

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL
RECREATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held at Loughton Library & Town Hall, Traps Hill, Loughton IG10 1HD on Tuesday 7 June 2022 at 7.30pm

Present

Councillors: D Wixley (in the chair)
S Fontenelle L House N Mackinnon
S Murray M Stubbings K Valentine

Also in attendance

Officers: M Squire (Town Clerk)
P Hoy (Services Manager)

RC126 Apologies

No apologies for absence were received.

RC106 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Murray declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda item 18 as he is a trustee of the Open Door Friendship Group. Cllr Wixley declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda item 13 as he is a life-member of the Essex Playing Fields Association and the Roding Valley Cricket Club is a member as a club.

RC107 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2022 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RC108 Public Representations

The Chairman reported that 3 members of the public had come to speak about Agenda item 5, and one member of the public had attended in relation to Agenda item 13.

RC109 Loughton Film Club (LFC)

Cllr Wixley made a further non-pecuniary declaration of interest as a former committee member of the film society. Three members of the now defunct Loughton Film Club addressed the meeting to explain why the club has ceased to operate. A cheque for £3,346.32 was given to the Town Council, the residue funds left in the club's bank account upon closure.

AGREED that these funds will be earmarked and used solely for local community grant funding.

The film club's equipment, currently stored at The Loughton Club, is to be sold with the proceeds to be donated to the Loughton Foodbank.

The Committee AGREED to bring that the following agenda item forward.

RC110 Roding Valley Cricket Club (RVCC) request – Min no RC93

Syed Islam, Vice Chairman, RVCC addressed the meeting. Members asked questions related to RVCC's request to have a cricket pitch sited on Loughton Town Council land,

AGREED that a further site visit would be arranged to allow Members, Officers Officers and RVCC to agree a precise location that is acceptable to the council.

AGREED that the Roding Valley Working Group would make the final decision on this matter and advise officers accordingly.

RC111 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report

The Town Clerk asked members to take leaflets advertising the forthcoming Jessel Green Family Fun Day, to distribute them accordingly.

The Chairman reported that the RVRG had been identified as a possible SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace), and informed members that a site meeting between Roding Ward Councillors, officers, representatives of Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) and other interested parties was currently being arranged. A report would be made at the next meeting, following the site visit.

The Chairman asked the Committee to appoint a representative to attend Epping Forest area meetings held by The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. Cllr House AGREED to represent the council at all meetings held by, and related to, Essex Police. Furthermore, it was AGREED that Cllr House would contact Caroline Wiggins, Safer Communities Manager at EFDC, to ascertain when meetings are due to be held.

The Chairman added that he had received favourable comments from two former Town Councillors regarding the Town Council playgrounds at Traps Hill and Felstead Road, as their respective grandchildren had enjoyed playing there.

He also mentioned the proposed hedgerow survey to be carried out on the Roding Valley Recreation Ground by the EFDC Countrycare team in August 2022

Roding Valley Recreation Ground (RVRG)

RC112 Planting Scheme and Footpaths – Min no RC86

The Committee NOTED the report.

RC113 Drainage Works – Min no RC87

The Committee NOTED the report.

RC114 Playground – Min no RC89

The Committee also NOTED the report and AGREED the following proposals:

1. That the budget is set at £120,000.00 ex. VAT.
2. That Cllr's Wixley, Valentine and MacKinnon join the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and Services Manager in the selection panel for the tenders submitted.

RC115 Tree Survey – Min no RC90

The Services Manager reported that essential works to remove unsafe Cherry trees, as well as works to make safe other trees will be carried out from September 2022, following the end of the bird nesting season. The Town Clerk and Services Manager would then draw up a plan for replacement trees to be planted in the coming years.

The Chairman stated that any felled logs could be place around the RVRG.to provide ecological benefits.

The Committee AGREED to vire funds from the Willingale Road Playing Field tree budget (and any other appropriate Budget headings) to cover part of the costs of the forthcoming programme of tree works at RVRG.

The Town Clerk reported that a former Town Councillor had been asked by a friend (at their own expense) if the Town Council could facilitate the planting of a memorial tree in the Debden vicinity.

Members advocated that EFDC should be contacted first as it was understood that they already had such a tree planting scheme. Failing that a tree could be planted at Hillyfields Green although memorial plaques are prohibited.

RC116 Football Terms and Conditions

The Committee NOTED the report and AGREED to change the Terms & Conditions so that from season 2022/23, teams who exceed their allotted 16 or 32 pre-paid games, will have to pay for any additional games at the casual hire rate, currently £61 + VAT.

