

**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 17 January 2024  
at 7.30pm**

**Present**

**Councillors:** D Wixley (in the chair)  
L House N MacKinnon S Murray  
M Stubbings K Valentine

**Councillors also in  
Attendance:**

R Brookes

**Officers:**

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

**Also Present:**

Fabrizio Ferrari, Public Health Improvement Officer, Health Improvement Manager – Customer and the Community, Epping Forest District Council (EFDC)

**RC287 Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Cllr Fontenelle. The Town Clerk reported that no substitute had been appointed for this meeting.

**RC288 Declarations of Interest**

Cllrs Wixley, Murray and Brookes declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda items relating to the work of EFDC as all are members of this authority. Cllrs Wixley and Murray declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9.1, as they are known to the Wintle Family.

**RC289 Confirmation of Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2023 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**RC290 Public Representations**

None were received.

**RC291 Play Facilities on the Oakwood Hill Estate**

Mr Fabrizio Ferrari, Public Health Improvement Officer, Health Improvement Team Manager – Customer and the Community, at EFDC was welcomed to the meeting. Mr Ferrari appraised members with regards to grant funding of £30,000, via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which could be made available to Loughton Town Council (LTC) to improve the Monksgrove Playground on the Oakwood Hill Estate, by way of adding new play equipment. It was further stated that other works were planned for the Oakwood Hill Estate in the near future. Members considered Mr Ferrari's address and it was AGREED that other LTC playgrounds warranted more urgent improvement, most notably Newmans Lane. Mr Ferrari was asked by the Committee to consider whether the funds could be diverted to an alternative site, in this case Newmans Lane Playground. Mr Ferrari informed the meeting that he would seek guidance on this proposal and inform the Town Clerk accordingly.

**RC292 Skate Ramps – Min no RC273**

Mr Ferrari reported that the skate ramps and trailer repairs had now been completed by King Ramps, with all of the equipment to soon be delivered to North Weald Airfield for storage. The ramps will remain the property of the Town Council, and appropriate groups will be sought by Mr Ferrari's department to use the equipment in the community.

Mr Ferrari was thanked for attending the meeting.

Cllr Brookes left the meeting before the next item.

**RC293 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report**

- The Services Manager updated the meeting on a sink hole that was found at the Felstead Road Playground on 4 January 2024. Transport for London had been contacted and its maintenance department would shortly be attending site.
- The free tree whips (ten in all) were collected from Essex County Council (ECC) headquarters on 15 December 2023 and have now been planted by Cllrs Wixley and Stubbings on the mound at Roding Valley Recreation Ground.
- The Chairman reported that the sink hole at Felstead Road Playground might be the responsibility of the Environment Agency, and or Thames Water, as there is an underground watercourse at the playground.
- The Chairman reported on a Police Community Safety event he attended at St Mary's Church on 12 January 2024. He referred to further police events as per Essex Police despatch issue 29.
- The Chairman reported that he will be attending the opening of the Epping Forest Wellness Centre at New City College on Saturday 20 January 2024. Cllr Mick Stubbings will also be in attendance, in his official capacity as Town Mayor.
- The Chairman Reported that he and Cllr Valentine had met with members of South Loughton Cricket Club (SLCC) on Saturday 4 November 2023, to discuss plans for the proposed re-development of the SLCC cricket pavillion. No further contact has been received from SLCC since the meeting.

**Roding Valley Recreation Ground (RVRG)**

**RC294 Roding Valley Cricket Club (RVCC) – Min no RC268**

Members NOTED that the Town Council's solicitors are awaiting receipt of funds from RVCC to finalise the legal agreements. The Town Clerk has continued to chase and will continue to do so.

**RC295 Residents requests for benches**

**295.1 Request from the Wintle family – Min no RC270**

Members NOTED that orders have been issued for the seat, plaque, and concrete base. Delivery of the seat and plaque is due on Tuesday 23 January 2024, and the concrete base will be installed as soon as possible, however this will be dependent on favourable weather and ground conditions.

Cllr Brookes re-joined the meeting.

**295.2 Request from the Lee family**

Members NOTED that a request has been received from a local resident, for a bench with a memorial plaque for her recently deceased husband. The seat would ideally be placed facing the lake close to the memorial tree planted in November 2021. It was AGREED that the Services Manager would proceed with the request.

