

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE COMMITTEE

**MINUTES of the Meeting held on Tuesday 28 January 2025 at 7.45pm at
1 Buckingham Court, Rectory Lane, Loughton IG10 2QZ**

Present

Councillors: K Valentine (in the Chair) A Fricker
S Harriman J Riley (substitute for Cllr Pond)
D Wixley (substitute for Cllr Obaseki)

Councillor also Present: I Allgood
S Fontenelle

Officers: P Bryce (Deputy Town Clerk)
P Hoy (Services Manager)

EH66 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Dodd, Obaseki, and Pond. The Deputy Town Clerk reported that Cllr Wixley was substitute for Cllr Obaseki, Cllr Riley was substitute for Cllr Pond and Cllr Valentine was Chairman for this meeting.

EH67 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Fricker declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 9 Best Allotment Competition as he has an allotment. Cllr Fontenelle declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 7.

EH68 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2024 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
Min EH64 Cllr Wixley reiterated his request that the Highway Rangers be contacted regarding the growth of vegetation surrounding the sign at the bottom of Lower Road and Englands Lane. Min EH60 Cllr Wixley asked if the certificates had been sent to the householders who had decorated their homes, officers confirmed that they had, and the householders were very appreciative of the recognition. Min EH50 Cllr Wixley paid tribute to the Speed Watch group and reported that the resident concerned would like to have a second device installed, this item would be included on the next Recreation Agenda.

EH69 Public Representations

None were received.

EH70 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report

The Committee NOTED the following:

- The Evolis, Speed Indicator Device (SID) is scheduled to be fitted on the lamppost by the Highway Rangers at 9 Valley Hill on 29 January 2025. Cllr Wixley reported that this should read 66 Valley Hill and 9 could possibly represent the lamppost number.
- The next 3-year tender for Christmas lights has now been posted on the 'Gov.Uk Contracts Finder' website, with three companies already showing an interest.
- Pyrles Lane (former) Allotment site EH35.2. No response has been received from EFDC to date.

- Salt bins – The impasse remains with Essex County Council (ECC). The Committee NOTED that Loughton Town Council continues with the salt grit volunteer scheme in Loughton.

EH71 Jessel Green – Fields in Trust – Min EH52

The Committee NOTED that work on this project will commence at the first available opportunity to include local residents questionnaire/consultation/ feedback. The Town Clerk will liaise with Neil Bartlett of the Save Jessel Green campaign prior to the rollout of the public consultation.

EH72 Weekly Markets – Min no EH53

The Committee NOTED that Hughmark have suggested a start date of June, but this date is subject to the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for the layby closure being in place. The Committee AGREED by unanimous vote that it would be prudent to pay for the TRO (at a cost of circa £1,000).

EH73 Heritage Asset and Conservation Areas – Extension and Protection of areas within Loughton – Min EH54.1

The Committee NOTED the response from the Senior Conservation Officer, Planning Services, Epping Forest District Council (EFDC), dated 6 December 2024. Cllr Wixley asked if the Loughton Cricket Club should be included as they have fields in trust status.

EH74 Allotments – Willingale Road Allotments Report

The Committee NOTED the report provided and noted that the next plot inspection would take place w/c 10 February. The Committee AGREED that the Best Allotment competition should continue and would therefore be held in 2025.

EH75 Events

75.1 Loughton Wombles

The Committee NOTED that Loughton Wombles has now reached its third anniversary. Typically, there are larger group meets each month, splitting into two working parties of litter pickers to cover different areas around Loughton. Recent meets: -

- Saturday 23 November 2024. One team focused on the Hillyfields Open Space and the other on the hedgerow in Colebrook Lane and Jessel Green.
- Saturday 14 December 2024 – a party tackled the Loughton Station Approach and surrounding pathways including Great Eastern Path.
- Saturday 18 January 2025 – One group cleared the green next to the Maple Gate housing area and opposite the Lidl supermarket, continuing up to the Baldwins Hill junction on Goldings Hill. The second Group worked on Chester Road and surroundings.
- Further Womble gatherings are scheduled for 15 February and 22 March 2025. We are aware that litter that ends up on the ground does not simply disappear. See some interesting statistics below of approximate rubbish breakdown timelines:

Plastics bags	-	5 - 100 years
Chewing gum	-	20 - 25 years
Cigarette butts	-	1 - 100 years
Aluminium cans	-	200 - 500 years
Plastic bottles	-	450 - 1000 years
Organic material i.e. apple core	-	1 month

75.2 Loughton Day

The Committee NOTED that Saturday 20 September 2025 has been scheduled for 'Loughton Day'.

EH76 Spring Bulb Display on Borders Lane – Min no EH58

The Committee NOTED that there are approximately forty outstanding cases registered along Borders Lane, on the ECC Highways website, the majority have an undefined timeline for completion. The likelihood of any response from ECC Highways anytime soon is remote. Officers will continue to follow up, with the hope that bulbs can be planted in October 2025.

EH77 Environmental Sustainability – Min no EH59

Members commended the Town Clerk and officers for the work involved to produce the comprehensive report. Cllr Fricker said that the information provided meant that the Town Council was in a good position for the Committee to develop a strategy going forward, based on this background information. There were areas to work on and Cllr Fricker would endeavour to provide a report for the next meeting of this Committee. Members were asked to share their thoughts and ideas on this issue with Cllr Fricker, which could then be fed into his report.

EH78 Christmas Windows Competition – Min no EH60

The Committee NOTED the winners report. Cllr Valentine said how enjoyable it had been to make the presentations, and how well they had been received. The winners were all delighted that their efforts had been acknowledged.

EH79 Locality Fund

The Committee NOTED that officers reported that a feasibility study had been completed for the fitting of solar panels at Murray Hall from a potential contractor at no cost. However, the quotation to have the panels installed was more than £36K. Members were asked for possible alternative suggestions of where the funds could be utilised quickly, and the following options were mooted.

- Use the money towards the Traffic Regulation Order for the layby closure for the weekly market.
- Replace the Bug Hotels that were installed five years ago as these would probably be deteriorating.
- A biodiversity assessment for Loughton Cemetery.
- The purchase of a second Speed Indicator Device (SID).

EH80 Tree Whips – see Recreation Committee Meeting agenda dated 15.1.25, agenda item 13 and subsequent minute number RC83

The Committee NOTED that the Services Manager will liaise with Cllr MacKinnon and if there are any surplus trees, they will be planted in areas within the Environment & Heritage Committee remit. It was also noted that Davenant Playing Fields should read Willingale Playing Field.

EH81 Litter along Station Approach

The Committee NOTED that officers have established contact with Transport for London (TFL), who have produced a map showing that the land adjacent to Loughton Station Approach and Roding Valley High School football astro turf pitches belongs to Essex County Council. Officers will write a strong letter to ECC requesting that the accumulated rubbish and takeaway food that is dropped on this land, is attracting rat infestations and needs to be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

EH82 Financial Position

Current Financial Position

The Committee NOTED the current financial position as of 20 January 2025 together with current details of the funds available from earmarked reserves.

EH83 Environmental Issues

No new items were raised.

EH84 Future Work of the Committee

No new items were raised.

Signed:

Date: 26 March 2025