

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 26 June 2019 at 7.45pm at Loughton Library & Town Hall.

Present:

Councillors: J Jennings (in the Chair)

J Angold-Stephens

M Dalton

J Jogia

D Wixley (as a substitute for Cllr Mahoney)

Officers: M Squire (Town Clerk)

B Smith (Assistant Town Clerk)

RG183 Apologies for absence

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

RG184 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Dalton declared a pecuniary interest in Agenda item 8, Financial Assistance Application, as he was employed by Voluntary Action Epping Forest and would leave the room during the consideration of this item.

RG185 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2019 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RG186 Public Representations

None were received.

RG187 Matters for Report

187.1 Training and Conferences

The Committee NOTED the Town Clerk would be implementing a comprehensive programme of cross training to cover all aspects of Loughton Town Council (LTC) work, both internally and externally. This could prove valuable during the holiday periods and also if there was any prolonged period of absence (for whatever reason) for any staff member.

As part of this action plan, the following courses have been attended / booked:-

- Officers Debra Paris and Pippa Bryce - Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) run course on 'Website Accessibility - basics and legal requirements. 12 June 2019. It was noted that the LTC website must be as accessible by as many people as possible. e.g. including those with impaired vision or learning difficulties. LTC will need to have an accessibility statement on it's website by 23 September 2020.
- Town Clerk at LGRC/NALC Local Expo conference 21 June 2019. Particular interest in making tax digital for VAT presentation made by RBS Omega who host our financial accounting system. The Town

Clerk explained that by October 2019, LTC would need to submit the tax return online. RBS Omega have a scheduled system upgrade to implement this change in good time.

- Assistant Town Clerk at National Allotment Society 'Allotments Course' run by EALC on 10 July 2019.
- Town Clerk at Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management (ICCM) run by EALC on 16 July 2019.

187.2 Christmas Card Competition 2019

The Committee NOTED that this year's competition would be launched before the autumn meeting of this Committee and AGREED to continue with the current format.

187.3 Flag Flying

The Committee NOTED that the Town Council marked Armed Forces Day 2019 on Saturday 29 June 2019 by flying the special flag outside the Library for the preceding week.

The Committee NOTED that the Town Council would also mark the occasion of Merchant Navy Day, on Tuesday 3 September 2019 by flying the Red Ensign to help raise public awareness of our island nation's reliance on seafarers and shipping.

187.4 Internal Audit

The Committee NOTED the internal auditor's final report for 2018/19 which had been circulated electronically to all members on 17 June 2019. The office were congratulated on such an excellent report.

187.5 Social Media Policy - Min no RG178

The Committee NOTED the Town Council was already running a Facebook page to advertise the Jessel Green Community Fun Day. This medium would also be used to promote the Horticultural Show in September 2019.

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Social Media policy. However further clarification regarding various terms and acronyms within the policy was requested, which the Town Clerk would add. The Town Clerk explained that this is a live document and would be updated from time.

It was AGREED that the Facebook Page would be organised internally for a trial period of 6 months to gauge whether the (in house) skills and resources available were sufficient to deliver a professional service. At that juncture it could be evaluated whether external assistance was required.

187.6 Banking/ Bank Mandates Min no RG178

The Assistant Town Clerk provided a verbal update on progress made with the banking mandates, and it was AGREED that further ongoing work was needed to replace the NatWest accounts.

With regards to the Santander and Nationwide Business Accounts they would be operated by Cllrs C C Pond, J Angold-Stephens, C P Pond

(not in conjunction with C C Pond), Town Clerk, Mark Squire and Assistant Town Clerk, Brent Smith. Cllr Stephen Pewsey would be removed as a signatory from the mandates.
The Assistant Town Clerk would prepare and send the required Mandates.

RG188 Job Evaluation

The Committee NOTED that a Vine HR representative would be visiting the office on Friday 2 August 2019 to carry out a one day assessment on the existing SCPs (salary scales) for all staff, to ascertain whether they are in line with local government sector levels of pay. A budget allocation had already been made to carry out this exercise. The Town Clerk would subsequently arrange a Strategy and Staff Group meeting once the summary report had been provided.

RG189 Telephones

The Committee AGREED the purchase of the new FTTC Broadband line at a cost of £173.87 for the first year from the recommended provider.

Cllr Dalton left the meeting.

**RG190 Financial Assistance
General Applications 2019/20**

The Committee NOTED the current balance of £2,420.00 in the 2019/20 Financial Assistance budget.

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

Organisation	Amount £	Item	Power
Voluntary Action Epping Forest (VAEF)	500.00	Providing a Handyperson for the Elderly and disabled residents	LGA 1972 s 1 3 7

The Committee further RESOLVED that the confirmation letter would require further proof of “ringfencing” of funds for Loughton Residents after payment of the Grant. VAEF would have the potential option of further applications later in the year if required.

Cllr Dalton re-joined the meeting.

RG191 Finance

191.1 End of Year Report

The accounts for 2018/19, approved by full Council on 15 May 2019 were NOTED.

191.2 Current Financial Position

The current financial position was NOTED.

191.3 Future Budgeting Provision

The Town Clerk presented some concepts and ideas for future workings. He would revert at a future meeting with some recommendations.

191.4 Precept

The Committee NOTED that the first instalment of the Precept, £359,500, was received into the Council's Santander bank account on 26 April 2019.

191.5 Internal Financial Check

The Committee AGREED to ask Cllr Jogia to carry out checks on the Council's financial transactions during the current financial year with assistance from Cllr Angold-Stephens for the first two checks and thanked Cllr Angold-Stephens for her work in this regard during 2018/19.

191.6 Accounts Paid

The Committee NOTED payments totalling £335,817.85 as detailed on payment schedules nos. 284 - 290 had been made since the report to the meeting on 9 January 2019.

The schedules and accompanying invoices were available at the meeting for inspection and the Committee AGREED that the schedules and accompanying invoices should continue to be available at future meetings for inspection. Copies of the latest bank account reconciliations were also provided at the meeting.

The Committee NOTED details of all Council payments in excess of £500 are provided on the Council's website on the strategic documents page http://www.loughton-tc.gov.uk/Finance_and_Transparency_2580.aspx

191.7 Councillor Financial Check for Resources and General Services Committee

The Committee NOTED that Councillor Jill Angold-Stephens carried out the periodic check on Council finances, on 2 April 2019, focussing specifically on 'bank reconciliation' and thanked her for her work in this matter.

Signed

Date: 16 October 2019

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 16 October 2019 at 7.45pm at Loughton Library & Town Hall.

Present:

Councillors: J Jennings (in the Chair)
J Angold-Stephens T Cochrane (as a substitute for Cllr Omer)
M Dalton J Jogia J Mahoney
S Murray from min no. 196.3

Officers: M Squire (Town Clerk)
B Smith (Assistant Town Clerk)

RG192 Apologies for absence

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

RG193 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Dalton declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda item 6, Financial Assistance Application, as he knew the applicant through his employment with Voluntary Action Epping Forest.

RG194 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2019 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RG195 Public Representations

None were received.

RG196 Matters for Report

196.1 Training and Conferences - Min no RG187.1

The Committee NOTED that the Town Clerk had implemented a cross training programme covering all aspects of Loughton Town Council (LTC) work.

Courses recently attended/booked :-

- Town Clerk at Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) Essex Branch Training and AGM Day on 13 June 2019
- Town Clerk at Memorial Management Inspection Workshop run by the Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management (ICCM) on 9 September 2019.
- Officers Debra Paris and Lorraine Gibson at 'Social Media' course run by Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) on 1 October 2019
- Officers Paul Hoy, Pippa Bryce and Debbie Taylor at 'Adult Mental Health First Aid Training' on 8 October 2019 run by Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) and funded by Essex County Council (ECC).
- Town Clerk looking to enrol on SLCC 'Website accessibility guidelines webinar' seminar.

196.2 Christmas Closedown Arrangements

The Committee NOTED that these arrangements were discussed at the Strategy and Staff Group meeting where it was agreed that the Town Council should operate over the Christmas holiday period, albeit, at skeleton staff levels and reduced working hours.

In line with the existing Council policy agreed in February 2008, the office hours will be as follows:

Tuesday 24 December	Closed 12 noon
Wednesday 25 December	Closed
Thursday 26 December	Closed
Friday 27 December	10am – 4pm
Monday 30 December	10am – 4pm
Tuesday 31 December	10am - 12.45pm
Wednesday 1 January	Closed

Cllr Murray joined the meeting during the next item.

