

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING

**MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 21 May 2025 at 7.30pm at
1 Buckingham Court, Rectory Lane, Loughton IG10 2QZ**

Present

Councillors:	K Valentine (in the chair until Min no 95)		
	D Wixley (in the chair from Min no 95)		
	I Allgood	R Brookes	W Dodd
	S Fontenelle	A Fricker	S Harriman
	K-W Lee	N MacKinnon	S Murphy
	S Murray	M Owen	C Pond
	J Riley	M Stubbings	R Sylvan

Officers:	M Squire (Town Clerk)
	P Bryce (Deputy Town Clerk)
	K Pendlebury (Responsible Financial Officer)

The meeting was preceded by a minute's silence in memory of Cllr Caroline P Pond who passed away on 13 May 2025. Cllr Pond served as Town Councillor for Alderton Ward from 2004 – 2008, and for St Johns Ward from 2008 – 2024. Also serving as Loughton Town Mayor from 2011 – 2012, and as District Councillor for St Johns Ward from 2002 – 2024.

A number of members recounted fond memories of Cllr Pond and the support that she had given to her colleagues on many occasions.

Before the commencement of the meeting, it was noted that Cllr Fontenelle would be recording the meeting.

95 Election of the Town Mayor for 2025/26

Cllr Valentine invited nominations for the role of Town Mayor. Cllr Wixley was proposed, and Cllr Wixley was unanimously elected as Town Mayor for 2025/26. Cllr Valentine presented him with the Town Mayor's badge and chain of office. Cllr Wixley took the chair and duly executed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Cllr Pond led the introductions and welcomed Cllr Wixley as Loughton Town Mayor for 2025-26. Cllr Wixley was humble in his words of acceptance, having had the honour of being Mayor in the past.

In her closing speech Cllr Valentine said how much she enjoyed her term as Town Mayor and meeting so many excellent community groups within Loughton. She added that Loughton is a wonderful community and has so much to offer its residents. Cllr Valentine also thanked the Town Clerk and his team for all their work and support, with special mention to the Town Mayor's secretary, for all her

assistance, during her period of office. Cllr Valentine was presented with her Past Town Mayor's badge.

Cllr Murray led the tributes to Cllr Valentine for her work during her year in office.

96 Appointment of Deputy Town Mayor for 2025/26

Cllr Stephen Harriman was proposed and unanimously elected as Deputy Town Mayor and presented with the Deputy Town Mayor's badge.

97 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Davies, House, Obaseki, Minhas and Ubah.

98 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were declared.

Members were reminded that if their interests change, they must, within 28 days of becoming aware of the change, complete a new register of members' interests form and return it to the Town Clerk for submission to the Monitoring Officer.

99 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2025 were confirmed. It was reported that Cllr Brookes' name had been missing as an attendee from these minutes. An amended page will be signed at the next meeting.

100 Town Clerk's Report

- Members noted that for reasons of ill health, Cllr Obaseki had been granted extended leave of absence until 17 June 2025 and Cllr House until 5 August 2025. Members noted the request for a further month's leave of absence for Cllr Obaseki until 17 July 2025.*
- Members noted that Jonathon Glynn, Finance and Administration Officer will take over the duties of Town Mayor's Secretary from Pippa Bryce, Deputy Town Clerk from this meeting onwards. This will enable Pippa to spend more time on her enhanced role, as Deputy Town Clerk.
- Members noted that Debbie Taylor had been appointed Services Manager and will commence this role on 14 July 2025 and congratulated her accordingly.
- Outgoing Services Manager, Paul Hoy was praised for his outstanding service to the Town Council.

101 Appointment of Members, and Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman, of Council Committees for 2025/26

101.1 Planning and Licensing Committee

Cllrs Davies, Dodd, Lee, Minhas, Murphy, Riley and Ubah were appointed to the Planning and Licensing Committee. Cllr Davies was elected Chairman and Cllr Riley Vice Chairman.

101.2 Recreation Committee

Cllrs House, MacKinnon, Murray, Stubbings, Sylvan, Valentine and Wixley were appointed to the Recreation Committee. Cllr Valentine was elected Chairman and Cllr Murray Vice Chairman.

*Members to review and minute at the next appropriate Committee meeting.

