

**LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL**

**ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES of the meeting held via Zoom on Wednesday 31 March 2021 at 7.15pm**

**Present**

**Councillors:**

C C Pond (in the Chair)

P Beales

T Cochrane

C Davies

T Owen

C P Pond

D Wixley (substitute for S Pewsey)

**Also in attendance**

**Councillors:**

B Cohen

S Murray

**Officers:**

Mark Squire (Town Clerk)

Paul Hoy (Services Manager)

**Also Present:**

1 member of the Public

**EH275 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Pewsey. The Town Clerk reported that Cllr Wixley had been nominated as substitute for Cllr Pewsey for this meeting.

**EH276 Declarations of Interest**

Cllr C C Pond declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda items relating to the work of Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) and Essex County Council (ECC) as a member of these authorities. Cllr Wixley declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 12, as he is a member of Epping Forest Heritage Trust.

**EH277 Confirmation of Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2021 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and will be signed by the Chairman.

**EH278 Public Representations**

None were received.

**EH279 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report**

The Town Clerk reported that he would contact EFDC to seek assistance from the Highway Rangers Team to renovate the two finger posts in the High Road.

**EH280 Allotments**

**280.1 Willingale Road Allotments**

The Committee NOTED that the National Allotment Society (NAS) had updated its Covid guidelines. Plot inspections and new plot allocations, albeit socially distanced, could re-commence from 8 March 2021.

As some allotment holders have been shielding and not able to tend their plots during the ongoing Covid lockdowns, the Committee AGREED to cancel both the Best Allotment Competition and Horticultural Show this year.

**280.2 Roding Road Allotments**

**280.2.1 Request to Re-position Gate and Fence – Min no EH 265.2**

The Town Clerk reported on the meeting that he and the Services Manager had on site on 5 February 2021 with

representatives of the Roding Road Allotment and Leisure Garden Association (RRALGA) and the local resident concerned. The Committee NOTED that the RRALGA representatives presented as non-committal and stated that any decision regarding this matter would have to be made by RRALGA's full committee, to whom they would be reporting back.

The Committee AGREED that officers should write to the NAS to seek advice. A full report will be made at the next meeting.

**280.2.2 Sundry matters**

The Town Clerk reported on sundry matters that had been raised by the Allotment Committee members, including planning and drainage issues. The planning issue, concerning access to the main gates, would be referred to EFDC's planning officers for advice. The Town Clerk reported that Trevor Baker, Principal Engineer, Environmental Protection & Drainage, Contracts & Technical Services at EFDC, had agreed to visit site to offer his advice on the issue of flooding during the winter months.

Reports on both issues will be made at the next meeting.

**EH281 Loughton Cemetery**

**281.1 Water leak**

The Committee NOTED that a water leak has been identified by Thames Water within the cemetery perimeter and had given the Town Council an extended deadline of 22 April 2021 to carry out any testing and remedial work. A visit from a specialist water leakage detection company, to detect the source of the leak had been undertaken, but subsequent dealings with the company had proven unproductive. The Town Clerk reported that a further Thames Water approved company had now been engaged, but no costs or time frame for investigations had been agreed at this time.

The Committee AGREED that Officers would contact the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) to seek advice, and for the Clerk to arrange for the second leak detection company to carry out the necessary investigation works. Furthermore, the Committee AGREED that any necessary follow-on works to correct this issue should be resolved between the Town Clerk and the Committee Chairman. A full report would be made at the next meeting.

**281.2 Extra capacity for cremated remains interments – Min no EH 266.3**

The Committee NOTED the on-site meeting between the Town Clerk, Services Manager, Cemetery Officer and Cemetery Attendant that took place on 23 March to discuss potential areas for cremated remains interments.

The Committee AGREED with the Officer's findings, that the most suitable location was the Common/Public Grave area adjacent to the border with St John's Church.

**281.3 Holm Oak – Min no EH 266.1**

The Committee NOTED the site meeting attended by the Town Clerk, Services Manager, Robin Hellier, Tree and Landscape Officer, Planning Services, (EFDC) and three concerned local residents, held on 28 January 2021. Following detailed discussions with Robin Hellier, Officers recommended that a planning application be instigated by the Town Council to reduce the tree to c9 metres in height with a symmetrical rounded spread.

The Committee AGREED to the recommendation.

**281.4 Contingency plan for backup gravedigger – Min no EH 266.2**

The Committee NOTED that the gravedigging services contractor for the Loughton Cemetery had confirmed that he has two teams of backup grave diggers, thus ensuring that the business continuity of the gravedigging service (especially during this Covid pandemic) is protected.

**281.5 Request for an additional memorial plaque on an existing donated bench**

The Committee considered a request by a member of the public to attach an additional memorial plaque to an existing bench where there is already a memorial plaque donated by the original donor of the bench.

The Committee AGREED to decline the request because it was not felt to be appropriate in this instance. Furthermore, it was AGREED to make it a council policy that only donated benches would be allowed to have commemorative plaques attached, bearing only the plaque provided by the particular donor.

