

THESE MINUTES NOT YET CONFIRMED

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 26 June 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)
R Brookes
S Fontenelle
S Murray
I Allgood
N MacKinnon
M Stubbings

Also present: Cllr D Wixley

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

There were no members of the public present.

The Chairman advised the meeting would be recorded.

RG1 Apologies for absence
There were no apologies for absence received.

RG2 Declarations of Interest
No Declarations of Interest were received.

RG3 Confirmation of Minutes
The minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2024 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

RG4 Public Representations
There were no public representations.

RG5 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report
The Town Clerk reported:

- There will be a Staff and Strategy meeting on the 28.6.24. predominantly to discuss the Deputy Town Clerk / RFO's retirement in October 2024 and the potential taking over the closed Church Yard at St John's.
- The Town Clerk had attended that day, the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) Essex Branch, annual general meeting / training day, where the introduction of Martyn's Law (following the Manchester bombings), and is currently pending UK wide legislation, was discussed. The law will require plans to be in place for potential terrorist threats, in events being attended by more than 1,000 people. Both Jessel Green and Loughton day would be applicable, and further information will be brought back to a Town Council meeting in due course.

The Chairman had nothing to report.

- RG6 Training and Conferences**
Members NOTED the update on training.
- RG7 Staff Salaries 2024/25**
Following discussion, the Committee NOTED the update.
- RG8 80th Anniversary of D-Day Landings Commemoration**
Members NOTED the update and fitting tribute, which was well attended by residents.
- RG9 Flag Flying**
The Committee NOTED the update, and requested that the St George's flag, is raised in support, should England be successful in getting to the final UEFA European Football Championship 24 football tournament.
- RG10 Christmas Card 2024**
The Committee AGREED to continue with last year's format of producing a festive photo card to be circulated digitally, and with a donation being made to charity.
- RG11 Civic Service 2025**
The Committee AGREED that the Town Mayor may hold a Civic Service, should she so wish, with details (if applicable) to be determined in due course.
- RG12 Councillor / Staff Long Service Awards**
Following discussion, Members AGREED that certificates and (or) badges for Councillors who had completed a minimum of 10 years, then 15 and 20 years etc., should be implemented. The Town Clerk agreed to give this some thought and would take to the imminent Strategy & Staff Group (SSG) meeting.

The Committee also AGREED that staff should also be recognised for similar long time service. The Town Clerk to recommend to the SSG meeting that extra day's holiday for significant milestones (e.g. 10, 15, 20 years' service).
- RG13 Finance**
- 13.1 Current Financial Position**
The Committee's financial position as at 30 April 2024 along with available funds in earmarked reserves as at 30 April 2024 were NOTED.
- 13.2 Accounts Paid**
The Committee NOTED that payments totalling £340,807.83 as detailed on payment schedules nos. 389-392 have been made since the report to the meeting on 10 April 2024, and that schedules and accompanying invoices are available for inspection at the Council offices.

A member highlighted that there was difficulty in seeing the detail supplied in the agenda on this item. The Town Clerk agreed that A3 copies would be made available in future meetings.

Following discussion, Members requested that the Town Council request a detailed breakdown of the election costs from Epping Forest District Council (EFDC), following the recent election and that these are shared via email with the Committee once the invoice is received.

Members also discussed and would like to introduce an informal gathering at the end of this Town Council cycle (four years), to follow the

last Town Council meeting, and prior to Town Council elections. Officers would be asked to set up an area, for the Town Mayor / Councillors to then organise and contribute to..

RG14 Precept

Members NOTED the first instalment of the 2024/25 Precept £496,954.50, was received into the Town Council's Santander bank account on 26 April 2024.

RG15 Internal Financial Check

The Committee AGREED to continue with the appointment of a Town Councillor to undertake internal financial checks during the year, and that Cllr MacKinnon would undertake this exercise for 2024/25.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Murray for his support in managing this responsibility during 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24.

RG16 Internal Audit

The Committee NOTED the clear Internal Audit Report received from the Internal Auditors, Healis & Lodge dated 13 May 2024, and thanked the officers concerned.

RG17 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023/24

The Committee NOTED that the AGAR has been submitted to the External Auditors, PKF Littlejohn LLP, and that the completed confirmation of dates for the provision of public rights form has been displayed on Town Council noticeboards and posted on the Town Council website.

RG18 Financial Regulations

The Committee NOTED the update on the new National Association of Local Council's (NALC) model Financial Regulations and asked officers to ensure any changes are marked accordingly to assist Members, when they are asked to review.

RG19 Credit Cards

Following discussion, and noting the difficulties being experienced by officers with bank changes, the Committee AGREED the following increases in the Town Council's NatWest credit card limits:

- No 1. Town Clerk – increasing to £3,500.00
- No 2. Services Manager – increasing to £3,000.00

RG20 Budget - virements

Following discussion and recommendation from the Recreation Committee (minute RC26), Members AGREED to recommend the following to Full Council:

- Authorise the Town Clerk to be able to make any necessary virements between budgets with an individual limit being set at £6,000.00. Any virements made to be in consultation with the committee Chairman and reported thereafter to the relevant committee meeting and also the Resources and General Services Committee.

The Committee also NOTED that if agreed by Full Council, the new agreed limits will be included in the latest Financial Regulations.

RG21 Town Council's Banking Arrangements / Signatories

Members discussed and AGREED the recommendation to Town Council the transfer of the Town Council's NATWEST current account number 1, to Unity Trust Bank, along with the following recommendations regarding signatories:

- The removal of former Town Councillors Caroline Pond and Graham Wiskin from signatories on all bank accounts.
- The recommendation of the following signatories / authorisations:
 - All existing Councillor signatories to remain and be added for signatory / authorisation when the new Unity Bank account is opened.
 - Cllr Owen as signatory / authorisation on new Unity Bank account to be opened
 - Cllrs Allgood and Fontenelle as signatory / authorisation on new Unity Bank account and signatory on all other Town Council bank accounts.
- Other Councillors may also be further nominated at next Town Council meeting.

RG22 Policies Review

22.1 Code of Conduct

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Code of Conduct Policy, with the next review June 2027.

22.2 Code of Conduct Annexe 3 Complaints Procedure

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Code of Conduct Annexe 3 Complaints Procedure, with the next review June 2027.

22.3 Health and Safety

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Health and Safety Policy, with the next review June 2027.

22.4 Training Strategy

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Training Strategy Policy, with the next review June 2027.

RG23 IT Price Increase

Following discussion, the Committee AGREED the price increase and to continue with our current IT provider.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked members for attending and closed the meeting at 8.25pm.

Signed:
Date: 2 October 2024