

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 26 June 2019 at 7.45pm at Loughton Library & Town Hall.

Present:

Councillors: J Jennings (in the Chair)
J Angold-Stephens M Dalton J Jogia
D Wixley (as a substitute for Cllr Mahoney)

Officers: M Squire (Town Clerk)
B Smith (Assistant Town Clerk)

RG183 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mahoney, Murray and Omer. The Town Clerk reported that Cllr Wixley had been nominated as Cllr Mahoney's substitute for this meeting.

RG184 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Dalton declared a pecuniary interest in Agenda item 8, Financial Assistance Application, as he was employed by Voluntary Action Epping Forest and would leave the room during the consideration of this item.

RG185 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2019 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RG186 Public Representations

None were received.

RG187 Matters for Report

187.1 Training and Conferences

The Committee NOTED the Town Clerk would be implementing a comprehensive programme of cross training to cover all aspects of Loughton Town Council (LTC) work, both internally and externally. This could prove valuable during the holiday periods and also if there was any prolonged period of absence (for whatever reason) for any staff member.

As part of this action plan, the following courses have been attended / booked:-

- Officers Debra Paris and Pippa Bryce - Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) run course on 'Website Accessibility - basics and legal requirements. 12 June 2019. It was noted that the LTC website must be as accessible by as many people as possible. e.g. including those with impaired vision or learning difficulties. LTC will need to have an accessibility statement on it's website by 23 September 2020.
- Town Clerk at LGRC/NALC Local Expo conference 21 June 2019. Particular interest in making tax digital for VAT presentation made by RBS Omega who host our financial accounting system. The Town Clerk explained that by October 2019, LTC would need to submit the

tax return online. RBS Omega have a scheduled system upgrade to implement this change in good time.

- Assistant Town Clerk at National Allotment Society 'Allotments Course' run by EALC on 10 July 2019.
- Town Clerk at Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management (ICCM) run by EALC on 16 July 2019.

187.2 Christmas Card Competition 2019

The Committee NOTED that this year's competition would be launched before the autumn meeting of this Committee and AGREED to continue with the current format.

187.3 Flag Flying

The Committee NOTED that the Town Council marked Armed Forces Day 2019 on Saturday 29 June 2019 by flying the special flag outside the Library for the preceding week.

The Committee NOTED that the Town Council would also mark the occasion of Merchant Navy Day, on Tuesday 3 September 2019 by flying the Red Ensign to help raise public awareness of our island nation's reliance on seafarers and shipping.

187.4 Internal Audit

The Committee NOTED the internal auditor's final report for 2018/19 which had been circulated electronically to all members on 17 June 2019. The office were congratulated on such an excellent report.

187.5 Social Media Policy - Min no RG178

The Committee NOTED the Town Council was already running a Facebook page to advertise the Jessel Green Community Fun Day. This medium would also be used to promote the Horticultural Show in September 2019.

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Social Media policy. However further clarification regarding various terms and acronyms within the policy was requested, which the Town Clerk would add. The Town Clerk explained that this is a live document and would be updated from time.

It was AGREED that the Facebook Page would be organised internally for a trial period of 6 months to gauge whether the (in house) skills and resources available were sufficient to deliver a professional service. At that juncture it could be evaluated whether external assistance was required.

187.6 Banking/ Bank Mandates Min no RG178

The Assistant Town Clerk provided a verbal update on progress made with the banking mandates, and it was AGREED that further ongoing work was needed to replace the NatWest accounts.

With regards to the Santander and Nationwide Business Accounts they would be operated by Cllrs C C Pond, J Angold-Stephens, C P Pond (not in conjunction with C C Pond), Town Clerk, Mark Squire and

Assistant Town Clerk, Brent Smith. Cllr Stephen Pewsey would be removed as a signatory from the mandates.
The Assistant Town Clerk would prepare and send the required Mandates.

RG188 Job Evaluation

The Committee NOTED that a Vine HR representative would be visiting the office on Friday 2 August 2019 to carry out a one day assessment on the existing SCPs (salary scales) for all staff, to ascertain whether they are in line with local government sector levels of pay. A budget allocation had already been made to carry out this exercise. The Town Clerk would subsequently arrange a Strategy and Staff Group meeting once the summary report had been provided.

RG189 Telephones

The Committee AGREED the purchase of the new FTTC Broadband line at a cost of £173.87 for the first year from the recommended provider.

Cllr Dalton left the meeting.

**RG190 Financial Assistance
General Applications 2019/20**

The Committee NOTED the current balance of £2,420.00 in the 2019/20 Financial Assistance budget.

The Committee RESOLVED to make the following contribution from the scheme by granting financial assistance to:

Organisation	Amount £	Item	Power
Voluntary Action Epping Forest (VAEF)	500.00	Providing a Handyperson for the Elderly and disabled residents	LGA 1972 s 1 3 7

The Committee further RESOLVED that the confirmation letter would require further proof of “ringfencing” of funds for Loughton Residents after payment of the Grant. VAEF would have the potential option of further applications later in the year if required.

Cllr Dalton re-joined the meeting.

RG191 Finance

191.1 End of Year Report

The accounts for 2018/19, approved by full Council on 15 May 2019 were NOTED.

191.2 Current Financial Position

The current financial position was NOTED.

191.3 Future Budgeting Provision

The Town Clerk presented some concepts and ideas for future workings. He would revert at a future meeting with some recommendations.

191.4 Precept

The Committee NOTED that the first instalment of the Precept, £359,500, was received into the Council's Santander bank account on 26 April 2019.

191.5 Internal Financial Check

The Committee AGREED to ask Cllr Jogia to carry out checks on the Council's financial transactions during the current financial year with assistance from Cllr Angold-Stephens for the first two checks and thanked Cllr Angold-Stephens for her work in this regard during 2018/19.

191.6 Accounts Paid

The Committee NOTED payments totalling £335,817.85 as detailed on payment schedules nos. 284 - 290 had been made since the report to the meeting on 9 January 2019.

The schedules and accompanying invoices were available at the meeting for inspection and the Committee AGREED that the schedules and accompanying invoices should continue to be available at future meetings for inspection. Copies of the latest bank account reconciliations were also provided at the meeting.

The Committee NOTED details of all Council payments in excess of £500 are provided on the Council's website on the strategic documents page http://www.loughton-tc.gov.uk/Finance_and_Transparency_2580.aspx

191.7 Councillor Financial Check for Resources and General Services Committee

The Committee NOTED that Councillor Jill Angold-Stephens carried out the periodic check on Council finances, on 2 April 2019, focussing specifically on 'bank reconciliation' and thanked her for her work in this matter.

Signed
Date: 16 October 2019