

THESE MINUTES NOT YET CONFIRMED

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 10 April 2019 at 7.45pm at Loughton Library & Town Hall.

Present:

Councillors: J Jennings (in the Chair)
M Dalton J Mahoney (from Min no 176.3) S Murray
A Omer J Angold-Stephens (as substitute for Cllr S Pewsey)

Also present D Wixley

Councillor

Officers: M Squire (Town Clerk)
P Bryce (Administrative Assistant)

RG172 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr J Jogia and Cllr Pewsey. The Town Clerk reported that Cllr Angold-Stephens had been nominated as Cllr Pewsey's substitute for this meeting.

RG173 Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

RG174 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2019 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RG175 Public Representations

None were received.

RG176 Matters for Report

176.1 Insurance Annual Review – Min no RG168

The Committee noted that the Assistant Town Clerk received three quotes from specialist companies and it was decided to go ahead and continue with WPS Insurance, who provided a competitive quote with a new provider Royal Sun Alliance (RSA).

The annual premium is £5,501.86 with a three year long term price agreement. It also carries a Public Liability increase to £15 million and a low claims profit rebate up to 7.5%.

Motor insurance has been similarly renewed with existing insurers for a further year at a minimal additional cost, totalling £489.80.

176.2 Annual Town Meeting

The Committee noted that the draft minutes for the 2019 Annual Town Meeting held on 13 March 2019 had been circulated to members. All concerns that had been raised by members of the public at the meeting during the question and answer session had been dealt with by the Town Council. The Town Clerk reported that engineers from Essex County Council Highways will be making a presentation at the Council meeting on 24 April 2019 to talk about the proposed bridge work on Alderton Hill during the summer.

Cllr Mahoney joined the meeting during the next item.

176.3 Local Council Awards Scheme (LCAS) – Min no RG 164.1

The Town Clerk explained that whilst much work had been conducted already to reaccredit the Town Council to 'Gold' level, the qualified audit comment raised by the external auditor in the 2017/2018 Annual Governance and Accountability (AGAR) Return has effectively prohibited reaccreditation for the time being. This has been confirmed by the Chief Executive of the Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC). Both the EALC and the Town Clerk will make representations to the respective governing bodies to advocate changes to the current LCAS deliberations. The Town Council will review the situation again later in the year.

176.4 AGAR 2017/2018

The Committee noted the qualified comment from the external auditors on the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2017/18, in the 'except for matters' section and RESOLVED that any similar accounting entries required for the 2018/2019 would be allocated appropriately; ie any outstanding Direct Debits and Standing Orders should not be part of the bank reconciliation but be included as creditors and form part of the reconciliation between Boxes 7 and 8 on the AGAR.

176.5 Travel expenses for training

The Committee authorised travel expenses for the Town Clerk to attend a 'making tax digital' training course scheduled for June 2019.

RG177 Policies Review

The Committee received and noted the following policies:-

- Code of Conduct
- Publication Scheme
- Health and Safety Policy
- Equality Policy
- Community Engagement Policy
- Grant Awarding Policy
- Training Policy

The Committee noted that the training record of both members and staff (for the last five years only) has now been added to the Town Council's website.

The Town Clerk highlighted the comprehensive review of risk management arrangements conducted in March 2018. A full review of the 2018/2019 arrangements would form part of the full Town Council agenda of 24 April 2019.

RG178 Social Media Policy

The Committee agreed to fully review the draft social media policy and report back to the next Resources and General Services Committee.

The Committee RESOLVED that Facebook only would be used initially, to advertise social events e.g. the Fun Run, Jessel Green Day, Horticultural and Christmas events.

The Town Clerk noted that he would investigate whether the general use of social media would be better organised internally (depending on skills and resources available) or with external assistance.

RG179 Financial Assistance

179.1 General Applications 2019/20

The Committee RESOLVED to make the following contributions (as listed below) from the scheme by granting financial assistance to:

Organisation	Amount granted £	Item	Power
Spark (a branch of Worth Unlimited)	1,000.00	Running Costs for Counselling	LGA 1972 s137
BASICS Essex Accident Rescue Service (BEARS)	200.00	Annual Running Costs	LGA 1972 s137

RG180 Finance

180.1 Authorised Signatories Min No 167.1

The Committee was made aware of the difficulty and frustration involved in making the appropriate changes to banking mandates and noted that the following changes to the bank mandates have been actioned to reflect the appointment of the new Town Clerk:

- a) Online access to all NatWest accounts for Town Clerk, Mr Mark Squire and Assistant Town Clerk, Mr Brent Smith.
- b) A credit card for the Town Clerk, Mr Mark Squire, has been received, a NatWest MasterCard, with a spending limit of £1,000 and the balance to be paid in full, monthly by direct debit from the NatWest current account.
- c) The Town Clerk, Mr Mark Squire is assigned as Operator of the Santander Business Reserve.
- d) Due to delays with NatWest's processing of applications the adding of the Town Clerk, Mr Mark Squire to the Security Deposit accounts are still to be processed, as is the changing of the authorizing signatures for the council credit cards.

180.2 Current Financial Position

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

180.3 Accounts Paid

The Committee noted that payments totalling £127,397.89 as detailed on payment schedules nos 279 - 283 have been made since the report to the meeting on 6 February 2019.

180.4 Councillor Financial Check for Resources and General Services Committee

The Committee thanked Councillor Jill Angold-Stephens for carrying out the periodic check on Council finances, focussing specifically on 'bank reconciliation'.

RG181 Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Committee RESOLVED to exclude the press and public for the next item only under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as it contained confidential information relating to personnel matters.

RG182 Staffing Matter

The Committee concurred with the actions proposed by the Town Clerk.

Signed
Date: **26 June 2019**