196.3 Remembrance Service

The Committee RESOLVED to make a donation of £100 to the Royal British Legion in support of the Poppy Appeal and towards the cost of the wreath to be laid by the Town Mayor at the Remembrance Service in November.

Payment will need to be approved under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

196.4 Citizens Awards

The Committee REAFFIRMED its commitment to the annual Citizen Awards. Publicity for these awards started earlier this year in an effort to attract a higher number of entries - the cut-off date for entries being 31 January 2020. We will also be approaching community groups and local schools and using social media publicity to further promote the awards. The Town Mayor discussed the format of the awards with officers and opted for the award presentations to be made again at the next Annual Town Meeting in March 2020 as these arrangements worked well last year.

Members also wished to congratulate Pippa Bryce, Administration Assistant for her excellent work on the poster for this event.

196.5 Annual Town Meeting

The Committee NOTED that the 2020 Annual Town Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 11 March 2020 commencing at 8pm in the Murray Hall. Whilst this is not a council meeting, all town councillors are expected to attend.

The Committee AGREED to continue with the format used at last year's 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 successful in their grant applications for 2020/21 would also be presented with a certificate by the Town Mayor.

The meeting would conclude with refreshments and an opportunity for members of the public to speak informally with their councillors. Local businesses which have supported the local community would also be invited.

A guest speaker would be used only if a suitable candidate could be sourced.

196.6 Strategy and Staff Group / Job Evaluation exercise - Min no RG 188

The Committee NOTED that the Strategy and Staff Group met on Wednesday 11 September 2019. The principal discussions centred on the confidential Job Evaluation Outcome Report from Vine HR dated 19 August 2019. Recommendations from the report on the existing SCPs (salary scales) for all staff, and alignment to local government sector levels of pay and other general operational considerations were taken on board and endorsed by the Working Group. The impact on budgets for 2020/21 was also considered.

Other areas covered included

- Support for Pippa Bryce – Administration / Allotments / Cemetery Assistant for her Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) course starting on 29 October 2019.
- Other sundry staffing matters.
- Death of a National Figure arrangements.
- Loughton Library & Town Hall, (now listed as an Asset of Community Value).

196.7 Social Media Policy - Min no RG187.5

The Committee NOTED that members and officers alike will soon be provided with a hard copy of the social media policy and asked to acknowledge receipt and understanding of the working document.

196.8 Telephones - Min no RG189

The Committee NOTED the new Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC) broadband line was installed at the end of June 2019 at the agreed cost of £29.99 plus line rental of £11.99 per month. Since the installation we have had no internet failures and our phone lines have operated continuously.

The increased broadband speed has been advantageous in the upgrading of our accounts programme.

Cllr Murray declared a non-pecuniary interest in the following item, as he knew the applicant.

**RG197 Financial Assistance
General Applications 2019/20**

The Committee RESOLVED to make the following contributions (as listed below) from the scheme by granting financial assistance to:

Organisation	Amount granted £	Item	Power
Youth Employment Strategy YES Partnership	500.00	Towards the cost of the training of 40 Students	LGA 1972 s137

RG198 Finance

198.1 Internal Audit

The Committee NOTED that the next visit by the Internal Auditor was booked for Thursday 17 October 2019.

198.2 External Audit 2018/19

The Committee NOTED the External Auditor's Certificate and that the Notice of Conclusion of Audit, published on 19 September 2019 was currently displayed on the noticeboards around the town and on the council's website. It was pleasing to note that the 'clean audit' would enable resumption of the Local Council Awards submissions for Gold Standard.

198.3 Banking/ Bank Mandates Min no RG187.6

The Committee was made aware of the difficulty and frustration involved in making the appropriate changes to banking mandates and noted the following changes:

The 'named' councillors now have authorisation to our accounts with Nationwide and Santander. Nationwide and Santander have approved these applications and confirmed this in writing.

Due to the issues encountered with Santander the Assistant Town Clerk has raised this as a complaint with their Customer Services team and this is ongoing.

NatWest have now changed their process for paying staff salaries and moved 'on line'. This uncovered an issue with the signatories on the wages account. Again a complaint was raised which has now been resolved and the council have received a cheque for £150.00 for the inconvenience. The new online salaries system starts from October 2019.

198.4 Current Financial Position

The Committee NOTED the report.

198.5 Future Budgeting Provision

The Town Clerk provided the Committee with some concepts and ideas for future workings, which would be discussed in greater detail at the next meeting including the following:

- Budgeting reporting
- Streamlining budget codes
- The upgrade of the RBS Omega Accounting System to Omega Rialtas Suite
- Future maintenance costs of Loughton Town Council (LTC) assets - e.g. tree work, recreation areas, halls
- Community Day

198.6 Internal Financial Check

The Committee NOTED that Cllr Jogia had accepted the appointment of being the councillor to carry out checks on the Council's financial transactions and attended the offices on 12 August 2019 with Cllr Angold-Stephens, who carried out our checks.

During their visit Cllrs Jogia and Angold-Stephens inspected records connected with petty cash, payroll for May, June and July 2019 along with the credit card transactions for June and July.

They recorded that no issues had been identified and thanked the staff for providing them with the relevant documents and all their help.

The Assistant Town Clerk further reported that Cllr Jogia attended the offices on 16 October 2019 and inspected records connected with payroll for August, September and October 2019 along with the petty cash and Hall Hire transactions for September 2019.

It was recorded that no issues were identified and she thanked the members of staff for their help.

The Committee NOTED the Council's current bank balances and most recent reconciliations.

198.7 Accounts Paid

The Committee NOTED that payments totalling £290,283.53 as detailed on payments schedules nos. 291 – 298 have been made since the report to the meeting on 26 June 2019.

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

The Committee NOTED that details of all Council payments in excess of £500 are provided on the Council's website on the strategic documents page.

http://www.loughton-tc.gov.uk/Finance_and_Transparency_2580.aspx

198.8 Upgrade of Accounts Software and VAT returns

The Committee NOTED that the Council's accounts software provided by RBS Rialtas was upgraded at the beginning of October 2019 and installed on all the PCs in the office. This is their latest version which complies with the new VAT on line return system. This was the last quarter where the council would complete its VAT return manually and for the quarter ending December 2019 we would use the on line accounting system.

RG199 Future Work of the Committee

No items were raised for future discussion

Signed

Date: 4 December 2019

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 4 December 2019 at 7.45pm at Loughton Library & Town Hall.

Present:

Councillors: J Jennings (in the Chair)
J Angold-Stephens M Dalton J Jogia
J Mahoney A Omer
Also present Cllr D Wixley

Officers: M Squire (Town Clerk)
B Smith (Assistant Town Clerk)

RG200 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr S Murray.

RG201 Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

RG202 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2019 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RG203 Public Representations

None were received.

RG204 Matters for Report

204.1 Training and Conferences – Min no RG 196.1

The Committee NOTED the courses recently attended by officers.

204.2 Remembrance Service – Min no RG 196.3

The Committee NOTED the reports on the remembrance parade and service at the War Memorial on Kings Green on 10 November 2019, and also the two minutes silence and reading, conducted by the Town Mayor at 11am on Monday 11 November 2019 at Kings Green.

204.3 Christmas Card Competition

The Committee NOTED the report of the 2019 competition. The Town Council will work towards increased participation for next year's competition.

RG205 Finance

205.1 Internal Financial Check

The Committee NOTED that a further appointment with Cllr Jogia will be set for the next internal financial check.

205.2 Current Financial Position

The Committee NOTED the current financial position with details of the funds available from earmarked reserves.

205.3 Accounts Paid

The Committee NOTED that payments totalling £123,623.22 as detailed on payment schedules no's 299 - 302 have been made since the report to the meeting on 16 October 2019.

205.4 Banking/ Bank Mandates

The Committee NOTED that Santander have resolved the mandate issues and as a result of the complaint raised by the Assistant Town Clerk they had paid £100 compensation.

RG206 Subscriptions Review – Min no RG 148

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.

RG207 Parish Basic Allowance – Min no RG 149

The Committee RECOMMENDED to full Council to retain the level of Parish Basic Allowance that members may claim in 2020/21 at £120 per member per annum.