RC117 New Bench

The Committee NOTED the report and AGREED to the request in principle and AGREED that Cllr Murray would discuss the request for a bench to be placed by the tennis courts, at greater length with the person who made the request. Cllr Murray to liaise with officers when more details known.

Other Agenda Items

RC118 Willingale Road Nature Reserve – Min no RC94

The Committee NOTED the report and AGREED that this item should be referred to the next meeting following more detail being gleaned from Epping Forest Countrycare, in particular regarding health and safety aspects.

The Committee AGREED that a follow-up visit should be arranged for members to return to view the site during the summer months. The Services Manager will discuss this with Countrycare Officers and contact members with prospective dates.

The Committee AGREED to suspend Standing Order number 3(ff) and AGREED to conclude the meeting by 9.30pm.

RC119 GFA Loughton FC (GFA) – Min no RC96

The Committee NOTED the report and AGREED, in keeping with the advice from the Fields in Trust, that it could not accept the installation of any type of fencing off of sections of council green open space. The Committee would however extend an invitation to GFA to attend a future meeting to make a presentation, and to see if the Committee could assist the club in any of its other aims.

The Committee AGREED to suspend Standing Order number 3(ff) and AGREED to conclude the meeting by 9.40pm.

**RC120 Murray Hall
Improvements**

The Committee NOTED that the new ceiling lights and implementation of WIFI will take place in July 2022 when E15 Drama School take their summer recess.

Defibrillator (defib)

The Committee AGREED that officers should progress the acquisition of defibrillator, to be placed externally

The Committee NOTED that the E15 Acting School had committed to using the hall for the academic year 2022/23.

Cllr Murray declared an interest in the following Agenda item, as he is acquainted with the Manager of Kingsley Pre-School Nursery.

RC121 Kingsley Hall

The Committee NOTED the report and AGREED that Officers should enter into a dialogue with the owner/Manager of Kingsley Pre-School Nursery regarding afternoon hire charges. The Committee AGREED to reduce its afternoon charge to assist this well used and important facility within the Debden area. The Committee delegated responsibility for any decisions to the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and officers.

RC122 Memorial Garden

The Services Manager Reported that an order for the repair works, following ' Storm Eunice,' had been placed. Furthermore, an additional bench was also to be installed, with costs being met by the Open Door Friendship Group.

The Committee AGREED to suspend Standing Order number 3(ff) and AGREED to conclude the meeting by 9.50pm.

RC123 Family Fun Day – Jessel Green – Sunday 26 June 2022

The Committee NOTED the report.

RC124 Financial Position

The Committee NOTED the report.

RC125 Future Work of the Committee

No items were raised.

The Town Clerk Reported that Mr Fabrizio Luca Ferrari, Public Health Improvement Officer, Community, Culture & Wellbeing, Epping Forest District Council (EFDC), had been invited to address the next Committee meeting, to provide a short presentation on community health and wellbeing needs.

Signed:
Date: 7 September 2022

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RECREATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held at Loughton Library & Town Hall, Traps Hill, Loughton IG10 1HD on Wednesday 7 September 2022 at 7.30pm

Present

Councillors: D Wixley (in the chair)
S Fontenelle L House N Mackinnon
S Murray M Stubbings K Valentine

Also in attendance R Brookes

Officers: M Squire (Town Clerk)
P Hoy (Services Manager)

RC126 Apologies

No apologies for absence were received.

RC127 Declarations of Interest

None were received.

RC128 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2022 were amended from those circulated at Min no RC111, to read, "as their respective grandchildren had enjoyed *playing* there", were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RC129 Public Representations

None were received.

RC130 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report

The Town Clerk Reported that Mr Fabrizio Luca Ferrari, Public Health Improvement Officer, Community, Culture & Wellbeing, Epping Forest District Council (EFDC), had been invited to address the next Committee meeting, to provide a short presentation on community health and wellbeing needs.

The Chairman invited Cllr House to report on whether he had managed to attend Epping Forest area meetings held by The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. Cllr House reported that no such meetings had been held, and that he was currently seeking a direct meeting with The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex. A report would be made at the next sitting of this Committee.

Roding Valley Recreation Ground (RVRG)

RC131 EFDC Green Infrastructure Strategy Roding Valley Recreation Ground Project (Local Plan proposal to designate the RVRG as a Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG))

The Committee NOTED the report of the meeting that the Chairman, Cllrs Brookes and Murray had attended along with the Town Clerk, Services Manager, Epping Forest District Council Officers and EFDC's external consultant on 23 June 2022.

