

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 3 May 2017 at 7.45pm at 1 Buckingham Court

Present:

Councillors: P Abraham (in the chair)
J Angold-Stephens P Beales (from Min no 69)
T Cochrane B Cohen M Dalton
T Downing (from Min no 71) J Jennings
K Latchford S Murphy S Murray
A Omer T Owen S Pewsey
C C Pond C P Pond M Stubbings
D Wixley

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

Not Present:

Councillors: R Brookes C Davies L Girling
J Mahoney

68 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Brookes, Davies and Mahoney.

Cllr Beales joined the meeting.

69 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

70 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2017 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Cllr Downing joined the meeting.

71 Public Representations

None were received.

72 Questions Without Discussion

No questions were received.

73 Town Mayor's Engagements and Announcements

The Chairman reported that, since the Council meeting on 22 February 2017, the Town Mayor had attended the following events:

Youth Makes Music at New Hall, Chigwell, the Civic Celebration at The Murray Hall, Loughton Youth Music Festival at LMC, Oak View School's Got Talent, GROW Community Garden Easter Egg Hunt and the St George's Night, Poppy Dance at the Loughton Royal British Legion.

Cllr Abraham also reported that, on behalf of the Town Mayor, he had attended the LADS performance of “A Streetcar Named Desire” at Lopping Hall and the presentations to the winners of the raffle at the Council’s tennis coaching sessions on the Roding Valley Recreation Ground.

74 Matters for Report

74.1 Finance – Min no RG46.2.2

The Committee NOTED that a complaint had been made to NatWest Bank as it appeared that the mandate instructions issued to the bank in May 2016 had been incorrectly applied.

The Council reconfirmed the signatories on the four NatWest accounts as follows:

No 1 CURRENT ACCOUNT (NatWest) and No 3 BUSINESS RESERVE (NatWest)

Position	Authorised signatory
Town Mayor	Carol Davies
Deputy Town Mayor	Philip Abraham
Chairman of Resources & General Services	Stephen Pewsey
Chairman of Environment & Heritage	Christopher C Pond (not in conjunction with CPP)
Chairman of Recreation	David Wixley
Chairman of Planning & Licensing	Jill Angold-Stephens
Additional Signatory see RGS Min 160.5	Caroline P Pond (not in conjunction with CCP)

No 2 PAYROLL ACCOUNT (NatWest)

Town Clerk	Enid K Walsh
Officer	Paul Hoy
Chairman of Resources & General Services	Stephen Pewsey
Town Mayor	Carol Davies
Chairman of Environment & Heritage	Christopher C Pond
Chairman of Planning & Licensing	Jill Angold-Stephens

No 5 For & on behalf of Loughton Town Council – SECURITY DEPOSITS (NatWest)

Town Clerk	Enid K Walsh
Deputy Town Clerk	-
Officer	Paul Hoy

Cllr Pewsey, Chairman of the Resources and General Services Committee confirmed that his Committee would review the banking arrangements at a future meeting.

74.2 Training and Conferences

Written reports on the following meetings were NOTED.

- i. Hate Crime Ambassador training, Essex Police – 28 March 2017 – Cllr Cohen;
- ii. Society of Local Council Clerks Regional Training Seminar – 27 March 2017 – Town Clerk

75 Reports from Members on Outside Organisations

75.1 Written reports on the following meetings were tabled and NOTED:

- i. **Citizens' Advice Epping Forest District** – 27 April 2017 – Cllr Angold-Stephens: Concerns were raised about funding issues and those District Councillors present were asked to make enquiries in this regard.
- ii. **Tree Wardens** – September 2016 – Cllr Cohen
- iii. **Debden Tenants Panel Meeting** – 6 March 2017 – Cllr Wixley
- iv. **Tree Wardens Meeting** – 21 March 2017 – Cllr Wixley
- v. **Roding Valley Meadows Local Nature Reserve Consultative Group** – 27 March 2017 – Cllr Wixley

76 Reports from Committees

76.1 Planning and Licensing

The reports from the meetings held on 20 February, 6 and 20 March, 3 April 2017 were NOTED.

76.2 Recreation

The report from the meeting held on 8 March 2017 was NOTED.

76.3 Environment and Heritage

The report from the meeting held on 22 March 2017 was NOTED.

Cllr C C Pond declared a non-pecuniary interest in the discussions on Min no EH48.4, Bus Service 167, as a member of Essex County Council.

76.4 Resources and General Services

The report from the meeting held on 12 April 2017 was NOTED.

77 The Annual Governance Statement

The Council members acknowledged their responsibility for ensuring that there was a sound system of internal control, including the preparation of the accounting statements for the year ended 31 March 2017 and made positive responses to each of the nine statements show on the Annual Governance Statement as follows:

1 We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.

The accounts were prepared by the RFO on an income and expenditure basis in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations and guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England (A Practitioner's Guide) March 2017. This process was scrutinised by the Resources and General Services Committee and through the internal audit process.

