

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING

**MINUTES of the Meeting held on Wednesday 20 May 2026 at 7.30pm at
1 Buckingham Court, Rectory Lane, Loughton IG10 2QZ**

Present

Councillors: D Wixley (in the chair until Min no 184)
S Harriman (in the chair from Min no 184)
R Brookes C Davies (from Min 184) W Dodd
M Fontenelle S Fontenelle A Fricker
L House K-W Lee N MacKinnon
S Murphy S Murray C Pond
J Riley M Stubbings C Ubah
K Valentine

Officers: M Squire (Town Clerk)
P Bryce (Deputy Town Clerk)

Cllr Neil Carlsson, Essex County Councillor for Loughton South & Buckhurst Hill Division,
Cllr Natalie Wilding-Barrett, Essex County Councillor for Loughton North & Epping Forest
District Council (EFDC), Loughton, Fairmead Ward and 3 Members of the public.

Before the commencement of the meeting, the Town Mayor reported that Cllr S Fontenelle
would be recording the meeting.

184 Election of the Town Mayor for 2026/27

Cllr Wixley gave a resume of his year in office, including highlights along the way.
He attended sixty-four engagements in total, chaired 10 x Full Council meetings and
was very pleased to raise £750 for his chosen charity St Clare Hospice.
Cllr Murray replied on behalf of the Council thanking Cllr Wixley for “the wonderful
job as Mayor, chairing our meetings in an appropriate manner and was the voice of
the Town Council at the community events,” comments echoed by other members.

Cllr Wixley invited nominations for the role of Town Mayor. Cllr Harriman was
proposed, and Cllr Harriman was unanimously elected as Town Mayor for 2026/27.
Cllr Harriman signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, as Town Mayor for
the Town Council year 2026/27. Cllr Wixley presented him with the Town Mayor’s
badge and chain of office and Lord Citrine’s book, ‘ABC of Chairmanship’.

Cllr Pond had proposed the nomination and said that Cllr Harriman had lived in
Loughton for quite a long time and was a worthy successor, fully charged in his new
responsibilities.

Cllr Harriman said that he was honoured to be appointed Town Mayor, and the bar
is exceptionally high. He will look forward to meeting new people and thanked the
members for their vote. Cllr Wixley was presented with his Past Town Mayor’s
badge.

185 Appointment of Deputy Town Mayor for 2026/27

Cllr Les House was proposed and unanimously elected as Deputy Town Mayor and presented with the Deputy Town Mayor's badge. Members were pleased that Cllr House was back in action and it was only right that he has now resumed the position of Deputy Mayor.

186 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Minhas, Owen and Sylvan.

187 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Pond declared a non-pecuniary interest in any matters relating to EFDC as he was a member. Cllr S Fontenelle declared a non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to the Broadway Town Centre Partnership but would not be commenting on any questions which may arise.

The Town Clerk reminded members of their duty to keep their register of interests up to date.

188 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2026, and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 12 May 2026 were confirmed.

189 Town Clerk's Report

The Town Clerk had nothing to report.

190 Appointment of Members, and Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman, of Council Committees for 2025/26

190.1 Planning and Licensing Committee

Cllr Pond reported that Cllr Murphy would be stepping down from this committee. Cllrs Davies, Dodd, Lee, Minhas, Riley and Ubah were appointed to the Planning and Licensing Committee. Cllr Davies was elected Chairman and Cllr Riley Vice Chairman. There being no appointment to replace Cllr Murphy, a vacancy on this committee will be filled in due course.

190.2 Recreation Committee

Cllrs House, MacKinnon, Murray, Stubbings, Sylvan, Valentine and Wixley were appointed to the Recreation Committee. Cllr Valentine was elected Chairman and Cllr Wixley Vice Chairman.

190.3 Environment and Heritage Committee

Cllrs Dodd, Fricker, Harriman, Obaseki, Pond, Ubah and Valentine were appointed to the Environment and Heritage Committee. Cllr Pond was elected Chairman and Cllr Fricker Vice Chairman.

190.4 Resources and General Services Committee

Cllrs, Brookes, M Fontenelle, S Fontenelle, MacKinnon, Murray, Owen and Stubbings were appointed to the Resources and General Services Committee. Cllr Owen was elected Chairman and Cllr Brookes Vice Chairman.

All Committees consist of seven members.

- 190.5** Nomination of up to three persons per political group authorised to make substitutions in accordance with Standing Order 5e.
Cllrs Pond and Wixley to continue.

191 Nomination of Council Representatives for 2026/27

- 191.1** The Council representatives on outside bodies for 2026/27 were AGREED as below:

Organisation	2026/27 representative(s)
Lopping Endowment	Cllr J Riley
Epping Forest District Association of Local Councils (EFDALC)	Cllr Wixley (currently chairing the meetings) & the Town Clerk and one other member to attend on an ad hoc basis, when the need arises.
Local Councils' Liaison Committee	Cllrs Davies and Wixley (Cllr Wixley currently Vice Chairman)
EALC - Local Councils Forum and AGM	Cllr Wixley
Tree Wardens (appointed by Epping Forest Countrycare)	Cllrs S Fontenelle, Fricker and Wixley
Loughton Broadway Town Centre Partnership	Cllrs Davies, S Fontenelle, