

THESE MINUTES NOT YET CONFIRMED

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 7 February 2024 at 7.30pm at Loughton Town Council, Council Chamber, 1 Buckingham Court, Rectory Lane, Loughton IG10 2QZ.

Present:

Councillors: M Owen (in the Chair) from Min no 312
R Brookes
S Murray (in the Chair until Cllr Owen arrived) B Cohen
M Stubbings

Also present: Cllr D Wixley

Officers: M Squire (Town Clerk)
K Lumb (Deputy Town Clerk / RFO)

There were no members of the public present.

RG304 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence received from Cllr Owen, as he would arrive late to the meeting.

In the absence of both the Chairman and Vice Chairman, Cllr Murray agreed to chair the meeting until Cllr Owen arrived.

RG305 Declarations of Interest

The Town Clerk read out the interests declared in respect of the Financial Assistance Award Scheme working party, involving Cllrs Cohen; Murray; Owen; and Wiskin.

Cllr S Murray – **Non-pecuniary interest** – 6. Christian Drama Resource Centre; 7. Citizens Advice – EF District; 8. Epping Forest Foodbank; 9. Epping Forest Heritage Trust; 13. Loughton Voluntary Care Association; 14. Restore Community – Grow Community Garden; 15. Restore Community – Noah’s Ark Toddler Groups; 16. Restore Community – Oakwood Hill Community Centre; 17. Roding Valley Parkrun; 19. South Loughton Cricket Club; 22. & 23. St Mary’s Church Loughton (applications a & b); 24. St Michael & All Angels Church – Little Angel Toddlers; 26. 3Food4U; 28. Youth Employment Strategy

Cllr Wixley declared a **non-pecuniary interest** for agenda item 10.1 for the Financial Assistance Applications 2024/25 for 9. Epping Forest Heritage Trust; 12. Loughton Cricket Club; 14. Restore Community – Grow Community Garden; 19. South Loughton Cricket Club and for agenda item 10.2 for 7. Citizens Advice Epping Forest District – as a member.

RG306 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2024 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

RG307 Public Representations

There were no public representations.

RG308 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report

The Town Clerk and Chairman had nothing to report.

RG309 Training and Conferences

The Committee NOTED the update on staff training.

RG310 Royal British Legion

The Committee NOTED the thank you letter received from the Royal British Legion for the contribution to the Poppy Appeal.

RG311 Annual Town Meeting

The Committee NOTED that the Annual Town Meeting will be held at 8pm at The Murray Hall, Borders Lane, Loughton IG10 3SB on Tuesday 5 March 2024. The format will be the same as the previous year.

Cllr Owen arrived during this item and took over as Chairman for the remainder of the meeting.

RG312 Meetings Schedule

The Town Clerk informed members that confirmation had just been received of Epping Forest District Council's (EFDC) meetings calendar for 2024/25, which was now available on their website.

The Town Clerk would investigate the possibility of amending the date of the Council meeting scheduled for Tuesday 23 April 2024, (due to a clash with an EFDC's Overview and Scrutiny committee meeting). Although he is generally, reluctant to do so, once the timetable had been set, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

There are however likely to be a few amendments to the Planning and Licensing Committee meetings set for May 2024. This is because the meetings schedule was constructed before the notification of Town Council elections, scheduled for Thursday 2 May 2024.

The Committee AGREED to delegate the production of the Loughton Town Council draft meeting schedule for 2024/25 to the Town Clerk, subject to email consultation with members, and ratification at the first appropriate Town Council meeting. The Town Clerk advised the draft calendar of meetings would be produced and shared in due course.

RG313 Financial Assistance Applications 2024/25

313.1 General Applications

The Committee considered the proposals of the Working Party and noted a recommendation by a member, that application numbers 3. Affordable Councillors Epping Forest and 27. Voluntary Action Epping Forest should receive increased funding. The large volume of applications (which have increased significantly this year) added to the difficulty of appropriating allocations.

After some discussion it was AGREED to accept the original recommendations of the Working Party for the 2024/ 25 applications, and to make the following contributions from the scheme by granting financial assistance as listed below. Members also NOTED that it is

Council policy to withhold 10% in case of emergency applications during the year.

