

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 31 May 2023 at
7.30pm**

Present

Councillors: D Wixley (in the chair)
L House N MacKinnon (from Min no 212)
S Murray M Stubbings K Valentine

Also in attendance: Cllr R Brookes (until Min no 229)

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

RC209 Apologies

No apologies had been received.

RC210 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Wixley declared a non- pecuniary interest in agenda item 13 as he knows the resident that is requesting the bench.

RC211 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2023 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RC212 Public Representations

None were received.

Councillor MacKinnon joined the meeting during the following item. He also declared a non- pecuniary interest in agenda item 11, as his wife was due to take part in the event.

RC213 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report

The Town Clerk was pleased to report that the E15 Acting School had extended their tenancy until at least June 2024. He also reported that Ruth Angrave, is the newly appointed, Nature Reserves Manager (South) for the Essex Wildlife Trust, and that he has her contact details, should members require this information.

The Chairman reported on his recent attendance at the 'Coffee with the Cops' Meeting. Members of the local Community Speed Watch group were present, and the police have expressed an interest in having information stalls at the Jessel Green Family Fun Day and Loughton Day. Cllr House was also at this meeting, and he highlighted a very informative 'Crime Stoppers Safer Streets' leaflet, which he would bring into the office.

He thanked Cllr Murray for chasing up a number of RVRG issues, namely the fisherman's platform by the lake, the long grass around the outdoor gym frames, the broken tennis court net and fly tipping at the Thames Water pumping station.

The Chairman also reported on the Planning & Licensing meeting he had attended on 30 May 2023, whereby plans are afoot for the redevelopment of the garage site and build of two bungalows, adjacent to the Hillyfields Open Space. He expressed the view that the entrance to Hillyfields Open Space should not be obstructed during construction work and that there should be no encroachment onto the Open Space by the storage of building materials involved in the construction work.

He reported that there had been approaches from 'Babyballers' and 'Pilates' groups to use the RVRG. Consent has been given on the basis that the number of attendees would be reviewed from time to time, sight of risk assessment and sight of public liability insurance certificate.

RC214 Playground – Min no RC195

The Committee NOTED that the Certificate of Lawful Development has now been granted by Epping Forest District Council (EFDC). A further site visit had been arranged for the following afternoon between the Town Clerk, the Services Manager, and the playground contractor. Hopefully there would be positive news, as the recent weather has been a lot drier, since the torrential rain experienced in April and the majority of May 2023. All parties were keen to progress this project as soon as possible, as the contractor has had the equipment ready for the last two months. If any work had been carried out during the wet conditions, then the Town Council would be liable for any additional repair work, over and above the normal workings.

Members were keen to have this project completed before the commencement of the school holidays, but it was NOTED that this should not be at the expense of the construction work being carried out properly.

An appropriate opening ceremony would be arranged in due course.

RC215 Trees

215.1 Oak Processionary Moth – Min no RC196.1

The Committee NOTED that the Services Manager will conduct a visual survey of oak trees in June 2023 and would report back accordingly, at a future Recreation Committee meeting.

215.2 Tree Planting – Min no RC196.2

The report was NOTED. The Chairman also referenced the recent EFDC planting along the riverbank as funded by the grant provide to EFDC by the Environment Agency and that the trees and whips, currently looked healthy.

215.3 Trees donated by EFDC – Min no RC196.3

The report was RECEIVED and NOTED.

RC216 River Way – Garages / brick wall – Min no RC197

The Committee NOTED the report and RECOMMENDED that smaller whips should be planted at a cost of c£150 rather than an alternative more expensive option of c£575. The work would be carried out by Cllr's MacKinnon, Wixley and Stubbings. There was the possibility that Cllr MacKinnon may be able to source the whips from the same source free of charge. See Min no RC 215.2.

RC217 South Loughton Cricket Club (SLCC) request for a bench in memory of Mr Rob Glendinning – Min no RC198

The report was RECEIVED and NOTED.

RC218 Roding Valley Cricket Club (RVCC) – Min no RC199

The Committee NOTED that the draft sublease is still with the Town Council's solicitors for completion. The situation was very frustrating, and the Town Clerk would continue to expedite matters.

RC219 The Alderton Infant School – litter pick

The Committee NOTED the report.

RC220 Cranleigh Gardens Parking

The Committee NOTED the report and AGREED that the work would be carried out at a cost of c£1,280.

RC221 Resident's request for a bench

The Committee NOTED the request for the bench and that the local resident would pay for all associated costs. The Town Council would vet the final plaque wording and agree the final site for the bench.

RC222 Mental Elf Charity Event

The Town Council AGREED to this request subject to the following.

