

**LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL**

**RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 30 June 2021 at 7.45pm at Loughton Library & Town Hall.**

**Present:**

**Councillors:** M Owen (in the Chair)  
 R Brookes B Cohen S Murray  
 M Stubbings K Valentine (as substitute for Cllr Jennings)  
 D Wixley (as substitute for Cllr Kauffman)

**Also present:**

**Councillors:** L House

**Officers:**

M Squire (Town Clerk)  
 B Smith (Assistant Town Clerk - Finance)

One Member of the Public

**RG1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllrs J Jennings and W Kauffman. The Town Clerk reported that Cllr M Owen would chair the meeting, Cllr K Valentine would substitute Cllr J Jennings and Cllr Wixley would substitute Cllr. Kauffman

**RG2 Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Murray declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda item 12, Financial Assistance Application as he knows the applicant.

**RG3 Confirmation of Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 April 2021 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

**RG4 Public Representations**

Jessie Ford addressed the Committee in support of her Financial Assistance Grant Application for Upstage Theatre Company.

The Committee agreed to move item 12, Financial Assistance – General Applications 2021/22, up the agenda order.

**RG5 Financial Assistance  
 General Applications 2021/22**

The Committee NOTED the current balance of £11,424.00 in the 2021/22, Financial Assistance budget.

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

Organisation	Amount £	Item	Power
UpStage Theatre Company	1,800.00	Production of the Loughton Pantomime	General Power of Competence

- RG6 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report**  
The Town Clerk reported that the NHS had given notice at Murray Hall and would be vacating the premises on 27 July 2021. It would appear that nearing completion of the initial vaccination programmes, the NHS are to consolidate sites across all areas of Herts and West Essex as they no longer require the same level of services. The Bookings Hall Officer would be contacting the regular Hall Hirers in order to ascertain if they wished to rehire the hall when available again.
- RG7 Training and Conferences**  
The Committee NOTED that on 23 June the Town Clerk, the two Assistant Town Clerks and Halls & Booking Officer attended a half day training session on RBS Rialtas Bookkeeping.
- RG8 Finance**
- 8.1 Current Financial Position**  
The Committee NOTED the current financial position and NOTED the Council's current bank balances and most recent reconciliations.
- 8.2 Accounts Paid**  
The Committee NOTED that payments totalling £254,813.42, as detailed on payment schedules no. 327-330, until 16 June 2021 had been made and entered on the accounts system, since the report to the meeting on 7 April 2021. Schedules and accompanying invoices were available at the council offices for inspection.
- RG9 Precept**  
The Committee NOTED that the first instalment of the 2021/22 Precept, £391,338, had been received into the Council's Santander bank account on 30 April 2021.
- RG10 Internal Financial Check**  
The Committee AGREED to continue with the appointment of a Town Councillor to undertake internal financial checks during the year and accepted Cllr Murray's offer to continue in this role for 2021/22. Former Town Councillor Jayna Jogia was thanked for her work in this regard during 2020/21.
- RG11 Internal Audit**  
The Committee NOTED the satisfactory Internal Audit report from the Internal Auditors, Healis & Lodge dated 7 May 2021.
- RG12 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2020/21**  
The Committee NOTED that the AGAR was submitted to the external auditors PKF Littlejohn LLP on 11 June 2021 and that the completed confirmation of dates for provision of public rights form had been displayed on our noticeboards and posted on our Town Council website.
- RG13 Flag Flying**  
The Committee NOTED that the Town Council had marked Coronation Day by flying the Union flag on Wednesday 2 June 2021. Also the official Celebration of Her Majesty's birthday on Saturday 12 June 2021 and birthday of the Duke of Cambridge on Monday 21 June 2021. The Town Council have marked Armed Forces Day 2021 on Saturday 26 June 2021 by flying the special flag outside Loughton Library for the preceding week.

The Committee NOTED that the Town Council will mark the occasion of the birthday of the Duchess of Cornwall on Saturday 17 July 2021 and the birthday of the Princes Royal on Sunday 15 August 2021. The Town Council will also mark the occasion of Merchant Navy Day, on Friday 3 September 2021 by flying the Red Ensign to help raise public awareness of our island nation's reliance on seafarers and shipping.

**RG14 Christmas Card Competition 2021**

The Committee NOTED that this year's competition will be launched before the autumn meeting of this Committee.

After some discussion it was AGREED to stick to the existing format for 2021/22 but to emphasise that photographs are eligible for the competition. There is an option to submit photos within the current competition rules.

**RG15 Local Council Awards**

The Committee NOTED the report.

**RG16 Policies Review**

**16.1 Review of the Data Protection Policy**

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Data Protection Policy.

