

THESE MINUTES NOT YET CONFIRMED

**LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**MINUTES of the Meeting held by ZOOM (digital meeting platform)  
on Wednesday 8 July 2020 at 7.15pm**

**Present:**

**Councillors:** S Murphy (In the Chair)

P Abraham	J Angold-Stephens	P Beales
R Brookes	T Cochrane	B Cohen
M Dalton	T Downing	J Jennings
J Jogia	K Latchford	J Mahoney
S Murray	A Omer	T Owen
S Pewsey	C C Pond	C P Pond
M Stubbings	D Wixley	

**Officers:** Mark Squire (Town Clerk)  
P Bryce (Civic Officer)

**Changes to Meetings During the Coronavirus Situation**

From 24 March 2020 Loughton Town Council AUTHORISED an 'Authority to Act' document to enable Council business to continue in the short-term.

From 4 April 2020 The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 came into effect. This enabled Town Councils to hold electronic meetings.

Loughton Town Council will participate in electronic meetings, following our Standing Orders and Financial Regulations as closely as practically possible, supported by our Remote Council Meeting Guidance (NALC), from 8 April 2020.

Electronic meetings will be open to the public in public session, minuted and recorded in accordance with ordinary Council legislation. Press and Public Participation: A meeting code will be publicly displayed to allow access to the public sessions. Members of the press and public who are not able to connect remotely will have the opportunity to input through the Town Clerk, in advance of the meeting. Face to face Council and Committee meetings will resume once health and safety allows. Regulation 13 modifies the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 allowing for remote attendance by the press and public. Methods of access will be published as usual.

A minute's silence was held at the beginning of the meeting in memory of  
**former councillor Margaret Chalk**  
who passed away on 22 April 2020

Cllr CC Pond recounted Margaret's valuable contribution to Loughton Town Council, particularly at the Planning and Licensing meetings, in which she played a prominent role well into her later years. Cllr S Murray also recalled her outstanding contribution to the local community and Loughton as a whole.

**309 Apologies for Absence**

An apology for absence was received from Cllr C Davies.

**310 Declarations of Interest**

Cllr C C Pond declared a non-pecuniary and non-prejudicial interest in any matters concerning Epping Forest District Council and Essex County Council as a member of those councils.

**311 Confirmation of Minutes**

Subject to an amendment to minute number 297 that Cllr C C Pond was a founder member of the Parishes Public Transport meeting (as opposed to EFTAG), the minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2020 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and will be signed by the Chairman.

**312 Annual Council Meeting**

The Council noted that in lieu of these extraordinary 'covid' circumstances and given this current large agenda, the Annual Council meeting will now take place on Wednesday 28 October (subject to change, if it can be arranged at an earlier date). All member roles that would have normally been allocated in the Annual Council meeting in May 2020 will now remain in place until this deferred meeting.

**313 Timetable of meetings**

The Council approved the meeting dates for the remaining Town Council Year, with the recommendation that the Planning and Licensing consultations continue in the same format until such time as formal 'face to face' meetings can resume.

Month	Date	Day	Meeting
			Please note that due to the implications of the coronavirus all formal Council and Committee meetings from 24 March 2020 up until 23 June 2020 were cancelled. Planning and licensing applications from the weekly lists dated during this period continued to be considered by members of the Planning and Licensing Committee under powers of delegated authority. The dates of these planning discussions are listed below *
<b>May 2020</b>	18	Monday	Planning & Licensing*
June	1	Monday	Planning & Licensing*
	15	Monday	Planning & Licensing*
	24	Wednesday	Resources and General Services (zoom meeting at 7.15pm)
	29	Monday	Planning & Licensing*
July	8	Wednesday	Council (zoom meeting at 7.15pm)
	13	Monday	Planning & Licensing

