

THESE MINUTES NOT YET CONFIRMED

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 9 February 2022 at 7.45pm at Loughton Library & Town Hall.

Present:

Councillors: J Jennings (in the Chair)
R Brookes B Cohen M Stubbings
W Kauffman

Also present: D Wixley
Councillors:

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

There were two members of the public present.

RG73 Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor S Murray.

RG74 Declarations of Interest

The Chairman read out the non-pecuniary interests declared of the Financial Assistance Award Scheme working party, involving Cllrs Jennings; Murray and Owen.

Cllr Jennings declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 for the Financial Assistance applications for 2022/23 for: Loughton Voluntary Care Association.

Cllr Murray declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 for the Financial Assistance applications for 2022/23 for: Epping Forest ReUSE; Loughton Chigwell & District Synagogue; Loughton Voluntary Care Association; Restore Grow Community Garden; Restore Community Noah's Ark; Restore Community Oakwood Hill Community Centre; Restore Community Oakwood Hill Youth Club; Spark – a branch of Worth Unlimited; 3Food4U; and Citizens Advice Epping Forest.

Cllr Owen declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 for the Financial Assistance applications for 2022/23 for: Restore Grow Community Garden; Restore Community Noah's Ark; Restore Community Oakwood Hill Community Centre; and Restore Community Oakwood Hill Youth Club.

Cllr Brookes declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 for the Financial Assistance applications for 2022/23 as a non-voting member for Citizens Advice Epping Forest.

Cllr Cohen declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 for the Financial Assistance applications for 2022/23 for involvement with Loughton Chigwell & District Synagogue.

Cllr D Wixley declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 for the Financial Assistance applications for 2022/23 for Restore Grow Community Garden, as he

is known to the group, has been involved with some of their special events and is also represents Fairmead Ward as a District Councillor.

RG75 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2022 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

RG76 Public Representations

A representative from Loughton Voluntary Care Association addressed the Committee in support of their Financial Assistance Application for 2022/23. The Committee thanked her for all her great work on behalf of Loughton residents.

RG77 Annual Town Meeting

The Committee discussed and AGREED that subject to the latest COVID situation that the Annual Town Meeting should be held in the traditional format at 8pm on Wednesday 16 March 2022 in Murray Hall. Should there be a deterioration in COVID circumstances prior to a final decision being made by Monday 14th February 2022, allowing sufficient notice time, members AGREED to delegate the final decision to the Chairman and Vice Chairman of this committee and the Town Clerk. The Committee also NOTED that it would be useful to have two working microphones as opposed to the usual one and that seating arrangements would be more distanced than previous years.

RG78 Staffing

The Committee NOTED the appointment of the new Part-Time Caretaker/Concierge, Jayne Bayley who joined the Town Council on 7 February 2022.

The Town Clerk also informed the Committee of the recent issues experienced with anti- social behaviour around library building.

RG79 Staff Salaries

The Committee NOTED that there has still been no communication received via the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), on the outcome of any staff statutory annual salary pay increases for 2021/2022.

RG80 Meetings Schedule

The Committee AGREED to delegate the production of the Loughton Town Council draft meeting schedule for 2022/23 to the Town Clerk, subject to email consultation with members, and ratification at the first appropriate Town Council meeting.

RG81 Financial Assistance Applications 2022/23

81.1 General Applications

The Committee discussed the recommendations of the Working Party and it was discussed and agreed that subject to applications and budget available, that Spark a branch of Worth Unlimited, may wish to submit a further application for consideration during the year given the full amount of their application had not been granted.

The Committee AGREED the applications for 2022/23 together with the recommendations of the Working Group, as read out by the Chairman, and to make the following contributions from the scheme by granting financial assistance as listed below. Members also NOTED that it is

Council policy to withhold 10% in case of emergency applications during the year.

The Working Group were thanked by the Committee for all of their work on the 2022/23 Financial Assistance Application Scheme.

