

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 8 December 2021 at 7.45pm at Loughton Library & Town Hall.

Present:

Councillors: J Jennings (in the Chair)
M Owen R Brookes B Cohen
S Murray M Stubbings

Also present: D Wixley S Fontenelle
Councillors:

Officer: M Squire (Town Clerk)
K Lumb (Deputy Town Clerk)

There were no members of the Public present.

RG43 Apologies for absence
No Apologies were received.

RG44 Declarations of Interest
Cllr Cohen declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda item 15, the Financial Assistance application for Loughton Chigwell & District Synagogue, as she is a member.

RG45 Confirmation of Minutes
The minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2021 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

RG46 Public Representations
There were no public representations.

RG47 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report
The Town Clerk

- (i) welcomed the recently appointed Deputy Town Clerk, Kim Lumb to the meeting and highlighted that both Kim and Jonathon Glynn, the new Finance & Administration Assistant are making great progress.
- (ii) stated that Local Council Awards – will be completed in stages, with most of the work now been completed for the Foundation Level.
- (iii) highlighted the Government Announcement COVID-19 restrictions – following this evening's announcements, and that the "working from home" plan will be considered and implemented accordingly.
- (iv) announced that a job specification for a new part time Caretaker for Murray Hall will be advertised this week. A further advert for new senior warden / maintenance officer role will also be advertised soon.
- (v) reported that a formal handover to the Deputy Town Clerk of the Responsible Financial Offer (RFO) responsibilities will take place at the end of the financial year. The "moving banking to online" project will progress once the new team members are settled into their roles.
- (vi) Informed members of the ongoing position on Buckingham Court.

- RG48 Training and Conferences**
The Committee NOTED the report.
- RG49 Appointment of Finance and Office Assistant**
The Committee NOTED the appointment of Mr Jonathon Glynn as the new Finance and Office Assistant.
- RG50 The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Celebrations – 2 to 5 June 2022**
The Committee discussed and NOTED the report.
- RG51 Annual Citizens Awards**
The Committee discussed and NOTED the report.
- RG52 Christmas Card Competition**
The Committee NOTED the report and the Chair congratulated the winners.
- RG53 Policies Review**
- i. **Investment Strategy and Policy**
The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Investment Strategy and Policy.
 - ii. **Procedure to fill a Casual Vacancy**
The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Procedure to Fill a Casual Vacancy Policy.
 - iii. **Member’s Remuneration Scheme**
The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Member’s Remuneration Scheme Policy, with the following amendment to be made – increase the lunch allowance to £5.00. The Town Clerk also advised should the Council be informed of any changes on mileage allowance from District Council, the policy would be submitted for a further review.
- RG54 Finance**
- 54.1 Current Financial Position**
The Committee NOTED the financial position and the Council’s current bank balances and most recent reconciliations as of 31 October 2021.
- 54.2 Accounts Paid**
The Committee NOTED that payments totalling £367,762.61 as detailed on payment schedules no. 334-340, until 25 November 2021 had been made and entered on the accounts system, since the report to the meeting on 5 October 2021.
- RG55 Internal Financial Check**
The Committee NOTED that Councillor Murray will be visiting the office on the 16 December 2021, to undertake a finance inspection. The Town Clerk advised that following the Government announcement that day on COVID-19 restrictions, any required changes would be advised.
- RG56 Internal Audit**
The Committee NOTED that the interim internal audit from Healis & Lodge will take place in January 2022.

**RG57 Financial Assistance
General Applications 2021/22**

The Committee reviewed the applications listed below for Financial Assistance.

Organisation	Amount £	Item	Power
BASICS Essex (Accident Rescue Service)	1,000	Assistance towards equipping a new doctor	General Power of Competence
Loughton Chigwell & District Synagogue	TBA	Supply of weekly food parcels	General Power of Competence

Members AGREED that these would be rolled over to include in the 2022/23 Financial Assistance Scheme, enabling members to view and assess all applications together.

RG58 Staff Salaries

The Committee NOTED there has not yet been any communication received via the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), on the outcome of any staff statutory annual salary pay increases for 2021/2022, and that this was unlikely to be forthcoming until the New Year.

RG59 Parish Basic Allowance

The Committee RECOMMENDED to Full Council to retain the level of the Parish Basic Allowance that members may claim in 2022/23 at £120 per member per annum.

The Town Clerk was requested looking forward to next year's review, to undertake a small comparative exercise to understand allowance limits for other Town/Parish Councils.

RG60 Subscription Review

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

The Town Clerk agreed to send an email circular to members to ascertain areas of particular interest from the various subscription parties, that they may wish to receive via e-mail circulation.

RG61 Committee Priorities

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the priority list for 2022/23.

RG62 Estimates 2022/2023

The Town Clerk reported there were no significant changes in the projected estimates, with costs remaining reasonably flat or rising by 2-3% in the main. The exceptions to this were increased staff salaries, having been four staff members down for some time; and extra costs vs income for Buckingham Court. The Town Clerk explained to members the basis and process of these preliminary budgets given where we are within the financial year, and that these would be fine-tuned ahead of the full budget meeting in January 2022, when further data would be available.

The Committee reviewed, discussed and AGREED the estimates of income and expenditure and levels of ear marked funds for 2022/23 as listed in the agenda, subject to the following amendments

- a. The “grant general” budget be increased for 2022/23 from £27,000.00 to £30,000.00
- b. The £1,100.00 unallocated balance in the 2021/22 grants budget, be put into “grant funding held over” ear marked reserves, bringing that total to £5,624.00 as it currently stands.

RG63 Future Work of the Committee

No items were raised for future discussion.

Signed:

Date: 8 December 2021