

THESE MINUTES NOT YET CONFIRMED

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

**MINUTES of the Meeting held by ZOOM (digital meeting platform)
on Wednesday, 24 June 2020 at 7.15pm**

Present:

Councillors: J Jennings (in the Chair)
J Angold-Stephens M Dalton J Jogia
J Mahoney S Murray A Omer (from Min no 236)

Also present:

Councillors: D Wixley C C Pond C P Pond

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

RG231 Apologies for absence
No apologies for absence were received.

RG232 Declarations of Interest
None were declared.

RG233 Confirmation of Minutes
The minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2020 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and will be signed by the Chairman.

RG234 Public Representations
None were received.

RG235 Town Clerks Report

235.1 Meetings Schedule

The Town Clerk reiterated that the Committee AGREED to the schedule for Council year 2020/21 at our last meeting minute no 225.2 It was further NOTED that this draft meetings timetable would be taken to the next Full Council meeting, taking into account the dates of meetings that have already been cancelled due to the Covid-19 virus and any other amendments subsequently needed.

Due to the current restrictions on people allowed into the library it is assumed that the next Full Council meeting will be a remote 'zoom' meeting also.

235.2 Asset Register

The Town Clerk reported on points raised at the last meeting regarding the Asset Register minute no 230.

The Council signed the lease on the Memorial Rose Garden on 2 September 2015 for 21 years, which will expire on 2 September 2036.

The Recreation Committee considered all the options regarding the Skateboard Equipment at their meeting of 19 February 2020 (minute no 169) and had AGREED for the time being to retain the ramps for future use.

With regards to the ownership of the War Memorial the Town Council took responsibility to maintain it but the ownership is unknown. Cllr Pond stated that this is not an unusual situation regarding War Memorials throughout the country.

Cllr Murray wanted it formally NOTED to thank the Council Officers for their hard work in keeping our services running during the lockdown period, and also thanked the community groups in Loughton that have helped the community during the lockdown period, especially the Covid-19 Mutual Aid Group.

Cllr Omer joined the meeting during the next item.

RG236 Christmas Card Competition 2020

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. Cllr Murray suggested an earlier launch date to encourage more entries.

Cllr Jogia suggested using the Christmas cards as an opportunity to reflect on 'lockdown' with some sort of 'Covid' related theme.

The concept was broadened, perhaps as a separate exercise, that local residents should be encouraged to express their experiences and document their time during this difficult period, through artwork e.g. writings, drawings, poems etc.

RG237 Flag Flying

The Committee NOTED that the Town Council marked Commonwealth Day by flying the Commonwealth flag on Monday 9 March 2020. Armed Forces Day 2020 on Saturday 27 June 2020 will be marked by flying the special flag outside the Library for the preceding week. The Town Council will also mark the occasion of Merchant Navy Day, on Thursday 3 September 2020 by flying the Red Ensign to help raise public awareness of our island nation's reliance on seafarers and shipping.

Cllr CC Pond and Cllr CP Pond left the meeting.

RG238 Year End Accounts

The Town Clerk reported that the original year-end account deadlines (for accounts closure, internal and external audit) had to be deferred due to the Covid-19 lockdown. However, the year-end accounts have now been closed in the system with the assistance of our accounts system provider, RBS Software Solutions Ltd on 22 June 2020 and the Internal Auditor will be auditing the accounts on 26 June 2020. They will be ready to submit to full council for approval on 8 July 2020 at the 'zoom' meeting.

The Committee also NOTED that there will be a substantial loss of income this year as Murray Hall and Kingsley Hall have been closed down for the past three months and still largely remain shut because of the virus. In lieu of the extraordinary circumstances, the tenant at Buckingham Court was given a three month "rent holiday" during the Covid-19 lockdown.

RG239 Standing Orders - Annual Review

The Town Clerk reported that we are revising our current Standing Orders in line with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) 2018 guidelines (as amended in July 2018). These are now updated in line with the NALC guidelines

and will be reviewed by the Committee Members and presented to the Full Council at the meeting on 8 July 2020.

RG240 Financial Regulations – Annual Review

The Town Clerk reported that our current Financial Regulations are being revised in line with the 2019 NALC guidelines. The updated version will be reviewed by the Committee Members and presented to the Full Council at the meeting on 8 July 2020.

RG241 Equal Opportunities Policy - To Review

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Equal Opportunities Policy.

RG242 Data Protection – Statement of Policy - To Review

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Data Protection Policy.

RG243 Protocol for Town Council meetings held remotely – To Review

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Protocol for Town Council meetings held remotely.

RG244 Governance and Accountability

244.1 Internal Audit

244.1.1 Review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Audit

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Audit

244.1.2 Review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Control

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Control.

244.2 Risk Assessment and Management

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Risk Assessment and Management.

Cllr Jennings briefly lost signal at the start of Minute no 245 and Cllr Angold-Stephens took over as Chair. Cllr Jennings re-joined the meeting soon after and continued thereafter as Chairman. Very little of the discussion was missed and no decisions were taken in the intervening period.

RG245 Finance

245.1 Current Financial Position

The financial position as of 31 March 2020 was NOTED.

245.2 Accounts Paid

The Committee NOTED payments totalling £243,828.81 as detailed on payment schedules nos. 307-310 to Year End. With further payments totalling £166,765.97 as detailed on payment schedules nos. 311-314 from 01/04/2020 until 09/06/2020, had been made since the report to the meeting on 5 February 2020.

The Committee noted that during this exceptionally difficult time of the 'Covid lockdown' period, Cllrs Pond have kindly agreed at the behest of the Town Clerk, to act as signatories for the Council cheques. As the lockdown eases, normal distribution of the cheques for signatories will be resumed.

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

245.3 Precept

The Committee NOTED that the first instalment of the Precept, £378,223, was received into the Council's Santander bank account on 28 April 2020.

245.4 Internal Financial Check

The Committee AGREED to ask Cllr Jogia to continue carry out checks on the Council's financial transactions during the current financial year and once restrictions are lifted Cllr Jogia will be able to continue with these checks. The Committee thanked Cllr Jogia for her work in this regard in 2019/20.

RG246 Pensions Update

The Committee NOTED the report regarding the "McCloud Judgement" which is under review by Essex Pension Fund.

Signed:

Date: 14 October 2020