RG208 Committee Priorities – Min no RG 150.1

208.1 As part of its overall plan and to complement the budget-making process, the Committee reviewed and AGREED the priority list for 2020/21.

RG209 Estimates for 2020/21

209.1 Income

The Committee AGREED to maintain existing charges for 2020/21.

209.2 The Committee's Rolling Programme - Income and Expenditure

The Town Clerk explained the basis of these preliminary figures which will be fine-tuned by the time of the full budget meeting in January 2020. There may be a further amendment to the final recharge figure. The Office will review the current 'chip and pin' fees.

The Committee reviewed and NOTED the report.

209.3 Earmarked Reserves for 2020/2021

The Town Clerk explained the capability of the new upgraded RBS accounting package to segregate separate individual earmarked funds.

The Committee reviewed and NOTED the report.

RG210 To Review Loughton Town Council's Complaints Policy

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Complaints Policy.

RG211 Future Work of the Committee

No items were raised for future discussion.

Signed:

Date: 8 January 2020

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 8 January 2020 at 7.00pm at Loughton Library & Town Hall.

Present:

Councillors: J Jennings (in the Chair)
J Angold-Stephens M Dalton S Murray
C C Pond as substitute for Cllr Jogia

Also present:

Councillors: Michael Stubbings
David Wixley (from Min no. RG213)

Officers: M Squire (Town Clerk)
B Smith (Assistant Town Clerk)

RG212 Apologies for absence

The Town Clerk reported that Cllr Pond had been nominated as Cllr Jogia's substitute for this meeting.

RG213 Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

RG214 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2019 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RG215 Public Representations

None were received.

RG216 Matters for Report

216.1 Financial Assistance Working Group

The Committee CONFIRMED the three members of this working group to continue in 2020/21 in considering the applications to be the current members Cllrs J Angold-Stephens, J Jennings and S Murray.

RG217 Council-wide Priorities

Members discussed and AGREED the Council-wide priorities and also that the

- refurbishment of Kingsley Hall and the Hillyfields entrance should be added as a high priority for the Recreation Committee
- reaccreditation of the Local Council Awards to gold standard should be added as a high priority for the Resources and General Services Committee.

It was suggested that for all the Committees the ranking priorities should be consistent in format (i.e. numerical 1,2,3 or written (high, medium, low)

RG218 Estimates for 2020/21

218.1 Budget Review

The Town Clerk ran through the parameters and rationale of his work on the 2020/21 budget which were NOTED by the Committee.

218.2 Service Re-charges

The Town Clerk stated that there was unlikely to be any change in the estimated service recharge figures from earlier calculations. The report was NOTED by the Committee.

218.3 Tax Base

The new Tax Base for Loughton Town Council for 2020/21 was NOTED by the Committee.

218.4 Committees' Estimates

The initial draft estimate figures were NOTED pending revision.

218.5 Public Loans Outstanding

The information and potential costs for early redemption were NOTED.

218.6 Recommendation for Precept to the Council Budget Review

In lieu of a potential significant increase in budget, a reduction in savings from specific earmarked funds totalling £53,670 was AGREED.

218.7 Committees' Estimates

The Committee noted that a small provision of £200 would be added to cover the basic costs for the Loughton Town Council Horticultural Show for 2020.

The Committee RECOMMENDED to Council that the precept for 2020/21 be set at £756,445 with the budget details as follows:

Committee	Income		Expenditure
	£	£	£
Resources and General Services	35,515		458,236
Environment and Heritage	17,920		109,285
Recreation	131,595		410,054
Planning and Licensing	0		0
		185,030	977,575
Interest		6,000	
Increase / Decrease in Earmarked Reserves			
Resources & General Services			13,200
Environment & Heritage			-22,670
Recreation			3,970
Planning and Licensing			-24,800
Total		191,030	947,475
Net requirement		756,445	59.47

This would result in a 4.05% increase on the Band D charge from £57.15 to £59.47

RG219 Reserves Policy Review

The Committee **AGREED** that the proposed (amended) Reserves Policy is adopted

- i. to make the current policy and methodology less complex and easier to follow
- ii. in lieu of the new upgrade of the RBS Omega accounting system to the 'Rialtas Suite', where earmarked funds can be identified individually and entries to earmarked funds made as and when they occur
- iii. to continue a cautious approach to the level of General Reserves maintained
- iv. to continue to maintain a satisfactory level of General Reserves.

RG220 Agenda format review

- i. The Committee **AGREED** that agenda items run on a purely numeric order but maintaining the reference to the previous relevant minute number.
- ii. The Committee **AGREED** that a new 'Town Clerk/ Chairman's Report' agenda item to be introduced to the Council, Recreation Committee, Environment & Heritage Committee and Resources Committee agendas to highlight new items of interest/news. N.B. for discussion only - no recommendations or decisions can be made.

These changes should be reflected in amended Town Council standing orders if and where applicable.

Signed:
Date: 5 February 2020

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 5 February 2020 at 7.45pm at Loughton Library & Town Hall.

Present:

Councillors: J Jennings (in the Chair)
J Angold-Stephens M Dalton J Jogia (from Min no. 222)
J Mahoney (from Min no 222) S Murray

Also present:

Councillors: D Wixley

Officers:

M Squire (Town Clerk)
B Smith (Assistant Town Clerk)

3 members of the public

RG221 Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence were received.

Cllrs Jogia and Mahoney joined the meeting during the next item.

RG222 Declarations of Interest

With regard to Agenda item 6.1, Financial Assistance, Councillors made the following declarations:

Cllr Jennings declared a non-pecuniary interest in the application from the Loughton Voluntary Care Association and Citizens Advice Epping Forest District.

Cllr Murray declared a non-pecuniary interest in the applications for Epping Forest Food Bank, Epping Forest Re-Use, Grow, Loughton Club, Loughton Festival, Loughton Voluntary Care Association, Love Loughton, New Vistas, Noah's Ark Play Group, Oakwood Hill Youth Club, Restore Community, South Loughton Cricket Club, Spark, St. Marys Church, Voluntary Action Epping Forest, Willingale Community Garden and Citizens Advice Epping Forest District.

Cllr Angold-Stephens declared a non-pecuniary interest in the applications for Epping Forest Re-Use, Grow, Loughton Voluntary Care Association, Noah's Ark Play Group, Oakwood Hill Youth Club, Restore Community, South Loughton Cricket Club, Spark, Willingale Community Garden and Citizens Advice Epping Forest District.

Cllr Dalton declared a non-pecuniary interest in the applications for St. Marys Church and Loughton Festival and a Pecuniary interest in Voluntary Action Epping Forest (VAEF).

Cllr Mahoney declared a non-pecuniary interest in the applications for New Vistas and South Loughton Cricket Club.

RG223 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2020 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RG224 Public Representations

Mr Alfie James addressed the Committee in support of his Financial Assistance Grant Application for Alfie James Productions, agenda Item 6.1

RG225 Matters for Report**225.1 Local Council Award Scheme**

The Committee NOTED that the original 'Foundation' and 'Quality' applications are now being reassessed and updated. The revised applications will be forwarded for external assessment shortly. The Town Clerk would be working towards completing the final 'Gold' assessment level later this year.

225.2 Meetings Schedule

The Committee AGREED to the schedule for Council year 2020/21 and noted that they would be subject to change, only in exceptional circumstances. The new dates were configured, taking into account the induction of any new councillors in the May 2020 elections. It was further NOTED that these dates would be agreed by Full Council.

RG226 Financial Assistance Applications 2019/20**226.1 General Applications**

Cllr Murray wished it to be NOTED to thank the Chairman and the members of the Financial Assistance Working Group for their hard work in preparing for the meeting. He added that there was a general consensus of agreement in the amounts granted in principal. He felt that the quality of the applications was high and that the organisations awarded these grants do a wonderful job for the Loughton community.