2 We maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.

The Council carried out the annual review of its systems of Internal Audit and Internal Control and their effectiveness at its meeting on 22 February 2017 (Min no 64.1.1) and agreed a Statement of Internal Control (Min no 64.1.2).

At this meeting members also reviewed and updated the Council's Risk Assessment and Management document (Min no 64.2).

- 3 We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and proper practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of the council to conduct its business or on its finances.**

The Council continued to operate within a robust set of governance arrangements, resulting from controls identified in the Risk Assessment which are reviewed annually. Measures also included regular reviews of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, training for councillors and staff and identification of powers for all council payments.

- 4 We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.**

As in 2016 and previously, the Council would provide an inspection period commencing on Monday 5 June 2017 and ending on Friday 14 July 2017 for the exercise of electors' rights. This entitled any person interested to inspect and make copies of the Annual Return, books, invoices, receipts etc at the Council Offices in normal working hours during this period.

Notices to this effect would be displayed on the Council's noticeboards around the town and on the Council's website where the Statement of Accounts and accompanying documentation would also be displayed.

- 5 We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this small authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and / or external insurance cover where required.**

At its meeting on 22 February 2017, the Council carried out the annual review of the Risk Assessment and Management document (Min no 64.2) which included details of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required. The Council's insurance cover was reviewed on 15 February 2017 (Min no RG48).

- 6 We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.**

Following the annual review of the system of internal audit and its effectiveness in April 2015, Auditing Solutions were re-appointed as the Council's internal auditors for a five-year period 2015/19 Min no (RG235.6). There have been two visits during the financial year with the final end of year visit on 2 May 2017. The scope of their work followed the outline programme drawn up in 2015 with councillors and officers afforded the opportunity to request coverage of particular areas especially when new working procedures or responsibilities were introduced. No issues arose at the end of year visit and the auditor completed and signed the Annual internal audit report 2016/17. The reports from the internal auditor were presented to all councillors and any issues raised by him reviewed at the next meeting of the Resources and General Services Committee.

During 2016/17, the Council continued the practice of appointing a member to carry out spot checks on the accounts throughout the year. The reports on these visits were also minuted.

- 7 We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.**

The external auditor for 2016/17 had commented that the declared annual precept figure did not agree with the amount notified to the auditor by Epping Forest District Council. Investigations revealed that the amount demanded by the Town Council had been adjusted by EFDC and the shortfall made up by an additional

grant from within its own budget. The Town Council was not advised of this matter. A formal apology for this error has since been received from the Director of Finance at EFDC. See Min nos RG16 and RG45.1.1.

8 We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this smaller authority and, where appropriate have included them in the accounting statements.

The RFO has considered these matters and debtors and creditors are included where necessary in the end of year accounts.

9 Trust Funds – in our capacity as the sole managing trustee we have discharged our responsibility in relation to the accountability for the funds / assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.

Not applicable.

The Chairman and Town Clerk were authorised to sign the statement on the Annual Return.

78 Accounts and Audit 2016/17

78.1 The Annual Return, the document that forms the Council's statutory accounts for the year 2016/17, and the following supporting papers were considered:

- i) Income and expenditure reports by committee;
- ii) The balance sheet as at 31 March 2017;
- iii) Details of the transfers to and from earmarked reserves together with the supporting notes.

78.2 Reserves Policy

The Council NOTED that the actual level of general reserves as at 31 March 2017 had stood at £309,747 which, at 62.9% of the estimated net running costs for 2017/18, was within the limits set by the Council's Reserves Policy.

78.3 Accounting Statements 2016/17

Having considered the documents provided with the Agenda, the Council APPROVED Section Two, Accounting Statements 2016/17, as shown and instructed the Deputy Town Mayor (as Chairman of the meeting) to sign the statement at the bottom of Section 2 to confirm that the accounting statements presented fairly the financial position of the Council and its income and expenditure for the year 2016/17.

79 Office Accommodation

The Council NOTED the information update on the forthcoming move to the library and in particular:

- i. **Lease – Min no 33**
The Council's solicitor had confirmed in writing that the lease for office space in Loughton Library had now been completed.
- ii. **Building Works**
As per the previous instructions of the Council:

- i) Martyn Pattie Architects would be engaged in a project management role to oversee the necessary building works at a cost of £1,950 plus VAT and travelling expenses (Min no RG18).
- ii) The contract for the minor building works will be awarded to Tarbrook Design and Build, with a value of £15,554 net of VAT (Min no 67.2).

79.3 Staffing Matters – RG293

Members were reminded of the Council's previous decision to recruit a part-time doorman/caretaker to provide support for the evening meetings. The contract would be for a guaranteed 15 hours per month at Spinal Column Point 11.

The Council recorded its thanks to former staff members Vivienne Messenger and Shirley Haynes for their work for the Council over recent years and wished them well in the future.

Signed.....

Date: 17 May 2017