

THESE MINUTES NOT YET CONFIRMED

**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 Tuesday 31 October 2023  
at 7.30pm**

**Present**

**Councillors:**

D Wixley (in the chair)

S Fontenelle

S Murray

K Valentine

L House (from Min no 272)

M Stubbings (until Min no 285)

**Officers:**

M Squire (Town Clerk)

P Bryce (Community Manager)

**RC262 Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Cllr MacKinnon and that Cllr House would most likely arrive late.

**RC263 Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Wixley and Murray declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9.2 as both are acquainted with the family of Alan Wintle, who are requesting the bench. Cllr Murray also declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 6 as a member of South Loughton Cricket Club and similarly agenda item 8 Loughton Athletic Club (LAC).

**RC264 Confirmation of Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2023 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**RC265 Public Representations**

None were received.

**RC266 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report**

The Committee NOTED the following updates: -

- The tree inspection was underway and should be completed by mid-November 2023. The Town Clerk confirmed that the tree inspections had been moved from 3 to 2 years inspection cycle.
- Cllr CC Pond had been able to source 10 tree whips from the office of the Essex County Council (ECC), Cabinet Member for Environment, Waste Reduction & Recycling. These whips may be used to supplement the planting along River Way, by the garages, or possibly on the Recreation Ground mound to replenish areas where last year's whips may have failed to survive. Officers would collect the whips from Chelmsford on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2023.
- Members were reminded of the Epping Forest District Council's (EFDC) news release dated 23 October 2023 regarding Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Order. The online consultation runs between Monday 23 October to Monday 20 November 2023.
- Essex and Suffolk Water are carrying out a civil engineering project to service a water chamber on the Roding Valley Recreation Ground behind

houses at the Greensted Road entrance, this work started on 31 October and should take a few days.

- The Town Clerk reported that two of the gate entrances to the Roding Valley Recreation Ground (RVRG), (namely Oakwood Hill and Greensted Road) needed repair work.
- The Chairman reported that following the last CountyCare work at the Willingale Road, nature reserve, there had been an abundance of apples that could have been put to good use. e.g. donating to the Loughton Foodbanks. A diary note would be made for the following year .

### **Roding Valley Recreation Ground**

#### **RC267 South Loughton Cricket Club (SLCC)'s request – e-mail dated 29 August 2023 – Min no RC244.1**

The Committee NOTED the report on SLCC's plans for a new clubhouse on the existing site.

Three Town Councillors had attended an invitation from SLCC to visit their ground on Saturday 28 October 2023. Additional members may also attend on Saturday 4 November 2023.

Members commented that there was no objection in principle so far, but that any developments would fall under the umbrella of due planning process, if and when it occurs.

#### **RC268 Roding Valley Cricket Club (RVCC) – Min no RC245**

The Committee NOTED that the Town Council's solicitors are awaiting receipt of funds from RVCC to finalise the legal agreements.

#### **RC269 Loughton Athletics Club (LAC)**

Members NOTED the report.

#### **RC270 Residents request for a bench – Min no RC247**

- (i) The Committee NOTED the report. It was suggested that the need for a litter bin should be considered in terms of location of any bench being situated by the lake, as the proximity to the lake could lead to further problems.
- (ii) The Committee Noted the request from the Wintle family.

#### **RC271 Skate Park Request – Min no RC249**

The Committee NOTED that a site meeting has been arranged between the Recreation Committee Chairman, Town Clerk and Services Manager with the founder of the Roding Valley Recreation Ground Skatepark Group (provisional title) for 10am on 16 November 2023. Cllr Wixley further suggested that Roding Ward Councillors should also be invited to attend this meeting and also Cllr Fontenelle, due to his interest in skateboarding.. Councillors also made it very clear that Loughton Town Council has made no formal decision and have not taken this on as a project, and that no funding is currently available for such a project.

Cllr House joined the meeting during the following agenda item

**Other Agenda Items**

**RC272 Town Council Community Halls**

**272.1 Murray Hall – Min no RC250**

- I. Members NOTED the report and oral update on the erratic and high electricity charges.
- II. Members NOTED the report and oral update on the difficulties with the existing heating system.
- III. Members NOTED the report and oral update on the defibrillator training. Costings from three different training suppliers were quoted. Members opted for the 'Community Heartbeat' training, who originally supplied the defibrillator.

