

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 5 November 2024  
at 7.30pm**

**Present**

**Councillors:**

D Wixley (in the chair)	
L House (from Min no. RC55)	N MacKinnon (from Min no. RC55)
M Stubbings	K Valentine

**Also in attendance:**

**Officers:**

M Squire (Town Clerk)  
P Hoy (Services Manager)  
K Pendlebury (Responsible Financial Officer – Pending)

**Also Present:**

Vanessa Gayton, Team Manager Community Development and Wellbeing Customer and Communities, Epping Forest District Council (EFDC)  
Cllr Chidi Nweke, EFDC Councillor

Attendees were asked if anyone were going to record the meeting and confirmed that they would not be recording.

**RC51 Apologies**

An apology had been received from Cllr Murray. Cllrs House and MacKinnon had both previously indicated that they would arrive a little late.

**RC52 Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Wixley declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda item 7, as a former employee of Essex and Suffolk Water. The Town Clerk and Services Manager declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda item 11, as they had both attended a training seminar organised by 'Proludic', which predominantly focussed on inclusivity in children's playgrounds .

**RC53 Confirmation of Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2024 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**RC54 Public Representations**

None were received.

Cllrs House and MacKinnon both joined the meeting during the next item.

**RC55 Oakwood Hill Project – Min no RC33**

Vanessa Gayton, Team Manager Community Development and Wellbeing Customer and Communities, Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) was welcomed to the meeting and provided a comprehensive update on community work in the Oakwood Hill area. Copies of "Oakwood Hill Matters," a new community newsletter were left for members to peruse. The work carried out so far has been centred on:

- After school club
- Funding for up to six people to gain child minding qualifications
- The appointment of a community Champion, Claire Silver, who has initiated a new residents' Facebook page and yoga sessions, with a Christmas meal and a summer barbeque planned
- Female Entrepreneurship programme
- Foodbank collection point, in conjunction with Restore
- "Ladies Dance and Dine" programme, for up to 15 residents
- "Let's Get Together" social group
- Mindful Arts Space – mental health support and advice
- Beginning in January 2025, "Movement of the Mind", for up to six mental health service users
- Funding for "Safer Streets" – diversionary activities aimed at both primary and secondary school age groups
- Creative Youth Club – music, art, podcasting etc, with mentorship from students from New City College

An invite from Claire Evans, EFDC Community Engagement Officer, Oakwood Hill, who had been invited but unable to attend this meeting, was extended via Vanessa Gayton to all members for the first annual stakeholder event for Oakwood Hill on Friday 15 November at Oakwood Hill Community Hall, Loughton. This would provide an opportunity to highlight key projects that have been developed in the Oakwood Hill area, and to explore the priorities for the area and how they can be addressed. Members Noted that the time of the event was 12.30pm.

Members took the opportunity to ask questions, and Vanessa Gayton was thanked for her presentation and for the work carried out on the Oakwood Hill Estate so far.

**RC56 Roding Valley Recreation Ground – Changing Rooms – Potential 'Mens Shed' Project**

EFDC Councillor, Chidi Nweke, was welcomed to the meeting and provided an update on the potential project to convert the derelict changing rooms to a 'Men's Shed' workshop for the benefit of the local community. The Chairman, Town Clerk and Services Manager met with Cllr Nweke at the changing room buildings on 4 October 2024, and the full scale of the task to convert the buildings into a safe working space were made aware to Cllr Nweke. Funding from multiple sources would be necessary to enable the project to commence.

Members took the opportunity to ask questions and Cllr Nweke was thanked for his presentation.

**RC57 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report**

Members NOTED the Town Clerk's report.

The Chairman highlighted and the Committee confirmed that they had received his e-mail, which provided information on two issues that originated from the Environment and Heritage Committee i.e. proposed Fields in Trust status for Jessel Green and potential budget implications to support the local Speed Watch Group.

