



RECREATION COMMITTEE

Members of the Recreation Committee

are summoned to attend a Meeting at **7.45 pm** on

Wednesday 29 May 2024

at Loughton Town Council, Council Chamber, 1 Buckingham Court,
Rectory Lane, Loughton IG10 2QZ
to transact the business shown in the agenda.

Cllr I Allgood
Cllr S Fontenelle
Cllr K-W Lee
Cllr S Murray
Cllr J Riley
Cllr K Valentine

Cllr R Brookes
Cllr A Fricker
Cllr N MacKinnon
Cllr J Obaseki
Cllr M Stubbings
Cllr D Wixley

Cllr C Davies
Cllr S Harriman
Cllr R Minhas
Cllr M Owen
Cllr R Sylvan

Cllr W Dodd
Cllr L House
Cllr S Murphy
Cllr C Pond
Cllr C Ubah

Mark Squire
Town Clerk
23 May 2024

Chairman, Vice Chairman and Membership to be confirmed :

Note to Councillors:

If you are unable to attend the meeting,
please phone your apologies to the office on 020 8508 4200

A G E N D A

- 1 To Confirm the Chairman, Vice Chairman and membership of the Committee**
To NOTE for the Committee minutes.

- 2 Apologies**
To RECEIVE any apologies for absence.

- 3 Declarations of Interest**
Councillors to declare any pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in any items on the Agenda.

- 4 Confirmation of Minutes**
To CONFIRM the minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2024.

- 5 Public Representations**
To hear any representations from members of the public who have registered a request to address the Committee in accordance with no 5, Appendix C, of the Standing Orders.

- 6 Oakwood Hill area in Loughton**
Vanessa Gayton, Team Manager Community Development and Wellbeing, Customer and Communities, Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) will provide a brief update on proposals for the Oakwood Hill area. EFDC have received Public Health Accelerator Funding to support their place based approach to tackling health inequalities. The funding will enable EFDC to recruit a Community Engagement Officer specifically for the Oakwood Hill area of Loughton. The officer will be responsible for coordination and development of a wide range of partnership projects to improve the health and wellbeing of residents in the area.

The EFDC Environment Protection Team is looking at a funding bid to Essex County Council (ECC) to develop a pocket park, potentially at Longford Rise in Oakwood Hill. Members have been requested, if this something that they would support and whether volunteers could be provided to manage it?

Members to receive and review.

- 7 Newmans Lane Playground Project**
See report attached and photo and sketch plan of existing site (pages 6 – 8).

Members to review and note.

- 8 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report**
- A Memorial Bench Policy and Memorial Tree Policy will be produced for the next Recreation Committee for consideration.
 - The bench for the Wintle family has been installed and the installation of the bench for the Lee family is imminent, (deferred very recently due to torrential rain). Rec Min 295.1 & 295.2 refer.
 - Work is ongoing regarding the Loughton Cricket Club boundary.

Roding Valley Recreation Ground (RVRG)

9 Roding Valley Cricket Club (RVCC) – Min no RC313

Progress on the proposed transfer of cricket area continues to be protracted. The RVCC have now completed their Clubmark and safeguarding policies, meaning they can apply for loans from the Essex Cricket Board (ECB).

To receive and note.

10 RVRG Tree Survey – Min no RC314

Follow-up works to trees, (following the comprehensive tree survey carried out by Place Services in late 2023), have been delayed due to persistent wet weather, and consequently, soft ground conditions. Commencement of the works is expected imminently, now that the ground has hardened and the Council's contractors are confident that their vehicles can move freely across the site.

To receive and note.

11 RVRG – Memorial Trees – Min no RC315

There have been no further developments since the previous report it is unlikely that anything further will be forthcoming until the tree planting season in the autumn.

To receive and note

12 RVRG Changing Rooms – Min no RC316

i. Security / Health and Safety

The Town Clerk has contacted the Senior Asset Manager at EFDC regarding all aspects of the dilapidated building. A further update may be available at the meeting.

ii. Development of the building

A local businessman has enquired whether the Town Council has plans to develop the building as he would like to be involved if this is the case. The Town Clerk will provide further background information.