101.3 Environment and Heritage Committee

Cllrs Dodd, Fricker, Harriman, Obaseki, Pond, Ubah and Valentine were appointed to the Environment and Heritage Committee. Cllr Pond was elected Chairman and Cllr Fricker Vice Chairman.

101.4 Resources and General Services Committee

Cllrs Allgood, Brookes, Fontenelle, MacKinnon, Murray, Owen and Stubbings were appointed to the Resources and General Services Committee. Cllr Owen was elected Chairman and Cllr Brookes Vice Chairman.

All Committees consist of seven members.

101.5 Nomination of up to three persons per political group authorised to make substitutions in accordance with Standing Order 5e.
Cllrs Allgood, Pond and Wixley to continue.

102 Nomination of Council Representatives for 2025/26

102.1 The Council representatives on outside bodies for 2025/26 were AGREED as below:

Organisation	2025 – 26 representative(s)
Lopping Endowment	Cllr J Riley
<i>Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) – Epping Forest Branch</i>	<i>(Now defunct – no need for a representative)</i>
Local Councils' Liaison Committee	Cllrs Davies and Wixley
EALC - Local Councils Forum and AGM	Cllr Wixley
Tree Wardens (appointed by Epping Forest Countrycare)	Cllrs Fontenelle, Fricker and Wixley
Loughton Broadway Town Centre Partnership	Cllrs Brookes, Davies, Murray, and Ubah
Essex Police local community meetings	Cllrs Fontenelle, House and Wixley
Roding Valley Nature Reserve Consultative Group	Cllrs MacKinnon and Wixley (with Cllr Murray as a District Councillor on the Management Committee)

102.2 To review arrangements for reporting back on the activities of outside bodies

Representatives were requested to provide a written report, which is attached to the next Council agenda, on meetings which they have attended. A verbal report can be made on meetings attended within ten days of the Council meeting. Members were also requested to provide an annual report for the final Council meeting of the municipal year.

The Council confirmed these arrangements.

102.3 Joint Standards Committee

Cllr C Pond remained as the representative on the Joint Standards Committee for 2025/26.

102.4 Grievance Hearing and Disciplinary Appeal Panels

Cllr MacKinnon remained as the additional member to sit on both the Grievance Hearing Panel and the Disciplinary Appeal Panel.

103 Membership of Internal Council Groups

103.1 Strategy and Staff Group (includes the Complaints Panel)

Membership to continue as: Town Mayor, Deputy Town Mayor and the Chairman of each of the Committees, S Murray as a representative from the minority group. Cllr Brookes (as Vice Chairman of the Resources and General Services Committee) would attend in the absence of the Chairman of the Resources and General Services Committee.

Note: It is always open to the group to invite a member to a particular meeting if special knowledge, etc. is required.

103.2 Financial Assistance Working Group

Membership to continue as: Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Resources and General Services Committee, Cllr Murray and the immediate past Town Mayor.

The Group usually meets in January to consider the annual round of applications.

103.3 Recreation Projects Working Group

Membership: Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Recreation Committee and other members to be nominated by this Committee.

104 General Power of Competence

The Council AGREED to reassert the use of the General Power of Competence in the forthcoming Civic Year.

105 Confirmation of Standing Orders

Members AGREED the Standing Orders, noting that they had not changed since last year.

106 Confirmation of Financial Regulations

Members AGREED the Financial Regulations, noting that these had not changed since last year.

107 Year End Financials 2024/25

107.1 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ending 31 March 2025, including.

- (i) The Council AGREED AGAR (Section 1) for the Year ended 31 March 2025.
- (ii) The Council AGREED AGAR (Section 2) for the Year ended 31 March 2025.
- (iii) The Council AGREED the AGAR, noting that the internal auditor has completed and signed the Annual Internal Audit Report on page 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25.

107.2. Annual Accounts

The Town Clerk ran through salient points of the 2024/25 balance sheet and income and expenditure figures. There had been a marginal upturn in final figures as at year-end 31 March 2025. As such further funds were added back to General Reserves, (in accordance with the Town Council's reserves policy). An additional £2,000 was added back to the Closed Churchyard Earmarked Reserves and £5,000 back to Roding Valley Recreation Ground (RVRG) Changing Rooms Earmarked Reserves.

The Council APPROVED the Annual Accounts for the Year ended 31 March 2025. This statement of accounts had been prepared in accordance with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

Signed
16 July 2025