Following a similar request involving a non-cemetery bench, the Committee AGREED that a full report should be made at the next meeting.

**EH282 Heritage Plaques – Min no EH 268**

The Chairman gave a brief overview of the heritage plaque scheme for the benefit of the interested member of the public who was present at the meeting.

The Committee NOTED that on 19 March 2021, the replacement Blue Plaque for the Bus Garage (sited at Lidl's) was received and would be re-sited at a higher position on the front elevation of the building.

The Committee NOTED the following:

**Arthur Bacot – 19 York Hill**

The draft plaque had now been agreed and the order placed.

**Sir Leonard Hill & Austin Bradford Hill – Nafferton Rise**

The plaque would be sited on the entrance gate piers to Nafferton Rise. Letters of consent had been received from all householders of the Close (11 in total) and an order would be placed for the specially designed plaque.

**Millican Dalton**

This plaque had been approved by the homeowner and discussions as to the most suitable position for the plaque were ongoing.

The Chairman reiterated that requests for new plaques would always be welcomed, and all would be measured against the council's established criteria.

**EH283 Sapling Tree Allocation**

The Committee NOTED that the Town Council is in possession of c 100 tree saplings, donated by the Woodland Trust, and originally intended to be included in the tree planting scheme adjacent to the River Roding on the Roding Valley Recreation Ground, now postponed until Autumn 2021. The Committee AGREED that as no suitable alternative site was available, and due to the lateness of any planting scheme, all the plants should be retained and nurtured until the Roding Valley project commences in the autumn.

**EH284 Noticeboard**

The Services Manager reported that the repositioning of the EFDC Housing Office noticeboard, to an alternative position on The Broadway, was now in the hands of EFDC Officers. Necessary permissions were being sought by EFDC Officers from the retailer outside whose shop the new board would be situated. It was hoped that a resolution to this issue would be forthcoming.

In relation to the Housing Office, the Services Manager reported that he had been notified by EFDC Officers over the possible need to relocate the defibrillator which is situated outside the Broadway Housing Office. No further information was available, but Officers would keep members informed of developments as they happened.

**EH285 Christmas Lights**

The Committee NOTED that the three-year contract for the provision of Christmas lights had expired in January 2021. Members were invited to suggest options for designs for the 2021 to 2023 scheme, and these would be considered along with all other options at the next meeting. The tender process would then be initiated following the next sitting of the Committee.

**EH286 Signage to the Forest from Loughton Station / Town Centre**

The Chairman reported that he and the Town Clerk had met (via Zoom on 4 February 2021) with representatives of the City of London Corporation (COLC) to discuss various aspects of Epping Forest. An ongoing project would provide adequate signage from Loughton Station / Loughton Town centre to Epping Forest – effectively a Loughton gateway to the forest. It was also reported that Epping Forest Heritage Trust (EFHT) would also be working towards this aim with the support of the Town Council. The Town Clerk has since been in discussion with Judith Adams, Chairman of the EFHT, and she wishes to set up a Working Party with LTC to progress the project to its conclusion. The Committee AGREED that it would nominate a representative from this Committee to sit on the working group alongside the Town Clerk, but not until after the formation of the new council following the election in May. It was also AGREED that Pippa Bryce (Assistant Town Clerk) would join this group.

**EH287 Street Signage**

The Services Manager reported that discussions were currently taking place with the City of London Corporation to facilitate the installation of alleyway name plates at 'Dragons Path', which runs between Nursery Road and Forest View Road. This work would be undertaken as soon as the necessary permissions were formalised by way of a 'wayleave' agreement.

**EH288 Epping Forest Climate Action (EFCA)**

Following a recent enquiry from Epping Forest Climate Action (EFCA), the Committee were supportive in declaring a Climate Emergency. However as new Town Council will be formed in May 2021, it was AGREED that this should form part of the agenda for the next Town Council meeting following the Annual Council meeting.

**EH289 Salt Bin Request**

Following a request for a new salt grit bin to be placed at the junction of Nursery Road/Smarts Lane, the Committee considered the request and AGREED that the request should be routed via the appropriate County Councillor, or a member of the Local Highways Panel, following the council elections in May.

**EH290 Financial Position**

**Current Financial Position**

It was AGREED that the heading "Cemetery (Debden Lane)" should be changed to Cemetery (Lady Whitaker's Mead).

**EH291 Environmental Issues**

The Chairman reported that the three commercial waste bins had once again found their way onto the footpath in The Drive. It was AGREED that the office should contact the relevant Environment Officer within EFDC.

**EH292 Future Work of the Committee**

No items were raised.

As this was the last meeting of the current Committee, The Chairman thanked all those who had served it for the past five years. Special thanks were extended to the three members who would not be standing for re-election, particularly Cllr Stephen Pewsey, who had served the Committee for the past 17 years, serving as Chairman in 2011/12 and Vice Chairman in 2006/7 and 2007/8.

**Signed:** .....

**Date:** 23 June 2021