Members to review.

13 Football pitch hire on the RVRG

There have been no bookings for pitches for this current season. The Town Clerk and Services Manager will provide further background information.

Members to review.

14 RVRG playground – Min no RC300

See attached report regarding safety harnesses on specific playground equipment (pages 9 – 10).

Members to review and recommend a way forward. The Town Clerk will provide further background information.

Members also to note that a major independent inspection of all playgrounds is to be carried out by the inspection company TMPI on 29 May 2024.

15 Roding Valley Angling Club (RVAC) – Min no RC312

Permission has been granted for the RVAC to supply and install its own notice board adjacent to the Town Council noticeboard, close to the Greensted Road entrance to the RVRG.

To receive and note

16 Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) signs – Min no RC312

Further signs were obtained from EFDC and have been installed onto notice boards on the RVRG.

To receive and note.

17 Paddle Tennis

See e-mail attached page11, dated 18 March 2024.

Members to review and recommend a response.

18 Essex & Suffolk Water (ESW) – Min no REC 297

Good communication has been maintained with ESW and restoration site works would have been completed but have been delayed because of recent heavy rain.

To receive and note

Other Agenda Items

19 Town Council Community Halls

A General Election has been called for 4 July 2024 and both Murray Hall and Kingsley Hall have been booked for use as polling stations.

19.1 Murray Hall

The 2024/25 budget for Murray Hall building and maintenance has been set as £6k, which on reflection, is too low. Essential works have already been undertaken (including a fire alarm beam detector and replacement emergency lighting) totalling £4k. Additionally the flooring needs re-sanding and polishing (work deferred by a year), and there is a small leak in the disabled toilet roof. Replacement exterior decking is another necessary expense for the future. Conversely, the 2024/25 budget for gas usage was set as £14k (when gas prices rose to record levels). Since then gas prices have stabilised (the final figure for year-end 2023/24 was £6.3k) and continue to do so.

Therefore RECOMMEND to vire £4k from the Murray Hall gas budget to be vired to the Murray Hall building and maintenance budget.

20 Inappropriate planting of trees on Hillyfields Open Space and Jessel Green by Essex County Council (ECC) / Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) – Min no RC318

This development has already been raised at the Town Council meeting on 21 February 2024.

- **Hillyfields Open Space** – On Wednesday 6 March, Cllr Wixley, the Town Clerk and Services Manager met with officers and contractors from ECC and EFDC, to agree on the re-location of 7 x *Betula utilis Jacquemontii* (silver birch) and 7 x *Pyrus chanticleer* (ornamental pear), that had previously been planted on City of London Corporation (COLC) land, at the Pyrls Lane edge of the site. It was

AGREED at the meeting that all 14 trees would be re-sited around the edge of the flood alleviation basin, thus meaning they would all now be situated on Town Council owned land. The trees were duly re-planted in the agreed positions on 7 and 8 March 2024. Members to note that as of week commencing 13 May, a tree watering regime has been in place, with the work being carried out by Mercer Tree Services on behalf of ECC.

- **Jessel Green** – Also on Wednesday 6 March, Cllr Wixley, the Town Clerk and Services Manager, and officers and contractors from ECC and EFDC, visited Jessel Green, to discuss the then, newly planted line of trees parallel to Jessel Drive but some way into the green itself. Whilst acknowledging that the green belongs to EFDC, it was AGREED by Cllr Wixley, the Town Clerk and Services Manager that the new layout would not restrict the space available for the annual Jessel Green Fun Day and LTC would raise no objection.

To receive and note.

21 Jessel Green Fun Day – Sunday 23 June 2024 – Min no RC319

Organisation of the event continues to progress well and on schedule, with a large number of participants already committed to the annual event.

Members are asked whether they wish to host a Town Council gazebo, and if so, as solely a meeting point or with an additional theme such as a tombola stall? If so members will be asked to volunteer to run the event.

