

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL
RECREATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Zoom meeting held on Wednesday 3 March 2021 at 7.15pm

Present:

Councillors: D Wixley (in the Chair)
R Brookes B Cohen (until Min no RC241)
J Jogia S Murray M Stubbings

Officers: M Squire (Town Clerk)
P Hoy (Services Manager)

Also Present: Tony Maycraft (Chairman, Loughton Athletic Club)
Andrew Shields (Chairman, South Loughton Cricket Club)

RC228 Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Omer.

RC229 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Wixley declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 17, Hillyfields, as a district councillor for Fairmead Ward. Cllr Murray declared a non-pecuniary interest in all agenda items relating to the Roding Valley Recreation Ground as he is a local resident.

RC230 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.

RC231 Public Representations

The Chairman reported that Tony Maycraft (Loughton Athletic Club) and Andrew Shields (South Loughton Cricket Club) had been invited to join the meeting, to address the Committee on agenda item 5.

The Committee AGREED to defer agenda item 5 to later in the meeting, to allow time for Andrew Shields to join the meeting.

RC232 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report

No report was made by the Chairman or the Town Clerk.

Cllr Murray asked that the Committee note the passing of Stan Newens, former Labour Member of Parliament for the respective constituencies of Epping and Harlow, and Member of the European Parliament for London Central. Cllr Murray asked that Mr Newens' dedicated contribution to the local community be NOTED by the Committee.

RC233 Roding Valley Recreation Ground - Planting Scheme and Footpaths - Min no RC215

The Town Clerk Reported that Trevor Baker, Principal Engineer, Environmental Protection & Drainage, Contracts & Technical Services, Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) hoped to commence planting and footpath repair works by the end of March 2021, depending on the condition of the ground. EFDC would be issuing a press release when the commencement date had been confirmed.

Concern was raised that we are nearing the end of the planting season and that tree planting would enhance the reinforcement of the riverbanks.

RC234 Roding Valley Recreation Ground – Drainage Works – Min no RC216

The Committee NOTED that there was no further update available as this work remains dependent on the weather and subsequent level of ground saturation, neither of which are favourable at the present time. The contractor would commence this work as soon as these factors improved.

RC235 Roding Valley Recreation Ground - Football Changing Room / Car Park Gates Min no RC217 & RC218

The Committee NOTED that the planned major refurbishment of the football changing rooms had been deferred for the foreseeable future. The Town Clerk informed the Committee of approximate costings for the replacement of all electrical wiring and fixtures, and all pipework and plumbing fixtures; the costs were NOTED. Grant applications were also NOTED as a possible additional source of funding for a limited refurbishment of the football changing rooms.

The Committee AGREED to temporarily suspend agenda item 9 and revert back to agenda item 5, as Andrew Shields (South Loughton Cricket Club) had joined the meeting.

RC236 South Loughton Cricket Club (SLCC) / Loughton Athletic Club (LAC)

Cllr Murray declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item as he is acquainted with members of Loughton Athletic Club (LAC).

Tony Maycraft and Andrew Shields were welcomed to the meeting.

Mr Shields addressed the meeting and outlined the problems faced by South Loughton Cricket Club (SLCC) in relation to ongoing wet weather issues that have affected both the condition of the cricket pitch and has caused repeated flooding to its club house. Mr Shields stated that SLCC now considers the current position of the cricket pitch and club house to be unviable and asked the Committee to consider the possibility of re-locating both to a more favourable location within the Roding Valley Recreation Ground. Mr Shields further stated that preliminary discussions had been held by officials from SLCC and LAC about the feasibility of constructing a new building that could be shared by both organisations.

Mr Maycraft addressed the meeting and gave a detailed account of the current external and internal condition of the LAC building and stated that LAC would be amenable to sharing a brand-new facility with SLCC.

The Committee NOTED both addresses and AGREED that Officers and Members would meet with officials from both organisations on site to discuss all relevant issues as soon as government regulations allowed for mass gatherings.

**RC235 Roding Valley Recreation Ground - Football Changing Room / Car Park Gates Min no RC217 & RC218
Continued**

The Committee AGREED that work should be prioritised on providing a manual gate for the car park, to be opened and closed by an external security firm.

The Services Manager appraised the meeting of the various gate options available, and the Committee AGREED to allow officers to secure three comparable quotes and proceed with this matter in conjunction with the Chairman.

Furthermore, in relation to the first part of this item, before the reversion back to agenda item 5, the Committee AGREED that due to the high potential cost, any works to replace outdated electrics and plumbing and any potential refit should be met by a public works loan (in conjunction with the planned new playground development) and would therefore need to be put before the councils' Strategy and Staff Group meeting.