**Roding Valley Recreation Ground (RVRG)**

**RC58 Roding Valley Cricket Club (RVCC) – Min no RC36**

The Committee NOTED that progress on the proposed transfer of the cricket area continues to be protracted.

**RC59 RVRG Changing Rooms – Min no RC40 – Security / Health and Safety**

The Committee NOTED that two quotes for the demolition of both buildings had been obtained. The Services Manager reported that work to install security measures to prevent access to the roof would amount to between £6k and £10k.

Members AGREED

- to invite Cllr Nweke to the next committee meeting to provide an update on progress on the potential Men's Shed Project;
- that in the meantime he should be informed of the urgency, to make immediate remedial works and that a timeline needs to be set to put these measures in place.

**RC60 Damage to RVRG Gate**

The Committee NOTED that damage to the main gate from the Oakwood Hill Estate to the RVRG was identified on the evening of 2 October 2024. An insurance claim has been made and accepted by the Council's insurance company, value £450, and the repair is due to be carried out on Thursday 7 November 2024.

**Other Agenda Items**

**RC61 Newmans Lane Playground Project – Min no RC34**

The Town Clerk reported that 10 companies had expressed an interest in the project, of which eight tender submissions had been received. All five members of the sub-committee assigned to choose the winning tender agreed that the scheme submitted by Proludic most accurately complied with the brief and provided dynamic play equipment with a high emphasis on inclusiveness. The Committee NOTED that work would commence in January 2025 and that feedback was currently being provided to all of the unsuccessful bidders.

**RC62 Essex Playing Fields Association AGM & Awards Evening**

The Committee NOTED the Chairmans report.

**RC63 Davenant Playing Fields**

The Committee NOTED the report. Further comment is awaited from Davenant Foundation School before a clear direction on this issue can be agreed. It was AGREED that any possible expenditure involved would be split between this Committee and the Environment and Heritage Committee, whose remit includes the neighbouring Lady Whittakers Mead.

**RC64 Jessel Green 'Fields in Trust' Status**

The Committee NOTED the report and AGREED to support the initiative as proposed by the Environment and Heritage Committee (Min no's EH6 and EH32).

It was AGREED that a comprehensive consultaion should be sent to local residents, in the vicinity of Jessel Green, to support the 'Fields in Trust' application, which would be carried out in due course.

**RC65 Town Council Community Halls**

**65.1 Murray Hall – Min no 44.1**

The Committee NOTED the report listing recent expendture on Murray Hall and potential projects that will need future funding, which need to be taken into account in the budget process.

**65.2 Kingsley Hall**

The Committee NOTED that the flooring throughout Kingsley Hall will need replacing at some point soon, which will similarly affect future budgets.

**RC66 Financial Position**

The Committee NOTED the current financial position as of 30 September 2024.

**RC67 2025/2026 Fees and Charges Review**

The Committee AGREED to an increase in fees and charges of 2.7%, in line with the Retail Price Index (RPI).

**RC68 Committee Priorities for 2025/2026**

The Committee reviewed its priority list for 2025/26 and AGREED to insert the 'Kingsley Hall floor' into number 2 and 'fencing at Willingale Road Playing Field' into number 3.

**RC69 2025/26 Budget**

The Town Clerk stated that this was very much a preliminary budget and may need to be adjusted at a later stage, in lieu of establishing more reliable utility costs data, and implementing the changes from the Chancellor's budget on Employer costs etc. The general budget figures were based on a 3% increase on many budget lines and more provision had been made on expenditure on tree maintenance.

The Committee was informed that no substantial funds for major projects would likely be available until the prepayment of public works loans at the tail end of financial year 2027/28.

An additional £5k was requested to be added to Earmarked Funds for speeding indicator measurement equipment for the Valley Hill area.

Members AGREED the preliminary budget figures.

**RC70 Future Work of the Committee**

None to report.

Signed: .....

Date: 15 January 2025