22 Request for a memorial bench plaque

Following the tragic death of a local Air Cadet, a request has been made on 17 May 2024 to place a memorial plaque at the bench near Murray Hall, where Colson Road meets Borders Lane. The Town Clerk will read out the written request.

Members to recommend a way forward

23 Memorial Garden

A major incident involving a stolen vehicle took place in mid-March, resulting in extensive damage to a section of railings, broken paving stones and the destruction of a wooden bench. The tree that was damaged has been reinstated. New railings had to be made to match existing, and works were carried out to fit the replacement railings and paving stones during week commencing 13 May 2024 (see before and after photos on pages 12 – 13). The bench that was crushed is not insured and cannot be repaired but the memorial plaque, that was attached to it has been held in safekeeping.

Members to discuss if or when a replacement bench should be purchased (no budget for this) or whether the memorial plaque should be placed on one of a number of other benches on site.

24 Oak Processionary Moth – Min no RC242.1

Members to note that the Services Manager will conduct a visual survey of oak trees across all Town Council sites in June 2024, and would report back accordingly, at the next Recreation Committee meeting.

25 Restructure of Working Group

The current working group is called 'Roding Valley Recreation Ground Improvements Projects Working Group (RVRGIPWG), which historically was set up to monitor the changing rooms project and latterly to deal with the children's playground project . As

you can see from this agenda, the issues that emerge between committee meetings are numerous and diverse. Some require immediate attention, and it is difficult to make decisions, given the large time gaps between the committee meetings. Any new Working Group would be used sparingly to assist on those occasions when urgent responses are required. The recommendations would then be ratified at the next available Recreation Committee meeting.

Recommend the new title of 'Recreation Working Party (RWP), providing increased flexibility. Members to review and nominate number of members and individual participants.

26 Financial Position

The current financial position as of 31 March 2024 is attached together with details of the funds available from earmarked reserves. See pages 14 – 15.

To receive and note.

27 Future Work of the Committee

The opportunity for members to suggest topics to be considered by the Committee at a future meeting, subject to the Committee's agreement.

Note: No substantive discussion may take place under this item as the required statutory notice of the topics will not have been given.

Mark Squire
TOWN CLERK
23 May 2024

Agenda Item 7

Newmans Lane Playground Project

Background

Following the successful completion of the new children's playground at the Roding Valley Recreation Ground (RVRG), the next playground that is in need of refurbishment and upgrade is the play area at Newmans Lane, adjacent to Rectory Lane, Loughton (see photo attached).

At the end of the last financial year Loughton Town Council (LTC) topped up the Earmarked Funds for this project from £40k by £25k to £65k. LTC was also very grateful to receive from Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) an additional grant of £30k, providing a new total £95k in Earmarked Reserves, dedicated to this project. The EFDC grant is part of 'Shared Prosperity' funding, originally intended for the revamp of the Oakwood Hill children's pocket playground, but after review, it was felt that the funding could be much better allocated at Newmans Lane.

Developments to date

- 3.4.24 – site visit to existing Newmans Lane Playground by Town Clerk (TC) Deputy Town Clerk (DTC) and Services Manager (SM). Plan drawn of existing site and multitude of photos take. Ideally 3 existing playground apparatus should, be retained in the new playground (saving some costs).
- 11.4.24 - Neither Planning permission or 'certificate of lawful development' needed, as per Planning Service Director EFDC .
- 16.4.24- Permission granted from Loughton Library to hold public consultation.
- 17.4.24 -St John Fisher School approached – re consultation – no response.
- 19.4.24 – Thomas Willingale approached – re consultation – no response
- 23.4.24 – Site visit to new children's playground at Hornbeam Road, Buckhurst Hill by TC, DTC & SM to compare site with LTC playgrounds.
- 24.4.24- site visit to Oakview School by TC & SM, specifically to looks at 'special needs equipment. The school was very receptive as the main users of the Newmans Lane playground. Happy to give out leaflets as part of the consultation.
- 24.4.24- site visit to children's playground at Theydon Bois by TC, SM, to compare.