**295.3 Other benches**

Members NOTED that the Town Council is responsible for a number of other benches in Loughton (not the High Road), including maintenance. The majority of these fall under the remit of the Environment & Heritage Committee. The Services Manager, Paul Hoy was thanked, in respect of this ongoing work.

**RC296 Skate Park Request – Min no RC271**

Members NOTED that a site meeting took place on 16 November 2023 between Cllrs D.Wixley, N.MacKinnon, the Town Clerk, Services Manager and Mr John Lawal (JL), instigator of a new skate park community group for Loughton. A possible location, on the mound near the outdoor gym, was discussed, but no further contact has been received from Mr Lawal since the meeting.

**RC297 Essex & Suffolk Water (ESW)**

The Town Clerk reported that the large excavation crater dug by ESW in November 2023 to source a water leak, some 20 feet below ground on the RVRG close to the Greentsed Road entrance, had been filled in following completion of the drainage repairs. Loughton Town Council (LTC) was very grateful to have the invaluable support of EFDC drainage engineers throughout the process. It was NOTED that ESW still have reinstatement work to be completed (including the entrance way) which will be addressed in Spring 2024.

**RC298 Play in the Park**

The Committee NOTED the reduction in the charge for Play in the Park sessions, and AGREED that officers should, if possible, book additional sessions in the summer holidays, using the saved expense.

**RC299 Jessel Green Fun Day**

Members AGREED the proposed date of Sunday 23 June 2024, 12 noon until 4pm.

**RC300 RVRG Playground**

- I. The Town Clerk gave an oral update on Safety harnesses for specific play equipment. Advice received from a leading play equipment inspector stated that harnesses should **not** be left on the equipment unsupervised, at anytime. The Committee considered allowing park users to borrow harnesses for specific time periods, but AGREED that concerns over the welfare of all park users, should they be accidentally left on site and abused in anyway, were too great, and therefore a borrowing scheme would not be implemented at this time.
- II. Members NOTED that the cracked platform of the toddler multi-play area was promptly replaced at no additional cost. In the Spring of 2024, attention will be given to any additional grass seeding required by the playground entrance.

**Other Agenda Items**

**RC301 Town Council Community Halls**

**301.1 Murray Hall – Min no RC272**

**301.1.1 Electric Charging Point**

Members NOTED that an EV electric charging point and installation has been secured at a net cost of £2,478.67 for the wall box and installation for the use of the Town Council van, which serves the Loughton community. On this basis Cllr CC Pond has been able to secure £1,000 towards the costs, from the ECC Locality fund in his capacity as a County Councillor. The Town Clerk reported that the installation team would be on site on Monday 22 January 2024.

**301.1.2 Electricity charges**

Members NOTED that a further 'Teams' meeting had been held with the Billing Customer Services Manager of SSE on 6 January 2024. The office is edging closer to agreeing bills paid to date and a practical way forward.

**301.1.3 Defibrillator training**

Members NOTED that the defibrillator training, to be delivered by The Community Heartbeat Trust, had been booked for Thursday 29 February 2024, 6pm to 8pm at the Murray Hall. The training is primarily aimed at council caretaking staff and park wardens, and members and staff will be advised if there is any spare capacity to attend the session.

**301.2 Kingsley Hall Heating – Min no RC272.2.1**

Members NOTED that during December 2023, further works were carried out on the heating system which would appear to have alleviated the previous issue of consistently low temperatures, quite considerably. Further checks were carried out to the pipework and an additional radiator installed, with the result being that temperatures are at an acceptable level for hall hirers. This situation will continue to be monitored closely.

**RC302 Filming on Loughton Town Council (LTC) Open Spaces – Min no RC275**

The Committee NOTED the report on 'Giggster,' the start-up company based in Los Angeles USA but seeking to expand into Europe and the UK. They describe themselves as 'the Airbnb for meetings, events, weddings, birthdays, film locations and photoshoots,' and they offer a free service which would list the council's venues with them, with no monthly fees, no contracts and no commitments. Should the Town Council seek to engage with Giggster for a trial period, an hourly filming rate for all listed assets would be required and Giggster would charge 19% commission for every completed booking. The Committee AGREED to enter into a trial period to see if any income can be generated.

**RC303 Financial Position**

Members NOTED the current financial position as of 31 October 2023 together with details of the funds available from earmarked reserves.

**RC304 2024/25 Budget**

The Committee NOTED the preceding Resources and General Services budget meeting.

**RC305 Future Work of the Committee**

No items were raised.

**Signed:** .....

**Date:** 27 February 2024