Members noted that the site meeting was in connection with the EFDC Local Plan construction and the proposed designation as a SANG.

The Chairman Reported that there had been no further update from EFDC Officers to the Town Council on this matter since the meeting.

RC132 Playground – Min no RC114

(i) Public consultation and tender

The Committee NOTED the report, the survey template and playground consultation summary. The Chairman Reported that three very credible Tender bids had been received, which he, along with Cllrs Valentine and MacKinnon, the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and Services Manager had reviewed at a meeting held on 2 September 2022. No decision to choose the winning bid had been reached at the meeting because clarification was needed on certain elements of the designs. The Committee AGREED that Officers should ascertain the information required and report back to the selection group, which would then select the winning bid.

The Town Clerk updated members on the current timetable/time scale for the works, as shown in the report.

The Chairman thanked officers for their hard work during the public consultation process.

(ii) Inspection

The Town Clerk Reported that due to concerns over the condition of the hard surface and safety surface at the Roding Valley Recreation Ground Playground, an independent “urgent annual inspection” had been carried out on 31 August 2022. It was reported that only ‘moderate risk’ had been recorded against the various surfacing issues within the inspection report, and although not ideal, the issues would continue to be monitored closely and no repair works would be carried out at this present time.

RC133 Tree Survey – Min no RC115

The Committee NOTED that tree contractors were due to commence works to remove unsafe Cherry trees, and to make safe other trees, on Monday 12 September 2022. On completion of the works, the Town Clerk and Services Manager would consider an appropriate plan for replacement trees to be planted.

It was AGREED that information notices would be displayed in all notice boards on the Roding Valley Recreation Ground, and at the crossroads of Valley Hill and Oakwood Hill.

RC134 New Bench – Min no RC117

Councillor Murray provided an update on the proposed bench and it was AGREED that to progress this matter further he would liaise with the Service Manager.

RC135 Litter Bin – Greensted Road

The Committee considered a request by a member of the public for the installation of a litter bin by the Greensted Road vehicle entrance. It was AGREED that the committee would not take this matter further due to the costs involved, and

because a bin at this location would attract household waste like all of the council's bins that are situated close to residential properties.

RC136 River Way- Garages / brick wall

The Committee AGREED to pay for the removal of a 'fallen' brick wall and other fly-tipped material, all of which had emanated from the neighbouring garages in River Way. It was also AGREED that estimates would be sought for a fence to be installed on council land which would effectively seal off the open space caused by the missing wall, and in-turn deter further fly-tipping onto the recreation ground via the River Way garages.

RC137 Roding Valley Cricket Club (RVCC) request – Min no RC110

The Town Clerk Reported that a map of the proposed new area had been sent to, and was acceptable to, EFDC. Furthermore, in view of the urgent need of RVCC to commence the groundwork for the new pitch area, permission had been requested from EFDC to enable the groundwork to commence with immediate effect, before the legal documents had been signed. This request was categorically rejected by EFDC, and RVCC were informed accordingly. The legal requirements are now being handled by the Town Councils solicitors and costs will be elicited. The matter will be progressed via EFDC' legal team and a progress report will be made at the next sitting of the Committee.

RC138 Hedgerows Survey

The Committee NOTED the report and AGREED to the recommendation that two metre grass strips be left uncut to further enhance the value of the hedgerows. The Services Manager would discuss the feasibility of this proposal with EFDC ground work contractors and report back to the next meeting.

RC139 Allergy Awareness signage

The Committee NOTED the report containing a request from a local resident regarding this serious issue and AGREED that appropriate signage would be displayed at all Town Council playgrounds.

Other Agenda Items

RC140 Town Council Van

The Committee NOTED the report and AGREED in principle to the acquisition of a new 'hybrid' van through a leasing scheme. It was further AGREED that this matter would be referred to the Resources and General Services Committee when further details maybe available.

RC141 Willingale Road Nature Reserve – Min no RC118

The Committee NOTED the report of the site visit that Cllrs Wixley, Fontenelle and Stubbings, along with the Services Manager, attended with Damien Weller from Epping Forest Countrycare on 20 July 2022. The Committee considered the request by Countrycare to create a pond on the site, however it was not felt appropriate for health and safety reasons due to the isolated nature of the site.

The Committee NOTED that the next Epping Forest Countrycare volunteer workday was due to take place on Thursday 6 October 2022. Members were invited to visit site, and if so inclined, to join in.

RC142 Murray Hall

The Committee NOTED the following:

(i) Improvements

The new ceiling lights and WIFI had been installed, with funding for the lights, having been sourced from existing Murray/Kingsley Hall earmarked funds.