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

Organisation	Amount Granted £	Purpose of Grant
Alfie James Productions	200.00	Performance Skills Workshop.
Associates of Epping Forest Field Centre	300.00	Family Activity/biodiversity project.
Basic Essex Accident Rescue Service (BEARS)	250.00	Portable Laerdal Suction Unit.
Cruse Bereavement Care Essex Area Epping Forest Client Services Committee	200.00	Running costs.
Epping Food Bank	3,000.00	Towards cost of Lease on Warehouse and office
Epping Forest Re-Use	376.00	Tools
Grow Community Garden (Restore Community)	1,500.00	Running costs
Loughton Club	2,000.00	New Furniture (Tables & Chairs)
Loughton Festival	3,000.00	Running costs
Loughton Voluntary Care Association	500.00	Phone Bill & Premises Rental
Love Loughton	500.00	Running Costs
New Vistas	300.00	Hall hire for Meetings

Noah's Ark Play Group (Restore Community)	2,000.00	Running Costs (Craft/Materials/Rent/Salary)
Oakwood Hill Youth Club (Restore Community)	1,000.00	Games and Equipment
Restore Community (Restore Community)	2,500.00	Operational Costs
Samaritans - Redbridge Branch	500.00	Running costs
South Loughton Cricket Club	1,000.00	Two Sightscreens
Spark (a branch of Worth Unlimited)	600.00	Operational and Advertising Costs
St Mary's Church	350.00	Xmas Light for Tree
Voluntary Action Epping Forest (VAEF)	1,000.00	Providing a Handyman for the elderly & disabled
Willingale Community Garden (Restore Community)	1,500.00	Running costs/tools & improvements
Total awarded	£22,576	

226.2 Citizens Advice – Epping Forest District

The Committee CONFIRMED that a separate budget item for a grant provision to the Citizens Advice is in place. The budget allocation of £8,500 for 2020/21 was AGREED.

Organisation	Amount granted £	Purpose of Grant
Citizens Advice – Epping Forest District	8,500.00	Running costs

RG227 Financial Regulations

227.1 Annual Review

The Committee NOTED that the annual review of the Financial Regulations will be deferred to the next Resources and General Services Committee meeting as there have been some recent updates recommended by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).

227.2 Financial Limits

The Committee CONFIRMED the financial limits below were adequate and AGREED to increase the credit card limit of the Services Manager to £1,000.

Topic	Amount £	Last reviewed	Last changed
Limit of imprest on no 2 a/c	40,000	Feb 2019	July 2018
Limit of officers signing cheques on no 2 a/c Except for Salary/Autopay – Essex Pensions - HMRC Other items subject to £150 cheque limit for officers	150	Feb 2019	April 2010

Limit of imprest on Security Deposits a/c	3,000	Feb 2019	April 2006
Limit of cheques on Security Deposits a/c	none	Feb 2019	April 2006
Petty cash imprest	150	Feb 2019	-
Urgent repair work etc without budgetary provision (FR 3.4)	5,000	Feb 2019	April 2008
Additional audit work of external auditor (FR 12.1)	750	Feb 2019	May 2004
Tenders to be obtained (FR 12.3, 12.6 & 12.8)	over 50,000	Feb 2019	May 2004
3 quotes to be obtained (FR 12.8)	10,000 to 50,000	Feb 2019	May 2004
3 estimates to be obtained (FR 12.8)	2,000 to 10,000	Feb 2019	May 2004
Public Contracts Regulations 2015 apply	over £25,000	Feb 2019	Feb 2016
Bad debts may be written off by RFO	250	Feb 2019	Feb 2014
Credit card:			
No 1 Town Clerk	1,000	Feb 2019	Nov 2004
No 2 Services Manager	1,000	Feb 2019	Feb 2014

227.3 Payments Procedures

It was noted that all instructions and the direct debit mandates had previously been approved by the Council and the mandates authorised by two councillor signatures. The Committee reviewed and CONFIRMED the list of payments currently made by direct debit as follows:

Name	Gross Amount	Frequency	Due date	Purpose
Peninsula Business Services	£241.11	Monthly	4 th	HR services
Epping Forest District Council	£997.00	Monthly	20 th	Business rates for Kingsley & Murray Halls, RVRG & WRPF changing rooms
World Pay (formerly Streamline)	Various	Monthly	18 th	Hire of terminal for credit/debit card payments and associated fees/charges
Crown Gas & Power	Various	Quarterly	10 days after invoice date	Gas supply at Murray Hall and Kingsley Hall
SSE	Various	Monthly	Various	Electricity supply at RVRG, Cemetery, Murray Hall, Kingsley Hall, WRPF and Kings Green
EE	Various	Monthly	30 th	Mobile phones for external staff
NatWest	Various	Monthly	27 th	Credit card purchases (in full, monthly)
Public Works Loan Board	£14,103.22	Half yearly	19 th Jan/July	Loan repayment Buckingham Court
Public Works Loan Board	£18,295.62	Half yearly	28 th Mar/Sept	Loan repayment Murray Hall (1)

Public Works Loan Board	£17,849.89	Half yearly	1 st June/Dec	Loan repayment Murray Hall (2)
ICO	£55.00	Annually	Sept	Subscription

RG228 Finance

228.1 Current Financial Position

The Committee’s financial position and details of the funds available from earmarked reserves as at 31 January 2020 was NOTED.

228.2 Accounts Paid

It was NOTED that payments totalling £165,121.91 as detailed on payment schedules nos 303- 306 have been made since the report to the meeting on 4 December 2019. The schedules and accompanying invoices were available at the meeting for inspection.

RG229 Insurance – Annual Review

The Committee considered and NOTED the report. It was highlighted that 2019/20 was the first year of a three-year long term agreement with WPS Insurance Brokers and Royal Sun Alliance (RSA).

RG230 Asset Register

The Register of Assets and Properties as at 31 January 2020 was reviewed and AGREED as presented in the Agenda.

The Committee further NOTED the addition of Loughton Cricket Club to the Asset Register.

Cllr Angold-Stephens queried the date of the lease of the Memorial Rose Garden and asked the Town Clerk to check for the next meeting.

Cllr Jogia also requested confirmation of the ownership of the War Memorial and the Town Clerk said he would check this for the next meeting.

The Committee also discussed the ‘skate board equipment’ and the potential of selling it. Cllr Wixley said he would take this to the Recreation Committee and report back to the Resources & General Services Committee.

Signed:
Date: 1 April 2020

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

**MINUTES of the Meeting held by ZOOM (digital meeting platform)
on Wednesday, 24 June 2020 at 7.15pm**

Present:

Councillors: J Jennings (in the Chair)
J Angold-Stephens M Dalton J Jogia
J Mahoney S Murray A Omer (from Min no 236)

Also present:

Councillors: D Wixley C C Pond C P Pond

Officers: M Squire (Town Clerk)
B Smith (Assistant Town Clerk)

RG231 Apologies for absence
No apologies for absence were received.

RG232 Declarations of Interest
None were declared.

RG233 Confirmation of Minutes
The minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2020 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and will be signed by the Chairman.

RG234 Public Representations
None were received.

RG235 Town Clerks Report

235.1 Meetings Schedule

The Town Clerk reiterated that the Committee AGREED to the schedule for Council year 2020/21 at our last meeting minute no 225.2 It was further NOTED that this draft meetings timetable would be taken to the next Full Council meeting, taking into account the dates of meetings that have already been cancelled due to the Covid-19 virus and any other amendments subsequently needed.

Due to the current restrictions on people allowed into the library it is assumed that the next Full Council meeting will be a remote 'zoom' meeting also.

235.2 Asset Register

The Town Clerk reported on points raised at the last meeting regarding the Asset Register minute no 230.

The Council signed the lease on the Memorial Rose Garden on 2 September 2015 for 21 years, which will expire on 2 September 2036.

The Recreation Committee considered all the options regarding the Skateboard Equipment at their meeting of 19 February 2020 (minute no

169) and had AGREED for the time being to retain the ramps for future use.

With regards to the ownership of the War Memorial the Town Council took responsibility to maintain it but the ownership is unknown. Cllr Pond stated that this is not an unusual situation regarding War Memorials throughout the country.

Cllr Murray wanted it formally NOTED to thank the Council Officers for their hard work in keeping our services running during the lockdown period, and also thanked the community groups in Loughton that have helped the community during the lockdown period, especially the Covid-19 Mutual Aid Group.

Cllr Omer joined the meeting during the next item.

RG236 Christmas Card Competition 2020

The Committee NOTED that this year's competition would be launched before the autumn meeting of this Committee and AGREED to continue with the current format. Cllr Murray suggested an earlier launch date to encourage more entries.

Cllr Jogia suggested using the Christmas cards as an opportunity to reflect on 'lockdown' with some sort of 'Covid' related theme.