	27	Monday	Planning & Licensing
August	24	Monday	Planning & Licensing
September	7	Monday	Planning & Licensing
	9	Wednesday	Recreation
	21	Monday	Planning & Licensing
	29	Tuesday	Environment & Heritage
October	5	Monday	Planning & Licensing
	14	Wednesday	Resources & General Services
	19	Monday	Planning & Licensing
	28	Wednesday	Annual Council
November	2	Monday	Planning & Licencing
	16	Monday	Planning & Licensing
	18	Wednesday	Recreation
	25	Wednesday	Environment & Heritage
	30	Monday	Planning & Licensing
December	2	Wednesday	Resources & General Services
	14	Monday	Planning & Licensing
	16	Wednesday	Council
January 2021	4	Monday	Planning & Licensing
	6	Wednesday	RGS (Budgets) 7pm, Recreation
	18	Monday	Planning & Licensing
	27	Wednesday	Council (Budgets) 7pm, Environment & Heritage
February	1	Monday	Planning & Licensing
	10	Wednesday	Resources & General Services
	15	Monday	Planning & Licensing
	24	Wednesday	Council
March	1	Monday	Planning & Licensing
	3	Wednesday	Recreation
	15	Monday	Planning & Licensing
	24	Wednesday	Environment & Heritage
	29	Monday	Planning & Licensing
	<b>31</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Annual Town meeting**</b>
April	7	Wednesday	Resources & General Services

	12	Monday	Planning & Licensing
	21	Wednesday	Council
	26	Monday	Planning & Licensing
May	19	Wednesday	Annual Council

### 314 Year End Financials 2019/20 APPENDIX A

#### 314.1 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ending 31 March 2020, including

- (i) The Council AGREED AGAR (Section 1) for the Year ended 31 March 2020.
- (ii) The Council AGREED AGAR (Section 2) for the Year ended 31 March 2020.
- (iii) The Council NOTED and AGREED that the internal auditor was satisfied and had completed and signed the Annual Internal Audit Report on page 3 of the AGAR 2019/20.

#### 314.2 Annual Accounts

The Council received and APPROVED the Annual Accounts for the Year ended 31 March 2020.

### 315 Town Mayor's Engagements and Announcements

The Town Mayor, Cllr Stella Murphy reported that since the Council meeting held on 11 February 2020, she had attended the following events:

- Loughton Young Artists, Lopping Art Gallery
- National Jazz Archive – Simon Spillett Quartet at Loughton Methodist Church
- Youth Makes Music, New Hall Chigwell School
- Annual Town Meeting
- A social distancing visit to Abbeyfield Care home to wish local resident Louisa Salter a Happy 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

### 316 Town Clerk / Town Mayor's Report

The Town Clerk took the opportunity to briefly update members on salient matters that had occurred over the last three months, since the 'covid' lockdown on 24 March 2020.

- A number of staff were continuing to work from home in a 'shielding' capacity.
- The 'skeleton' staffing of the office was now up to a maximum of five personnel, all adhering to social distancing guidelines.
- Loughton Library will be re-opened to the public, albeit with a limited service.
- As such the Town Council will be available to visitors, but by prior appointment only.
- The part time Finance Assistant has requested to take retirement and the part time Town and Community Officer has been offered a full time post externally. The Town Clerk will therefore set up a Strategy and Staff Group meeting in August 2020 to primarily discuss future staffing requirements.
- Unfortunately all external Community events prior to the envisaged 2020 Christmas events, have been cancelled due to the covid 19 pandemic.

The Town Clerk was thanked for his hard work during this difficult period along with all the office staff, cemetery attendant and park wardens. Gratitude was also expressed to all key workers, community groups and 'covid' mutual aid groups who had performed so admirably during this time.

### **316.1 Recreation Committee**

The Town Clerk then reported to members on issues and actions specific to this committee.

- A very late Government directive had been received allowing the opening of playgrounds and outdoor gyms as from 4 July 2020. Following discussions between the Town Clerk and a number of Town Councillors it was initially thought that the Town Councils' playgrounds should remain closed until further notice, as the number of stipulations demanded by this latest legislation, (including social distancing) remained impractical and unmanageable given the limited resources of the Town Council. As a test case, it was intended as an initial step to open soonest the playground at Traps Hill. Following further playground industry guidance and feedback from other local councils nationwide, a pragmatic approach has now been taken. Appropriate signage requesting playground users to conform to strict guidelines will be prominently displayed by the playgrounds. After an initial health and safety inspection, it is envisaged that all eight of the Town Council's children's playgrounds will be re-opened over the course of the following week.
- Mr Pesh Kapasiawala, Past President of the Loughton, Buckhurst Hill & Chigwell Rotary, wishes to seek support for the Rotary 3food4u project. He will provide details to the Town Clerk, which can be reviewed at the forthcoming Strategy and Staff Group Committee meeting. It is appropriate that Cllr C Davies and Cllr S Murray are also invited to this meeting.
- Final documentation is being processed to secure the Loughton Cricket Club ground as a 'Field in Trust' to secure the land as a green space for Loughton cricket for the benefit of local residents. The Town Clerk was thanked for all his work in this regard.
- The continued anti-social behaviour (large gatherings of young people, lack of social distancing, excessive noise, alcohol drinking, noise and gas canister misuse) at the Recreation Ground and other green areas (e.g. Baldwins Hill) around Loughton was reported. This problem has been exacerbated by the large volumes of litter left on these sites on a daily basis. An ongoing dialogue with the Community Resilience Team at Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) and local police has been ongoing and followed up with a virtual 'zoom' meeting. Whilst initially a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSBO) had been mooted, the subsequent external advice was that this would take too long to set up and with limited police resources would be difficult to enforce.
- Similar anti-social behaviour at the car park behind the changing rooms is causing nuisance for local residents well into the night and 'small' hours. This ongoing problem needed to be resolved on an urgent basis