(ii) Defibrillator (defib)

The purchase of a defib for Murray Hall was in hand.

(iii) Utility costs

The Town Clerk Reported that the Town Council was continuing to review its position and was endeavouring to secure the best payment deal possible. This was proving to be a challenge in these uncertain times. Town Council staff would also be undertaking a comprehensive review of its practices at all community buildings and office locations, in order to make energy efficiencies

(iv) NHS

The Town Clerk Reported that the NHS would soon be using the car park for a health check van. The office would check to see if any payment would be received for the use of the car park.

The Committee AGREED to suspend Standing Order number 3(ff) and AGREED to conclude the meeting by 9.30pm.

RC143 Kingsley Hall

(i) Pre school

The Committee NOTED that the pre-school nursery would now be operating morning sessions only for the foreseeable future and that the office is now taking additional afternoon bookings from other users.

(ii) Essential works to the rear garden wall and gate

The Committee NOTED that essential external repair works were now necessary to:

- replace the existing wooden gate, its frame and associated timber work, which had now shrunken beyond repair
- replace the perimeter brick wall and internal brick flower planters, which were cracked and had suffered significant movement in the past months
- address the issue of the brick paving, which had experienced significant movement over the last few years, and which had greatly accelerated during the past few months

The Committee AGREED that the work should be carried out, and the Services Manager would now seek quotes from contractors for this work.

(iii) Utility costs

The Town Clerk Reported that the council was continuing to review its position, and was endeavouring to secure the best payment deal possible. The Committee NOTED that it would soon be necessary to have a new boiler to fitted.

Councillor Murray declared a non-pecuniary interest in the next item.

RC144 Memorial Garden - Benches and Repairs

The Committee NOTED that the replacement benches, including one being provided by the Open Door Friendship Group, were on order, and that two sections of storm damaged railings were currently being straightened, meaning that the completion of works would be imminent.

RC145 Family Fun Day – Jessel Green – Sunday 26 June 2022

The Committee NOTED the report and thanked Officers for their hard work, in both the planning and delivery of this event.

The Committee AGREED to suspend Standing Order number 3(ff) and AGREED to conclude the meeting by 9.45pm.

RC146 Broadway Town Centre Partnership (BTCP) request

The Committee NOTED the request by Cllr Brookes (in her capacity as interim Chair of the BTCP) that the Town Council consider whether staff could assist with a Christmas event on The Broadway. Members AGREED that there should be no change to the current programme of community events and should not reverse its previous decision (min no RC37) to withdraw from the 'Countdown to Christmas' event, to concentrate on other community events. Cllr Brookes asked the Committee to formally NOTE her request that this event be resurrected at some point in the future.

The Committee AGREED to suspend Standing Order number 3(ff) and AGREED to conclude the meeting by 9.50pm.

The Committee AGREED that this matter be referred to the Strategy and Staff group for consideration, and that Cllr Brookes should be invited to attend the next meeting of this group.

RC147 Financial Position

The Committee NOTED the report.

RC148 Future Work of the Committee

No items were raised.

Signed:
Date: 2 November 2022

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RECREATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held at Loughton Library & Town Hall, Traps Hill, Loughton IG10 1HD on Wednesday 2 November 2022 at 7pm

Present

Councillors: D Wixley (in the chair)
S Fontenelle L House N Mackinnon

Also in attendance R Brookes

Officers: M Squire (Town Clerk)
P Hoy (Services Manager)

Also present:

Fabrizio Luca Ferrari, Public Health Improvement Officer, Community Culture and Wellbeing, Epping Forest District Council (EFDC)

RC149 Apologies

No apologies for absence were received.

RC150 Declarations of Interest

Councillors Wixley, Murray and Brookes declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 3, as all are EFDC district councillors.

RC151 Health and Wellbeing Presentation

Mr Fabrizio Luca Ferrari, Public Health Improvement Officer, Community Culture and Wellbeing, EFDC, was welcomed to the meeting. Mr Ferrari gave a presentation to the committee on community health and wellbeing needs in the district, and afterwards invited members to ask questions. Mr Ferrari was thanked for attending the meeting and for sharing the work of his department with members.

RC151 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2022 were AGREED, noting the additions made from those circulated at Min no. 131, to record that Cllrs Murray and Brookes were also in attendance at the site meeting detailed in the item. Also that the site meeting was in connection with the EFDC Local Plan construction and the proposed designation as a Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG).

RC152 Public Representations

None were received.

