

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 25th June 2008 at 7.45 p.m. at 1 Buckingham Court.

Present:

Councillors: S Pewsey (in the Chair)
 J W Angold-Stephens K E Angold-Stephens B Glassman (from Min no RG4)
 S M Harper P J C House P Richardson (from Min no RG4)
 R E Brookes (as substitute for Cllr C C Pond)

Also in Attendance

Councillors: A P Copland (from Min no RG3 until Min no RG10)
 S W Murray C P Pond (until Min no RG20)
 D J Wixley

Officers: E K Walsh (Town Clerk)
 T J Hudson (Senior Finance and Administration Officer)

3 members of the public

RG1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs C C Pond and R T Law. The Town Clerk reported that Cllr Brookes had been nominated as Cllr C C Pond's substitute for this meeting.

RG2 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Resources and General Services Committee held on Wednesday 9th April 2008 amended at Min. no. RG165.3 from those circulated were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Cllr Copland joined the meeting.

RG3 Public Representations

The meeting was adjourned to hear addresses by two members of the public regarding Agenda item 10, additional grant funding for the provision of Christmas lights by the Town Centre Partnerships.

Cllrs Glassman and Richardson joined the meeting.

RG4 Declarations of Interest

Cllrs K Angold-Stephens, Brookes and Richardson declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in Agenda item 20 because of their association with the Town Centre Partnerships.

Cllr Glassman declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in Agenda item 10 the application for financial assistance from the Acting Up Theatre Co. Ltd.

Cllr Murray declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda item 10, the application for financial assistance from the Samaritans of Redbridge as his sister is a voluntary advisor with the organisation.

Cllr Murray declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in Agenda item 19 because of his friendship with the former councillor.

Cllr Wixley declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in Agenda item 10 as he has undertaken some voluntary work with the Samaritans of Redbridge.

RG5 Reference from the Environment and Heritage Committee – Min. no. EH9

The Committee AGREED to bring forward agenda item 20 as members of the public were interested in this section.

The Committee considered the recommendation of the Environment and Heritage Committee and AGREED to increase the maximum of grant funding available for Christmas lights to £8,000 thus providing funding of up to £4,000 for each Town Centre Partnership. A supplementary budget would be presented to the Committee at its next meeting.

RG6 Matters for Report

RG6.1 Chain of Office Min. no. RG170

The Town Clerk confirmed that, as the delivery of the new silver chain had been delayed, the company had provided a loan chain for the interim period and that the total costs of the works would be as previously agreed by the Committee.

RG7 Current Financial Position

The Committee NOTED the report of the end of the financial year 2007/08. Information had been issued showing current bank balances.

RG8 Accounts and Audit 2006/07 and 2007/08

8.1 End of year Accounts 2006/07

The Committee NOTED the receipt of the external auditor's certificate for 2006/07 and that the audit for that financial year had been completed.

8.2 Internal Audit 2007/08

The Committee NOTED the final report for 2007/08 and that there had been no issues raised or recommendations made.

8.3 Review of effectiveness of system of internal audit

The Committee considered the detailed report and reviewed the effectiveness of the system of internal audit, including the current system of internal audit, the independence and competence of the internal auditors, the scope of the internal audit and audit planning and reporting systems. It was AGREED that the system of internal audit was satisfactory.

It was noted that, in future, the review of the effectiveness of the system of internal audit will be carried out at the same time as the other major reviews i.e. the spring meeting of the Committee.

8.4 Review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control

The Committee considered the detailed report and reviewed the effectiveness of the system of internal control. It was AGREED that the system of internal control was satisfactory.

It was noted that, in future, the review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control will be carried out at the same time as the other major reviews i.e. the spring meeting of the Committee.

8.5 End of year Accounts 2007/08

The Annual Return, the document that forms the council's statutory accounts for the year 2007/08, was considered.

The Committee APPROVED Section One, the statement of accounts; confirmed it is able to answer "yes" to the questions posed in Section Two, the Annual Governance Statement; and noted Section Four, the report of the

internal auditor, which had now been completed with “yes” in all the relevant boxes. The Committee also noted the additional information provided which gave a more detailed account of the council’s finances.

Copies of the Register of Assets and Properties as at 31st March 2008 were considered by the Committee and no amendments were required at this time.

RG9 Councillor Checks on Finance

The Committee AGREED to continue with the practice of appointing a councillor to carry out period checks on the council’s financial transactions and Cllr J Angold-Stephens accepted the responsibility for the financial year 2008/09.

RG10 VAT Inspection

The Town Clerk reported on the satisfactory VAT inspection undertaken on 11th June 2008, which had covered the previous three years of accounts. It was NOTED that the inspector had made only one observation in his report requesting for a change to the tax treatment of hall booking deposits.

Cllr Copland left the meeting.

RG11 Applications for Financial Assistance 2008/09

Cllr Murray left the meeting for this item.

It was noted that £910 of the budget for 2008/09 remained available. The Committee RESOLVED to make the following contributions from the scheme by granting financial assistance to:

Organisation	Amount granted £	Power
Acting Up Theatre Co. Ltd	400	LG(Misc Prov)A 1976 s19
Samaritans of Redbridge	350	LGA 1972 s137

Cllr Murray rejoined the meeting.

