

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 3 September
2024 at 7.30pm**

Present Councillors: D Wixley (in the chair)

L House (from Min no RC33)	N MacKinnon
S Murray	M Stubbings
R Sylvan (until Min no RC46)	K Valentine

Also in attendance: Cllr R Brookes

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

Also Present: Chris Couldrey, Treasurer, South Loughton Cricket Club (SLCC)

RC28 Apologies

No apologies had been received, although Cllr House had previously informed that he would be arriving late due to a prior commitment.

RC29 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Murray declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda item 5, as a social member of SLCC. Cllr Wixley declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda item 16, as a former employee of Essex and Suffolk Water.

RC30 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29 May 2024 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. The Chairman asked that the following items be NOTED:

- That the council staff involved in the organisation and delivery of the beacon lighting, to mark the 80th anniversary of the Normandy Landings on 6 June 2024 (Min no RC8), be congratulated on the success of the event.
- That a report be made at this meeting on the findings of the major independent inspection of all playgrounds conducted by the inspection company TMPI on 29 May 2024 (Min no RC14).
- That following Cllr Wixley's offer to committee members to organize a walk over the Recreation Ground and other areas to show members some of the areas that the Committee is responsible for (Min no RC27), Cllr Sylvan had taken up accepted the offer to accompany him on the tour, which took place on 20th July 2024.

RC31 Public Representations

None were received.

RC32 South Loughton Cricket Club (SLCC) – Min no RC267

Chris Couldrey, the Treasurer of SLCC, addressed the Committee and presented outline plans for the redevelopment of the cricket pavilion, which is currently in the pre-application submission stage with Epping Forest District Council (EFDC). Members were invited to ask questions and reviewed initial sketch drawings for the project. The current lease with EFDC will expire in 2027 and a new lease will need to be put in place. There is likely to be some changes in existing dimensions; with the overall height of the new pavilion to be six metres. Residents living in properties in River Way would be consulted on the plans.

The Town Clerk advised of the benefit of holding an early meeting between SLCC, EFDC and Loughton Town Council (LTC) at the earliest opportunity, to expedite the process.

The Committee AGREED that SLCC plays a valuable part in the local community, and also the provision of recreation activities over many years. As such the Committee was broadly supportive, subject to receipt of a full application and consideration by the Planning and Licensing Committee, which would be looked at in due course.

The Committee thanked Chris Couldrey for his presentation and looked forward to hearing future developments.

Cllr House joined the meeting.

RC33 Oakwood Hill project – Min no RC6

The Committee NOTED the report, and Vanessa Gayton, Team Manager Community, Development and Wellbeing, Epping Forest District Council (EFDC), would be invited to attend the next Recreation Committee meeting to provide a further update.

RC34 Newmans Lane Playground Project – Min no RC7

The Town Clerk reported that the tender process via the governments Project Finder Portal, had attracted the initial interest of eight major playground companies in the project. The recent public consultation held at Loughton Library was well attended, and the data received was available for members to peruse during or after the meeting. A further consultation would be held with Oak View School in the coming days and it was noted that there had also been a healthy response to the consultation via social media. The Committee also noted that following the closure of the tender submission date, the Playground Panel would meet to review all submissions during the week commencing 7 October 2024.

RC35 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report

- The Committee NOTED that the installation of the bench for the Lee family had now been carried out and had been well received.
- The Town Clerk reported that there had been no further developments on the Loughton Cricket Club (LCC) boundary since the last meeting of this Committee. The Town Clerk further stated that he would soon be arranging a meeting with LCC officials to discuss this matter, as well as broader issues relating to grounds maintenance and the responsibilities of all parties involved in the management of the site.
- The Town Clerk reported that the Resources and General Services Committee would be approached at the next meeting to review whether the

Town Council would wish to participate in the commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of VE Day by taking part in a nationwide beacon lighting event on 8 May 2025, which would use Hillyfields Green as the venue.

- Members were reminded that the Town Council's 'Loughton Horticultural Show' was to be held this coming Saturday, 7 September 2024, at Murray Hall; all members of the Committee were invited to attend.

Roding Valley Recreation Ground (RVRG)

RC36 Roding Valley Cricket Club (RVCC) – Min no RC9

The Committee NOTED that progress on the proposed transfer of the cricket area continues to be protracted, and that there had been no significant developments since the last meeting of this Committee, but that RVCC were still working on a loan from the Essex Cricket Board (ECB).

RC37 RVRG Tree Survey – Min no RC10

The Committee NOTED that the Town Council's contractors had now completed all follow-up works to trees, (following the comprehensive tree survey carried out by Place Services in late 2023). The Services Manager reported that during the works a further Oak tree had been identified as having an infestation of Oak Processionary Moth (OPM), and that works to remove the nests would soon be undertaken.