The concept was broadened, perhaps as a separate exercise, that local residents should be encouraged to express their experiences and document their time during this difficult period, through artwork e.g. writings, drawings, poems etc.

RG237 Flag Flying

The Committee NOTED that the Town Council marked Commonwealth Day by flying the Commonwealth flag on Monday 9 March 2020. Armed Forces Day 2020 on Saturday 27 June 2020 will be marked by flying the special flag outside the Library for the preceding week. The Town Council will also mark the occasion of Merchant Navy Day, on Thursday 3 September 2020 by flying the Red Ensign to help raise public awareness of our island nation's reliance on seafarers and shipping.

Cllr CC Pond and Cllr CP Pond left the meeting.

RG238 Year End Accounts

The Town Clerk reported that the original year-end account deadlines (for accounts closure, internal and external audit) had to be deferred due to the Covid-19 lockdown. However, the year-end accounts have now been closed in the system with the assistance of our accounts system provider, RBS Software Solutions Ltd on 22 June 2020 and the Internal Auditor will be auditing the accounts on 26 June 2020. They will be ready to submit to full council for approval on 8 July 2020 at the 'zoom' meeting.

The Committee also NOTED that there will be a substantial loss of income this year as Murray Hall and Kingsley Hall have been closed down for the past three months and still largely remain shut because of the virus. In lieu of the extraordinary circumstances, the tenant at Buckingham Court was given a three month "rent holiday" during the Covid-19 lockdown.

RG239 Standing Orders - Annual Review

The Town Clerk reported that we are revising our current Standing Orders in line with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) 2018 guidelines (as amended in July 2018). These are now updated in line with the NALC guidelines and will be reviewed by the Committee Members and presented to the Full Council at the meeting on 8 July 2020.

RG240 Financial Regulations – Annual Review

The Town Clerk reported that our current Financial Regulations are being revised in line with the 2019 NALC guidelines. The updated version will be reviewed by the Committee Members and presented to the Full Council at the meeting on 8 July 2020.

RG241 Equal Opportunities Policy - To Review

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Equal Opportunities Policy.

RG242 Data Protection – Statement of Policy - To Review

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Data Protection Policy.

RG243 Protocol for Town Council meetings held remotely – To Review

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Protocol for Town Council meetings held remotely.

RG244 Governance and Accountability

244.1 Internal Audit

244.1.1 Review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Audit

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Audit

244.1.2 Review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Control

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Control.

244.2 Risk Assessment and Management

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Risk Assessment and Management.

Cllr Jennings briefly lost signal at the start of Minute no 245 and Cllr Angold-Stephens took over as Chair. Cllr Jennings re-joined the meeting soon after and continued thereafter as Chairman. Very little of the discussion was missed and no decisions were taken in the intervening period.

RG245 Finance

245.1 Current Financial Position

The financial position as of 31 March 2020 was NOTED.

245.2 Accounts Paid

The Committee NOTED payments totalling £243,828.81 as detailed on payment schedules nos. 307-310 to Year End. With further payments totalling £166,765.97 as detailed on payment schedules nos. 311-314 from 01/04/2020 until 09/06/2020, had been made since the report to the meeting on 5 February 2020.

The Committee noted that during this exceptionally difficult time of the 'Covid lockdown' period, Cllrs Pond have kindly agreed at the behest of the Town Clerk, to act as signatories for the Council cheques. As the lockdown eases, normal distribution of the cheques for signatories will be resumed.

The Committee NOTED details of all Council payments in excess of £500 are provided on the Council's website on the strategic documents page http://www.loughton-tc.gov.uk/Finance_and_Transparency_2580.aspx

245.3 Precept

The Committee NOTED that the first instalment of the Precept, £378,223, was received into the Council's Santander bank account on 28 April 2020.

245.4 Internal Financial Check

The Committee AGREED to ask Cllr Jogia to continue carry out checks on the Council's financial transactions during the current financial year and once restrictions are lifted Cllr Jogia will be able to continue with these checks. The Committee thanked Cllr Jogia for her work in this regard in 2019/20.

RG246 Pensions Update

The Committee NOTED the report regarding the "McCloud Judgement" which is under review by Essex Pension Fund.

Signed:
Date: 14 October 2020

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

**MINUTES of the Meeting held by ZOOM
on Wednesday, 2 December 2020 at 7.15pm**

Present:

Councillors: J Jennings (in the Chair)
J Angold-Stephens M Dalton J Jogia
J Mahoney S Murray A Omer (from Min no 276)

Also present:

Councillors: D Wixley

Officers: M Squire (Town Clerk)
B Smith (Assistant Town Clerk)

RG272 Apologies for absence
No apologies for absence were received.

Cllr Mahoney left the meeting during the next item.

RG273 Declarations of Interest
None were declared.

RG274 Confirmation of Minutes
The minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2020 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and will be signed by the Chairman.

RG275 Public Representations
None were received.

Cllr Omer joined the meeting during the next item.
Cllr Mahoney re-joined the meeting during the next item

RG276 Town Clerk's Report
The Town Clerk reported on the following items:

The New Finance & Administration Assistant, Lyndsey Mitchell, was due to start work on the 2nd November but in view of the current COVID lockdown she asked to defer her start date to 2nd December 2020.

RG277 Christmas Card Competition 2020
The Town Clerk reported that despite the current COVID-19 restrictions, the Christmas Card Competition has been completed. There were 147 entries from local schools, a care home and individual entries. Cllrs Murphy and Cllr Cochrane have been able to judge the cards and we have designated winners in each category. The overall winner was agreed, and hard copies of this year's Christmas Cards have been ordered to be signed by the Mayor and the Town Clerk and sent out as soon as possible.

RG278 Training and Conferences
The Committee NOTED the courses recently attended.

The Committee discussed whether Webinar Training was of similar quality as attending personally. The Town Clerk reported that the feedback was good, and they tended to be more economical, generally costing less and incurring no travelling expenses. There were some merits in attending personally, especially in terms of networking. Future training courses would be booked on a case-by-case basis, assessing the merits of each method of training.

RG279 Apprenticeship Scheme

The Town Clerk reported the difficulties in delivering the Apprenticeship Scheme from the original Communities Initiative Funding (CIF) of £10,000 from the Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) that was to be used for a ground's maintenance apprenticeship.

Whilst the grant would cover a proportion of the apprentice cost, the Town Council would need to budget a further £25,900 over the next two years to cover further costs required for an apprentice, including salaries, uniforms, training equipment etc

This would be difficult to justify given the large fall in income on hall hire, football pitches and other sources this year, almost entirely due to the covid pandemic. Proceeding with this scheme would potentially add a significant amount to the precept request for 2021/22. Bearing in mind also that the Council is committed to other major projects that would benefit local residents, this may not be the best use of such funding.

After some initial delay, the Town Council had liaised with Writtle Agricultural College and was ready to go in the Spring of 2020. However from the onset of the Covid pandemic in March 2020, the various Government restrictions, lockdowns, and social distancing measures have made the project untenable and unmanageable (due to health and safety considerations) whilst the virus continues to persist. Although further extensions have been requested, the EALC have now requested the return of the grant funding.

The Committee AGREED that although it would be a good thing to take on an apprentice, in consideration of the factors already highlighted, it would be in the best interests of the Town Council and better value for local residents to return the funds.

RG280 Current Financial Position

The Assistant Town Clerk reported that grant payments to date were low which might be due to organisations locking down during Covid. A reminder will be sent out in December 2020 stating that community organisations need to claim soonest. If for any reason organisations have to delay their claim, the Committee will consider this on a case-by-case basis.

The financial position as of 30th September 2020 was NOTED.

RG281 Accounts Paid

The Committee NOTED that payments totalling £26,321.56 as detailed on payment schedules no. 320 until 30 October 2020 have been made since the report to the meeting on 14 October 2020.

RG282 Internal Financial Check

The Committee NOTED that Cllr Jogia visited the office on the 15 October 2020. The Committee thanked Cllr Jogia for carrying out the financial check.

Areas covered during this visit included petty cash, payroll for Feb, March, April, May, June, July, August, September and October 2020 along with the Public Works Loans transactions for Buckingham Court and Murray Hall.

RG283 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) – Section 3 External Auditors Report and Certificate for 2020/21

The Committee NOTED the external auditors report from PKF Littlejohn LLP dated 16/11/20 and thanked The Town Clerk for a good report. The Town Clerk reported that this will assist the Local Council Awards, Gold Standard re accreditation process.