The Chairman reported that a late application from the Brook Project had also been received but that it would be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

RG12 Buckingham Court Management Company

The Committee AGREED to the appointment of the Town Clerk, Enid K Walsh, as the Council’s designated company director to the Buckingham Court Management Company.

RG13 Newsletter Production – Think Loughton

The Town Clerk advised members of the problems with the production and distribution of the most recent edition of the newsletter. As the current contract expired with the Autumn 2008 edition, a full report on future production and delivery options would be made to the next meeting of the Committee.

RG14 Flagstaff on Loughton Town Council offices

The Committee AGREED to investigate the cost of installing a flagstaff at the Loughton Town Council offices with the intention of purchasing and installing the flagstaff on the Rectory Lane side of the building. The officers were also asked to report on the cost of purchasing a Union Flag and a cross of St. George flag with the intention, if the costs were appropriate, of flying the relevant flag on the appropriate flag days.

RG15 Fair Trade status

The Committee NOTED the report and requested the Chairman to provide more information on this topic to enable further consideration.

RG16 Noticeboard Policy

The Committee confirmed the current policy for the display of notices and posters on the Town Council's noticeboards but requested that, when space allowed for additional items, priority should be given to local events.

RG17 Council Logo on Signage

The Committee NOTED the report and requested that a list detailing the existing signage be provided for consideration.

RG18 Reference from the Recreation Committee – Min. no. RC11

The Committee AGREED to refer this item to the Strategy & Staff group for consideration.

The Committee AGREED to suspend Standing Order number 1.4. and AGREED to conclude the meeting by 9.40 p.m.

RG19 Honours Board

The Committee considered the report and AGREED to investigate the costs of providing an Honours Board in the Council Chamber, including the costs of the inscriptions for the period since the Council's inauguration.

RG20 Accounts Paid

It was NOTED that payments totalling £239,386.68 in accordance with payment schedules nos. 11 to 14 had been made and that the payment schedules and the accompanying invoices were available for inspection at the meeting.

Cllr C P Pond left the meeting.

RG21 Future Work of the Committee

The Committee suggested the following topic for future consideration:

A Sustainability Policy – Cllr C C Pond to present a report.

Signed.....
Date 24th September 2008

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

Organisation	Amount granted £	Power
High Road Town Centre Partnership	4,000	LGA 1972 s145
Broadway Town Centre Partnership	2,500	LGA 1972 s145

RG27 Matters for Report

27.1 Strategy and Staff report

The Committee NOTED the report

27.2 Newsletter Production – Think Loughton – Min. no. RG13

The Committee NOTED the report and AGREED to accept the quotation of Scott Dryden Graphic Design and Total Media for the production and printing of the next four editions of the newsletter at a total net cost of £7,410.

27.3 Flagstaff on Loughton Town Council offices – Min. no. RG14

The Committee NOTED the report and AGREED to include this as a budget item for 2009/10.

27.4 Fair Trade status – Min. no. RG15

The Committee NOTED the report.

It was AGREED the proposal would lie until public opinion had been gauged through an article in Think Loughton inviting comment on whether to support Fair Trade status for the town.

27.5 Honours Board – Min. no. RG19

The Committee NOTED the report and AGREED to include an amount for the purchase of materials and the gilding as a budget item for 2009/10. The Town Clerk would work with the Strategy and Staff Group to finalise the design details.

The Town Clerk's husband was thanked for his offer to make the board pro bono.

RG28 Current Financial Position

The financial position as at 31st August 2008 was NOTED. Information had been issued showing current bank balances.

The Committee NOTED the Supplementary Budget for 2008/09 and AGREED to commend this to the next meeting of the Council.

It was noted that a review of the banking arrangements was to be carried out.

RG29 Applications for Financial Assistance 2008/09

29.1 General applications:

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

Organisation	Amount granted £	Power
Roding Circle Fellowship	160	LG(Misc Prov)A 1976 s19

The Brook Project was unsuccessful in receiving a grant on this occasion but the Committee offered to defer the application to the annual round of grant funding in February 2009 for consideration.

RG30 Internal Audit Report

The Committee NOTED the report.

RG31 Subscriptions review

The Committee NOTED the report. It was AGREED to join the Open Spaces Society to assist with the registration of village greens. Membership of the Rural Community Council of Essex would be included in the subscriptions for 2009/10.

RG32 Loughton Civic Service including the Loughton Citizenship Awards

The Committee NOTED the report and AGREED to hold an annual Civic Service commencing in March 2009 which would include the Loughton Citizenship awards as detailed in Cllr C C Pond's report. Nominations would be invited through Think Loughton.

RG33 Christmas Card Competition

The Committee confirmed the arrangements for the Christmas Card competition and members volunteered to take the entry forms to schools.

RG34 Remembrance Service

The Committee NOTED the report and AGREED to increase the donation to the Royal British Legion for the wreath to be laid by the Town Mayor at the Remembrance Service.

RESOLVED to make payment of £75 to the Poppy Appeal under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

RG35 Quality Status**35.1 Promoting Local Democracy and Citizenship**

The Committee considered the report but agreed not to proceed with the proposed pilot webcast project in partnership with Epping Forest District Council.

