

THESE MINUTES NOT YET CONFIRMED

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RECREATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held at Loughton Library & Town Hall, Traps Hill, Loughton IG10 1HD on Wednesday 7 September 2022 at 7.30pm

Present

Councillors:

D Wixley

(in the chair)

S Fontenelle

L House

N Mackinnon

S Murray

M Stubbings

K Valentine

Also in attendance

R Brookes

Officers:

M Squire (Town Clerk)

P Hoy (Services Manager)

RC126 Apologies

No apologies for absence were received.

RC127 Declarations of Interest

None were received.

RC128 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2022 were amended from those circulated at Min no RC111, to read, "as their respective grandchildren had enjoyed *playing* there", were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RC129 Public Representations

None were received.

RC130 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report

The Town Clerk Reported that Mr Fabrizio Luca Ferrari, Public Health Improvement Officer, Community, Culture & Wellbeing, Epping Forest District Council (EFDC), had been invited to address the next Committee meeting, to provide a short presentation on community health and wellbeing needs.

The Chairman invited Cllr House to report on whether he had managed to attend Epping Forest area meetings held by The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. Cllr House reported that no such meetings had been held, and that he was currently seeking a direct meeting with The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex. A report would be made at the next sitting of this Committee.

Roding Valley Recreation Ground (RVRG)

RC131 EFDC Green Infrastructure Strategy Roding Valley Recreation Ground Project (Local Plan proposal to designate the RVRG as a Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG))

The Committee NOTED the report of the meeting that the Chairman, Cllrs Brookes and Murray had attended along with the Town Clerk, Services Manager, Epping Forest District Council Officers and EFDC's external consultant on 23 June 2022.

Members noted that the site meeting was in connection with the EFDC Local Plan construction and the proposed designation as a SANG.

The Chairman Reported that there had been no further update from EFDC Officers to the Town Council on this matter since the meeting.

RC132 Playground – Min no RC114

(i) Public consultation and tender

The Committee NOTED the report, the survey template and playground consultation summary. The Chairman Reported that three very credible Tender bids had been received, which he, along with Cllrs Valentine and MacKinnon, the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and Services Manager had reviewed at a meeting held on 2 September 2022. No decision to choose the winning bid had been reached at the meeting because clarification was needed on certain elements of the designs. The Committee AGREED that Officers should ascertain the information required and report back to the selection group, which would then select the winning bid.

The Town Clerk updated members on the current timetable/time scale for the works, as shown in the report.

The Chairman thanked officers for their hard work during the public consultation process.

(ii) Inspection

The Town Clerk Reported that due to concerns over the condition of the hard surface and safety surface at the Roding Valley Recreation Ground Playground, an independent “urgent annual inspection” had been carried out on 31 August 2022. It was reported that only ‘moderate risk’ had been recorded against the various surfacing issues within the inspection report, and although not ideal, the issues would continue to be monitored closely and no repair works would be carried out at this present time.

RC133 Tree Survey – Min no RC115

The Committee NOTED that tree contractors were due to commence works to remove unsafe Cherry trees, and to make safe other trees, on Monday 12 September 2022. On completion of the works, the Town Clerk and Services Manager would consider an appropriate plan for replacement trees to be planted.

It was AGREED that information notices would be displayed in all notice boards on the Roding Valley Recreation Ground, and at the crossroads of Valley Hill and Oakwood Hill.

RC134 New Bench – Min no RC117

Councillor Murray provided an update on the proposed bench and it was AGREED that to progress this matter further he would liaise with the Service Manager.

RC135 Litter Bin – Greensted Road

The Committee considered a request by a member of the public for the installation of a litter bin by the Greensted Road vehicle entrance. It was AGREED that the committee would not take this matter further due to the costs involved, and

because a bin at this location would attract household waste like all of the council's bins that are situated close to residential properties.

RC136 River Way- Garages / brick wall

The Committee AGREED to pay for the removal of a 'fallen' brick wall and other fly-tipped material, all of which had emanated from the neighbouring garages in River Way. It was also AGREED that estimates would be sought for a fence to be installed on council land which would effectively seal off the open space caused by the missing wall, and in-turn deter further fly-tipping onto the recreation ground via the River Way garages.

RC137 Roding Valley Cricket Club (RVCC) request – Min no RC110

The Town Clerk Reported that a map of the proposed new area had been sent to, and was acceptable to, EFDC. Furthermore, in view of the urgent need of RVCC to commence the groundwork for the new pitch area, permission had been requested from EFDC to enable the groundwork to commence with immediate effect, before the legal documents had been signed. This request was categorically rejected by EFDC, and RVCC were informed accordingly. The legal requirements are now being handled by the Town Councils solicitors and costs will be elicited. The matter will be progressed via EFDC' legal team and a progress report will be made at the next sitting of the Committee.