RG284 Subscriptions Review – Min no RGS 206

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.

RG285 Parish Basic Allowance – Min no RGS 207

The Committee RECOMMENDED to full Council to retain the level of Parish Basic Allowance that members may claim in 2020/21 at £120 per member per annum.

RG286 Committee Priorities – Min no RGS 208

As part of its overall plan and to complement the budget-making process, the Committee reviewed and AGREED the priority list and to move IT and office Equipment from High to Medium on the priority list for 2021/22.

RG287 Estimates for 2021/22

The Town Clerk reported that there are no spectacular changes in projected working expenses, which typically rise slightly year. on year. There may be some drop in rental income. The Town Clerk explained the basis of these preliminary figures, which will be fine-tuned by the time of the full budget meeting in January 2021. There may be a further amendment to the final recharge figure.

The Committee reviewed and NOTED the report.

RG288 Future Work of the Committee

No items were raised for future discussion.

RG289 Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Committee RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the following two items in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as they contained confidential information relating to contractual matters.

RG290 Buckingham Court

The Committee NOTED the report from the Town Clerk.

RG291 Councils Water Supplier

The Committee NOTED the report from the Assistant Town Clerk.

Signed:

Date: 6 January 2020

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL
RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held by ZOOM
on Wednesday, 6 January 2021 at 7pm

Present:

Councillors: J Jennings (in the Chair)
J Angold-Stephens M Dalton J Jogia
J Mahoney S Murray (from Minute No. 295)

Also present:

Councillors: R Brookes B Cohen M Stubbings
D Wixley

Officers:

M Squire (Town Clerk)
P Bryce (Assistant Town Clerk - Civic)

RG292 Apologies for absence
Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Omer.

RG293 Declarations of Interest
None were declared.

RG294 Confirmation of Minutes
The minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2020 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and will be signed by the Chairman.

RG295 Public Representations
None were received.

Cllr Murray joined the meeting during the next item.

RG296 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report
The Town Clerk reported that due to unforeseen domestic circumstances, Lyndsey Mitchell would no longer be able to take up the new role of Finance & Administration Assistant. Judy Graham, Halls and Bookings Officer would assist to carry out these duties for the foreseeable future until the Covid situation eases.

RG297 Financial Assistance Working Group
The Committee AGREED that the existing three members of this working group, namely Cllrs J Angold-Stephens, J Jennings and S Murray should continue their work in assessing financial grant applications for the Town Council year 2021/22

RG298 Council-wide Priorities 2021/22
The priority lists were NOTED and have subsequently been amended by the Town Clerk in accordance with the Resources & General Services Committee's Budget and Estimates deliberations that were AGREED later on in the agenda.

Ranking	Committee	Activity
1	Recreation	Roding Valley Recreation Ground Playground improvements
2	Recreation	Roding Valley Recreation Ground Football Changing Rooms
2	Recreation	Playgrounds

PLANNING AND LICENSING COMMITTEE – Priorities 2021/22

Priority	Main Function	Greater Detail (current position)
	Current activities	
High	Local Plan	Further deliberations
High	Planning and Licensing	Responding to applications
High	All other matters within the committee's terms of reference	
Medium	Design Award Scheme	Annual award presentation

RECREATION COMMITTEE – Priorities 2021/22

Current Priority	Main Function	Greater Detail (current position)
	Current Activities	
1	Roding Valley Recreation Ground (RVRG) Playground	New works & upgrading
2	RVRG – improvements to changing rooms exterior & surrounding area	Internal works
3	RVRG car park & gate	Design and costs tbc
4	Kingsley Hall windows	Out to tender
5	Playgrounds	New works/upgrading
6	Land adjacent to Willingale Road Allotment	Use as a nature reserve/community orchard. Some clearance and environmental studies undertaken
7	Hillyfields new gate	Specifications and costings
8	Loughton Cricket Club	Registration as a "Field in Trust"-now complete
9	RVRG ground path maintenance	Including the diverted path by Charlie Moules bridge – awaiting initial EFDC work and monitoring the erosion
10	Jessel Green Day	Preparation and organisation
11	Countdown to Christmas	Preparation and organisation
12	Registration of RVRG as s a 'Field in Trust'	Revision of look at land ownership issues
13	Solar energy installations for Council	Further research and budgetary

	buildings	allowance
14	Byelaws for Town Council land	To be researched
On-going Activities		
High	Running the committee	Agenda, reports, research, minutes, finance, admin
High	Kingsley and Murray Halls	Bookings, admin, finance, maintenance and works
High	Open spaces including the Memorial Garden in Roding Road	Maintenance
High	Willingale Road Playing Field and Roding Valley Recreation Ground	Football lettings, maintenance and works
High	Playgrounds/outdoor gyms	Maintenance
High	Responding to consultations	Variable
High	Any other matters within the committee's terms of reference	As detailed in the Standing Orders
High	Provision of Public Access Defibrillators	Maintenance

ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE COMMITTEE – Priorities 2021/22

Current Priority	Main Function	Greater Detail/Current Position
	Current activities	
High	Loughton Day / Heritage Open Days	September events + heritage trail/leaflets
High	Registration of Village Greens	Applications submitted to ECC
High	Conservation Areas / areas of local landscape merit	Monitor proposals submitted to EFDC Local List review TBC
High	Liaison with City of London Corporation	All aspects re Epping Forest including route signage
Medium	Town signs	Awaiting funding opportunities
Medium	Lady Whitaker's Mead	Development of new cemetery
Medium	Flower baskets	Extension to North part of Loughton,
Medium	Interpretation panels	Locations to be identified
Medium	Heritage streetlights**	On LHP action list
On-going activities		
High	Running the committee	Agenda, reports, research, minutes, finance, admin
High	Community Lavatory scheme	Awaiting approaches to businesses
High	Cemetery (Church Lane)	Burials, administration, maintenance Rules and Regulations review
High	War memorials	Inspect and maintain

Resources and General Services Committee 2019 – 2021

High	Heritage plaques, drinking fountain, seats and other street furniture; Lopping Hall clock	Installation and maintenance
High	Allotments	Lettings, licences, administration
High	Christmas lights (Kings Green, The Broadway and High Road)	Installation, inspections and maintenance
High	Christmas Window Competition	Admin and arrangements
Medium	Alleyway nameplates	Site surveys, permissions, purchase and installation
High	Winter salt bag partnership	Facilitating the ECC scheme Replacement of existing grit bins
High	Responding to consultations	Variable
High	Any other matters within the Committee's terms of reference	

Resources and General Services -- Priorities 2021/22

Priority	Main Function	Greater Detail/Current Position
	Current activities	
High	Seeking external funding sources	Targeted action
Low	Council structure	Continuing reviews
	On-going activities	
High	Banking arrangements and investments	Kept under review
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 as required
Medium High	Civic matters	Civic Celebrations incl Citizenship Awards
High	Annual Report	Preparation and printing
High	Newsletter	Editorial, printing and distribution
High	Noticeboards	Maintenance and installation
High	Publicity and website	
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	Policy reviews	On-going
High	Responding to consultations	Variable

High	Contract reviews	On-going
High	Training Strategy	Annual review
High	Training Strategy	Annual review
Medium	IT and Office equipment	Updated in 2020
Medium	Any other matters within the Committees terms of reference	Ongoing
Low	Community Forum	Arrangements and admin if applicable

RG299 Estimates for 2021/22

RG299.1 Budget Review

The Town Clerk ran through the parameters and rationale of his work on the 2021/22 budget which were NOTED by the Committee.

RG299.2 Service Re-charges

The report was NOTED by the Committee.

RG299.3 Tax Base

The new Tax Base for Loughton Town Council for 2021/22 was NOTED by the Committee.

RG299.4 Committees' Estimates

The initial draft estimate figures were NOTED pending revision. It was noted that the potential increase in the precept at this level would be too high.

RG299.5 Public Loans Outstanding

The information was NOTED.

**RG299.6 Recommendation for Precept to the Council
i Budget Review**

The Committee noted the adverse impact the Covid pandemic was making (particularly on normal income generating areas), not only in respect of this year's finances but also to the detriment and unpredictability of estimating the following year's financial position.