35.2 Training

The Committee NOTED the report.

The Committee AGREED to suspend Standing Order 1.4 and AGREED to conclude the meeting at 9.40 p.m.

RG36 Accounts Paid

It was NOTED that payments totalling £166,742.01 in accordance with payment schedules nos. 15 to 19 had been made and that the payment schedules and the accompanying invoices were available for inspection at the meeting.

RG37 Future Work of the Committee

No items were raised.

RG38 Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Committee RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the remainder of the meeting under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as the following items contained confidential information relating to staffing.

The Administrative Assistant left the meeting.

RG39 Staff matters**39.1 Increments**

The Committee noted the report and AGREED items 5a and 5b concerning the award of additional increments to two existing members of staff.

39.2 External Staff

In response to the request by the Recreation Committee, it was AGREED to recruit an additional member of external staff as follows:

Job title	Assistant Park Warden/Caretaker
Salary	SCP 11 – 13
Hours	36 per week (operating on summer/winter schedules 40/32) flexible to include late evening and weekend working
Duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assist with the management and care of the Roding Valley Recreation Ground and other open spaces in Council ownership including the cemetery grounds • Caretaking duties at the Murray Hall and other Council owned facilities • Other duties as the Council may require from time to time

It was further agreed that if necessary a virement would be made from the Central Personnel Budget of Resources and General Services Committee to the Recreation Committee to finance the costs in 2008/09.

The Committee AGREED to suspend Standing Order 1.4 and AGREED to conclude the meeting at 9.45 p.m.

39.3 Personnel Service

It was AGREED to appoint Peninsula Business Services to support senior Town Council staff with up-to-date legal and welfare advice on personnel matters at a cost of £252 per month under a five year contract.

Signed.....
Date: **19th November 2008**

RG47 Parish Basic Allowance

The Committee reviewed the Parish Basic Allowance and AGREED to increase the allowance to £108 per annum with effect from 1st April 2009.

RG48 Annual Town Meeting 2009

The Committee AGREED to continue with the usual format of the Annual Town Meeting and invite Cllr Norman Hume, Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, as the guest speaker.

RG49 FOI publication scheme

The Committee RESOLVED to adopt the model publication scheme together with the guide to the proactively published information for the public.

RG50 Code of Conduct for Local Authority Members and Employees

The Committee AGREED to defer this item until the next meeting to allow councillors more time to consider the document as copies for circulation had not yet been received from the Office of Public Sector Information.

RG51 Committee Priorities

The Committee reviewed its priorities and AGREED on the list as follows:

Priority	Main Function	Greater Detail/Current Position
On-going activities		
High	Running the Committee	
High	Admin. For whole council	
High	Council and committee agendas and minutes	
High	All council finances, end of year accounts, audit etc	
High	Management of Buckingham Court	
High	Personnel matters, staff management	
High	IT and office equipment	
High	Publicity and website	Website to be upgraded
High	Civic matters	Civic Service reinstated including Citizenship Awards
High	Annual Report	Preparation and printing
High	Newsletter	Editorial, printing and distribution
High	Community Forum	Arrangements and admin
High	Annual Town Meeting	Arrangements and admin
High	Christmas card competition	Arrangements and admin
High	Emergency Plan	Amendments and circulation (carried out through digest)
High	Grants	Admin and finance
High	New legislative requirements	
High	Responding to consultations	Variable
High	Any other matters within the committee's terms of reference	

Current activities		
High	Data Protection/Freedom of Information Acts	FOI Publication Scheme completed; Records and Information Management Policy and Complaints Procedure required. Data Protection: no action
High	Staffing – employment and Health and Safety policies and procedures; Fire Risk Assessments; employee handbook	H&S policy and some employment policies have been completed; handbook commenced
Medium	Investigate bank alternatives	Deposit account improved but no further action on current account
Low	Noticeboards	Maintenance and installation
High	Council accommodation	Review and research
Low	Council structure	Continuing reviews
High	Seeking external funding sources	Limited action
Medium	Honours Board	2009/10 project
Medium	Flagstaff at Buckingham Crt	2009/10 project
Medium	Fairtrade	Awaiting public response to consultation

RG52 Estimates 2009/10

52.1 Fees and Charges

The Committee AGREED that

- i the hire fees for Buckingham Court should increase in-line with the RPI rate for September, 5 percent.
- ii the price per sheet of A4 for items on the Publication Scheme should remain at 60p.

The Committee also AGREED to the Rolling Programme.

