

**LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL**

**RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 11 October 2017 at 7.45pm at Loughton Library & Town Hall.**

**Present:**

**Councillors:** S Pewsey (in the Chair)  
J Angold-Stephens M Dalton J Jennings  
J Mahoney A Omer

**Also in attendance:**

**Councillors:** P Abraham D Wixley

**Officers:** E K Walsh (Town Clerk)  
P Bryce (Administrative Assistant)

This meeting was preceded by a presentation by Grant Maton, from the Essex Wildlife Trust, to the Town Mayor of a framed certificate acknowledging the Council's 10-year membership of this charity.

**RG72 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Murray.

**RG73 Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of Interest were received.

**RG74 Confirmation of Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2017 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**RG75 Public Representations**

None were received.

**RG76 Matters for Report**

**76.1 Remembrance Service**

The Committee AGREED to make a donation of £100 to the Royal British Legion in support of the Poppy Appeal and towards the cost of the wreath to be laid by the Town Mayor at the Remembrance Service on 12 November 2017. Payment was approved under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

**76.2 Data Protection**

The Committee NOTED that to help the Council prepare for the changes in Data Protection law in May 2018, the Chairman and Vice Chairman would attend training provided by the Essex Association of Local Councils on Thursday 9 November 2017. The Town Clerk was also taking part in two online webinars on this topic run by the Society of Local Council Clerks and Voluntary Sector Training.

**76.3 Christmas & New Year Opening Times**

The Committee NOTED that the Town Council offices would close on Friday 22 December 2017 at 12 noon, reopening as normal to the public from 9.30am

on Wednesday 27 December until Friday 29 December at 4pm; then close on Monday 1 January 2018 with normal opening hours resuming on Tuesday 2 January 2018.

**76.4 Annual Town Meeting**

The Committee NOTED that the 2018 Annual Town Meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 14 March 2018 commencing at 8pm in the Murray Hall. Whilst this was not a council meeting, all town councillors were expected to attend.

The Committee AGREED to continue with the usual format for the meeting by inviting local organisations and voluntary groups, particularly those in receipt of Financial Assistance from the Council, to mount displays at the event to attract more public interest. The organisations successful in their grant applications for 2018/19 would also be presented with a certificate by the Town Mayor.

Members were asked to submit suggestions for a guest speaker to the Town Clerk.

**76.5 Insurance – Annual Review – Min no RG5.4**

The Committee NOTED that a low claims bonus rebate of £268.26 had been received for the financial year 2016/17. However, following the office move, an additional premium of £30.72 had been levied to cover the Town Council's former offices at 1 Buckingham Court.

**76.5.1 Insurance Claim – Min no RG91.27**

The Committee NOTED that the Council's insurance company's solicitor had confirmed that, following a court order issued by the judge, the claimant had withdrawn his claim. The solicitor had also reported that she had asked the court to issue a costs order against the claimant's solicitor to discourage such spurious action in the future by this firm.

**76.5.2 Transfer of Business**

The Town Clerk reported that following a detailed review by the Council's brokers, WPS Insurance, their underwriting business was to transfer from Aviva to Royal and Sun Alliance insurers with effect from 1 January 2018. The existing terms provided to the Town Council were to be maintained.

**76.6 Training and Conferences**

The Committee APPROVED the attendance of:

- i. Cllr Omer at the Code of Conduct training on 2 October 2017; and
- ii. Cllrs Beales and Owen on the Social Media training on 24 October 2017

for the purposes of paying travelling expenses.

**76.7 Think Loughton**

The Committee:

- i. CONFIRMED that the use of Royal Mail's Door to Door service for the delivery of the quarterly newsletter should continue.
- ii. AGREED to the use of a glossier paper for the newsletter for the Winter edition only and then to consider whether this style should continue.

**76.8 Committee Meetings**

The Committee CONFIRMED that the meeting of the Recreation Committee originally scheduled for 1 November 2017 was now to be held on Wednesday 8 November 2017 owing to a clash with a District Council meeting.

**76.9 Staffing – Min no RG70.2**

**76.9.1 Job Description**

The Committee RATIFIED the job description for the post of Responsible Financial Officer and Assistant Clerk drawn up by the Town Clerk in discussion with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of this Committee.

**76.9.2 Concierge – Min no RG79.3**

The Town Clerk confirmed that Philip Lowrie had been appointed to this new post to provide general security for evening meetings of the Council and its committees in the library. Mr Lowrie would also act as a relief caretaker for the Murray Hall. Alex Wilson, the Council's Cemetery Attendant, was to act as concierge for Wednesday night meetings.

**76.9.3 Organisation Structure Chart**

The Committee NOTED the revised chart.

**76.10 Christmas Card Competition**

Members NOTED that this had been launched in September and thanked the Library staff who were to hold a craft session from 10am – 4pm on Saturday 22 October 2017, to encourage families to create their cards.

**RG77 Finance**

**77.1 Precept – Min no RG38**

The Committee NOTED that the second instalment of the 2017/18 Precept (£317,400), collected by Epping Forest District Council, had been paid directly into the Santander bank account on 29 September 2017.

**77.2 Audit**

The Committee NOTED receipt of the External Auditor's Certificate which would be reported formally to full Council.

The Notice of Conclusion of Audit had been published on 8 September 2017 and was currently displayed on the noticeboards around the town and on the Council's website.

**77.3 Internal Audit**

The Committee NOTED that the next visit by the Council's internal auditor was booked for Thursday and Friday, 9 and 10 November 2017. The auditor would follow the previously agreed 5-year work plan.

**77.4 Internal Financial Check**

A date for Cllr Omer's visit to carry out a routine check on the Council's financial transactions was still to be arranged.

**77.5 Financial Position**

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

**77.6 Accounts Paid**

Payments totalling £187,452.66 as detailed on payments schedules nos 240 – 244 had been made since the report to the meeting on 5 July 2017. The schedules and accompanying invoices were available at the meeting for inspection.

Copies of the latest bank account reconciliations were inspected at the meeting.

**RG78 Complaints Panel**

The Committee NOTED the report of the Panel meeting held on 26 July 2017 to consider a resident's complaint relating to an investigation of an initial complaint concerning antisocial behaviour and parking issues at the Kingsley Hall.

**RG79 Health and Safety Policy Review**

The Committee carried out a review of this policy and AGREED to make the following amendment shown in italics in Section II, Organisation, item 4:

Employees have a duty:

- to report all accidents and incidents *whether or not injury was sustained including where there was a potential for an incident* and to assist with the investigation of such.

**RG80 Essex County Council Grant Funding**

Details of the new County Council scheme of funding for parish and town councils, The Local Services Fund, were considered.

The Committee asked the Town Clerk to explore this opportunity to create a grounds maintenance apprenticeship scheme.

**RG81 Office Accommodation – Min no RG79**

**81.1** The Committee NOTED the move to the new office space on the first floor of Loughton Library in July 2017.

**81.2 Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The Council RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the remainder of the meeting under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as the following item contained confidential information relating to leases.

**81.3 1 Buckingham Court**

The report and its recommendations were discussed. The Committee AGREED to offer:

1. a 3-year tenancy at £32,500 per annum
2. with an initial 3-month rent free period
3. with permission for the first floor internal wall with the counter to be removed;

Details of the lease and the initial deposit would be finalised with the Council's solicitor.

**RG82 Future Work of the Committee**

No items were raised for future discussion.

Signed .....  
Date: 6 December 2017