**16.2 Review of the Code of Conduct**

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Code of Conduct Policy.

**16.3 Review of the Code of Conduct Annex 3 Complaints Procedure**

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Code of Conduct Annex 3 Complaints Procedure.

**16.4 Review of the Freedom of Information Publication Scheme**

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Freedom of Information Publication Scheme.

**16.5 Review of the Health and Safety**

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Health and Safety Policy.

**16.6 Review of the Training Strategy**

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Training Strategy.

**RG17 Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The Committee RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the following item in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as they contained confidential information relating to contractual and /or staffing matters.

**RG18 Buckingham Court**

The Committee NOTED the report from the Town Clerk.

**RG19 Town Council's Water Supplier**

The Committee NOTED the report from the Assistant Town Clerk.

**RG20 Town Council's Banking Arrangements**

The Committee NOTED the report from the Town Clerk.

**RG21**      **Strategy and Staff Group meeting 28 June 2021**  
The Committee NOTED the report from the Town Clerk.

**Signed:** .....  
**Date:** 5 October 2021

**LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL**

**RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES of the Meeting held on Tuesday 5 October 2021 at 7.45pm at Loughton Library & Town Hall.**

**Present:**

**Councillors:** J Jennings (in the Chair)  
R Brookes B Cohen S Murray  
M Stubbings

**Also present:**

**Councillor:** D. Wixley

**Officer:** M Squire (Town Clerk)

Two members of the Public

**RG22 Apologies for absence**  
No Apologies were received.

**RG23 Declarations of Interest**  
Cllr Murray declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda item 19 Financial Assistance Applications as:

- (i) he is a patron of the Christian Drama Resource Centre. He would not participate in the ultimate decision making of the Committee; and
- (ii) as he knew applicants for the Restore Community Oakwood Hill Grow Garden request.

Cllr Brookes declared a non-pecuniary interest in the Restore Community Oakwood Hill Grow Garden as a member of the Methodist Church in Loughton.

**RG24 Confirmation of Minutes**  
The minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2021 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

The Committee agreed to move item 19, Financial Assistance – General Applications 2021/22, up the agenda order.

**RG25 Public Representations**  
Andrea Moles, Founder & Chair of the Christian Drama Resource Centre (CRDC) and Ruth Soundrajah, Centre Manager (CRDC) addressed the Committee in support of their Financial Assistance Grant Application for the CRDC.

**RG26 Financial Assistance  
General Applications 2021/22**  
The Committee NOTED that the total Financial Assistance budget for 2021/22 had now been reduced to a current balance of £9,624.00. A schedule of the financial grants (often scaled back) provided to date was distributed to members.

The Committee, noting the wide community benefit of the CRDC work and the valuable project work of 'Restore Grow', RESOLVED to make the following contributions from the scheme by granting financial assistance to:

Organisation	Amount £	Item	Power
Christian Drama Resource Centre	2,000.00	(a) Implement a database. (b) commission key new costume stock and props (c) create a digital directory of CDRC inventory.	General Power of Competence
Restore Community Oakwood Hill Grow Garden	2,000.00	Equipment, marketing and staff costs	General Power of Competence

Members also AGREED that

- (i) A summary list of previous individual grant allocations and figures, (for the relevant financial year) should form part of any subsequent agenda, where financial assistance grants are being discussed.
- (ii) Whenever possible, applicants from local community should be encouraged to apply for financial assistance from the outset (i.e. the beginning of the calendar year) when the main batch of applications are being assessed.

**RG27 Town Clerk’s / Chairman’s Report**

The Town Clerk reported that

- (i) Cllr Murray had conducted an internal financial check during August. A further visit would be arranged soon.
- (ii) The transfer to online banking would be taken forward, once the new Deputy Town Clerk is in place.
- (iii) The ongoing problems with the previous water supply company appear to have now been resolved.

**RG28 Training and Conferences**

The Committee NOTED the report.

**RG29 Appointment of Deputy Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)**

The Committee NOTED the appointment of Mrs Kim Lumb as the new Deputy Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). The Town Clerk would continue to be the RFO in the shorter term until Kim has settled into her new role.

**RG30 Finance & Office Assistant**

The Committee noted that interviews for potential candidates had taken place on the preceding day . An appointment had been made subject to contract and a formal announcement would be made soonest.

**RG31 Loughton Town Council (LTC) Organisation Structure**

The updated staffing organigram was received and NOTED.