52.2 The estimates for 2009/10 were AGREED as follows:

Cost centre		2008/09			2009/10	
		Revised Annual Budget*	Forecast / Committed	Transfer from Earmarked Reserves	Estimate 2009/10	Transfer from Earmarked Reserves
Communication	Expenditure	18,500	18,000		19,000	
Office expenses	Expenditure	14,500	14,500		10,900	
Audit & accounts	Expenditure	3,550	1,600		3,600	

Central personnel	Expenditure	275,250	211,350		267,700	
	*Income	5,000		5,000		
Council expenses	Expenditure	15,750	16,450		13,900	
Other services	Expenditure	39,050	39,050		15,050	
	*Income	15,000		15,000		
Members' expenses	Expenditure	3,000	2,200		3,000	
Buckingham Court	Expenditure	53,500	53,100		55,100	
	Income	0				
Grants	Expenditure	17,500	16,000		32,2000	
Recharge to Murray Hall	Expenditure	-17,000	-17,000		-18,000	
Service re-charge	Expenditure	-196,600	-196,600		TBC	
Expenditure		227,000	158,650	0	402,450	0
Income		20,000	0	20,000		
Net Expenditure over Income		207,000	158,650		402,450	0
Net Expenditure over Income*		207,000	138,650		402,450	

*Including transfers from Earmarked Reserves

RG53 Accounts Paid

The Committee NOTED that payments totalling £88,387.24 as detailed on payments schedules nos. 20 to 22 had been made since the meeting on 24th September 2008. The schedules and accompanying invoices were available at the meeting for inspection.

RG54 Future Work of the Committee

No items were raised.

Signed.....
Date: 10th December 2008

RG61 Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Committee RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the next item under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as the following item contained confidential information relating to staffing matters.

RG62 Staffing Review

The Town Clerk outlined her report, which was NOTED by the Committee. It was AGREED that the Strategy and Staff Group would consider matters in more details and prepare recommendations for consideration by this Committee.

RG63 Estimates for 2009/10

The Committee considered the agenda report and it was AGREED that:

1. £98,585 would be taken from General Reserves to set against the net requirement and reduce the precept, leaving the General Reserves at 70.23 % of running costs.
2. A precept of £627,700 would be recommended to the Council on 14th January 2009.

Each Committee's estimate would be as follows:

Resources and General Services		Estimate 2009/10	Transfer from Earmarked Reserves
Communication	Expenditure	19,000	
	*Income		1,000
Office expenses	Expenditure	10,900	
	*Income		4,500
Audit & accounts	Expenditure	3,600	
Central personnel	Expenditure	242,000	
Council expenses	Expenditure	13,900	
Other services	Expenditure	9,050	
Members' expenses	Expenditure	3,000	
Buckingham Court	Expenditure	55,100	
Grants	Expenditure	32,200	
Service re-charge	Expenditure	-223,100	
Expenditure		173,150	
Income			5,500
Net Expenditure over Income		173,150	
Net Expenditure over Income (including transfers from Earmarked Reserves*)		167,650	

Environment and Heritage		Estimate 2009/10	Transfer from Earmarked Reserves
Christmas BDW competitions	Expenditure	450	
Cemetery-Church Lane	Expenditure	50,650	
	*Income	16,000	6,000
Street furniture	Expenditure	18,250	
	*Income		6,500
Allotments	Expenditure	3,000	
	Income	345	
Lady Whitakers Mead/new cemetery	Expenditure	10,000	
Other services	Expenditure	1,500	
Service Re-charge (EH)	Expenditure	72,500	
Expenditure		156,350	
Income		16,345	12,500
Net Expenditure over Income		140,005	
Net Expenditure over Income (including transfers from Earmarked Reserves*)		127,505	

Planning and Licensing		Estimate 2009/10	Transfer from Earmarked Reserves
Town Design Statement	Expenditure	15,000	
	*Income		15,000
Service Re-charge (PL)	Expenditure	20,600	
Expenditure		35,600	
Net Expenditure over Income		35,600	
Net Expenditure over Income (including transfers from Earmarked Reserves*)		20,600	

Recreation		Estimate 2009/10	Transfer from Earmarked Reserves
Kingsley Hall	Expenditure	15,300	
	Income	14,500	
The Murray Hall	Expenditure	149,500	
	Income	47,250	
Other Services (Rec)	Expenditure	1,300	
Service Re-charge (Rec)	Expenditure	130,000	
Roding Valley Rec Grd	Expenditure	132,500	
	Income	5,870	
Open Spaces	Expenditure	19,300	
Playgrounds	Expenditure	36,350	
Skateboard Facility	Expenditure	43,000	
	*Income		39,000
Will. Rd. Playing Field	Expenditure	18,900	
	Income	1,000	
Van replacement fund	Expenditure	2,000	
Expenditure		548,150	0
Income		68,620	39,000
Net Expenditure over Income		479,530	
Net Expenditure over Income (including transfers from Earmarked Reserves*)		440,530	

To summarise:

		£
Running costs	2009/10	654,535
Forecast reserves	at 31 st March 2009	459,696

Committee	Income £	Expenditure £
Resources and General Services	0	173,150
Environment and Heritage	16,345	156,350
Recreation	68,620	548,150
Planning and Licensing	0	35,600
Total	84,965	913,250
Interest	30,000	
Use from earmarked reserves		
Resource and General Services	5,500	
Environment & Heritage	12,500	
Recreation	39,000	
Planning and Licensing	15,000	
Use from general reserves	98,585	
Total	200,585	
	Total income	285,550
Council Precept		£627,700

RG64 Code of Conduct for Local Authority Members and Employees

The Committee NOTED the report and discussed the proposed revisions.

It was AGREED that the Town Clerk, in discussion with the Chairman and Vice Chairman, would draw up a written response based on the issues raised in the agenda report and expressing the view that the Council did not see the need to revise the Code at this stage as the last amendments had only been introduced in 2007.