Organisation	Amount Granted £	Purpose of Grant
Alfie James Productions	200.00	Performance skills workshop
Affordable Counselling	500.00	Counselling sessions
Basics Essex	1,000.00	Assistance towards equipping a new doctor
Epping Forest ReUSE	484.98	Operational Costs (safety boots/uniform)
Loughton Chigwell & District Synagogue	500.00	Supply of weekly food parcels
Loughton Voluntary Care Association	391.00	Phone bill and premises rental
Restore Grow Community Garden	2,500.00	Running Costs
Restore Community Noah's Ark	3,000.00	Crafts, toys and running costs
Restore Community Oakwood Hill Community Centre	3,000.00	Operational Costs
Restore Community Oakwood Hill Youth Club Project	2,000.00	Operational costs and equipment
Samaritans Redbridge Branch	700.00	Running Costs
Spark a branch of Worth Unlimited	1,500.00	'Complex cases' counselling service
3Food4U	3,500.00	Rent of foodbank venue
Voluntary Action Epping Forest	1,500.00	Operational Costs
Total awarded	£20,775.98	

81.2 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 2022/23 was AGREED.

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

RG82 Financial Limits

The Chairman checked with the Town Clerk, who agreed the current levels remain sufficient. The Committee reviewed and AGREED the financial limits as listed in the agenda are adequate.

RG83 Payments Procedures

The Committee reviewed and discussed the Direct Debit payments currently being made by the Council and NOTED that all instructions and Direct Debit mandates have previously been approved by the Council and the mandates authorised by two Councillor signatures.

RG84 Finance

84.1 Current Financial Position

The Committee's financial position as at the 31 December 2021 along with available funds in ear marked reserves as at 25 January 2022 were NOTED.

84.2 Accounts Paid

The Committee NOTED that payments totalling £183,508.54 as detailed on payment schedules nos. 341-342 have been made since the report to the meeting on 8 December 2021, and that schedules and accompanying invoices are available for inspection at the Council offices. The Town Clerk apologised and confirmed that signatures should be redacted throughout.

RG85 Internal Auditor

85.1 Interim Internal Audit Report

The Chairman thanked officers for their work and the Committee NOTED the clean Interim Internal Audit Report from Heelis and Lodge.

85.2 Bank Accounts

Following a verbal update from the Town Clerk, the Committee NOTED the comments from the Town Clerk's discussion with the Internal Auditor and RECOMMEND a merger of the No.1 Current Account and No.2 Account as part of the general overhaul project of the Council's banking arrangements.

RG86 Insurance – Annual Review

The Committee NOTED that 2021/22 was the final year of a three-year term agreement with WPS Insurance Brokers, and that alternative quotations with companies specialising in Councils' Insurance are underway.

The Committee reviewed and CONFIRMED the current levels of insurance cover are adequate. Members AGREED to delegate the decision on which company to place the Council's Insurance with to the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk in discussion with the Committee Chairman.

Cllr Wixley raised a number of questions, primarily relating to the valuations of a few historic valuations for Town Council assets. The office would investigate historic records.

RG87 Asset Register

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Register of Assets and Properties as at 31 January 2021, noting the points below.

The Town Clerk advised the Loughton Cricket Club's value has been updated given as landlord we have to value at £1 and this adjustment will show in year-end figures.

Cllr Wixley raised a number of sundry questions, which the office would check and confirm.

RG88 Essex Pension Fund's Draft Administration Strategy for Employers Consultation

The Town Clerk provided some further background to the consultation and the Committee NOTED the report .

RG89 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.

RG90 Buckingham Court

The Committee NOTED the oral update. A number of recommendations were made and it was AGREED that the building should now be redecorated with minor cosmetic repairs completed . It would also be beneficial to organise a visit for councillors to the building.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked members for attending and closed the meeting at 9.13 pm.

Signed:
Date: 13 April 2022