

THESE MINUTES NOT YET CONFIRMED

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 2 October 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	I Allgood
	S Fontenelle	N MacKinnon
	S Murray	M Stubbings

Also present: Cllr D Wixley

Officers: M Squire (Town Clerk)
K Pendlebury (RFO) pending

There were no members of the public present.

The Chairman advised the meeting would be recorded.

RG24 Apologies for absence
There were no apologies for absence received.

RG25 Declarations of Interest
Cllr Murray declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 26 as he knows the former C.E.O. and Cllr Murray, Cllr Owen and Allgood declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 27 as they are District Councillors.

RG26 Confirmation of Minutes
The minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2024 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

RG27 Public Representations
There were no public representations.

RG28 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report
The Town Clerk reported:

- The Town Clerk welcomed Kate Pendlebury and noted that Kim Lumb retires on 8 October 2024
- The Town Clerk is working to adapt the Town Council's 'Financial Regulations' to the new National Association of Local Councils (NALC's) recommended template and confirmed that a marked up copy would be circulated for review for the next meeting.
- The Terrorism Bill has been introduced and had its first reading in Parliament

The Chairman had nothing to report.

RG29 Training and Conferences
 Cllr Murray asked if newly elected Councillors had attended training. The Clerk confirmed that relevant training courses were offered to all members.

Members NOTED the update on training.

RG30 Staffing
 Members NOTED the update on staffing and wished Kim well in her retirement.

RG31 Staff Salaries 2024/25
 The Committee NOTED the update.

RG32 Christmas Closedown Arrangements 2024
 The Committee agreed the reduction of 15 minutes on December 31, 2024, to close at 12.30pm. The Christmas period closure will therefore be:

Tuesday 24 December	Closed 12 noon
Wednesday 25 December	Closed
Thursday 26 December	Closed
Friday 27 December	10am – 3pm
Monday 30 December	10am – 3pm
Tuesday 31 December	10am – 12.30pm
Wednesday 1 January	Closed

RG33 Citizens Awards
 The Committee CONFIRMED its commitment to the annual Citizen Awards.

RG34 Town Mayor initiatives
 The Committee NOTED the Town Mayors decision not to hold a Civic Service in 2025 and the two new initiatives for early next year. I.e.

- Fine tuning the publicity for the Citizenship Awards, to attract and involve the younger generation.
- Hosting a mock Town Council meeting, involving members of local primary school councils. The children to set up their own agenda and to be assisted during the daytime meeting.

RG35 Financial Assistance
 The Committee AGREED that the Financial Assistance scheme should continue in 2025/26

Members NOTED receipt of emails from successful 24/25 grant recipients.

RG36 Annual Town Meeting
 The Committee NOTED the 2025 Annual Town meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 19 March 2025, commencing at 8pm in the Murray Hall, and AGREED they would like to keep the same format as previous years without a key speaker.

The Committee also AGREED to invite the Essex Fire, Police and Crime Commissioner to talk at the Council meeting in February 2025.

RG37 Finance

13.1 Current Financial Position

The Committee's financial position as at 31 July 2024 along with available funds in earmarked reserves as at 31 July 2024 were NOTED.

13.2 Accounts Paid

The Committee NOTED that payments totalling £558,250.30 as detailed on payment schedules nos. 393-395 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.

Cllr Brookes asked if there was a review of unrepresented cheques with appropriate timely follow up. The Clerk confirmed that this was a regular procedure.

RG38 Internal Financial Check

Members NOTED that Councillor MacKinnon visited the office on Wednesday 17 July 2024 and undertook a financial check on invoices and cheque runs from the start of 2024/2025 financial year to date and that the next visit is 7 October 2024.

RG39 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023/24

The Committee NOTED that:

- PKF Littlejohn LLP, the external auditors, had signed and returned section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2023/2024, without any comments. This was dated 24 September 2024.
- Notice of 'Conclusion of Audit' which finalises the yearly audit requirements, dated 26 September 2024, has been posted on the Town Council's noticeboards and website.

The Chair thanked the Council for all the work completed in achieving a clean audit.

RG40 Internal Audit

The Committee NOTED that the interim internal audit from Heelis & Lodge will take place on Monday 13 January 2025.

RG41 Remembrance Service

- The Committee AGREED that the Town Council will donate £150 to the Royal British Legion in support of the Poppy Appeal and towards the cost of the wreath laid by the Town Mayor at the annual Remembrance Service to be held this year on 10 November 2024.
- Cllr Mackinnon requested that the Clerk follow up with Churches Together in Loughton regarding inclusive participation by all religious groups.

RG42 VE Day 80th Anniversary – 8 May 2025

- The Committee AGREED they wish to commemorate VE Day 80 - 'a shared moment of celebration' on the 8 May 2025, with a further beacon lighting at Hillyfields Green.

RG43 Utilities

The Committee NOTED the twelve-month contracts agreed in July 2024 with British Gas for both electricity and gas.

- RG44 Policies Review**
The Committee REVIEWED and AGREED the policies below :
- 44.1 Equal Opportunities Policy**
The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Equal Opportunities Policy, with the next review October 2027.
- 44.2 Community Engagement Strategy**
The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Community Engagement Strategy, with the next review October 2027.
- 44.3 LTC Complaints Procedure**
The Committee reviewed and AGREED the LTC Complaints Procedure, with the next review October 2027.
- RG45 Town Council’s Banking Arrangements – changes**
The Committee NOTED the update to the Town Councils Banking arrangements and change of signatories
- RG46 Loughton Town Council (LTC) email addresses and ‘Sharepoint’ access**
The Committee NOTED the update to the Town Councils email addresses and ‘Sharepoint’ access and requested in person support to ensure they are set up correctly to receive emails to the new addresses.
- RG47 Clerks and Councils Direct Magazine – September 2024 - Article**
The Committee NOTED the article attached and requested the magazine be made available in the office for review in future.
- RG48 Exclusion of the Press and Public**
The Committee AGREED to exclude the press and public from the following items and recording of the meeting was stopped.
- RG49 Local Charity**
Following a lengthy discussion the Committee agreed that the matter was in hand and that the Council would wait for the liquidators’ findings.
- RG50 EFDC Fees**
The Committee AGREED that the Council should revert to EFDC requesting clarification on some of the administration fees charged and achieve some rebate if possible. They also requested that the operational issues experienced on the day be highlighted to EFDC for future elections. Members also NOTED that earmarked reserves for elections would need to be increased significantly over the next three annual budgets in preparation for the 2028 Town/Parish Council elections.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked members for attending and closed the meeting at 9.00pm.

Signed:
Date: 4 December 2024