RG65 Annual Pay Award 2008

The Committee NOTED the report.

Signed.....

Date: 25th February 2009

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 25th February 2009 at 7.45 p.m. at 1 Buckingham Court.

Present:

Councillors: S Pewsey (in the Chair)
 K Angold-Stephens J Angold-Stephens B Glassman
 S M Harper P J C House R Law
 C C Pond P Richardson

Also in attendance

Councillors: D J Wixley

Officers: E K Walsh (Town Clerk)
 S Haynes (Deputy Clerk)

9 members of the public

RG66 Apologies for absence

No apologies were received.

RG67 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Resources and General Services Committee held on Wednesday 10th December 2008 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Committee AGREED to defer agenda item 3, Public Representations, until immediately before agenda item 6 as members of the public wished to address the Committee regarding their financial assistance applications.

RG68 Declarations of Interest

Cllr J Angold-Stephens declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in Agenda item 6, the Financial Assistance applications for the Loughton Brook Project, as her husband was the applicant, and for Home Start Epping Forest, Loughton Festival 2009, Samaritans of Redbridge and St John's Church as she was acquainted with members of these organisations.

Cllr K Angold-Stephens declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda item 6, the Financial Assistance application for Loughton Brook Project as he was its chairman and advised that he would exercise his right to address the Committee but withdraw from the meeting whilst this application was discussed. He also declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in the Loughton Festival application as he was acquainted with members of this organisation.

Cllr Harper declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in Agenda item 6, the Financial Assistance applications for the Alzheimer's Society, as she was acquainted with members of the Society and Loughton Brook Project, as she knew the applicant.

Cllr Law declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in Agenda item 6, the Financial Assistance application for Epping Forest Youth for Christ as he was acquainted with the organisation.

Cllr Pewsey declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda item 6, the Financial Assistance application for the Loughton Festival 2009, being a member of the Festival Committee and advised that he would withdraw from the meeting when the application was discussed. He also declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in the applications for the Loughton Operatic Society as he knew the applicant through his position as a Trustee of the Lopping Endowment and the Loughton Potato Ground as he lived close to the site.

Cllr C C Pond declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in Agenda item 6, the Financial Assistance applications for the Broadway Town Centre Partnership, as a representative on the Town Centre Enhancement Focus Group (The Broadway), the Loughton Youth Project as a member of Essex County Council and for the Alzheimer's Society, Loughton Brook Project, Loughton Festival 2009, Operatic Society, Samaritans of Redbridge and the Loughton & District CAB as he was acquainted with members of these organisations.

Cllr Richardson declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in Agenda item 6, the Financial Assistance application for Loughton Broadway Town Centre Partnership as a member of Epping Forest District Council and on occasions acted as a substitute representative for the Town Council at meetings of the Partnership.

Cllr Wixley declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in Agenda item 6, the Financial Assistance applications for the Loughton Brook Project as he had assisted in practical works and the Loughton Festival 2009, Loughton Operatic Society, Loughton Potato Ground, Loughton Youth Project, Samaritans of Redbridge and St Johns Church as he was acquainted with members of these organisations. In addition, he declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in the application from Epping Forest Youth for Christ as this organisation had carried out projects with The White Bridge County Junior School, where he is a school governor.

RG69 Matters for Report

69.1 Fairtrade Status – Min no RG27.4

The Chairman advised that he was waiting for confirmation that Churches Together in Loughton would be prepared to help progress this scheme and in the meantime that the Town Centres Manager had indicated that the High Road Town Centre Partnership would be willing to lend its support.

69.2 Annual Town Meeting 2009 – Min no RG48

The Committee NOTED that Cllr Norman Hume, Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, had accepted the invitation to be the guest speaker at this year's Annual Town Meeting on 1st April 2009 at the Murray Hall, Borders Lane. The Chairman reminded Councillors that their attendance at this meeting would be expected.

69.3 Loughton Civic Service including the Loughton Citizenship Awards – Min no RG44.2

The Committee NOTED that the revised date of the Civic Service was Thursday 23rd April 2009 at the Loughton Methodist Church starting at 8.00pm and that presentations would be made to the Citizenship Award winners.

69.4 Committee Priorities/Updating of the Website – Min no RG51

The Committee put forward the following suggestions for additions to the Council's website:

- A Roll of Honour Page to provide details of those remembered on the Loughton War Memorial and other such memorials in the town.
- Photographs of the past chairmen of the Loughton Urban District Council.

RG70 Public Representations

The meeting was adjourned to hear addresses from 9 members of the public regarding the applications for Financial Assistance from Home Start Epping Forest, Kidz Club, Loughton Brook Project, Loughton Operatic Society, Loughton Youth Project, St John's Church, Together: Working for Wellbeing and the Loughton & District Citizens Advice Bureau.

RG71 Financial Assistance**71.1 General Applications**

Cllrs K Angold-Stephens, Glassman, Harper, Pewsey and Wixley declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in the application from the Loughton Youth Project as last year they had met with representatives from this group for fact-finding.