The proposed revision of Earmarked Funds would lead to a revised budget and a reduction of Earmarked Funds of £84,615 which was AGREED by the Committee.

The agreement to changes in Earmarked Funds would also mean a few of the Town Council's list of priorities would need to be amended accordingly (see RG298).

ii Committees Estimates

The Committee RECOMMENDED to the Council that the precept for 2021/22 be set at £782,675 with the budget details as follows

Committee	Income		Expenditure
	£	£	£
Resources and General Services	20,000		482,485
Environment and Heritage	16,660		116,127

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

**MINUTES of the Meeting held by ZOOM
on Wednesday, 10 February 2021 at 7.15pm**

Present:

Councillors: J Jennings (in the Chair)
J Angold-Stephens M Dalton J Jogia
J Mahoney S Murray A Omer

Also present:

Councillors: P Beales S Pewsey D Wixley

Officers: M Squire (Town Clerk)
B Smith (Assistant Town Clerk - Finance)

Press: D Jackman (Everything Epping Forest)

RG302 Apologies for absence
No Apologies for absence were received

RG303 Declarations of Interest
With regard to Agenda items 7 Epping Forest Car Park Consultation, 9 Laptops (i) School Laptops, 10.1 Financial Assistance, General Applications and 10.2 Citizens Advice – Epping Forest, Councillors made the following declarations:

Cllr Jennings declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 7 through involvement with the Epping Forest Heritage Trust, and in 10.1 for the applications for Loughton Voluntary Care Association and Citizens Advice Epping Forest District.

Cllr Murray declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 7 through involvement with the Epping Forest Heritage Trust, Item 9 (i) working for Loughton Secondary Schools and Items 10.1 in the applications for Epping Forest Re-use, Restore Group – Grow, Noah’s Ark Play Group, Oakwood Hill Community Centre, Oakwood Hill Youth Club, Willingale Community Garden, Loughton Voluntary Care Association, 3Food4U- Rotary Club of Loughton, St. Michael and All Angels Church, and Citizens Advice Epping Forest District.

Cllr Angold-Stephens declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 10.1 for the applications for Oakwood Hill Community Centre and Citizens Advice Epping Forest District.

Cllr Dalton declared a Pecuniary interest in item 10.1 for the application for Voluntary Action Epping Forest (VAEF).

Cllr Mahoney declared a non-pecuniary interest item 10.1 for the applications for Voluntary Action Epping Forest (VAEF), 3Food4U-Rotary Club of Loughton, and Tinder Sticks CIC.

Cllr Mahoney declared a non-pecuniary interest item 10.1 for the applications for Voluntary Action Epping Forest (VAEF), 3Food4U-Rotary Club of Loughton, and Tinder Sticks CIC.

Cllr Wixley although not a member of this committee declared non pecuniary interests in item 10.1 as a member of the Epping Forest Heritage Trust and in 10.2 as a member of Citizens Advice.

RG304 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2021 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and will be signed by the Chairman.

RG305 Public Representations

None were received.

RG306 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report

The Town Clerk reported that due to limited resources, during this difficult Covid-19 period, applications for the Local Council Awards have been deferred until such time as circumstances allow. He also informed members that there had been a couple of changes to the award criteria, and in particular regarding the Newsletter which can now be produced in digital format without a full paper distribution. Also the Council needs to make a statement (to be minuted as such) regarding the stance against crime and disorder.

An appointment has been booked with the newly appointed Internal Auditor to attend the Council offices on the 23 February 2021, to carry out an interim audit.

RG307 Meetings Schedule

The Committee NOTED that as Epping Forest District Council's (EFDC) schedule of meetings timetable will not be available until their agenda of 15 February 2021 and not then presented to the EFDC meeting of 25 February 2021, it is unlikely that a draft of our own timetable will be available for the next Town Council Meeting on the 17 February 2021. The Town Clerk would inform the Town Council at the next meeting and prepare a draft soonest for circulation to members, on the basis that it would be ratified at the next Resources and General Services meeting on 7 April 2021.

RG308 Epping Forest Car Park Consultation

The issue was discussed in some length. There was a general concern that car parking could be displaced into residential streets adjoining the forest ,creating additional problems and increasing pollution levels.

The Committee AGREED to make their own individual responses to this consultation.

Cllr Beales joined the meeting during the next item.

RG309 Annual Town Meeting

Committee Members reviewed the options and noted that there were valid reasons for and against holding the meeting. If the meeting were to be held at all, it would need to be held remotely. The Committee AGREED to defer the decision and take to the Council Meeting on the 17 February 2021. Further guidance maybe forthcoming by this time.

RG310 Laptops

(i) School laptops

The Committee AGREED that there were sufficient funds available via other school and government sources and therefore no further requirement for the Council to contribute.

Cllr Murray thanked Cllr Beales for bringing this matter to the attention of the Committee

(ii) Office laptops

The Town Clerk reported that during the Covid-19 lockdowns, a number of staff that are working at home were not able to work as constructively as they normally do on behalf of the Council, due to a lack of or inadequate laptops and difficulty in accessing the server. There was also a need to access Adobe Acrobat functions for some colleagues. Members stressed the need to provide adequate equipment, especially during these difficult times.

The Committee AGREED that;

- laptops and ancillary PC functions should be purchased up to a limit of £2,000. Any figure above this level should be agreed with the Chairman of this Committee.
- that a safeguarding policy for staff using Town Council laptops be formulated and agreed by this Committee at a future meeting.

Cllr Omer left the meeting during the next item.

RG311 Financial Assistance Applications 2021/22
311.1 General Applications

Cllr Jogia wished it to be NOTED to thank the Chairman and the members of the Financial Assistance Working Group for their hard work in preparing for the meeting. She added that there was a general consensus of agreement in the amounts granted in principle. She felt that the quality of the applications was high and that the organisations awarded these grants do a wonderful job for the Loughton community.

Cllr Murray praised the Town Council's policy for making such substantive grants available to the Community on an annual basis.

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

Organisation	Amount Granted £	Purpose of Grant
Affordable Counselling Epping Forest (ACEF)	400.00	Counselling Sessions
Alfie James Productions	200.00	Performance Skills Workshop
Epping Forest Re-Use	200.00	Tools
Grow (Restore Comm.)	4,000.00	Mobility Path & Running Costs
Noah's Ark Play Group (Restore Comm.)	2,500.00	Crafts, Toys & Running Costs
Oakwood Hill Community Centre (Restore Comm.)	3,000.00	Operational Costs
Oakwood Hill Youth Club (Restore Comm.)	2,000.00	Supplies & Crafts
Willingale Community Garden (Restore Comm.)	2,000.00	Activities & New Shed
Loughton Voluntary Care Association	450.00	Running Costs & Hyacinth Bulbs
Rotary Club of Loughton - 3Food4u	2,500.00	Venue Rent

Samaritans – Redbridge Branch	600.00	Running Costs
St Michael & All Angels Church Loughton	2,000.00	Play Area
Tinder Sticks CIC	750.00	Outreach Events
Voluntary Action Epping Forest (VAEF)	1,500.00	Providing Benefits Advice
Total awarded	<u>£22,100.00</u>	

311.2 Citizens Advice – Epping Forest District

The Committee CONFIRMED that a separate budget item for a grant provision to the Citizens Advice is in place. The budget allocation of £8,500 for 2021/22 was AGREED.

Organisation	Amount Granted £	Purpose
Citizens Advice – Epping Forest District	8,500.00	Running costs

RG312 Financial Regulations

312.1 Annual Review

The Committee is NOTED that the annual review of the Financial Regulations was APPROVED by Loughton Town Council, on 8 July 2020 as per minute RG240.

312.2 Financial Limits

The Committee CONFIRMED the financial limits below were adequate.