- Liaison with the very well-established Roding Valley Park Run to ensure that the event does not clash with either the Saturday 5km parkrun or the Sunday Junior Parkrun.
- The Town Council would also reserve the right to sign off on the finalised date, time, and route as it may be aware of conflicting issues that the organisers are unaware of.

RC223 Car Park Gate

An update was provided on recent problems on

- i. the opening and closing of the gate. Members AGREED that this will be continued to be monitored. The Town Clerk would keep a log of ongoing incidents;
- ii. the very recent incidents of fly tipping on the car park site which appears to be sourced and caused locally. Members AGREED that the Town Clerk should leaflet local residents living in the vicinity and ask them to report any incidents of fly tipping that they may be aware of.

Other Agenda Items

RC224 Town Council Van – electric charging - Min no RC200

The Committee NOTED the report and AGREED that in the first instance the Town Clerk should pursue the prospect of charging the van on site, before investigating the potential opportunities to offer a charging service to local residents.

RC225 Town Council Community Halls

225.1 Murray Hall – Solar panels - Min no RC202.1

The Committee NOTED the report and that there is no immediate budget for such a project. The Town Clerk reported that a meeting had recently taken place to investigate if any potential savings could be made from existing users, which appeared to be not the case. He also added that an official complaint has been logged with the electricity billing company concerned, as only estimated bills are being received, despite regular reading being provided and provision of photographic evidence of these readings. It may be appropriate to have an independent energy survey conducted to check whether the existing roof air conditioning system is as efficient as it could be.

In the longer term it may prove more cost effective to budget for and install a solar panel system.

225.2 Murray Hall - Defibrillator

The Committee NOTED the report and that training would be provided soon. Advice from the Community Heartbeat Trust is that September is preferable for the training, as attendance during the summer months would not be great as many people are away.

225.3 Murray Hall – Staffing

The Committee NOTED that as from 1 April 2023, Jayne Bayley was appointed as part time Principal Caretaker & Office Cleaner and also Steven Watkins as part time Relief Caretaker / Officer Cleaner / Cemetery Assistant.

RC226 Jessel Green Fun Day – Min no RC203

The Committee NOTED that arrangements for this event on Sunday 25 June 2023 are progressing well. Especially pleasing is the healthy amount of sponsorship already received.

Any tombola prizes that Members can provide for the Town Council tombola stall would be gratefully received. The Town Mayor was thanked for his recent donations for the stall.

RC227 Skate Ramps – Min no RC204

The Committee NOTED the report and would await the outcome of the inspection and EFDC's further recommendations.

RC228 Transfer of Epping Forest District Council Grounds Maintenance Services to Qualis Management – April 2023

The Committee NOTED the forthcoming meeting, and the Town Clerk and Services Manager would run through all the existing grass cutting itinerary, explain the very tight Town Council budget and the need to keep costs down in the future. The ongoing issue of bin clearance on the RVRG would also be raised.

RC229 Environment & Heritage Committee 28.3.23. Minute 194 Financial Savings

After much discussion, it was AGREED that

- there were no obvious, significant cost cutting opportunities.
- an onsite meeting should be arranged between representatives of the Recreation Committee, the Chairman of the Environment & Heritage Committee, the Town Clerk and Services Manager, EFDC Team Manager Grounds Maintenance South Contracts & Technical Services and any other interested parties.
- a more comprehensive statement could be developed in due course.

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

Cllr Brookes left the meeting.

RC230 Proposal for British Sign Language Signs in our Playgrounds.

The Committee NOTED the report and AGREED that this signage should be implemented.

RC231 Financial Position

The Committee NOTED the report. The Town Clerk added that he would be holding an internal meeting after every two months' financial figures, to dissect the budget spent to date and ascertain whether there would be potential for any overrun of the Committees' 2023/24 budget allocations.

RC232 Financial Savings

The Committee NOTED that there were no obvious cost savings to be made. However, with reference to Min 216, a potential saving of up to c £600 may be made.

RC233 Future Work of the Committee

The Committee noted that Loughton Athletic Club wished to put up a mural on the changing room wall to deter further graffiti. The Town Clerk was asked to inform the club that the new mural may attract further graffiti. The Town Council would discuss potential plans to place tall shrubs around the perimeter walls, to improve and soften the appearance of the clubhouse at a future Committee meeting.

The Committee AGREED to further suspend Standing Order number 3(ff) and AGREED to conclude the meeting by 9.35pm.

RC234 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 contains confidential information relating to contractual matters.

RC235 Potential Insurance Claim

The Committee NOTED the report.

Signed:
Date: 6 September 2023