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

Organisation	Amount granted £	Power
Alzheimer's Society, Epping Forest	500	LGA 1972 s145
Home-Start Epping Forest	1,000	LGA 1972 s145
Kidz Club	1,500	LGA 1972 s145
Broadway Town Centre Partnership	700	LGA 1972 s145
Loughton Brook Project	1,350	Open Spaces 1906
Loughton Festival 2009	500	LGA 1972 s145
Loughton Operatic Society	200	LGA 1972 s145
Loughton Potato Ground	600	LG(MiscProv)A 1976 s19
Loughton Youth Project	5,000	LGA 1972 s137
Samaritans of Redbridge	350	LGA 1972 s137
St John's Church Loughton	3,277	LGA 1972 s137
Together: Working for Wellbeing	550	LG(MiscProv)A 1976 s19
Vitalise	184	LG(MiscProv)A 1976 s19
Epping Forest Youth for Christ	500	LG(MiscProv)A 1976 s19
	£16,211	

Cllr K Angold-Stephens left the meeting during the discussion of the Loughton Brook Project application.

The Chairman, Cllr S Pewsey, left the meeting during the discussion of the Loughton Festival application, during which time the Vice Chairman, Cllr Harper, took the Chair.

The application from "Enrich" was unsuccessful in receiving a grant.

71.2 Citizens Advice Bureau

The Committee RESOLVED to grant £4,200 to the Loughton & District Citizens Advice Bureau, power LGA 1972 s142.

RG72 Current Financial Position

The financial position report as at 17th February 2009 was NOTED and information was issued showing current bank balances.

The Committee AGREED to suspend Standing Order number 1.4 and AGREED to conclude the meeting by 9.40 p.m.

RG73 Audit**73.1 External Audit 2007/08**

The Committee NOTED the receipt of the External Auditor's certificate and report for 2007/08 and that the audit for that financial year had been concluded.

With regard to the matters raised by the Auditor, the Committee made the following comments:

- The correct statutory reference for advertising the notice of appointment for the exercise of electors' rights and the conclusion of audit notice was the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 (SI2003/533) was noted.
- The Committee AGREED to review the current level of fidelity guarantee insurance cover under agenda item 15, Insurance.
- The Business Interruption (loss of revenue) cover for both the Kingsley and Murray Halls was reviewed annually as part of the insurance review and had been increased in April 2008 in recognition of the increased hire income for the financial year 2007/08.
- It noted that income and expenditure should be recorded on a gross basis but that the treatment employed in 2007/08 for the construction costs associated with the Murray Hall had followed that used in the 2006/07 accounts.
- It noted that under the Local Councils' Governance and Accountability Guidance, fixed assets should be measured at current book value but that the treatment of the Council's vehicle under fixed line depreciation in 2007/08 was a continuation of the method used in the accounts since the van's acquisition in March 2004.
- It noted that the interest credited on 1st April 2008 should have been treated as an accrual rather than a receipt in the cashbook, but commented that this was again how interest on the Abbey account had been dealt with historically.

73.2 Internal Audit 2008/09

The Committee NOTED the receipt of the interim report for 2008/09 and that there had been no issues raised or recommendations made.

73.3 Internal Financial Check

The Committee thanked Cllr J Angold-Stephens who had carried out a financial check on 17th February 2009 on the Murray Hall booking records. Cllr Angold-Stephens reported that all books were clearly and accurately maintained with no issues arising.

RG74 Accounts Paid

It was NOTED that payments totalling £216,782.34 in accordance with payments schedules nos. 23 to 27 had been made since the meeting on 19th November 2008 and the schedules and accompanying invoices were available at the meeting for inspection.

RG75 Quality Parish Status**75.1 Reaccreditation**

The Committee NOTED that the Town Council had been reaccredited with the Quality Council award in December 2008 and expressed thanks to the Town Clerk for her work on this.

75.2 Training Strategy

The Committee RESOLVED to adopt the revised training policy as provided by the following Statement of Intent and AGREED that it should be reviewed on an annual basis.

Training – A Statement of Intent

1

General

The Council has a strong commitment to learning and development by encouraging its councillors and staff to undertake training and so strive for continuous improvement in their knowledge and skills.

The Council recognises the importance of continuous development in enabling it to meet the future needs and aspirations of the local community.

2

Identifying Training Needs

Councillors:

A comprehensive training programme for Councillors will be drawn up by the Town Clerk for the start of each new term of office and reviewed annually thereafter.

This will include an induction course for each new council member held prior to the first Annual Meeting of the new Council.

Councillors will be encouraged to attend a variety of courses to support their role within the Council.

Flexible solutions will be provided to any Councillors with particular needs.

Staff:

The Council supports relevant training for staff, both one-off and qualification courses.

The Council will pay for training fees and the expense of attending courses.

Training needs will be identified at the initial induction meetings held with all new employees and then reviewed at their annual "Review and Development Meetings".

Staff will be encouraged to undertake training both relevant to their specific roles and to extend their skills.

3

Resources

The Council will ensure that training requirements are built into the annual budget process to support the training strategy.