RC38 RVRG – Memorial Trees – Min no RC11

The Committee NOTED the report.

RC39 Memorial Tree and Bench Policy

The Committee considered the report and AGREED the detailed draft policy, subject to the following:

- The policy should be universal and apply to all Town Council controlled green spaces, including those overseen by the Environment and Heritage (E &H) Committee. This proposal would be taken to the next E & H Committee meeting for members to review.
- Point 3.2 should also include the wording 'permission is required from, but not limited to the local Highways Authority, Essex County Council, Epping Forest District Council and or any other relevant authorities.
- Point 5.12 – the two time frames to be extended to "6 weeks" and "12 weeks" respectively.

It was noted that another application for a memorial bench had been received from a local resident that very day.

RC40 RVRG Changing Rooms – Min no RC12 -Security / Health and Safety

The Committee NOTED the report and AGREED that quotations should be sought at the earliest opportunity.

- for the demolition of both changing room buildings
- for the capping of the building and potential parapet work.

RC41 Football Pitch Hire on the RVRG- Min no RC13

The Committee NOTED the report and AGREED to the decision of the Recreation Working Party (RWP), to permit the use of one full-size football pitch for the forthcoming 2024/25 season only.

RC42 Independent Playground Inspection – Min no RC14

The Committee NOTED that a purchase order has been issued to the Play Inspection Company, who are tasked to carry out the next major independent inspection of all playgrounds in November 2024, exact date to be confirmed.

The Services Manager reported that the previous full independent inspection of all Town Council playgrounds, conducted in May 2024, resulted in a very positive report with minimal remedial works necessary. All works recommended in the May 2024 inspection report had now been completed.

RC43 Essex & Suffolk Water (ESW) – Min no RC18

The Committee NOTED that the majority of the remedial work has now been completed by ESW. The Services Manager reported that there remained one small area of concern relating a partially exposed section of pipework. Officers would be contacting ESW in this regard in the coming days.

Other Agenda Items

RC44 Town Council Community Halls

44.1 Murray Hall

The Committee NOTED the following;

- A new heating thermostat has been installed, providing greater control and flexibility on the heating timings.
- Electricity bills have now been switched to British Gas and hopefully this will result in more reliable and consistent billing.
- As the Town Council electric van is now charged from Murray Hall directly, a cost reallocation will need to be considered during the financial year, from the 'Murray Hall electricity' budget line to 'van' budget line.
- The air conditioning units are not working and repair quotes have been sought.

The Town Clerk reported that he was currently discussing impending maintenance issues with the Services Manager and Halls and Bookings Officer, and that a full report would be made at the next meeting of this Committee. It was further reported that the East 15 Acting School would be returning to the hall on 7 October 2024, through to May 2025.

Issues arising from two recent party hires were NOTED, and as a result it was AGREED that the following points should be added to the terms and conditions of hire:

- "The Town Council is not responsible for matters beyond its control. e.g. loss of utilities power or water "
- "Hirers are responsible for the noise levels (decibels) generated by their own contractors"

44.2 Kingsley Hall – Min no RC19.2

The Committee NOTED that work on the front windows is now complete, and officers had been impressed by the high standard of work.

RC45 Jessel Green Fun Day – Sunday 23 June 2024 – Min no RC319

The Committee NOTED the report regarding the successful Jessel Green Day in the summer. The Town Clerk gave a comprehensive report on the sad and disappointing news that had just broken on the day, that the Red Ballon Foundation

(RBF) was now in the process of appointing liquidators to close the registered charity down. RBF has been a consistent supporter of LTC and its activities over many years and he explained how this would adversely affect LTC, now and also in the future

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

RC46 Request for a memorial bench plaque – Min no RC22

The Town Clerk reported that the Services Manager had met with the person who had made the initial request, and that confirmation of final adjustments to the design of the plaque were awaited from him.

Cllr Sylvan left the meeting.

RC47 Memorial Garden bench – Min no RC23

The Town Clerk reported that he would be following-up on the recent kind offer of a former Town Councillor regarding the donation of a new bench.

RC48 Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) – Min no RC242.1

The Committee NOTED that the Services Manager conducted a visual survey of Oak trees across all Town Council sites in June 2024, and that OPM was detected in two trees on the RVRG. The Services Manager reported that both trees had now been treated, and that a further tree on Hillyfields Open Space had been reported to the City of London Corporation, as it fell within their section of this site.

RC49 Financial Position

The Committee NOTED the current financial position as of 30 June 2024, together with details of the funds now available from earmarked reserves.

RC50 Future Work of the Committee

Cllr Murray to produce a report detailing a long-term strategic vision for the RVRG.

Signed:
Date: 5 November 2024