The second instalment of £488 was due on 19 December 2014. In January 2015, the club paid the final balance on its bank account, £208, to the Council leaving an outstanding balance of £280 on Council invoice no 1675.

The Committee concurred with the Town Clerk's view that court action was not appropriate and RESOLVED to write off this debt. However, should the club approach the Council in the future regarding pitch hire advance payment in full would be required.

212.4 Investments

The Committee NOTED that on 21 January 2015 a formal complaint had been lodged with the Customer Care Team at NatWest.

This was regarding the Bank's transfer, without prior notice, of the Council's Bonus Saver Account. This account previously paid interest of 1.05% including a bonus. It was now operated as a Business Reserve Account at 0.15% interest. In addition, no interest had been paid for the entire month of October 2015 following the transfer.

Officers would continue to press for a response and should a satisfactory resolution not be achieved the complaint would be escalated to the Financial Ombudsman.

212.5 Payments Procedures

212.5.1 The Committee CONFIRMED the list of direct debit payments made by the Council as of February 2015 that were as follows:

Name	Gross Amount	Frequency	Due date
Peninsula Business Services Ltd	£241.92	Monthly	4 th
Epping Forest District Council	£2,071	Monthly	20 th
Select Business Equipment Ltd	£243.60	Quarterly	1 st
World Pay (formerly Streamline)	Various	Monthly	18 th
Total Gas & Power	Various	Quarterly	Various
EDF	£10.00	Monthly	15 th
Orange	Various	Monthly	30 th
NatWest	Various	Monthly	27 th
Public Works Loan Board	£14,103.22	Half yearly	19 th Jan/July
Public Works Loan Board	£18,295.62	Half yearly	28 th Mar/Sept
Public Works Loan Board	£17,849.89	Half yearly	1 st June/Dec

212.5.2 Cheque Signatories

The Committee CONFIRMED the list of authorised signatures for each account as follows:

No 1 – Current Account (NatWest)

Position	Signatories for 14/15
Town Mayor	Sharon Weston
Deputy Town Mayor	Judy Jennings
Chairman of Resources & General Services	Stephen Pewsey
Chairman of Environment & Heritage	Christopher C Pond (Not in conjunction with CPP)
Chairman of Recreation	David Wixley
Chairman of Planning & Licensing	Jill Angold-Stephens
Additional signatory see Min no RG160.5	Caroline P Pond (Not in conjunction with CCP)

No 2 – Payroll Account (NatWest)

As above plus	
Town Clerk	Enid K Walsh
Deputy Town Clerk	Shirley Haynes
Officer	-
Chairman of Resources & General Services	Stephen Pewsey
Town Mayor	Sharon Weston (not set up)
Chairman of Environment & Heritage	Christopher C Pond
Chairman of Planning & Licensing	Jill Angold-Stephens

No 3 – Bonus Saver Account (NatWest)

Transfers to no 1 account only by the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Admin Officer (as on No 2 a/c), Town Mayor or Chairman of Resources Committee.

No 4 – Santander including 1 year fixed rate Business Bond

Transfers to no 1 account only by the operators (the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk)
Signatories are currently Cllrs J Angold-Stephens, C C Pond, C P Pond, S Pewsey and D Wixley

No 5 – For & on behalf of Loughton Town Council – Deposits Account

Town Clerk	Enid Walsh
Deputy Town Clerk	Shirley Haynes
Officer	Paul Hoy

212.5.3 Limits of Cheque Signing Authority on Accounts

The Committee CONFIRMED the limits of authority for each account signatory as follows:

Account no	Limits
1	No limit, but working balance to be kept at around £20K
2	Imprest account, £150 limit for officer signatories
3	Transfers only to no 1 Account
4	Transfers only to no 1 Account
5	Imprest account, £3,000 limit for officer signatories

212.6 Section 137 Expenditure Limit for 2015/16

Members NOTED that the limit under section 137(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 (the 1972 Act) for parish and town councils in England for 2015-16 was £7.36 per elector.

212.7 Financial Position

The Committee's financial position as at 11 February 2015 was NOTED. Details of the Council's current bank balances together with a copy of the most recent bank reconciliations were circulated at the meeting.

212.8 Accounts Paid

It was NOTED that payments totalling £151,725.01 as detailed on payments schedules nos 173 – 176 had been made since the report to the meeting on 3 December 2014.