Projected Next Stages – **best case basis, subject to weather and other external factors**

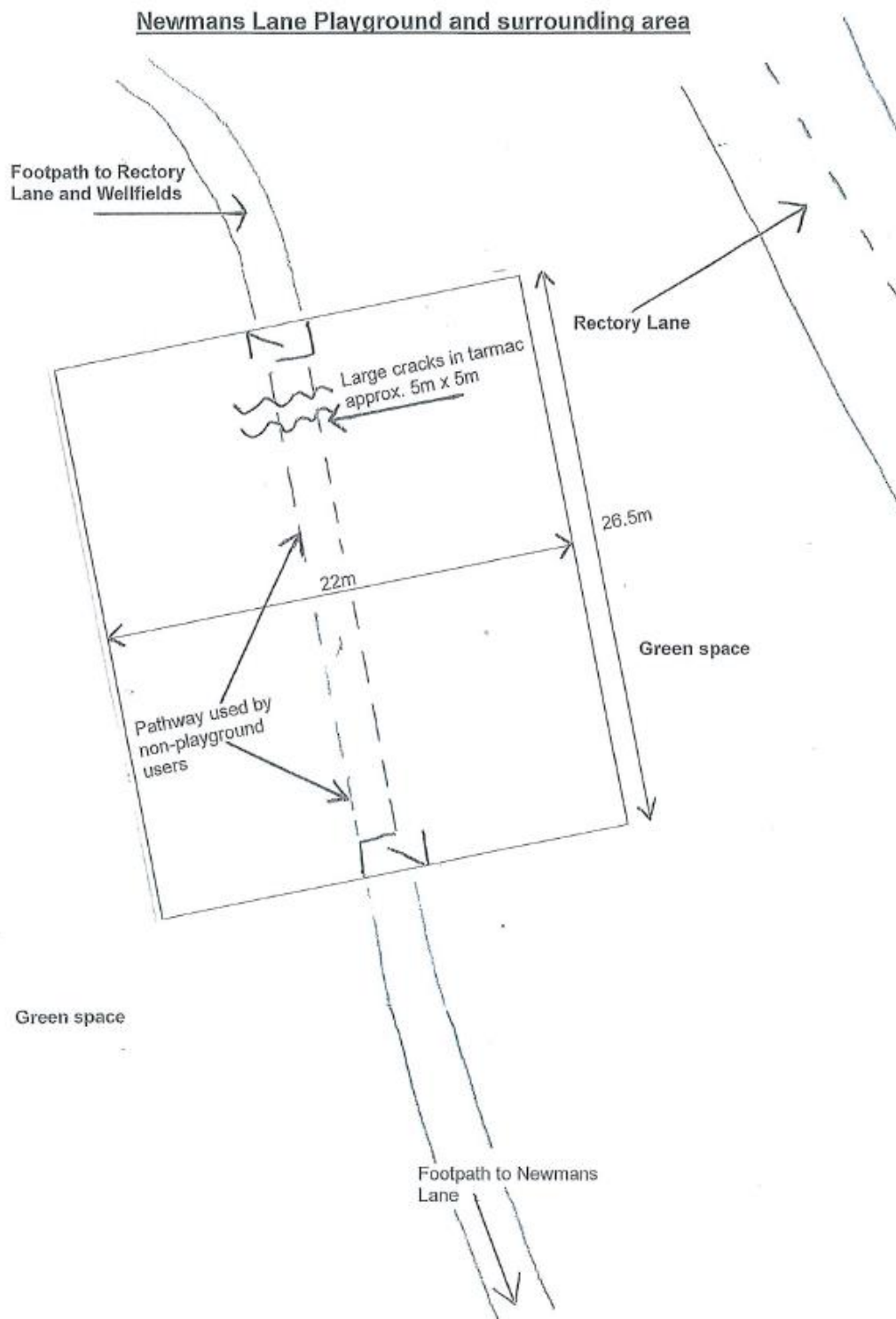
- Consultation with local residents / schools / library – June /July
- Out to tender – June / July
- Review of tenders August / September
- Appointment of project manager tender late September
- Delivery of materials & playground equipment and construction thereafter
- Completion by March
- Official opening March / April 2025

MS 21.5.24

Agenda item 7 cont/...