**RG32 Christmas Closedown Arrangements**

The Committee AGREED to retain the existing framework, on the proviso that the office would close at 3pm on Wednesday 29 December 2021 and also on Thursday 30 December 2021. See below:-

Friday 24 December	Closed 12 noon
Monday 27 December	Closed
Tuesday 28 December	Closed

Wednesday 29 December	10am – 3pm
Thursday 30 December	10am – 3pm
Friday 31 December	10am - 12.45pm
Monday 3 January	Closed

- RG33 The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Celebrations – 2 to 5 June 2022**  
 The Committee AGREED that the lighting of a beacon on Hillyfields Green would be the best way forward to celebrate the occasion.
- AGREED that the office should extend an invitation (on a best-efforts basis) to a few local school choirs, town crier and piper to enhance the ceremony. It was suggested that commemorative mugs could be handed out to children who participate at the event.
- A further recommendation was made that the Town Council purchase a limited supply of festive bunting to distribute (on a first come, first served basis) to those residents who would be organising street parties to mark the Queen’s platinum jubilee celebrations.
- RG34 Citizens Awards**  
 The Committee NOTED the report. For reference purposes, the Town Clerk was asked to distribute to all Town Councillors a list of the recipients of the awards over the last eight years.
- RG35 Annual Town Meeting**  
 The Committee NOTED the report.
- RG36 Buckingham Court**  
 The Committee noted the Town Clerk’s update. He reminded Members that the building is not used at the moment and that the Council is incurring costs. He would investigate the pros and cons of instigating some hall hire at the premises.
- RG37 Finance**
- 37.1 Current Financial Position**  
 The Committee NOTED the current financial position and the Council’s current bank balances and most recent reconciliations.
- 37.2 Accounts Paid**  
 The Committee NOTED that payments totalling £61,895.94 as detailed on payment schedules no. 331-333, until 21 July 2021 had been made and entered on the accounts system, since the report to the meeting on 30 June 2021. The Town Clerk was asked to investigate whether Councillors signatures should be redacted from the financial papers.
- RG38 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2020/21**  
 The Committee NOTED the satisfactory AGAR (section 3) return and that the Notice of the ‘Conclusion of Audit’ dated 31 August 2021 had been posted on the Town Council noticeboards and website.
- RG39 Request for Credit Card limit increase**  
 Committee Members AGREED that the Town Council credit card limits should be increased to £1,500 for the Town Clerk and £1,000 for the Services Manager.
- RG40 Remembrance Service**  
 The Committee AGREED to make the donation under the General Power of Competence.

**RG41 Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The Committee RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the following item in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as they contained confidential information relating to contractual and staffing matters.

**RG42 Strategy and Staff Group (SSG) meeting 15 July 2021**

The Committee NOTED the update from the Town Clerk on this meeting and subsequent staffing developments.

Signed: .....  
Date: 8 December 2021



**LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL**

**RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 8 December 2021 at 7.45pm at Loughton Library & Town Hall.**

**Present:**

**Councillors:** J Jennings (in the Chair)  
M Owen R Brookes B Cohen  
S Murray M Stubbings

**Also present:** D Wixley S Fontenelle  
**Councillors:**

**Officer:** M Squire (Town Clerk)  
K Lumb (Deputy Town Clerk)

There were no members of the Public present.

**RG43 Apologies for absence**  
No Apologies were received.

**RG44 Declarations of Interest**  
Cllr Cohen declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda item 15, the Financial Assistance application for Loughton Chigwell & District Synagogue, as she is a member.

**RG45 Confirmation of Minutes**  
The minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2021 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

**RG46 Public Representations**  
There were no public representations.

**RG47 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report**  
The Town Clerk

- (iv) welcomed the recently appointed Deputy Town Clerk, Kim Lumb to the meeting and highlighted that both Kim and Jonathon Glynn, the new Finance & Administration Assistant are making great progress.
- (v) stated that Local Council Awards – will be completed in stages, with most of the work now been completed for the Foundation Level.
- (vi) highlighted the Government Announcement COVID-19 restrictions – following this evening's announcements, and that the "working from home" plan will be considered and implemented accordingly.
- (vii) announced that a job specification for a new part time Caretaker for Murray Hall will be advertised this week. A further advert for new senior warden / maintenance officer role will also be advertised soon.
- (viii) reported that a formal handover to the Deputy Town Clerk of the Responsible Financial Offer (RFO) responsibilities will take place at the end of the financial year. The "moving banking to online" project will progress once the new team members are settled into their roles.
- (ix) Informed members of the ongoing position on Buckingham Court.