The schedules and accompanying invoices were made available at the meeting for inspection.

For information, details of all Council payments in excess of £250 are regularly provided on the Council's website on the strategic documents page in the interests of transparency and openness.

RG213 Financial Regulations – Annual Review

213.1 The Committee CONFIRMED that the Financial Regulations still met the Council's requirements with the amendment that all references to the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 and 2006 would now read "Accounts and Audit Regulations".

The following paragraph would be inserted as section 1.5.

In these financial regulations, references to the Accounts and Audit Regulations or 'the regulations' shall mean the regulations issued under the

provisions of section 27 of the Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and then in force unless otherwise specified.

213.2 The Committee CONFIRMED the financial limits below and AGREED that they were adequate as follows:

Topic	Amount	Last reviewed	Last changed
Limit of imprest on no 2 a/c	35,000	Feb 2015	April 2010
Limit of officers signing cheques on no. 2 a/c	150	Feb 2015	April 2010
Limit of imprest on Security Deposits a/c	3,000	Feb 2015	April 2006
Limit of cheques on Security Deposits a/c	none	Feb 2015	April 2006
Petty cash imprest	150	Feb 2015	
Urgent repair work etc without budgetary provision (FR 3.4)	5,000	Feb 2015	April 2008
Additional audit work of external auditor (FR 12.1)	750	Feb 2015	May 2004
Tenders to be obtained (FR 12.3, 12.6 & 12.8)	over 50,000	Feb 2015	May 2004
3 quotes to be obtained (FR 12.8)	10,000 to 50,000	Feb 2015	May 2004
3 estimates to be obtained (FR 12.8)	2,000 to 10,000	Feb 2015	May 2004
Bad debts may be written off by RFO	250	Feb 2015	Feb 2014
Credit card:			
No 1 Town Clerk	1,000	Feb 2015	Nov 2004
No 2 Services Manager	500	Feb 2015	Feb 2014

RG214 Governance and Accountability

The Committee NOTED that, to meet the expectations of the external auditors, the annual reviews of the internal audit arrangements, the internal control measures and the risk assessment and management documents, which had previously been carried out by this Committee, would be in future undertaken by the full Council. These matters will be considered at the Council meeting on 25 February 2015 in preparation for the completion of the Annual Governance Statement at the April Council meeting.

It was further NOTED that to ensure the Council maintained its existing high standards of governance and accountability, the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk would be attending a training session on 25 February 2015 run by the Essex Association of Local Councils entitled "End of Year Accounting/Getting through the Audit Requirements".

RG215 Insurance – Annual Review

The Committee reviewed the insurance cover and CONFIRMED

- i. the level of cover for 2015/16 as shown in the agenda; and
- ii. that the buildings on the Willingale Road Allotments were to be insured with the exception of the wooden shed, which was in a poor condition and shortly to be dismantled.

RG216 Training and Conferences

The Committee CONFIRMED the attendance of Cllrs K Angold-Stephens and Wixley at the Police Conference in Dunmow on 25 March 2015 for the purposes of paying their travel expenses.

Cllrs Mahoney and Murray left the meeting.

RG217 Future Work of the Committee

No items were raised.

Signed.....
Date: 8 April 2015

THESE MINUTES NOT YET CONFIRMED

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 8 April 2015 at 7.45pm at 1 Buckingham Court.

Present:

Councillors: S Pewsey (in the Chair)
J Angold-Stephens K Angold-Stephens J Jennings
I Lawrence S Murray
C C Pond (as substitute for H Mann)
D Wixley (as substitute for J Mahoney)

Also in attendance:

Councillor: M Chalk

Officers: E K Walsh (Town Clerk)
Shirley Haynes (Deputy Town Clerk)

RG218 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mahoney and Mann. The Town Clerk reported that Cllr C C Pond had been nominated as Cllr Mann's substitute and Cllr Wixley as Cllr Mahoney's substitute for this meeting.

RG219 Declarations of Interest

Cllr C C Pond declared a non-pecuniary and non-prejudicial interest in any items on the Agenda relating to Essex County Council and in particular Agenda item 10.2, Office Accommodation, being a member of that Council.

RG220 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2015 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RG221 Public Representations

None were received.