RC153 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report

Following an update by the Town Clerk, the Chairman extended thanks to the Services Team, grounds maintenance contractors and volunteers for awards recently won in the Essex Playing Field Association's annual 'Best Kept Playing Fields' competition. The awards were as follows:

Class 1 – Playing fields serving a population of 2,500 or more
Roding Valley Recreation Ground – certificate of merit

Willinagle Road Playing Field – certificate of merit

Class 3 – Children’s Playgrounds

Traps Hill – over all category Runner-up

Newmans Lane – Silver Award

Westall Road – Silver Award

Roding Valley Recreation Ground (RVRG)

RC154 Playground – Min no RC132

The Town Clerk reported that EFDC had confirmed in writing that no planning permission was required for the new playground, although a ‘Certificate of Lawful Development’ would be obtained.

The Committee NOTED the report.

RC155 Tree Survey – Min no RC133

The Services Manager Reported that work is due to be completed on all remaining trees during week commencing 7 November 2022. The Committee NOTED that the lost Cherry trees will be replaced in a rolling programme of works, to be commenced during 2023.

RC156 New Bench – Min no RC134

The Committee AGREED to delay the installation of a new seat close to the tennis courts until after the installation of the new playground, as it was likely that a new bench in this vicinity was likely to be incorporated into the overall playground project.

RC157 River Way- Garages / brick wall – Min no RC136

The Services Manager Reported that a purchase order had been issued for a new chain-link fence to replace the brick wall that was formerly the border between River Way garages and the recreation ground, and that it was anticipated that work would commence within the next seven days. It would be useful to also plant some native hedging and engage EFDC Countrycare for this purpose.

RC158 Hedgerows Survey – Min no RC138

The Chairman Reported he would discuss appropriate ways to enhance hedgerows with Officers of Epping Forest Countrycare. Following these discussions, the Services Manager would hold discussions with EFDC grounds maintenance officers to agree a suitable programme of works to support this scheme.

RC159 Footpath adjacent to the River Roding

The Committee considered the concerns of a local resident who recently highlighted the poor state of sections of the footpath. As the costs of footpath replacement/repairs are so high, and with very limited budget capacity, it was AGREED that the Town Clerk will write to the Director of Planning Services at EFDC to follow-up on EFDC’s proposal to designate the RVRG as a Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG). Should that plan go ahead resulting in additional funding for enhancements to the RVRG then the priority would be on pathway repairs. The Town Clerk will provide a report at the next sitting of the committee.

Other Agenda Items

RC160 Town Council Van – Min no RC140

The Town Clerk reported that together with the Service Manager, they had visited three Van dealerships in Harlow on 28 October 2022. Only one viable option presented itself during the visits, and it was felt that a little more research was required before a final decision is made.

The Committee AGREED that following the further research the decision on a suitable way forward should be left to the Town Clerk and all Town Council committee Chairmen, to proceed at the earliest opportunity.

RC161 Willingale Road Nature Reserve – Min no RC141

The Chairman reported that he visited site during the last volunteer work session carried out by Epping Forest Countrycare on 6 October 2022. The Services Manager reported that a further work session had been arranged for Thursday 5 January 2022, and that all members were invited to join in.

RC162 Murray Hall – Min no RC142

No new items were reported.

RC163 Kingsley Hall – Essential works to the rear garden wall and gate – Min no RC143 (ii)

The Services Manager Reported that a third quote was forthcoming and that a decision would be made on receipt of the third quote.

RC164 Jessel Green Fun Day

The Town Clerk Reported that he will liaise with the various Community Group partners in the New Year, regarding plans for the 2023 event, and further updates will be provided at future Recreation Committee meetings.

RC165 Broadway Town Centre Partnership (BTCP) request

The Committee NOTED that the council was not in a position to support a Christmas event on The Broadway this year, and it was AGREED that it should be stated in these minutes that the original request was made by Cllr Brookes directly and not by the BTCP.

RC166 Financial Position

The Committee NOTED the report.

RC167 Estimates for 2023/24

The Committee NOTED the projections for estimates / budget for 2023/24 and AGREED to increase the council's fees and charges for 2023/24 by 7%, keeping it below the current Retail Price Index (RPI) rate. The Committee AGREED to the draft budget but accepted that some figures may need to be updated at the final budget meeting in early January 2023 as the budget would be financially challenging.

The Committee AGREED to suspend Standing Order number 3(ff) and AGREED to conclude the meeting by 9.00pm.

RC168 Committee Priorities

The Committee reviewed its priorities for 2023/24 and AGREED to move 'Solar energy installations for council buildings' up to number 1. The Chairman AGREED

that initial enquiries should be made and the costs of a feasibility study ascertained
A report will be made at the next meeting.

