

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 13 April 2022 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 W Kauffman

Also present: D Wixley
Councillors:

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

There were no members of the public present.

RG91 Apologies for absence
No Apologies were received.

RG92 Declarations of Interest
No Declarations of Interest were received. The Town Clerk advised that Cllr R Brookes may be late due to travelling.

RG93 Confirmation of Minutes
The minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2022 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

RG94 Public Representations
There were no public representations.

RG95 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report
The Town Clerk & Chairman had nothing to report.

RG96 Staff Salaries / National Insurance / Pensions
The Committee NOTED that the communication on the outcome of staff salary pay increases from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) for 2021/22, has now been received, paid in March 2022 salaries and backdated to 1 April 2021.

The Committee NOTED the 2022/23 increase in employers National Insurance Contributions (NIC's) to 15.05% from 13.8% in the last financial year.

The Committee NOTED there is no change in 2022/23 to the Employer pension rates (under the Essex Pension Fund Scheme), which remains at 23.3%.

Cllr Murray asked what the annual impact would be for the Town Council on the increase in National Insurance Contributions rates. The Town Clerk agreed to revert with a circa figure.

Cllr Kauffman arrived during this item.

RG97 Training and Conferences

The Committee NOTED the update on staff training.

RG98 Meetings Schedule

Following discussion and requests for the below dates to be changed, the Committee AGREED the draft Meeting Schedule for the next Town Council year, having NOTED the July 2022 Town Council meeting scheduled for the 20th July 2022 has been rescheduled and will now take place on the 13th July 2022 instead. A small number of other potential clashes were identified and the Town Clerk would investigate whether these could be amended.

The Committee also AGREED that the Town Clerk may issue a definitive schedule (changing these dates if possible) and to put forward a recommendation to Council for meetings to start earlier at 7.30pm rather than 7.45pm.

Cllr Brookes arrived during this item.

RG99 Queens Platinum Jubilee Commemoration – Mayoral Chain of Office

The Committee discussed and noted that the Council is already marking this unique and momentous occasion through:

- the planting of a tree in the Memorial Rose Garden, by the Mayor on 29 March 2022
- the lighting of a beacon, which will take place on the evening of 2 June 2022 at Hillyfields Green.
- and a design a crown competition for Jessel Green Fun Day on 26 June 2022

It was AGREED not to proceed with the purchase of the commemorative link for the Mayoral Chain of Office.

Additionally, Members discussed and AGREED that the Town Clerk could look to source a Jubilee bench with appropriate commemorative engraving.

RG100 Finance

100.1 Current Financial Position

The Committee's financial position as at the 28 February 2022 along with available funds in ear marked reserves as at 31 March 2022 were NOTED.

100.2 Accounts Paid

The Committee NOTED that payments totalling £747,752.79 as detailed on payment schedules nos. 343-348 have been made since the report to the meeting on 9 February 2022, and that schedules and accompanying invoices are available for inspection at the Council offices.

The Town Clerk advised he will arrange with Cllr Murray a date for a further internal financial check to be undertaken.

RG101 Financial Assistance

The Committee discussed and considered the financial assistance application for Lopping Hall art c/o Lopping Hall and AGREED the following contribution from the 2022/23 Financial Assistance scheme:

- £300 – specifically for the transport of the boards £150 and publicity including flyers and posters £150

The Committee requested that the applicant be advised that any future applications for the Council's Financial Assistance Application Scheme, would need to be made within the scheme timelines.

The Committee AGREED that they wish to carry forward the outstanding £3,100 Financial Assistance budget for 2021/22 to 2022/23, and NOTED that there is also £4,524.00 held in Ear Marked Reserves.

RG102 Annual Insurance 2022 – 2024

The Town Clerk provided a summary of the Deputy Clerk's research in obtaining three quotations for the Council's annual insurance, and the expiry date of the previous contract on the 31 March 2022. Following discussions, the Committee NOTED:

- In agreement with the Resources and General Services Committee (RGS) on 9 February 2022, minute number RG86 – The Town Clerk discussed the quotations with the RGS Chairman, with the following agreed:
- To place the Council's annual insurance with Zurich with effect from 1 April 2022 with a three-year long-term price agreement. The premium of £9,811.99 includes both the Council's Van and the lift at 1 Buckingham Court, along with Playground equipment insurance (not previously included).
- It has been agreed that whilst 1 Buckingham Court remains empty that someone needs to be based there one day a month to retain full cover for the building.

Cllr Kauffman asked for any information on potential cancellation clausuring for Zurich. The Town Clerk agreed to review and advise.

RG103 Asset Register

The Town Clerk gave the following oral update, which was received and NOTED:

- The oak interpretation board as listed, is made from oak
- The civilian war memorial as listed, is the memorial attached to the Police Station
- The notice board at Lidl car park will be added to the Asset Register

RG104 Governance and Accountability

The Committee NOTED and AGREED the following reviews and risk assessments.

104.1 Internal Audit

104.1.1 Review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Audit.

104.1.2 Review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Control.

104.2 Risk Assessment and Management

RG105 Year End 2021/22 Accounts
The Committee NOTED the report.

The Town Clerk advised that with effect from 1 April 2022 the title of Responsible Financial Officer has been formally passed to the Deputy Town Clerk.

RG106 2022/23 Fees for Hall Hire and Football Pitches
The Committee NOTED the following as agreed in the Recreation Committee on 9 March 2022:

- 5% increase in charges for 2022/23
- Rounded up to the nearest pound as historic charges set with 2 decimal places are not user friendly and over complicate the charging procedure.

RG107 2022/23 Cemetery Fees
The Committee NOTED the following as agreed in the Environment & Heritage Committee on 29 March 2022:

- 5% increase in charges for 2022/23
- Rounded down to the nearest pound as historic charges set with 2 decimal places are not user friendly and over complicate the charging procedure.

RG108 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.

RG109 Buckingham Court
The Town Clerk declared a non-pecuniary interest in this agenda item as he had inherited a role as Director of Buckingham Court Property Management Ltd, as one of a number of tenants on the site to vet the management accounts, in respect of the administrative costs relating to the area.

The Committee NOTED the oral update from the Town Clerk and this would appear as and agenda item at the next Town Council meeting.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked members for attending and closed the meeting at 8.50pm.

Signed:
Date: 5 July 2022