RG222 Matters for Report

222.1 Annual Civic Service and Citizenship Awards

The Committee NOTED that this year's service was held at the Loughton Methodist Church on Sunday 1 March 2015. Joyce Shelley, representing Violet Short, was presented with the Citizenship of the Year award by Lord Petre, Lord Lieutenant of Essex, for over twenty years of service at the Save the Children charity shop in The Broadway.

It was NOTED that the collection at this year's Civic Service had raised £245 for Oak View School to help raise funds for a new Life Skills room. This would provide improved facilities to enable the students to learn to be more independent.

222.2 Annual Town Meeting

The Committee NOTED that copies of draft minutes of the 2015 Annual Town Meeting had been circulated to members under separate cover and that they would be presented for approval at the 2016 Town Meeting.

The guest speaker this year was Chief Inspector Denise Morrissey who had provided an update on local policing matters.

The Committee expressed their thanks to the local organisations who mounted displays in the hall, many of whom also collected their financial assistance award certificates from the Town Mayor during the meeting.

Questions from members of the public and councillors were exclusively on policing issues.

222.3 Strategy and Staff Group – Min no RG188.2

The Committee NOTED that the Strategy and Staff Group met on 12 March 2015. Topics discussed at that meeting included a staff request for flexible working, which had been granted by the Town Clerk, and alternative office accommodation.

222.4 Insurance – Annual Review – Min no RG215

The Committee NOTED that the Council had renewed its policy with its existing insurers, Aviva Insurance Limited through WPS Insurance Brokers, at a total premium for 2015/16 of £9,254.03, net of VAT.

The vehicle insurance premium for the van had also been confirmed at £523.80, which represented an increase on the 2014/15 premium of £396.60 following a third party repairs' claim of £939.60.

RG223 Financial Assistance

223.1 General Applications 2014/15 Budget

The Committee RESOLVED to use the £500 additional funds left from the 2014/15 general grant budget towards the 2015/16 applications.

223.2 General Applications 2015/16

The Committee RESOLVED to make the following contributions from the scheme by granting financial assistance to:

Organisation	Amount requested £	Power
Associates of Epping Forest Field Centre	240.00	LGA 1972 s145

RG224 Finance

224.1 Investments

The Committee NOTED that, as the response to the formal complaint lodged with the Customer Care Team at NatWest was unsatisfactory, the matter had been escalated to the Financial Ombudsman.

A review of the Council's banking arrangements would be carried out in the new financial year.

224.2 Internal Financial Check

The Committee thanked Cllr Mahoney for undertaking a routine inspection of the Council's financial records on 23 March 2015. Included in his checks were the bank reconciliations for the end of February 2015, the Loughton Youth Centre recharges and the contracts' folder.

No issues arose during this visit.

224.3 Internal Audit

The Committee NOTED that the end of year visit by the internal auditor would take place on 6 May 2015. At the next meeting of this Committee members would be asked to review the internal auditor appointment for 2015/16 and consider the scope of the internal audit as the five-year strategic plan agreed in April 2010 would shortly expire.

224.4 Financial Position

The Committee's financial position as at 26 March 2015 was NOTED. Details of the Council's current bank balances together with a copy of the most recent bank reconciliations were circulated at the meeting.

224.5 Accounts Paid

It was NOTED that payments totalling £78,408.52 as detailed on payments schedules nos 177 – 179 had been made since the report to the meeting on 11 February 2015.

The schedules and accompanying invoices were made available at the meeting for inspection.

For information, in the interests of transparency and openness details of all Council payments in excess of £250 were regularly provided on the Council's website on the strategic documents page.

RG225 Asset Register – Annual review

The Register of Assets and Properties as at 31 March 2015 was considered and AGREED as presented in the Agenda. This would now be available to view on the Council's website.

RG226 Staffing 2015/16

It was NOTED that the Central Personnel budget for 2015/16 included a provision for a new part-time post whose duties would include town and community development work. The budget allowed for an appointment of up to fourteen hours a week on a 12-month contract at spinal column point 29 plus inner fringe London Weighting Allowance.

The Committee reviewed the draft job description and AGREED the wording as presented in the Agenda.

RG227 Office Accommodation

227.1 Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Committee RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the next item under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as it contained confidential information relating to leases.

227.2 The Committee RESOLVED to adopt the recommendations of the Strategy and Staff Group with a final report to be presented to full Council at an appropriate time when details of the financial implications of the move were confirmed.

RG228 Future Work of the Committee

No issues were raised.

Signed.....
Date: 8 July 2015