RC169 Future Work of the Committee
No items were raised.

Signed:
Date: 11 January 2023

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL
RECREATION COMMITTEE

**MINUTES of the meeting held at Loughton Town Council, Council Chamber,
1 Buckingham Court, Rectory Lane, Loughton IG10 2QZ on Wednesday 11 January
2023 at 7.45pm**

Present

Councillors: D Wixley (in the chair)
S Fontenelle L House N Mackinnon
S Murray M Stubbings K Valentine

Also in attendance: R Brookes (until Min no RC189)

Officers: M Squire (Town Clerk)
K Lumb (Deputy Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer)
P Hoy (Services Manager)

RC170 Apologies

No apologies for absence were received.

RC171 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Murray declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 10, as an Associate Member of South Loughton Cricket Club (SLCC).

RC172 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2022 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RC173 Public Representations

None were received.

RC174 Town Clerk's / Chairman's Report

The Chairman Reported that he was seeking clarification from Officers at Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) as to the status of the proposed planting scheme on the Roding Valley Recreation Ground, particularly regarding grant funding that had been provided by the Environment Agency. For reference, to date the project has only seen a small section of path replacement carried out and no tree planting. An update will be made at the next meeting.

The Chairman reiterated that the Committee remained committed to investigating the feasibility of installing solar panels at the council's buildings, Min no RC168, Committee Priorities (priority number 1). It was AGREED that officers would follow this up and report to the next meeting.

The Committee noted that the allergy signs had been installed by the playgrounds and that the resident requesting them had expressed her gratitude.

Roding Valley Recreation Ground (RVRG)

RC175 Playground – Min no RC154

The Committee NOTED the progress report and were informed that a proposed commencement date for the works, 27 March 2023, had been set by the contractor. However, the Town Clerk advised the Committee that this date was subject to favourable weather/ground conditions and would be deferred if necessary.

The Town Clerk further stated that the contractor had estimated that the installation would take approximately five weeks, again dependant on weather and ground conditions.

RC176 Tree Survey – Min no RC155

The Committee NOTED that all outstanding work to trees was completed during week commencing 14 November 2022 and AGREED to a limited programme of works to replace lost Cherry trees, subject to budgetary constraints.

RC177 River Way- Garages / brick wall – Min no RC157

The Committee NOTED that a new chain-link fence to replace the brick wall that was formerly the border between River Way garages and the Recreation Ground, had been installed on 9 November 2022. The Services Manager Reported that he was currently in discussion with EFDC CountyCare with regards to the planting of native hedging close to the new fence, to add further protection against fly-tipping and other anti-social activities.

RC178 Hedgerows Survey – Min no RC158

The Committee NOTED that discussions on appropriate ways to enhance hedgerows had taken place between Loughton Town Council (LTC) Officers and counterparts at EFDC. The Committee AGREED that due to the perceived additional costs involved, this project would not now be progressed.

RC179 South Loughton Cricket Club (SLCC) request for a bench in memory of Mr Rob Glendinning

The Committee NOTED that the Services Manager has spoken to members of SLCC and permission has been given for the cricket club to purchase and install a bench, at its own cost, in honour of Mr Glendinning. The bench will be situated by the row of trees close to the pavilion.

RC180 Roding Valley Cricket Club (RVCC) - Min no RC137

The Town Clerk Reported that a draft lease was now being prepared by the Town Council's solicitors. It was AGREED that the Town Clerk would liaise with the RVCC and RVRG Working Group to clarify the following points, to be covered within the lease:

1. Are RVCC to fence the pitch to protect it, or just rope it off?
2. How long is the lease to be for?
3. Rent to be agreed.

Other Agenda Items

RC181 Town Council Van – Min no RC160

The Committee NOTED that the Town Clerk and Service Manager are in ongoing discussions with Qualis to utilise their working van fleet hire arrangements with the Northgate Vehicle Hire company. The Town Clerk Reported that discussions were

now at an advance stage, and hopefully a new van will be sourced in the coming weeks.

RC182 Willingale Road Nature Reserve – Min no RC161

The Committee NOTED that Epping Forest CountyCare and a team of its regular volunteers, aided by Cllr Fontenelle, carried out a further day of clearance work and general site maintenance on Thursday 5 January 2023. Further work sessions are planned for later in the year.

RC183 Town Council Halls

Kingsley Hall – Essential works to the rear garden wall and gate – Min no RC163 (ii)

The Town Clerk Reported that he and the Services Manager had met at Kingsley Hall with the chosen contractor on Friday 6 January. The scope of the works was confirmed during the meeting, and a start date is now awaited.