Members thanked the Deputy Town Clerk and Officers for their hard work on the scheme.

The Town Clerk also recognised the very thorough work of Councillors during the assessment process.

Organisation	Amount Granted £	Purpose of Grant
1. Accuro	500.00	Educational activities for children and young people
2. Action for Family Carers	0 Unsuccessful on this occasion	Club Lead (staff) costs
3. Affordable Counselling Epping Forest	500.00	Counselling sessions
4. Alfie James	200.00	Performance skills workshops
5. BASICS Essex	1,120.00	Equipping a volunteer Doctor
6. Christian Drama Resource Centre	500.00	Website update / PC upgrade / storage boxes / staff costs
8. Epping Forest Foodbank	3,000.00	Food supplies / rent
9. Epping Forest Heritage Trust	500.00	Core staff costs / conservation tools
10. Grant a Smile CIC	250.00	A community wide event celebrating diversity and culture
11. Loughton Baptist Church	0 Unsuccessful due to our criteria / NALC guidelines	Soundproofing of main hall / building
12. Loughton Cricket Club	500.00	Lawnmower
13. Loughton Voluntary Care Association	1,000.00	Operating costs
14. Restore Community – Grow Community Garden	2,500.00	Running costs
15. Restore Community – Noah's Ark Toddler Groups	2,500.00	Running costs
16. Restore Community – Oakwood Hill Community Centre	2,500.00	Operational costs

17. Roding Valley Parkrun	400.00	New PA system
18. Samaritans Redbridge Branch	700.00	Running costs
19. South Loughton Cricket Club	249.99	Jet washer
20. Spark – a branch of Worth Unlimited	1,500.00	Complex cases counselling service
21. St Clare Hospice	600.00	'Help people live well with dementia' garden project
22. St Mary's Church Loughton – (application a)	244.08	Additional chairs, with arms
23. St Mary's Church Loughton – (application b)	350.00	Table tennis table
24. St Michael & All Angels Church – Little Angel Toddlers	400.00	Play area matting / toys
25. The Lopping Endowment Corporate Trust	1,200.00	Renovation of brickwork / terracotta carvings
26. 3Food4U	3,000.00	Rent for venue
27. Voluntary Action Epping Forest	1,000.00	Benefit advice service
28. Youth Employment Strategy	1,750.00	3 conferences for school students at Waltham Abbey Marriott Hotel
Total awarded	26,964.07	

313.2 Citizens Advice – Epping Forest District

The Committee CONFIRMED that a separate budget item for a grant provision to Citizens Advice (CA) is in place. The budget allocation of £8,500 for 2024/25 was AGREED.

Organisation	Amount Granted £	Purpose
Citizens Advice – Epping Forest District	8,500.00	Running Costs

RG314 Financial Limits

The Committee confirmed and AGREED the financial limits, as listed in the agenda, are adequate.

RG315 Payments Procedures

The Committee reviewed and discussed the Direct Debit payments currently being made by the Council and NOTED that all instructions and Direct Debit mandates have previously been approved by the Council and the mandates authorised by two Councillor signatures.

RG316 Finance

316.1 Current Financial Position

The Committee's financial position as at 30 November 2023 along with available funds in earmarked reserves as at 30 November 2023 were NOTED.

316.2 Accounts Paid

The Committee NOTED that payments totalling £566,639.62 as detailed on payment schedules nos. 383-386 have been made since the report to the meeting on 29 November 2023, and that schedules and accompanying invoices are available for inspection at the Council offices.

RG317 Internal Auditor

The Chairman thanked officers for their work and the Committee NOTED the clean Interim Internal Audit Report from auditors Heelis and Lodge.

RG318 Insurance

Following discussion, members CONFIRMED the current levels of insurance cover as summarised.

RG319 Asset Register

The Committee NOTED the Register of Assets and Properties at 23 January 2024, and would follow up on a few minor points.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked members for attending and closed the meeting at 8.16 pm.

Signed:

Date: 10 April 2024