- RG48 Training and Conferences**  
The Committee NOTED the report.
- RG49 Appointment of Finance and Office Assistant**  
The Committee NOTED the appointment of Mr Jonathon Glynn as the new Finance and Office Assistant.
- RG50 The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Celebrations – 2 to 5 June 2022**  
The Committee discussed and NOTED the report.
- RG51 Annual Citizens Awards**  
The Committee discussed and NOTED the report.
- RG52 Christmas Card Competition**  
The Committee NOTED the report and the Chair congratulated the winners.
- RG53 Policies Review**
- i. **Investment Strategy and Policy**  
The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Investment Strategy and Policy.
  - ii. **Procedure to fill a Casual Vacancy**  
The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Procedure to Fill a Casual Vacancy Policy.
  - iii. **Member’s Remuneration Scheme**  
The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Member’s Remuneration Scheme Policy, with the following amendment to be made – increase the lunch allowance to £5.00. The Town Clerk also advised should the Council be informed of any changes on mileage allowance from District Council, the policy would be submitted for a further review.
- RG54 Finance**
- 54.1 Current Financial Position**  
The Committee NOTED the financial position and the Council’s current bank balances and most recent reconciliations as of 31 October 2021.
- 54.2 Accounts Paid**  
The Committee NOTED that payments totalling £367,762.61 as detailed on payment schedules no. 334-340, until 25 November 2021 had been made and entered on the accounts system, since the report to the meeting on 5 October 2021.
- RG55 Internal Financial Check**  
The Committee NOTED that Councillor Murray will be visiting the office on the 16 December 2021, to undertake a finance inspection. The Town Clerk advised that following the Government announcement that day on COVID-19 restrictions, any required changes would be advised.
- RG56 Internal Audit**  
The Committee NOTED that the interim internal audit from Healis & Lodge will take place in January 2022.

**RG57 Financial Assistance  
General Applications 2021/22**

The Committee reviewed the applications listed below for Financial Assistance.

Organisation	Amount £	Item	Power
BASICS Essex (Accident Rescue Service)	1,000	Assistance towards equipping a new doctor	General Power of Competence
Loughton Chigwell & District Synagogue	TBA	Supply of weekly food parcels	General Power of Competence

Members AGREED that these would be rolled over to include in the 2022/23 Financial Assistance Scheme, enabling members to view and assess all applications together.

**RG58 Staff Salaries**

The Committee NOTED there has not yet been any communication received via the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), on the outcome of any staff statutory annual salary pay increases for 2021/2022, and that this was unlikely to be forthcoming until the New Year.

**RG59 Parish Basic Allowance**

The Committee RECOMMENDED to Full Council to retain the level of the Parish Basic Allowance that members may claim in 2022/23 at £120 per member per annum.

The Town Clerk was requested looking forward to next year's review, to undertake a small comparative exercise to understand allowance limits for other Town/Parish Councils.

**RG60 Subscription Review**

The Committee reviewed the current list of organisations of which it is currently a member and AGREED to continue to support those listed in the agenda without any amendment.

The Town Clerk agreed to send an email circular to members to ascertain areas of particular interest from the various subscription parties, that they may wish to receive via e-mail circulation.

**RG61 Committee Priorities**

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the priority list for 2022/23.

**RG62 Estimates 2022/2023**

The Town Clerk reported there were no significant changes in the projected estimates, with costs remaining reasonably flat or rising by 2-3% in the main. The exceptions to this were increased staff salaries, having been four staff members down for some time; and extra costs vs income for Buckingham Court. The Town Clerk explained to members the basis and process of these preliminary budgets given where we are within the financial year, and that these would be fine-tuned ahead of the full budget meeting in January 2022, when further data would be available.

The Committee reviewed, discussed and AGREED the estimates of income and expenditure and levels of ear marked funds for 2022/23 as listed in the agenda, subject to the following amendments

- a. The “grant general” budget be increased for 2022/23 from £27,000.00 to £30,000.00
- b. The £1,100.00 unallocated balance in the 2021/22 grants budget, be put into “grant funding held over” ear marked reserves, bringing that total to £5,624.00 as it currently stands.

**RG63 Future Work of the Committee**

No items were raised for future discussion.

Signed: .....

Date: 12 January 2022

**LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL**

**RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 12 January 2022 at 7.00pm at Loughton Library & Town Hall.**

**Present:**

**Councillors:** J Jennings (in the Chair)  
M Owen R Brookes B Cohen  
S Murray M Stubbings

**Also present:** C Pond S Fontenelle D Wixley  
**Councillors:**

**Officer:** M Squire (Town Clerk)  
K Lumb (Deputy Town Clerk)

There were no members of the public present.

**RG64 Apologies for absence**  
No Apologies were received.

**RG65 Declarations of Interest**  
No Declarations of Interest were received.

Councillor D Wixley joined the meeting during this item.