Authority to proceed in principle with the installation of a gate at the entrance to the car park by the changing rooms at the Recreation Ground to deter consistent anti-social behaviour in the area was AGREED, subject to the Town Clerk obtaining various pricings on manual and electric gates and costings on further security and maintenance measures.

The Recreation Committee Chairman informed members that EFDC should be commencing the tree planting scheme along the Roding Valley Recreation Ground later this year.

### **316.2 Environment & Heritage Committee**

The Town Clerk reported

- on the good progress of the blue plaque installations
- that the Cemetery Attendant had settled well in his new role
- that Cllr CC Pond and the Town Clerk had attended a 'zoom' meeting with City of London representatives to discuss amongst other things the anti-social behaviour experienced around the forest edges and the need to improve signposting to Epping Forest for incoming visitors, especially from Loughton Underground Station.

**317 Reports from Members on Outside Organisations**

**317.1** Reports from representatives on outside organisations were NOTED

- (i) Transport Representative Meeting – Tuesday 10 March 2020 – Cllr Phillip Abraham
- (ii) Report from the 'virtual' meeting of Citizens' Advice Epping Forest District – Wednesday 20 May – Cllr J Angold-Stephens.

**318 Changes to Meetings During The Coronavirus Situation**

In lieu of these unparalleled and exceptional circumstances, members RATIFIED the changes to meetings during the coronavirus situation (as stipulated at the heading of these Minutes).

**319 Reports from Committees**

**319.1 Planning and Licensing**

- (i) Members RATIFIED the steps taken to continue processing the planning and licensing applications during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and 'lockdown' period by the Committee under powers of delegated authority.
- (ii) Members NOTED the comments made over this period on the planning and licensing applications and weekly lists which were considered by members of the committee under delegated authority. These comments are located on the Town council website, dates listed below:

30 March 2020    20 April 2020    4 May 2020    18 May 2020  
1 June 2020      15 June 2020    29 June 2020

The Chairman of the Planning and Licensing Committee expressed gratitude to the Planning Clerk, Debra Paris, who has worked so hard during this difficult time. These comments were then 'echoed' by the Vice Chairman of Planning and Licensing Committee and also the Town Clerk.

**319.2 Recreation**

The report from the meeting held on 19 February 2020 was NOTED.

**319.3 Environment and Heritage**

The report from the meeting held on 4 March 2020 was NOTED.

It was noted that the installation of the Holmhurst blue plaque had been deferred for a year.

**319.4 Resources and General Services**

The report from the meeting held on 24 June 2020 was NOTED.

Members APPROVED the draft revised Loughton Town Council, Standing Orders as per minute RG239.

Members APPROVED the draft revised Loughton Town Council, Financial Regulations as per minute RG240.

Members NOTED and APPROVED measures taken under minute RG244 – Governance and Accountability.

**320 To approve a new Blue Plaque for author and journalist Peter Abrahams 1919 - 2017).**

The Council AGREED to a new Blue Plaque for author and journalist Peter Abrahams 1919 -2017).

**321 To review how Loughton Town Council can best provide a local Civic Response to Bereavement and Acknowledgement of Key Workers in Loughton.**

The Council AGREED that this should be discussed and reviewed at the next Resources and General Services Committee meeting.

**322 Members to review whether to support the appeal by the Society of Local Council Clerks, in writing to the Government to provide financial support to the Local Government sector.**

The Council AGREED to support this appeal. The Town Clerk would write an appropriate letter.

Signed: .....

Date: 28 October 2020