In addition to in-house training, the following is a non-exclusive list of training and conference providers to be considered, which will be reviewed annually:

- Essex Association of Local Councils
- Essex Training Partnership
- Epping Forest District Council
- Society of Local Council Clerks
- East of England Regional Assembly
- National Association of Local Councils
- Rural Community Council for Essex

- 4 **Impact of training**
 Training will:
- help maintain, enhance and expand the quality and range of services offered by the Council
 - prepare members for their future roles within the Council
 - assist members to adapt to meet the changing needs of the Council and community
 - allow staff to acquire more confidence in their work
 - ensure the legal requirements are met
- 5 **Review**
 Staff will have the opportunity to review the impact of their training at the annual Review and Development meeting and informal discussions throughout the year.
- Areas that may prompt additional training are
- Changes in legislation
 - New or revisions to existing council services
 - Introduction of new qualifications
 - Accidents or incidents at work
 - Complaints
 - Specific requests from staff
- 6 **Members' requirements**
 Training opportunities for councillors will be identified by the Town Clerk and attendance considered through the agenda process.
- 7 **Council development**
 In the event of new legislation being introduced or an issue arising which requires the attention of all members, the Town Clerk will provide or arrange for a suitable training event to be held.
- 8 **Update and information**
 The Council recognises the need to invest in the future by ensuring that its information source is current. This will be achieved through
- Access to free information whether through literature or the use of research on the internet.
 - Annual subscriptions to relevant publications
 - Membership of relevant organisations
- 9 **The Council will support its members by:**
- i. Being a member of the Essex Association of Local Councils
- The Council will support its officers by:**
- i. Supporting the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk's membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks by paying their subscriptions
 - ii. Encouraging and supporting the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk to become members of the Institute of Local Council Management and to pay their subscriptions.
- 10 **Annual review**
 This Statement of Training Intent will be reviewed annually by the Resources and General Services Committee.

75.3 Community Engagement

The Committee NOTED the request for Councillors to staff the display at the Loughton Club on Saturday 18th April 2009.

RG76 Christmas Card Competition 2008

The Committee considered the report and AGREED the re-classification of the categories as follows:

Category:	1. Infants – years 0/1/2	up to age 7
	2. Juniors – years 3/4/5/6	ages 7 - 11
	3. Secondary – years 7/8/9/10/11	11 – 16
	4. Adult – year 12+	16 and over

RG77 Meetings Schedule

The Committee AGREED the following schedule of meetings for 2009/10:

2009 May	20	Wednesday	Annual Council
	26	Tuesday	Planning and Licensing
June	3	Wednesday	Recreation
	8	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	17	Wednesday	Resources and General Services
	22	Monday	Planning and Licensing
July	1	Wednesday	Environment & Heritage
	6	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	20	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	22	Wednesday	Council
August	29	Wednesday	Recreation
	3	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	24	Monday	Planning and Licensing
September	7	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	16	Wednesday	Environment and Heritage
	21	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	30	Wednesday	Resources and General Services
October	5	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	14	Wednesday	Council
	19	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	28	Wednesday	Recreation
November	2	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	11	Wednesday	Environment and Heritage
	16	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	25	Wednesday	Resources and General Services
December	30	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	14	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	16	Wednesday	Resources and General Services (Budgets)
2010 January	6	Wednesday	Council
	11	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	20	Wednesday	Recreation
February	25	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	3	Wednesday	Environment and Heritage
	8	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	17	Wednesday	Resources and General Services
March	22	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	3	Wednesday	Council
	8	Monday	Planning and Licensing
	17	Wednesday	Recreation
	22	Monday	Planning and Licensing

	24	Wednesday	Annual Town Meeting, The Murray Hall, Borders Lane at 8 p.m.
April	31	Wednesday	Environment and Heritage
	6	Tuesday	Planning and Licensing
	14	Wednesday	Resources and General Services
	19	Monday	Planning and Licensing
May	28	Wednesday	Council
	4	Tuesday	Planning and Licensing
	12	Wednesday	Annual Council

The Committee AGREED to suspend Standing Order number 1.4 and AGREED to conclude the meeting by 9.45 p.m.

RG78 Future Work of the Committee

The Committee suggested the following topics for future consideration:

- (i) Town Twinning – Cllr Glassman to prepare a report
- (ii) The Power of Well Being – The Town Clerk to prepare a report

RG79 Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Committee RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from Agenda item no.15 under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as the report contains confidential information relating to the council's property affairs.

The Committee AGREED to suspend Standing Order number 1.4 and AGREED to conclude the meeting by 9.50 p.m.

RG80 Insurance – Annual Review

The Committee CONFIRMED the adequacy of the Council's insurance cover as laid out in the report with the exception of the following items where cover was to be increased as shown below:

1. Fidelity Guarantee from £500,000 to £750,000
2. Material damage (buildings) to include subsidence cover on key Council buildings

As the long term agreement would expire on 31st March 2009, the Committee AGREED to delegate the selection of the most appropriate insurance company at renewal time to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Committee's Chairman and Vice Chairman.

Signed.....
Date: 22nd April 2009

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 22nd April 2009 at 7.45 p.m. at 1 Buckingham Court.

Present:

Councillors: S Pewsey (in the Chair)
 J W Angold-Stephens
 B Glassman (from Min no RG91)
 C C Pond
 K E Angold-Stephens
 S M Harper
 R Law
 P Richardson (from Min no RG84)

Also in attendance

Councillors: D J Wixley

Officers: E K Walsh (Town Clerk)
 S Haynes (Deputy Clerk)

RG81 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Glassman.