Topic	Amount £	Last reviewed	Last changed
Limit of imprest on no 2 a/c	40,000	Feb 2020	July 2018
Limit of officers signing cheques on no 2 a/c Except for Salary/Autopay – Essex Pensions - HMRC Other items subject to £150 cheque limit for officers	150	Feb 2020	April 2010
Limit of imprest on Security Deposits a/c	3,000	Feb 2020	April 2006
Limit of cheques on Security Deposits a/c	none	Feb 2020	April 2006
Petty cash imprest	150	Feb 2020	-
Urgent repair work etc without budgetary provision (FR 3.4)	5,000	Feb 2020	April 2008
Additional audit work of external auditor (FR 12.1)	750	Feb 2020	May 2004
Tenders to be obtained (FR 12.3, 12.6 & 12.8)	over 50,000	Feb 2020	May 2004
3 quotes to be obtained (FR 12.8)	10,000 to 50,000	Feb 2020	May 2004
3 estimates to be obtained (FR 12.8)	2,000 to 10,000	Feb 2020	May 2004
Public Contracts Regulations 2015 apply	over £25,000	Feb 2020	Feb 2016

Bad debts may be written off by RFO	250	Feb 2020	Feb 2014
Credit card:			
No 1 Town Clerk	1,000	Feb 2020	Nov 2004
No 2 Services Manager	1,000	Feb 2020	Feb 2020

312.3 Payments Procedures

It was noted that all instructions and the direct debit mandates had previously been approved by the Council and the mandates authorised by two councillor signatures. The Committee reviewed and CONFIRMED the list of payments currently made by direct debit as follows:

Name	Gross Amount	Frequency	Due date	Purpose
Peninsula Business Services	£241.11	Monthly	4 th	HR services
Epping Forest District Council	£ 1012.00	Monthly	20 th	Business rates for Kingsley & Murray Halls, RVRG & WRPF changing rooms
World Pay (formerly Streamline)	Various	Monthly	18 th	Hire of terminal for credit/debit card payments and associated fees/charges
Crown Gas & Power	Various	Quarterly	10 days after invoice date	Gas supply at Murray Hall and Kingsley Hall
SSE	Various	Monthly	Various	Electricity supply at RVRG, Cemetery, Murray Hall, Kingsley Hall, WRPF and Kings Green
First Business Water	Various	Monthly	End of Month	Water Supply at Cemetery, Murray Hall, Kingsley Hall, WR Pavilion, WR Allotments.
The Comms Guys	Various	Monthly	20 th of Month	Phones and Broadband at Head Office
Pitney Bowes	Various	Monthly	Various	Postage: Franking Machine at Head Office
EE	Various	Monthly	30 th	Mobile phones for external staff
NatWest	Various	Monthly	27 th	Credit card purchases (in full, monthly)

Public Works Loan Board	£14,103.22	Half yearly	19 th Jan/July	Loan repayment Buckingham Court
Public Works Loan Board	£18,295.62	Half yearly	28 th Mar/Sept	Loan repayment Murray Hall (1)
Public Works Loan Board	£17,849.89	Half yearly	1 st June/Dec	Loan repayment Murray Hall (2)
ICO	£55.00	Annually	Sept	Subscription

**RG313 Finance
313.1**

Current Financial Position

The Committee's financial position and details of the funds available from earmarked reserves as at 30 November 2020 were NOTED.

313.2 Accounts Paid

It was NOTED that payments totalling £217,927.51 as detailed on payment schedules no. 321-323 until 18 January 2021 have been made and entered on the accounts system, since the report to the meeting on 2 December 2020 (see pages 20 – 22). Schedules and accompanying invoices were available at the council offices for inspection.

RG314 Insurance – Annual Review

The Committee considered and NOTED the report. It was highlighted that we are covered for loss of business Insurance. The Assistant Town Clerk reported that he did try to claim in the earlier part of last year during the Covid-19 lockdown and the claim was rejected by the Insurance company. In September 2020 there was a Government Directive that these claims should be assessed and therefore he has re-applied to claim for the loss of business.

The Committee requested that the cover levels for the Drinking Fountain and all the Notice Boards in Loughton are reviewed.

RG315 Asset Register

The Register of Assets and Properties as at 31 January 2021 was reviewed and AGREED as presented in the Agenda.

RG316 Essex County Council – Micro Grant Communication & Technology Support Fund

The Committee NOTED the availability of the Essex County Council Micro Grant Communication & Technology Support Fund.

RG317 Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Committee RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the following item in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as it contained confidential information relating to contractual matters.

RG318 Buckingham Court – Min no RGS 290

The Committee NOTED the oral update.

RG319 Councils Water Supplier – Min no RGS 271

The Committee NOTED the oral update.

Signed:

Date: 7 April 2021

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

**MINUTES of the Meeting held by ZOOM
on Wednesday, 7 April 2021 at 7.15pm**

Present:

Councillors: J Jennings (in the Chair)
J Angold-Stephens from min no 324 M Dalton J Jogia from min no 326
J Mahoney from min no 326 S Murray

Also present:

Councillors: D Wixley

Officers:

M Squire (Town Clerk)
B Smith (Assistant Town Clerk - Finance)

RG320 Apologies for absence
No Apologies for absence were received

RG321 Declarations of Interest
None were declared.

RG322 Confirmation of Minutes
The minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2021 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and will be signed by the Chairman.

RG323 Public Representations
None were received.

Cllr Angold-Stephens joined the meeting during the next item.

RG324 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report
The Town Clerk reported that in due course the Council will pay a mark of respect for the sad loss of Richard Okorogheye and pass their condolences to his family.

RG325 Training and Conferences
The Committee NOTED the courses recently attended by officers.

Pippa Bryce, Assistant Town Clerk, Civic was congratulated on passing her Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) qualification.

Cllrs Jogia and Mahoney joined the meeting during the next item.

RG326 Local Authority Meetings

The Town Clerk reported that there is a legal obligation to hold the first Council Meeting within 21 days of the Local Council Elections 6 May 2021. The Government directive states that as from the 17 May 2021 it may be permissible to hold indoor meetings. The first Annual Town Council meeting is planned for the 18 May 2021. The directive is however confusing and contradictory. New Guidelines are expected in June 2021, but there may be a further update on the 21 April 2021.

The first Town Council meeting is important for the newly elected Councillors and the subsequent delegations of Committees. It is possible to accommodate this meeting in the Library ensuring social distancing of the 22 members.

The Committee AGREED that it may be possible to prepare for a live meeting but will await a further update in April 2021.

This agenda item will also be a part of the forthcoming Town Council meeting.

RG327 Meetings Schedule

The Committee AGREED the meetings schedule for the next Town Council year

RG328 Finance

328.1 Current Financial Position

The Committee's financial position and details of the funds available from earmarked reserves as at 28 February 2021 was NOTED.

The Committee advised that the costs of the forthcoming local council elections should be closely monitored, and that adequate provision is made for future Election Earmarked Reserves.

328.2 Accounts Paid

The Committee NOTED that payments totalling £163,942.55 as detailed on payment schedules no. 324-326 until 25 March 2021 have been made and entered on the accounts system, since the report to the Committee on 10 February 2021.

RG329 Insurance

329.1 Insurance 2021-22

The Committee NOTED the insurance premiums for 2021-22.

329.2 Covid-19 Claim

The Committee NOTED the report and the Insurance company's decision not to pay out for Covid business interruption.

The Committee recommended that when the insurance policies are next reviewed, consideration should be given to ensure that robust cover is in place to cover business interruption

RG330 Internal Audit

The Committee NOTED the satisfactory Internal Audit report of 23 February 2021.

RG331 Governance and Accountability

The Committee NOTED and AGREED the following reviews and risk assessments.

331.1 Internal Audit

331.1.1 Review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Audit

331.1 .2 Review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Control

331.2 Risk Assessment and Management

RG332 Year End 2020/21 Accounts

The Committee NOTED the report.

RG333 Laptop Policy – Working from Home

The Committee APPROVED the Laptop Policy.

RG334 Staff Absence Policy

The Committee reviewed and APPROVED the Staff Absence Policy.

RG335 Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Committee RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the following two items in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as they contained confidential information relating to contractual matters.

RG336 Buckingham Court – Min no RGS

The Committee NOTED the report from the Town Clerk.

RG337 Councils Water Supplier – Min no RGS

The Committee NOTED the report from the Assistant Town Clerk.

The Committee returned to the Public Meeting. The Chairman thanked the Council Officers for their hard work how they had excelled in the past year. She also thanked the Town Councillors for all their work in particular Cllr Jogia for her additional work on the finances and Cllr Angold-Stephens for her expertise in accounts.

Cllr Murray echoed the sentiments of the Chairman and thanked Cllr Angold-Stephens for her contribution to this Committee.

Cllr Angold-Stephens thanked all the officers of the council in particular the Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk.

Cllr Jogia thanked the Council for their guidance during her first term on the Town Council.

Signed:

Date: 30 June 2021