

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RECREATION COMMITTEE

**MINUTES of the meeting held at Loughton Town Council, Council Chamber,
1 Buckingham Court, Rectory Lane, Loughton IG10 2QZ on Wednesday 8 March 2023
at 7.30pm**

Present

Councillors:

D Wixley (in the chair)
S Fontenelle N Mackinnon S Murray
M Stubbings K Valentine (from Min no RC194)
R Brookes (as substitute for Cllr House)

Also in attendance:

Officers:

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

RC190 Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Cllr House. Cllr Brookes had been nominated as substitute for this meeting.

RC191 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Murray declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 as an Associate Member of South Loughton Cricket Club (SLCC).

RC192 Confirmation of Minutes

The Chairman reported that the words "working group" had been added to Min no RC180. The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2023 were then CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RC193 Public Representations

None were received.

Councillor Valentine joined the meeting during the next item.

RC194 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report

The Town Clerk reported that there had been an error in the current edition of Think Loughton regarding the dates of the 'Play in the Park' sessions. Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) officers, who are responsible for the sessions, had been informed of the error and would be able to advise prospective service users accordingly. It was also confirmed that the Town Council website was displaying the correct information.

The Chairman Reported that he was hopeful that following the adoption of the Local Plan, the Roding Valley Recreation Ground would be declared a SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace), and therefore qualify for local authority grant funding for the upgrading of footpaths and for tree planting.

Roding Valley Recreation Ground (RVRG)**RC195 Playground – Min no RC175**

The Committee NOTED the recent site visit by the contractor and the updated timetable, including the planned start date of early April 2023. As has been previously stated, the commencement of this project will be dependent on both weather and ground conditions. An opening ceremony would be arranged in due course.

The Town Clerk was asked to request that, if possible, the current playground remain in-situ for as long as possible while work on the new playground starts, thus reducing the time that no playground is available.

RC196 Trees**196.1 Oak Processionary Moth (OPM)**

The Chairman Reported that he had received a further update from the Forestry Commission, with particular reference to chemical treatments and the potential for harm to wildlife. The concern being the proximity of the RVRG to the Roding Valley Nature Reserve.

The Committee AGREED that in the event of OPM being found to be present at council sites, advice in the first instance should be sought from EFDC Countrycare and also the Roding Valley Meadows Local Nature Reserve Ranger. The latter should be contacted as the Nature Reserve (adjoining the RVRG) has 'Site of Special Scientific Interest' SSSI status and has been banned from using chemical removal in favour of manual removal, due to that status and the fact the 25 species of butterfly have been recorded on the Nature Reserve.

196.2 Tree Planting

The Committee NOTED that Cllr MacKinnon had been offered 50, one year old tree whips that could be planted in the RVRG. It was reported that 30 Grey Willow whips would make up a large part of the planting scheme, with the remaining 20 to be confirmed, subject to availability, although the Committee AGREED that they should be 'native' species. Cllrs MacKinnon and Wixley would be carrying out a site visit to scope suitable locations and would seek volunteers to carry out the planting.

196.3 Trees Donated by EFDC

The Services Manager Reported that following notification from the EFDC Tree Officer earlier in the day, he had AGREED to the planting of three new trees and had arranged to attend a meeting on Thursday 9 March to agree suitable planting locations. Two of the trees (Acer Campestre Elegant – Field Maple, and Crataegus Laevigata – small Hawthorn tree) were trees donated by members of the public to commemorate lost loved ones, and the third was a Cherry tree that EFDC had left over from its previous years' planting scheme.

RC197 River Way – Garages / brick wall – Min no RC177

The Services Manager Reported that EFDC Countrycare would not be able to plant native hedging close to the new fence, to add further protection against fly-tipping and other anti-social activities. Following a site visit, Countrycare Officers reported that they found evidence of asbestos close to the ground surface at the desired point where the hedges would be planted.

It was AGREED that the Services Manager would attend site and carry out an investigation.

RC198 South Loughton Cricket Club (SLCC) request for a bench in memory of Mr Rob Glendinning – Min no RC179

The Committee NOTED that SLCC had ordered the bench, and it was AGREED that the Services Manager would attend site and meet with SLCC officials to confirm the exact location for the bench, which is expected to be installed during April 2023.

RC199 Roding Valley Cricket Club (RVCC) – Min no RC180

The Committee NOTED that the draft sublease is with the Town Councils' solicitors for completion, and it was AGREED that Officers would confirm with RVCC that the club had an up-to-date public liability insurance certificate.

Other Agenda Items

RC200 Town Council Van – Min no RC181

The Committee NOTED the update on the new van, the disposal of the old van and issues around the installation of an electric charging point at a suitable Town Council facility. On the last point, the Town Clerk Reported that options were still being considered, and the Committee AGREED that Officers should investigate the feasibility of the installation of a 'commercial, charging point at Murray Hall which would have the potential to bring income into the council, if other users participated. A report will be made to the next meeting.

RC201 Willingale Road Nature Reserve – Min no RC182

The Committee NOTED the Report.

RC202 Town Council Community Halls

RC202.1 Murray Hall – Solar panels

The Committee NOTED the update and awaited the response from Solar Together who are working in conjunction with Essex County Council (ECC). The Chairman reported that he had hoped to have been able to provide a report from officials at the Buckhurst Hill United Reformed Church, regarding their experience of solar panels, but he was still awaiting the report.

The Committee NOTED that Jayne Bayley had been appointed as Principal Caretaker at Murray Hall with effect from 1 April 2023, and it was also reported that Ms Bayley had recently commenced twice weekly cleaning duties at the Town Council offices at Buckingham Court.

**RC202.2 Kingsley Hall – Essential works to the rear garden wall and gate
Min no RC183**

The Committee NOTED that the essential safety works in the back garden were completed on 17 February 2023.

RC203 Jessel Green Fun Day – Min no RC184

The Committee NOTED that arrangements for this event, due to take place on 25 June 2023, are progressing on schedule. The Town Clerk and Community Officer are due to hold their final meeting with partner organisations on Friday 10 March 2023, and local sponsors are being sought to reduce the outlay in costs.

Councillors AGREED that they would run a tombola stall on the day.

RC204 Skate Ramps

The Services Manager Reported on the approach made by Officers from EFDC expressing an interest in re-furbishing and then using the Town Council's skate ramps, which are currently stored at Roding Valley High School (RVHS). It was hoped that more information could have been made available at the meeting, but there had been no further developments. However this approach would appear to carry more credibility than the several previous approaches from commercial bodies, which sadly proved short-lived. The Services Manager AGREED to forward photographs of the ramps to members of the committee for their future reference.

RC205 Transfer of Epping Forest District Council Grounds Maintenance Services to Qualis Management – April 2023

The Town Clerk reported that he and the Services Manager are due to attend an introductory meeting with Qualis Management in the coming weeks. A full report of the meeting will be made to all Town Council members in due course.

RC206 Financial Position

The Committee NOTED the Report.

RC207 Financial savings

The Committee NOTED the agenda item.

RC208 Future Work of the Committee

No issues were raised.

Signed:

Date: 2023