RC184 Jessel Green Fun Day – Min no RC164

The Committee NOTED that at the Strategy and Staff Group meeting on the 19 December 2022, it was agreed that the event should continue on an annual basis, albeit that sponsors should be sought to minimise costs. A provisional date has been set for Sunday 25 June 2023. The Town Clerk Reported that he and the Community Manager will be holding meetings with the principal contributors to the event, commencing on 20 January 2023.

RC185 Fees review

The Committee NOTED the Strategy and Staff Group meeting on the 19 December 2022, where it was agreed that all fee levies relevant to this Committee should be raised to 10% for the following financial year, in lieu of the ‘cost of living’ and ‘utilities’ crisis.

The Town Clerk also reported that the Town Council had recently been informed that EFDC was to increase the cost of staging its Play in the Park sessions, held at Jessel Green and RVRG in the Easter and summer school holidays, by some 47%. The Committee AGREED that the Town Clerk would write to the event organisers and inform them that due to this massive increase, Loughton Town Council would be forced to reduce its provision of sessions from 12 to six per annum.

RC186 Financial Position

The Committee NOTED the current financial position as of 30 November 2022.

RC187 Financial savings

The Committee acknowledged the AGREED 10% rise in Town Council fees, effective 1 April 2023, as a saving, and further AGREED that the Services Manager should seek quotations for the grounds’ maintenance contract at RVRG, following the imminent transfer of this service to Qualis.

RC188 Estimates for 2023/24

The Committee NOTED the 2023/24 budget as discussed by the preceding meeting of the Resources and General Services Committee meeting.

RC189 Future Work of the Committee

Councillor Brookes left the meeting during this agenda item.
No items were raised.

Signed:
Date: 8 March 2023

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL
RECREATION COMMITTEE

**MINUTES of the meeting held at Loughton Town Council, Council Chamber,
1 Buckingham Court, Rectory Lane, Loughton IG10 2QZ on Wednesday 8 March 2023
at 7.30pm**

Present

Councillors: D Wixley (in the chair)
S Fontenelle N Mackinnon S Murray
M Stubbings K Valentine (from Min no RC194)
R Brookes (as substitute for Cllr House)

Also in attendance:

Officers: M Squire (Town Clerk)
P Hoy (Services Manager)

RC190 Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Cllr House. Cllr Brookes had been nominated as substitute for this meeting.

RC191 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Murray declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 as an Associate Member of South Loughton Cricket Club (SLCC).

RC192 Confirmation of Minutes

The Chairman reported that the words “working group” had been added to Min no RC180. The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2023 were then CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RC193 Public Representations

None were received.

Councillor Valentine joined the meeting during the next item.

RC194 Town Clerk’s / Chairman’s Report

The Town Clerk reported that there had been an error in the current edition of Think Loughton regarding the dates of the ‘Play in the Park’ sessions. Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) officers, who are responsible for the sessions, had been informed of the error and would be able to advise prospective service users accordingly. It was also confirmed that the Town Council website was displaying the correct information.

The Chairman Reported that he was hopeful that following the adoption of the Local Plan, the Roding Valley Recreation Ground would be declared a SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace), and therefore qualify for local authority grant funding for the upgrading of footpaths and for tree planting.

Roding Valley Recreation Ground (RVRG)

RC195 Playground – Min no RC175

The Committee NOTED the recent site visit by the contractor and the updated timetable, including the planned start date of early April 2023. As has been previously stated, the commencement of this project will be dependent on both weather and ground conditions. An opening ceremony would be arranged in due course.

The Town Clerk was asked to request that, if possible, the current playground remain in-situ for as long as possible while work on the new playground starts, thus reducing the time that no playground is available.

RC196 Trees

196.1 Oak Processionary Moth (OPM)

The Chairman Reported that he had received a further update from the Forestry Commission, with particular reference to chemical treatments and the potential for harm to wildlife. The concern being the proximity of the RVRG to the Roding Valley Nature Reserve.

The Committee AGREED that in the event of OPM being found to be present at council sites, advice in the first instance should be sought from EFDC Countrycare and also the Roding Valley Meadows Local Nature Reserve Ranger. The latter should be contacted as the Nature Reserve (adjoining the RVRG) has 'Site of Special Scientific Interest' SSSI status and has been banned from using chemical removal in favour of manual removal, due to that status and the fact the 25 species of butterfly have been recorded on the Nature Reserve.