Agenda item 7 cont/...



Agenda Item 14
RVRG Playground

For reference minute RC-300RVRG Playground, is included below

- I. The Town Clerk gave an oral update on Safety harnesses for specific play equipment. Advice received from a leading play equipment inspector stated that harnesses should **not** be left on the equipment unsupervised, at anytime. The Committee considered allowing park users to borrow harnesses for specific time periods, but AGREED that concerns over the welfare of all park users, should they be accidentally left on site and abused in anyway, were too great, and therefore a borrowing scheme would not be implemented at this time.

After reading the e-mail trail below, advice was taken from the Senior Director of the UK Play Inspections Company. That the Town Council uses. (see below)

Members to discuss and review

Hags are quite clear in their recommendation that they shouldn't be left on the seats and that they should be installed and removed by a supervisor. They are a significant health and safety risk if left on the seats unattended.

Usually, the harnesses would be loaned to families that need them, or they can buy their own and bring them along.

Alternatively, I have seen a site with a locked storage box installed in the play area and they could provide a key or code to those that need to use it so that they can add and remove the harness as and when required.

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In March 2024, the Town Clerk received further representations from a local resident and relative (e-mail correspondence paraphrased below)

Local resident.12.3.24

Dear all

Thank you for your response and I appreciate that this is something you have noted and discussed very recently.

Apologies if I appear to jump in on this conversation - I am [REDACTED] daughter and aforementioned grandson's mother. I am also the Designated Safeguarding Lead at a school.

With all due respect, it would appear you have received some poor advice prior to installation of equipment that now cannot be used in the way it is intended. I don't disagree with the decision made, however, I do think some consideration could be made to the following proposal:

- 1. The current equipment be donated to a local SEN school*
- 2. Consultation with companies who can install more appropriate equipment to take place with at least 3 different providers*

I look forward to your response.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

From: Contact Info 12.3.

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email. We're really pleased to hear that you have enjoyed spending time with your grandson in the new playground at the Roding Valley Recreation Ground.

We appreciate and understand your thoughts and concerns. The subject of the supply of safety harnesses on specific pieces of the play equipment is something Councillors have discussed at depth (minute no. RC300 of the Recreation Committee meeting on 17.01.24).

Agenda item 14 Cont/...

Advice received from a leading play equipment inspector stated that harnesses should **not** be left on the equipment unsupervised, at any time. Members discussed and considered allowing park users to borrow harnesses for specific time periods, but with the concerns of the safety and welfare of all park users, should they accidentally be left on site or unattended, and abused in anyway or park users being caught up in the harnesses, was too great, and therefore agreed not to implement a borrowing scheme at this time.

In light of play equipment industry advice, we hope you can understand the decisions taken by the Councillors.

Kind regards
Kim

.....

Local resident 8.3.

Hello,

I hope this email will reach the right department in time. I am not a resident of Loughton, but I look after my 17 month old grandson two days a week.

I was pleased to note that the rather dilapidated playground in the park was removed and a new playground installed last summer. The equipment is attractive and well laid out, and, I think, designed to be inclusive.

I have enjoyed taking my grandson on the swings but I am rather concerned about the pieces of equipment in the photographs. I am assuming that these pieces of equipment are designed for children with additional needs who may not be as mobile or safety aware as others. The photographs clearly suggest that the seats on the roundabout and the blue swing should have harnesses and that these should be buckled up, presumably by all users.

I have searched but cannot see any sign of harnesses on any of this equipment, and as such, I think they pose a serious health and safety risk. I have myself witnessed a youngish child fall out of the blue swing and land on her back. Fortunately she wasn't seriously injured, just winded. I have also seen teenage boys jumping on and off the roundabout somewhat recklessly.

