

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 29 May 2024 at
7.45pm**

Present

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

Also in attendance: Cllr S Fontenelle (until Min no RC6)

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

Also Present: Vanessa Gayton, Team Manager Community Development and Wellbeing, Customer and Communities, Epping Forest District Council (EFDC)

RC1 To Confirm the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and membership of the Committee
Cllr Wixley was confirmed as Chairman of the Recreation Committee and Cllr Murray was confirmed as Vice-Chairman. The Chairman welcomed Cllr Sylvan to the Committee, all other members had served this Committee in the previous Council.

RC2 Apologies
No apologies had been received.

RC3 Declarations of Interest
Cllrs Wixley and Murray declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 8, as they are acquainted with the Wintle family. Cllr Wixley declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 18, as a former employee of Essex and Suffolk Water. Cllr Murray declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 12 as his property overlooks the changing room buildings.

RC4 Confirmation of Minutes
The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2024 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RC5 Public Representations
None were received.

RC6 Oakwood Hill Area in Loughton
Vanessa Gayton, Team Manager Community Development and Wellbeing, Customer and Communities (EFDC), was welcomed to the meeting and provided a brief update on proposals for the Oakwood Hill area. EFDC have received Public Health Accelerator Funding to support their place-based approach to tackling health inequalities. The funding will enable EFDC to recruit a Community Engagement Officer specifically for the Oakwood Hill area of Loughton. The officer will be responsible for coordination and development of a wide range of partnership projects to improve the health and wellbeing of residents in the area.

The EFDC Environment Protection Team is looking at a funding bid to Essex County Council (ECC) to develop a pocket park, potentially at Longcroft Rise in Oakwood Hill.

Members were invited to ask questions.

It was broadly felt that any potential funding could be best used for renewing footpaths close to Oakwood Hill on the Roding Valley Recreation Ground.

To enable Members to make an informed decision as to whether to support the development of a pocket park, it was AGREED that the Town Clerk would seek further information from Fabrizio Ferrari, Public Health Improvement Officer, Health Improvement Team Manager – Customer and the Community (EFDC) who is leading the project.

Vanessa Gayton was thanked for her presentation.

Cllr Fontenelle left the meeting.

RC7 Newmans Lane Playground Project

The Town Clerk reported that Thomas Willingale and St John Fisher Schools had both been approached with regards to taking part in the consultation process, but no responses had been forthcoming. A personal visit had been made by the Town Clerk and Services Manager to Oak View School, with the emphasis on discussing equipment suited to park users with special educational needs, as students and staff from the school are known to regularly frequent this playground.

The Committee NOTED the report and the projection for the next stages in the process, and it was AGREED that Alderton Junior School would also be approached to take part in the consultation process.

RC8 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report

- The Committee NOTED that a Memorial Bench Policy and Memorial Tree Policy will be produced for the next Recreation Committee for consideration.
- The Committee NOTED that the bench for the Wintle family had been installed and the installation of the bench for the Lee family is imminent, (deferred very recently due to torrential rain). Rec Min 295.1 & 295.2 refer.
- The Town Clerk reported that work is ongoing regarding the Loughton Cricket Club boundary.
- The Chairman reminded members that the lighting of the beacon to commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day was on Thursday 6 June, at Hillyfields Open Space, with all welcome to attend.

Roding Valley Recreation Ground (RVRG)

RC9 Roding Valley Cricket Club (RVCC) – Min no RC313

The Committee NOTED that Progress on the proposed transfer of cricket area continues to be protracted. The RVCC have now completed their Clubmark and safeguarding policies, so they can apply for loans from the Essex Cricket Board (ECB).

RC10 RVRG Tree Survey – Min no RC314

The Committee NOTED that follow-up works to trees, (following the comprehensive tree survey carried out by Place Services in late 2023), have been delayed due to

persistent wet weather, and consequently, soft ground conditions. Commencement of the works is expected imminently, now that the ground has hardened and the Council's contractors are confident that their vehicles can move freely across the site.

RC11 RVRG – Memorial Trees – Min no RC315

The Town Clerk reported that there have been no further developments since the previous report it is unlikely that anything further will be forthcoming until the tree planting season in the autumn.

RC12 RVRG Changing Rooms – Min no RC316

i. Security / Health and Safety

The Town Clerk has contacted the Senior Asset Manager at EFDC regarding all aspects of the delapidated buildings. Although under the terms of the lease the Town Council is responsible for all of the buildings on its section of the recreation ground, as this is such a serious issue, the Town Clerk will continue to liaise closely with officers at EFDC to reach a mutually agreeable solution.

ii. Development of the building

Members reviewed the request and AGREED to decline any such approach for the foreseeable future.