196.2 Tree Planting

The Committee NOTED that Cllr MacKinnon had been offered 50, one year old tree whips that could be planted in the RVRG. It was reported that 30 Grey Willow whips would make up a large part of the planting scheme, with the remaining 20 to be confirmed, subject to availability, although the Committee AGREED that they should be 'native' species. Cllrs MacKinnon and Wixley would be carrying out a site visit to scope suitable locations and would seek volunteers to carry out the planting.

196.3 Trees Donated by EFDC

The Services Manager Reported that following notification from the EFDC Tree Officer earlier in the day, he had AGREED to the planting of three new trees and had arranged to attend a meeting on Thursday 9 March to agree suitable planting locations. Two of the trees (Acer Campestre Elegant – Field Maple, and Crataegus Laevigata – small Hawthorn tree) were trees donated by members of the public to commemorate lost loved ones, and the third was a Cherry tree that EFDC had left over from its previous years' planting scheme.

RC197 River Way – Garages / brick wall – Min no RC177

The Services Manager Reported that EFDC Countrycare would not be able to plant native hedging close to the new fence, to add further protection against fly-tipping and other anti-social activities. Following a site visit, Countrycare Officers reported that they found evidence of asbestos close to the ground surface at the desired point where the hedges would be planted.

It was AGREED that the Services Manager would attend site and carry out an investigation.

RC198 South Loughton Cricket Club (SLCC) request for a bench in memory of Mr Rob Glendinning – Min no RC179

The Committee NOTED that SLCC had ordered the bench, and it was AGREED that the Services Manager would attend site and meet with SLCC officials to confirm the exact location for the bench, which is expected to be installed during April 2023.

RC199 Roding Valley Cricket Club (RVCC) – Min no RC180

The Committee NOTED that the draft sublease is with the Town Councils' solicitors for completion, and it was AGREED that Officers would confirm with RVCC that the club had an up-to-date public liability insurance certificate.

Other Agenda Items

RC200 Town Council Van – Min no RC181

The Committee NOTED the update on the new van, the disposal of the old van and issues around the installation of an electric charging point at a suitable Town Council facility. On the last point, the Town Clerk Reported that options were still being considered, and the Committee AGREED that Officers should investigate the feasibility of the installation of a 'commercial, charging point at Murray Hall which would have the potential to bring income into the council, if other users participated . A report will be made to the next meeting.

RC201 Willingale Road Nature Reserve – Min no RC182

The Committee NOTED the Report.

RC202 Town Council Community Halls

RC202.1 Murray Hall – Solar panels

The Committee NOTED the update and awaited the response from Solar Together who are working in conjunction with Essex County Council (ECC). The Chairman reported that he had hoped to have been able to provide a report from officials at the Buckhurst Hill United Reformed Church, regarding their experience of solar panels, but he was still awaiting the report.

The Committee NOTED that Jayne Bayley had been appointed as Principal Caretaker at Murray Hall with effect from 1 April 2023, and it was also reported that Ms Bayley had recently commenced twice weekly cleaning duties at the Town Council offices at Buckingham Court.

**RC202.2 Kingsley Hall – Essential works to the rear garden wall and gate
Min no RC183**

The Committee NOTED that the essential safety works in the back garden were completed on 17 February 2023.

RC203 Jessel Green Fun Day – Min no RC184

The Committee NOTED that arrangements for this event, due to take place on 25 June 2023, are progressing on schedule. The Town Clerk and Community Officer are due to hold their final meeting with partner organisations on Friday 10 March 2023, and local sponsors are being sought to reduce the outlay in costs.

Councillors AGREED that they would run a tombola stall on the day.

RC204 Skate Ramps

The Services Manager Reported on the approach made by Officers from EFDC expressing an interest in re-furbishing and then using the Town Council's skate ramps, which are currently stored at Roding Valley High School (RVHS). It was hoped that more information could have been made available at the meeting, but there had been no further developments. However this approach would appear to carry more credibility than the several previous approaches from commercial bodies, which sadly proved short-lived. The Services Manager AGREED to forward photographs of the ramps to members of the committee for their future reference.

RC205 Transfer of Epping Forest District Council Grounds Maintenance Services to Qualis Management – April 2023

The Town Clerk reported that he and the Services Manager are due to attend an introductory meeting with Qualis Management in the coming weeks. A full report of the meeting will be made to all Town Council members in due course.

RC206 Financial Position

The Committee NOTED the Report.

RC207 Financial savings

The Committee NOTED the agenda item.

RC208 Future Work of the Committee

No issues were raised.

Signed:

Date: 31 May 2023