**272.2 Kingsley Hall**

- I. Members NOTED the report and oral update on the problems with the old heating system. The interim measure of draining the sludge from the radiators, appeared not to have been successful, as two radiators are still not working. Should there not be a resolution to this problem, the Committee may have to contemplate a newer and more efficient heating system. The Town Clerk confirmed that the Services team regularly did routine checks on the heating and the radiators were bled.
- II. Member NOTED that EFDC will be hiring the hall for the local elections in May 2024. A member stated that Kingsley Hall would replace the usual polling station based at Thomas Willingale School. The Town Clerk confirmed that Murray Hall would be used as a polling station as usual.

**RC273 Skate Ramps – Min no RC252**

The Committee NOTED that officers continue to chase EFDC who are liaising with a skateboard company for progress reports on repairs. The skate ramps would be stored in the future by EFDC at their premises at North Weald, but continue to be owned by the Town Council.

**RC274 Environment & Heritage Committee 28.3.23 Minute 194 Financial Savings – Min no RC254**

The Committee NOTED that some prospective dates have been circulated between the respective Environment & Heritage and Recreation Committee Chairmen, to set up a site meeting between all relevant parties, at the first available opportunity.

**RC275 Filming on Loughton Town Council (LTC) Open Spaces – Min no RC256**

The Town Clerk reported that the company were acting as agents. There would be no fee, but the company would take a percentage of LTC's hire fees. The Town Clerk would set up a call, confirm terms and conditions and find out whether LTC would be tied to a contract and if this would preclude any independent hire.

**RC276 Playing Field / Playground Awards**

The Committee NOTED the pleasing report

**RC277 Financial Position**

The Committee NOTED the report.

**RC278 Financial Savings / Income Generation**

A question was raised as to whether savings could be made on water usage in general, including the flushing frequency of the Town Council's halls 'water /urinal systems, which could use more water than necessary .It was thought not, but the Town Clerk would enquire further. The Committee discussed and reviewed and would continue to monitor all options.

**RC279 2024/2025 Fees and Charges Review**

The Committee AGREED to increase hire fees by the recommended 7%. An additional point should be included in the policy that all hirers for open events should provide their valid Public Liability Insurance and the amount of coverage should be in line with the Town Council's policy.

**RC280 Committee Priorities for 2024/2025**

The Committee agreed to move Jessel Green event to the top of the priorities list as this was now an annual event. All other priorities to remain the same.

**RC281 2024/25 Budget**

The Town Clerk highlighted the following areas.

- Generally expenses had been increased by an average of 7%.
- In the current difficult financial climate, it is unlikely that any new major projects can be contemplated
- However ideally, additional Earmarked Reserves (EMR) needed to be allocated for ongoing concerns, such as the heating systems for Murray Hall and Kingsley Hall.
- Football income is likely to be much lower for 2024/25 as a number of clubs have disbanded. Further work would take place on dissecting the existing costs versus income for running football on the RVRG next year.
- The current EMR for the Town Council van would most likely be utilised by the end of the financial year. Working costs for the van would be increased in recognition of the new lease financing arrangements next year.
- Recommended that EMR would be increased by £10k for new playgrounds and £20k for potential work on the halls heating systems. The EMR for Moull's bridge would be removed.

Councillors noted the report and thanked the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) for her hard work on the budget. The Town Clerk reiterated that these are early draft figures and further amendments may be necessary later in the budget process.

**RC282 Future Work of the Committee**

None to report.

**RC283 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.

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

**RC284 Potential Insurance claim**

The Committee NOTED the report and the Town Clerk would proceed on the recommended basis.

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

Cllr Stubbings left the meeting during the next item.

**RC285 EFDC Playground Project**

After discussing this agenda item, the Town Clerk agreed that this agenda item could be taken out of private session as the initial project was being withdrawn by EFDC. It was reported that EFDC were now considering placing wooden picnic tables and children's seating on the grass area of land at the end of Marlescroft Way.

**RC286 Lease Agreement**

The Committee NOTED the report and the existing lease agreement between EFDC and SLCC.

**Signed:** .....  
**Date:** 17 January 2024