RC237 Roding Valley Recreation Ground - Playground – Min no RC219

The Services Manager Reported that he and the Town Clerk had arranged to meet with the playground consultant on 16 March 2021, to inspect the favoured area for the re-location of the playground, adjacent to the tennis courts. A report would be made to the committee at a subsequent meeting.

RC238 Roding Valley Recreation Ground – New benches - Min no 221

The Committee NOTED that an order had been placed for two new metal benches to replace the recent fire damaged benches close to the lake. The Committee also NOTED that the application to Essex County Councils Locality Fund (value £500.00) had proved successful and the monies had been granted.

RC239 Roding Valley Recreation Ground – Noticeboard

The Town Clerk Reported that a new notice board had been ordered, to replace the recently vandalised board near the Greensted Road entrance, and that an insurance claim had also been submitted.

RC240 Roding Valley Recreation Ground – Football Pitches – Min no RC220

Following requests from several regular football pitch hirers for the football pitches to be made available until late June 2021, to allow for the completion of the 2020/21 league season, the Committee AGREED to allow for football pitches to remain available for use until the end of the 2020/21 season.

It was further AGREED that as last season, teams unable to resume football due to a combination of the Covid pandemic and waterlogged pitches, will receive refunds for monies already paid to the council for all unplayed matches.

RC241 Roding Valley Recreation Ground – Quagmire areas

(i) Land strip behind the lake and adjacent to the River Roding

The Town Clerk Reported that following discussions between the Services Manager and the EFDC Grounds Maintenance Manager, it was confirmed that EFDC was responsible for this section of land. Several measures had already been put in place to stabilise the path between the lake and the river, and vegetation would continue to be cut back from the path to allow access for users of the recreation ground.

The Committee AGREED to suspend Standing Order number 1(ff) and AGREED to conclude the meeting by 9.30pm.

Cllr Cohen left the meeting.

(ii) Access point from the footpath linking Avondale Drive/Avondale Close to Greensted Road

The Services Manager reported that he had recently inspected this area and the ground had dried and was now firm. No action is to be taken at this time but to be monitored.

RC242 Accumulation of waste by Loughton Brook at the rear of Broomfield Avenue garages

The Committee NOTED that EFDC Officers have reported the dumping of this waste to the Environment Agency, but that no response had been forthcoming at this time. Cllr Murray would follow this matter up.

RC243 Murray Hall – Min no RC222

The Committee NOTED that the NHS are in full possession of the Hall, and that vaccinations were now due to commence on 4 March 2021.

It was also NOTED that Murray Hall would be used as a polling station for the forthcoming local council elections on 6 May 2021.

RC244 Hillyfields

244.1 Hillyfields Open Space Flood Alleviation Scheme - Min no RC 204

The Committee NOTED that LTC, EFDC and now the City of London Corporation continue to chase ECC for its contractors to complete the remedial work to replace the drainage grate and to fill in the large cracks/ holes on the surrounding bunds. However, it was NOTED that replacement trees had now been planted.

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

244.2 Hillyfields Litter Bins

The Services Manager reported on the relevant costings for the supply and installation of litter bins, however weekly charges for emptying the bins remained outstanding from EFDC. The Committee AGREED to the installation of one bin, initially, subject to the outstanding emptying costs. The bin is to be situated near to the entrance to the open space via the footpath adjacent to no 56 Hillyfields.

The Town Clerk added that both the dog waste bins had been removed from the area by EFDC, which is non sensical given that Hillyfields is a very popular area for dog walkers. He would follow this up with the Waste Management Officer at EFDC.

RC245 Woodland Trust – Min no RC200.10

The Committee NOTED that the Services Manager collected two packs of saplings, donated free by the Woodland Trust. The planting of these trees is to be added to the Roding Valley Recreation Ground planting scheme **(Min no RC215)**.

RC246 Financial Position

The Town Clerk informed members that a substantial refund would need to be made to the E15 Acting School as they had not been able to use the hall during the Covid lockdown periods. The Committee NOTED the report.

The Committee AGREED to suspend Standing Order number 1(ff) and AGREED to conclude the meeting by 10.00pm.

RC247 Future Work of the Committee

No items were raised.

RC248 Kingsley Hall - Min no RC223

The Committee NOTED the report.

RC249 Exclusion of the Press and Public

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

RC250 Kingsley Hall tender report - Min no RC223

The Committee considered the report and AGREED that Officers would now engage the recommended contractor Clivnars to progress the project to complete the window replacement works.

Signed:

Date: to be confirmed 2021