RC13 Football Pitch Hire on the RVRG

The Committee NOTED that there had been no requests for football pitches for the forthcoming 2024/25 season.

RC14 RVRG Playground – Min no RC300

The Committee NOTED the request by a member of the public regarding the future use of safety harnesses, and it was AGREED that the decision made at the previous meeting to not allow harnesses to be used for health and safety reasons would remain as the council's policy going forward but would note these circumstances for future playground projects.

Members NOTED that a major independent inspection of all playgrounds is to be carried out by the inspection company TMPI on 29 May 2024.

RC15 Roding Valley Angling Club (RVAC) – Min no RC312

The Committee NOTED that permission had been given for RVAC to place a noticeboard close to the Greensted Road entrance, but that work had not yet commenced to install it.

RC16 Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) Signs – Min no RC312

The Committee NOTED that further signs were obtained from EFDC and had been installed onto notice boards on the RVRG.

RC17 Paddle / Padel Tennis

The Committee NOTED the report and AGREED that it would not support the request from this commercial enterprise, which would also potentially mean losing a section of the playing fields.

RC18 Essex & Suffolk Water (ESW) – Min no REC 297

The Committee NOTED that restoration site works would have been completed but have been delayed because of recent heavy rain. The Service Manager reported

that completion works were expected imminently, and a report would be made at the next meeting.

Other Agenda Items

RC19 Town Council Community Halls

The Committee NOTED that a General Election had been called for 4 July 2024 and both Murray Hall and Kingsley Hall had been booked for use as polling stations. The Town Clerk would investigate whether display boards providing information relating to the work of the Town Council could be displayed at Murray Hall on the day.

19.1 Murray Hall

The Committee NOTED the report detailing costings for necessary forthcoming maintenance works and AGREED to vire £4k from the Murray Hall gas budget to be vired to the Murray Hall building and maintenance budget.

19.2 Kingsley Hall

The Committee NOTED that improvement works to three low level windows at the front of the building was necessary, and would be commencing in the next few weeks.

RC20 Inappropriate planting of trees on Hillyfields Open Space and Jessel Green by Essex County Council (ECC) / Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) – Min no RC318

This development had already been raised at the Town Council meeting on 21 February 2024.

- I. **Hillyfields Open Space** – The Committee NOTED the report.
- II. **Jessel Green** – The Committee NOTED the report.

RC21 Jessel Green Fun Day – Sunday 23 June 2024

The Committee NOTED the progress report and AGREED that a Councillor-run stall, with tombola, should be part of the event and that members should be encouraged to run the stall.

Cllr Murray Declared a non-pecuniary interest in the following item, as he is known to the family.

RC22 Request for a Memorial Bench Plaque

The Committee NOTED the request and AGREED in principle, subject to the wishes of the family.

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

RC23 Memorial Garden

The Committee NOTED the report on the completion of refurbishment works following the incident with the stolen car.

The Town Clerk reported that he had received an offer from a former Town Councillor to pay for a replacement bench, with the proviso that it contained a plaque commemorating a lost loved-one. The Committee AGREED to accept the

proposal and that the new bench should also contain the commemorative plaque that been retrieved from the bench destroyed in the collision.

RC24 Oak Processionary Moth – Min no RC242.1

The Committee NOTED that the Services Manager will conduct a visual survey of oak trees across all Town Council sites in June 2024, and would report back accordingly, at the next Recreation Committee meeting.

RC25 Restructure of Working Group

The Committee NOTED the report on the Roding Valley Recreation Ground Improvements Projects Working Group (RVRGIPWG) and AGREED to the new title of Recreation Working Party (RWP). The Committee AGREED that The Chairman, Vice -Chairman and Cllr House would sit on this group to work with the Town Clerk and Services Manager. It was further AGREED that the group should be allowed the flexibility to include individual ward councillors to contribute at appropriate times.

RC26 Financial Position

The Committee NOTED the financial position as of 31 March 2024.

The Committee AGREED that authorisation for the Town Clerk to be able to vire amounts between budgets (subject to a cap) should be put before the Resources and General Services Committee for approval.

RC27 Future Work of the Committee

Reverting to the Newmans Lane Playground project it was AGREED that Cllrs Mackinnon, Sylvan and Valentine, together with the Town Clerk and Services Manager would form the selection panel, to review the tenders and designs from the prospective playground contractors, when they are forthcoming.

Cllr Wixley made an offer to committee members to organize a walk over the Recreation Ground and other areas to show members some of the things that the Committee is responsible for.

Signed:

Date: 3 September 2024