I cannot understand why the project was signed off and the playground opened for use by members of the public, when it is incomplete.

I appreciate the facility is not monitored, and whether or not the harnesses are used will have to be a personal choice, and that the public enter the playground at their own risk, but it is surely not right that the option is not available, especially when it is clearly indicated that harnesses should be used? In my opinion, the council have not carried out their duties to keep the public as safe as possible.

I look forward to a response at your earliest convenience.

Regards,

Agenda Item 17
Paddle Tennis

Hi Mark,

I hope you are well.

I wanted to get in contact with you regarding some potential land to build padel tennis courts. I see a huge amount of potential to create a few padel courts by the entrance of the park at the bottom of Roding Road.

A bit of background of myself, I have grown up living in Loughton and attended Chigwell School, not too far away. I have since started a company with my business partner Leonel Richard, where we are in the progress of developing some padel tennis courts in a few locations. We have been lucky enough to gain the support of a few investors who are excited to join this journey with us as we continue to create a sports loving community who enjoy playing padel tennis.

Our philosophy is to create an environment where people of all ages and abilities can come together and take part in privately organised games or public tournaments.

It would be great to jump on a call at your convenience to discuss the viability of this site or any other sites you may think could be a better alternative.

Kind regards,

Joffe Bradley

Co-Founder / **PadelWld**

Agenda item 23
Memorial Garden



Agenda item 23 Cont/...



Agenda item 26
Financial Position

Loughton Town Council
Summary Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading as of 31/03/2024
Month End no 12
Recreation Committee Report

		Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Budget	Variance Annual Total	Funds Available	% of Budget
Recreation							
Kingsley Hall	Expenditure	37,046	19,031	25,536	6,505	6,505	74.5%
	Income	30,707	30,012	25,750	(4,262)		116.5%
The Murray Hall	Expenditure	207,382	122,998	187,420	64,422	64,422	65.6%
	Income	78,001	109,079	119,200	10,121		91.5%
Other Services (Rec) (1)	Expenditure	7,957	15,671	5,500	(10,171)	(10,171)	284.9%
Other Services (Rec)	Income	0	7,163	0	(7,163)		
Service Re- Charge (2)	Expenditure	152,000	0.00	196,000			
Roding Valley Recreation Ground)	Expenditure	151,585	159,717	168,593	8,876	8,876	94.7%
	Income	6,065	4,459	6,300	1,841		70.8%
Open Spaces	Expenditure	29,191	19,522	17,795	(1,727)	(1,727)	109.7%
	Income	609	125	0	(125)		
Playgrounds (3)	Expenditure	31,844	160,249	57,340	(102,909)	(102,909)	279.5%
Will. Rd. Playing Field	Expenditure	13,273	12,211	20,788	8,577	8,577	58.7%
	Income	696	2,152	612	(1,540)		351.7%

INCOME – EXPENDITURE TOTALS

Recreation Expenditure	630,277	705,399	678,972	26,427	268,786	103.9%
Income	116,078	152,990	151,862	1,128		100.7%
Net Expenditure over Income	514,200	552,409	527,110	25,299		

Notes:

- 1) Other services budget includes the preparation for Jessel Green Day (e.g., marquee, toilet facilities and rides / inflatables etc). Income from the event offsets some of the expenses.
- 2) The annual service recharge is £196,000, allocated at year end March 2024).
- 3) Playgrounds – actual year to date expenditure, includes £92,000 taken from earmarked reserves (new RVRG playground).

Agenda item 26
Financial Position cont.**Earmarked Reserves:**

A summary of the Committee's reserves showing the amounts available from reserves as at 31 March 2024, for the current financial year is provided below.

Schedule of Earmarked Reserves	
	31.03.24
Recreation Committee	
Hillyfields Maintenance	7,600
Playgrounds	95,000
Halls Heating / Car Park	5,000
Total	£107,600