**RG66 Confirmation of Minutes**  
The minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2021 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

**RG67 Public Representations**  
There were no public representations.

**RG68 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report**  
The Town Clerk reported the following:  
(i) Current COVID 19 position – In adherence to current requirements, the office is working on a 'skeleton staff' basis, remaining colleagues working from home. There were a number of staff off sick with the covid virus.  
(ii) The Internal Auditor will be visiting the office on Thursday 20 January 2022 to undertake the Council's interim audit.  
(iii) The Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk will be interviewing for a part-time Caretaker on Friday 14 January 2022.

**RG69 Internal Financial Check**  
The Committee NOTED that Councillor Murray visited the office on the 16 December 2021 and undertook a financial check on Purchase Orders and Receipts from the start of the 2021/22 financial year until the end of November 2021. A narrative will be added to the proforma purchase order (where the final amount is uncertain) and cross referenced to the final purchase order. The Chairman thanked Councillor Murray for completing this exercise on behalf of the Council.

**RG70 Financial Assistance Working Group**

The Committee AGREED that the current members of this working group; Councillors J Jennings, M Owen, and S Murray, will continue to assess the financial grant applications and provide recommendations to the next Resources and General Services Committee meeting for the 2022/23 financial year. Councillor Brookes offered her support in case of need.

**RG71 Council-wide Priorities 2022/23**

The Committee NOTED the Council-wide priority lists for 2022/23.

**RG72 Estimates for 2022/23**

**72.1 Budget Review**

The Town Clerk provided an overview of the rationale and content of the draft budget calculations, which were NOTED by the Committee. Finance staff were thanked by members for all of their work.

**72.2 Service Recharges**

The Town Clerk reported how and why these are calculated, which was NOTED by the Committee.

**72.3 Tax Base**

The new Tax Base for 2022/23 for Loughton Town Council, was NOTED by the Committee.

**72.4 Committees Estimates**

The Committee NOTED the initial draft estimates pending revision. Members AGREED that the potential increase in the precept at this level would be too high and unacceptable.

**72.5 Public Loans Outstanding's**

The Committee NOTED the information provided on the current status of the public loans outstanding.

**72.6 Recommendations for Precept to the Council**

**i Budget Review**

The Committee NOTED the ongoing uncertainty and adverse impact the COVID 19 pandemic has on estimating the financial position for the following year.

The proposed revision of Earmarked Funds, resulting in a revised budget and net reduction of £81,558 in Earmarked Funds, along with a proposed net reduction in the Council's General Reserves of £10,000 was AGREED by the Committee.

Councillors NOTED the impacts that these reductions would make in 2022/23.

**72.7 Committees' Estimate**

The Committee RECOMMENDED to Council that the precept for 2022/23 be set at £829,663 with the budget details as follows:

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>
	£	£
Resources and General Services	10,000	528,181
Environment and Heritage	16,810	120,145
Recreation	119,945	420,150
Planning and Licensing	0	0
	<b>146,755</b>	<b>1,068,476</b>
Interest	200	
Increase / Decrease in Earmarked Reserves		
Resources & General Services		-23,270
Environment & Heritage		-32,708
Recreation		-25,880
Planning and Licensing		0
Total	<b>146,955</b>	<b>986,618</b>
<b>Net requirement</b>	<b>839,663</b>	<b>65.94</b>
<b>Reduction in General Reserves</b>	<b>-10,000</b>	
<b>Final Net Requirement</b>	<b>829,663</b>	<b>65.16</b>

This results in charges to band D increasing 4.35% from £62.44 (2021/22) to £65.16 (2022/23)

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked members for attending and closed the meeting at 7.37pm.

Signed: .....

Date: 9 February 2022

**LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL**

**RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 9 February 2022 at 7.45pm at Loughton Library & Town Hall.**

**Present:**

**Councillors:** J Jennings (in the Chair)  
R Brookes B Cohen M Stubbings  
W Kauffman

**Also present:** D Wixley  
**Councillors:**

**Officer:** M Squire (Town Clerk)  
K Lumb (Deputy Town Clerk)

There were two members of the public present.

**RG73 Apologies for absence**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor S Murray.

**RG74 Declarations of Interest**

The Chairman read out the non-pecuniary interests declared of the Financial Assistance Award Scheme working party, involving Cllrs Jennings; Murray and Owen.

Cllr Jennings declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 for the Financial Assistance applications for 2022/23 for: Loughton Voluntary Care Association.

Cllr Murray declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 for the Financial Assistance applications for 2022/23 for: Epping Forest ReUSE; Loughton Chigwell & District Synagogue; Loughton Voluntary Care Association; Restore Grow Community Garden; Restore Community Noah's Ark; Restore Community Oakwood Hill Community Centre; Restore Community Oakwood Hill Youth Club; Spark – a branch of Worth Unlimited; 3Food4U; and Citizens Advice Epping Forest.