RC138 Hedgerows Survey

The Committee NOTED the report and AGREED to the recommendation that two metre grass strips be left uncut to further enhance the value of the hedgerows. The Services Manager would discuss the feasibility of this proposal with EFDC ground work contractors and report back to the next meeting.

RC139 Allergy Awareness signage

The Committee NOTED the report containing a request from a local resident regarding this serious issue and AGREED that appropriate signage would be displayed at all Town Council playgrounds.

Other Agenda Items

RC140 Town Council Van

The Committee NOTED the report and AGREED in principle to the acquisition of a new 'hybrid' van through a leasing scheme. It was further AGREED that this matter would be referred to the Resources and General Services Committee when further details maybe available.

RC141 Willingale Road Nature Reserve – Min no RC118

The Committee NOTED the report of the site visit that Cllrs Wixley, Fontenelle and Stubbings, along with the Services Manager, attended with Damien Weller from Epping Forest Countrycare on 20 July 2022. The Committee considered the request by Countrycare to create a pond on the site, however it was not felt appropriate for health and safety reasons due to the isolated nature of the site.

The Committee NOTED that the next Epping Forest Countrycare volunteer workday was due to take place on Thursday 6 October 2022. Members were invited to visit site, and if so inclined, to join in.

RC142 Murray Hall

The Committee NOTED the following:

(i) Improvements

The new ceiling lights and WIFI had been installed, with funding for the lights, having been sourced from existing Murray/Kingsley Hall earmarked funds.

(ii) Defibrillator (defib)

The purchase of a defib for Murray Hall was in hand.

(iii) Utility costs

The Town Clerk Reported that the Town Council was continuing to review its position and was endeavouring to secure the best payment deal possible. This was proving to be a challenge in these uncertain times. Town Council staff would also be undertaking a comprehensive review of its practices at all community buildings and office locations, in order to make energy efficiencies

(iv) NHS

The Town Clerk Reported that the NHS would soon be using the car park for a health check van. The office would check to see if any payment would be received for the use of the car park.

The Committee AGREED to suspend Standing Order number 3(ff) and AGREED to conclude the meeting by 9.30pm.

RC143 Kingsley Hall

(i) Pre school

The Committee NOTED that the pre-school nursery would now be operating morning sessions only for the foreseeable future and that the office is now taking additional afternoon bookings from other users.

(ii) Essential works to the rear garden wall and gate

The Committee NOTED that essential external repair works were now necessary to:

- replace the existing wooden gate, its frame and associated timber work, which had now shrunken beyond repair
- replace the perimeter brick wall and internal brick flower planters, which were cracked and had suffered significant movement in the past months
- address the issue of the brick paving, which had experienced significant movement over the last few years, and which had greatly accelerated during the past few months

The Committee AGREED that the work should be carried out, and the Services Manager would now seek quotes from contractors for this work.

(iii) Utility costs

The Town Clerk Reported that the council was continuing to review its position, and was endeavouring to secure the best payment deal possible. The Committee NOTED that it would soon be necessary to have a new boiler fitted.

Councillor Murray declared a non-pecuniary interest in the next item.

RC144 Memorial Garden - Benches and Repairs

The Committee NOTED that the replacement benches, including one being provided by the Open Door Friendship Group, were on order, and that two sections of storm damaged railings were currently being straightened, meaning that the completion of works would be imminent.

RC145 Family Fun Day – Jessel Green – Sunday 26 June 2022

The Committee NOTED the report and thanked Officers for their hard work, in both the planning and delivery of this event.

The Committee AGREED to suspend Standing Order number 3(ff) and AGREED to conclude the meeting by 9.45pm.

RC146 Broadway Town Centre Partnership (BTCP) request

The Committee NOTED the request by Cllr Brookes (in her capacity as interim Chair of the BTCP) that the Town Council consider whether staff could assist with a Christmas event on The Broadway. Members AGREED that there should be no change to the current programme of community events and should not reverse its previous decision (min no RC37) to withdraw from the 'Countdown to Christmas' event, to concentrate on other community events. Cllr Brookes asked the Committee to formally NOTE her request that this event be resurrected at some point in the future.

The Committee AGREED to suspend Standing Order number 3(ff) and AGREED to conclude the meeting by 9.50pm.

The Committee AGREED that this matter be referred to the Strategy and Staff group for consideration, and that Cllr Brookes should be invited to attend the next meeting of this group.

RC147 Financial Position

The Committee NOTED the report.

RC148 Future Work of the Committee

No items were raised.

Signed:

Date: 2 November 2022