RG82 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Resources and General Services Committee held on Wednesday 25th February 2009 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

RG83 Public Representations

None were received.

Cllr Richardson joined the meeting.

RG84 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

RG85 Matters for Report

85.1 Subscriptions review – Min no RG31

In recognition of the valuable service the Voluntary Action Epping Forest offered, the Committee AGREED to become an affiliated member of at an annual cost of £12.00.

85.2 Insurance – Annual Review – Min no RG80

The Committee NOTED the report and confirmed the delegated decision taken by the Town Clerk, in discussion with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee, to place the Council's insurance business with WPS Insurance Brokers and Risk Services (agents for Norwich Union) at a cost of £10,844 per annum.

It was NOTED that, with effect from 1st April 2009, for individuals hiring Council buildings for private functions or organising events such as fundraising / coffee mornings it would no longer be necessary to charge an additional fee to include them in the Council's public liability insurance cover as this was already included in the new policy. It was AGREED that the hiring fees would not require revision as the premium for this item of cover had not increased

beyond the normal inflation range. The Committee requested that the Recreation Committee review the terms and conditions of the hall hirings that fell within its remit at its next meeting.

RG86 Current Financial Position

The financial position report as at 31st March 2009 was NOTED and information was issued showing current bank balances. It was further noted that the balance in the NatWest Capital Reserve Account had been transferred into a NatWest Bonus Saver Account to improve the level of interest received and that the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee had been notified of this action by the Town Clerk. The restrictions and operations of the account remain unchanged. Investment arrangements will continue to be reviewed by officers to ensure compliance with the Council's Investment Strategy and Policy.

RG87 Application for Financial Assistance 2009/10

The Committee considered the application and RESOLVED to make a grant of £200 to the Cystic Fibrosis Trust in support of the charity event at the Murray Hall under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

RG88 Financial Regulations Annual Review.

88.1 The Financial Regulations were review and the Committee confirmed that they met the Council's requirements.

88.2 The Committee CONFIRMED the continued use of direct debits for credit card payments and AGREED to extend this method of payment to include utility supplies and where fixed and regular instalments were offered at no additional cost, subject to the restrictions of Regulation 6.8.

88.3 The financial limits were reviewed and considered adequate at this time.

RG89 Internal Audit

89.1 Review of the effectiveness of the system of internal audit

The Committee considered the detailed report and reviewed the effectiveness of the system of internal audit, including the current system of internal audit, the independence and competence of the internal auditors, the scope of the internal audit and audit planning and reporting systems. It was AGREED that the system of internal audit was satisfactory.

89.2 Review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control

The Committee considered the detailed report and reviewed the effectiveness of the system of internal control. It was AGREED that although the system of internal control was considered satisfactory, a periodic review of contract management would be added to the internal control system list.

The Committee AGREED the following **Statement of Internal Control**:

1 Scope and Responsibility

Loughton Town Council (hereafter called the Council) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

2 Purpose of the System of Internal Control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk at a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risks of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them effectively and economically.

The system of internal control has been in place at the Council for the year ended 31st March 2009.

3 The Internal Control Environment

The system of internal control is based on a framework consisting of the Code of Conduct, internal regulations (including but not limited to financial regulations) and administrative procedures. It is further enhanced by the regular provision of management and financial information as appropriate to fit the Council's policy of delegation and responsibility. The system is constantly monitored by members as well as officers within the Council. In particular the system incorporates:

- comprehensive budgeting systems, project evaluation and management appraisal
- regular reports of service delivery and project performance
- preparation and dissemination of regular financial reports measuring actual expenditure against forecasts for both revenue and capital projects
- regular review of such reports by officers, and by members in committee and full council.
- periodic finance checks undertaken by a councillor appointed annually to this role.

4 Review of Effectiveness

The authority has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control. The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the work of

- the Council and its committees, especially Resources and General Services Committee
 - councillor financial checks
 - the Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer and other staff
 - the internal auditor
 - the external auditor
 - any other review agencies and inspectorates in their reports.

The Statement of Internal Control will be incorporated into the end of year accounts.

89.3 Appointment of internal auditor for 2009/10

The Committee accepted the Town Clerk's recommendation and AGREED to the appointment of Auditing Solutions as the Council's internal auditors for 2009/10 at a cost of £360 per visit. This will include 2 interim visits during the year with a final end of year visit to inspect the annual accounts.

RG90 Accounts Paid

It was NOTED that payments totalling £90,466.02 in accordance with payments nos. 28 to 30 had been made since the meeting on 25th February 2009 and the schedules and accompanying invoices were available at the meeting for inspection.

RG91 Emergency Response Plan

The Committee NOTED the plan and provided a series of amendments to the entries. It was AGREED to appoint Cllrs C C Pond and K Angold-Stephens as the deputy coordinators.

Cllr Glassman joined the meeting.

RG92 Future Work of the Committee

The Committee suggested the following topic for future consideration:

- (1) An Archives Policy - Cllr C C Pond to prepare a report.

Other items raised which fell outside of the remit of this Committee were passed to the Environment and Heritage Committee for consideration.

Signed.....

Date: 17th June 2009