Cllr Owen declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 for the Financial Assistance applications for 2022/23 for: Restore Grow Community Garden; Restore Community Noah's Ark; Restore Community Oakwood Hill Community Centre; and Restore Community Oakwood Hill Youth Club.

Cllr Brookes declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 for the Financial Assistance applications for 2022/23 as a non-voting member for Citizens Advice Epping Forest.

Cllr Cohen declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 for the Financial Assistance applications for 2022/23 for involvement with Loughton Chigwell & District Synagogue.

Cllr D Wixley declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 for the Financial Assistance applications for 2022/23 for Restore Grow Community Garden, as he



is known to the group, has been involved with some of their special events and is also represents Fairmead Ward as a District Councillor.

**RG75 Confirmation of Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2022 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

**RG76 Public Representations**

A representative from Loughton Voluntary Care Association addressed the Committee in support of their Financial Assistance Application for 2022/23. The Committee thanked her for all her great work on behalf of Loughton residents.

**RG77 Annual Town Meeting**

The Committee discussed and AGREED that subject to the latest COVID situation that the Annual Town Meeting should be held in the traditional format at 8pm on Wednesday 16 March 2022 in Murray Hall. Should there be a deterioration in COVID circumstances prior to a final decision being made by Monday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022, allowing sufficient notice time, members AGREED to delegate the final decision to the Chairman and Vice Chairman of this committee and the Town Clerk. The Committee also NOTED that it would be useful to have two working microphones as opposed to the usual one and that seating arrangements would be more distanced than previous years.

**RG78 Staffing**

The Committee NOTED the appointment of the new Part-Time Caretaker/Concierge, Jayne Bayley who joined the Town Council on 7 February 2022.

The Town Clerk also informed the Committee of the recent issues experienced with anti- social behaviour around library building.

**RG79 Staff Salaries**

The Committee NOTED that there has still been no communication received via the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), on the outcome of any staff statutory annual salary pay increases for 2021/2022.

**RG80 Meetings Schedule**

The Committee AGREED to delegate the production of the Loughton Town Council draft meeting schedule for 2022/23 to the Town Clerk, subject to email consultation with members, and ratification at the first appropriate Town Council meeting.

**RG81 Financial Assistance Applications 2022/23**

**81.1 General Applications**

The Committee discussed the recommendations of the Working Party and it was discussed and agreed that subject to applications and budget available, that Spark a branch of Worth Unlimited, may wish to submit a further application for consideration during the year given the full amount of their application had not been granted.

The Committee AGREED the applications for 2022/23 together with the recommendations of the Working Group, as read out by the Chairman, and to make the following contributions from the scheme by granting financial assistance as listed below. Members also NOTED that it is

Council policy to withhold 10% in case of emergency applications during the year.

The Working Group were thanked by the Committee for all of their work on the 2022/23 Financial Assistance Application Scheme.

Organisation	Amount Granted £	Purpose of Grant
Alfie James Productions	200.00	Performance skills workshop
Affordable Counselling	500.00	Counselling sessions
Basics Essex	1,000.00	Assistance towards equipping a new doctor
Epping Forest ReUSE	484.98	Operational Costs (safety boots/uniform)
Loughton Chigwell & District Synagogue	500.00	Supply of weekly food parcels
Loughton Voluntary Care Association	391.00	Phone bill and premises rental
Restore Grow Community Garden	2,500.00	Running Costs
Restore Community Noah's Ark	3,000.00	Crafts, toys and running costs
Restore Community Oakwood Hill Community Centre	3,000.00	Operational Costs
Restore Community Oakwood Hill Youth Club Project	2,000.00	Operational costs and equipment
Samaritans Redbridge Branch	700.00	Running Costs
Spark a branch of Worth Unlimited	1,500.00	'Complex cases' counselling service
3Food4U	3,500.00	Rent of foodbank venue
Voluntary Action Epping Forest	1,500.00	Operational Costs
<b>Total awarded</b>	<b>£20,775.98</b>	

#### 81.2 Citizens Advice – Epping Forest District

The Committee CONFIRMED that a separate budget item for a grant provision to the Citizens Advice is in place. The budget allocation of £8,500 for 2022/23 was AGREED.

Organisation	Amount Granted £	Purpose
Citizens Advice – Epping Forest District	8,500.00	Running Costs

#### RG82 Financial Limits

The Chairman checked with the Town Clerk, who agreed the current levels remain sufficient. The Committee reviewed and AGREED the financial limits as listed in the agenda are adequate.

**RG83      Payments Procedures**

The Committee reviewed and discussed the Direct Debit payments currently being made by the Council and NOTED that all instructions and Direct Debit mandates have previously been approved by the Council and the mandates authorised by two Councillor signatures.

**RG84      Finance**

**84.1      Current Financial Position**

The Committee's financial position as at the 31 December 2021 along with available funds in ear marked reserves as at 25 January 2022 were NOTED.

**84.2      Accounts Paid**

The Committee NOTED that payments totalling £183,508.54 as detailed on payment schedules nos. 341-342 have been made since the report to the meeting on 8 December 2021, and that schedules and accompanying invoices are available for inspection at the Council offices. The Town Clerk apologised and confirmed that signatures should be redacted throughout.

**RG85      Internal Auditor**

**85.1      Interim Internal Audit Report**

The Chairman thanked officers for their work and the Committee NOTED the clean Interim Internal Audit Report from Heelis and Lodge.

**85.2      Bank Accounts**

Following a verbal update from the Town Clerk, the Committee NOTED the comments from the Town Clerk's discussion with the Internal Auditor and RECOMMEND a merger of the No.1 Current Account and No.2 Account as part of the general overhaul project of the Council's banking arrangements.

**RG86      Insurance – Annual Review**

The Committee NOTED that 2021/22 was the final year of a three-year term agreement with WPS Insurance Brokers, and that alternative quotations with companies specialising in Councils' Insurance are underway.

The Committee reviewed and CONFIRMED the current levels of insurance cover are adequate. Members AGREED to delegate the decision on which company to place the Council's Insurance with to the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk in discussion with the Committee Chairman.

Cllr Wixley raised a number of questions, primarily relating to the valuations of a few historic valuations for Town Council assets. The office would investigate historic records.

**RG87      Asset Register**

The Committee reviewed and AGREED the Register of Assets and Properties as at 31 January 2021, noting the points below.

The Town Clerk advised the Loughton Cricket Club's value has been updated given as landlord we have to value at £1 and this adjustment will show in year-

end  
figures.

Cllr Wixley raised a number of sundry questions, which the office would check and confirm.

**RG88 Essex Pension Fund's Draft Administration Strategy for Employers Consultation**

The Town Clerk provided some further background to the consultation and the Committee NOTED the report .

**RG89 Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The Committee RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the following item in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as It contained confidential information relating to contractual matters.

**RG90 Buckingham Court**

The Committee NOTED the oral update. A number of recommendations were made and it was AGREED that the building should now be redecorated with minor cosmetic repairs completed . It would also be beneficial to organise a visit for councillors to the building.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked members for attending and closed the meeting at 9.13 pm.

**Signed:** .....

**Date:** 13 April 2022

**LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL**

**RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 13 April 2022 at 7.45pm at Loughton Library & Town Hall.**

**Present:**

**Councillors:** J Jennings (in the Chair)  
M Owen R Brookes B Cohen  
S Murray M Stubbings W Kauffman

**Also present:** D Wixley  
**Councillors:**

**Officer:** M Squire (Town Clerk)  
K Lumb (Deputy Town Clerk)

There were no members of the public present.

**RG91 Apologies for absence**  
No Apologies were received.

**RG92 Declarations of Interest**  
No Declarations of Interest were received. The Town Clerk advised that Cllr R Brookes may be late due to travelling.

**RG93 Confirmation of Minutes**  
The minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2022 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

**RG94 Public Representations**  
There were no public representations.

**RG95 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report**  
The Town Clerk & Chairman had nothing to report.

**RG96 Staff Salaries / National Insurance / Pensions**  
The Committee NOTED that the communication on the outcome of staff salary pay increases from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) for 2021/22, has now been received, paid in March 2022 salaries and backdated to 1 April 2021.

The Committee NOTED the 2022/23 increase in employers National Insurance Contributions (NIC's) to 15.05% from 13.8% in the last financial year.

The Committee NOTED there is no change in 2022/23 to the Employer pension rates (under the Essex Pension Fund Scheme), which remains at 23.3%.

Cllr Murray asked what the annual impact would be for the Town Council on the increase in National Insurance Contributions rates. The Town Clerk agreed to revert with a circa figure.

Cllr Kauffman arrived during this item.

**RG97 Training and Conferences**

The Committee NOTED the update on staff training.

**RG98 Meetings Schedule**

Following discussion and requests for the below dates to be changed, the Committee AGREED the draft Meeting Schedule for the next Town Council year, having NOTED the July 2022 Town Council meeting scheduled for the 20<sup>th</sup> July 2022 has been rescheduled and will now take place on the 13<sup>th</sup> July 2022 instead. A small number of other potential clashes were identified and the Town Clerk would investigate whether these could be amended.

The Committee also AGREED that the Town Clerk may issue a definitive schedule (changing these dates if possible) and to put forward a recommendation to Council for meetings to start earlier at 7.30pm rather than 7.45pm.

Cllr Brookes arrived during this item.

**RG99 Queens Platinum Jubilee Commemoration – Mayoral Chain of Office**

The Committee discussed and noted that the Council is already marking this unique and momentous occasion through:

- the planting of a tree in the Memorial Rose Garden, by the Mayor on 29 March 2022
- the lighting of a beacon, which will take place on the evening of 2 June 2022 at Hillyfields Green.
- and a design a crown competition for Jessel Green Fun Day on 26 June 2022

It was AGREED not to proceed with the purchase of the commemorative link for the Mayoral Chain of Office.

Additionally, Members discussed and AGREED that the Town Clerk could look to source a Jubilee bench with appropriate commemorative engraving.

**RG100 Finance**

**100.1 Current Financial Position**

The Committee's financial position as at the 28 February 2022 along with available funds in ear marked reserves as at 31 March 2022 were NOTED.

**100.2 Accounts Paid**

The Committee NOTED that payments totalling £747,752.79 as detailed on payment schedules nos. 343-348 have been made since the report to the meeting on 9 February 2022, and that schedules and accompanying invoices are available for inspection at the Council offices.

The Town Clerk advised he will arrange with Cllr Murray a date for a further internal financial check to be undertaken.

**RG101 Financial Assistance**

The Committee discussed and considered the financial assistance application for Lopping Hall art c/o Lopping Hall and AGREED the following contribution from the 2022/23 Financial Assistance scheme:

- £300 – specifically for the transport of the boards £150 and publicity including flyers and posters £150

The Committee requested that the applicant be advised that any future applications for the Council's Financial Assistance Application Scheme, would need to be made within the scheme timelines.

The Committee AGREED that they wish to carry forward the outstanding £3,100 Financial Assistance budget for 2021/22 to 2022/23, and NOTED that there is also £4,524.00 held in Ear Marked Reserves.

**RG102 Annual Insurance 2022 – 2024**

The Town Clerk provided a summary of the Deputy Clerk's research in obtaining three quotations for the Council's annual insurance, and the expiry date of the previous contract on the 31 March 2022. Following discussions, the Committee NOTED:

- In agreement with the Resources and General Services Committee (RGS) on 9 February 2022, minute number RG86 – The Town Clerk discussed the quotations with the RGS Chairman, with the following agreed:
- To place the Council's annual insurance with Zurich with effect from 1 April 2022 with a three-year long-term price agreement. The premium of £9,811.99 includes both the Council's Van and the lift at 1 Buckingham Court, along with Playground equipment insurance (not previously included).
- It has been agreed that whilst 1 Buckingham Court remains empty that someone needs to be based there one day a month to retain full cover for the building.

Cllr Kauffman asked for any information on potential cancellation clausung for Zurich. The Town Clerk agreed to review and advise.

**RG103 Asset Register**

The Town Clerk gave the following oral update, which was received and NOTED:

- The oak interpretation board as listed, is made from oak
- The civilian war memorial as listed, is the memorial attached to the Police Station
- The notice board at Lidl car park will be added to the Asset Register

**RG104 Governance and Accountability**

The Committee NOTED and AGREED the following reviews and risk assessments.

**104.1 Internal Audit**

**104.1.1 Review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Audit.**

**104.1.2 Review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Control.**

**104.2 Risk Assessment and Management**

**RG105 Year End 2021/22 Accounts**

The Committee NOTED the report.

The Town Clerk advised that with effect from 1 April 2022 the title of Responsible Financial Officer has been formally passed to the Deputy Town Clerk.

**RG106 2022/23 Fees for Hall Hire and Football Pitches**

The Committee NOTED the following as agreed in the Recreation Committee on 9 March 2022:

- 5% increase in charges for 2022/23
- Rounded up to the nearest pound as historic charges set with 2 decimal places are not user friendly and over complicate the charging procedure.

**RG107 2022/23 Cemetery Fees**

The Committee NOTED the following as agreed in the Environment & Heritage Committee on 29 March 2022:

- 5% increase in charges for 2022/23
- Rounded down to the nearest pound as historic charges set with 2 decimal places are not user friendly and over complicate the charging procedure.

**RG108 Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The Committee RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the following item in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as It contained confidential information relating to contractual matters.

**RG109 Buckingham Court**

The Town Clerk declared a non-pecuniary interest in this agenda item as he had inherited a role as Director of Buckingham Court Property Management Ltd, as one of a number of tenants on the site to vet the management accounts, in respect of the administrative costs relating to the area.

The Committee NOTED the oral update from the Town Clerk and this would appear as an agenda item at the next Town Council meeting.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked members for attending and closed the meeting at 8.50pm.

**Signed:** .....  
**Date:** 5 July 2022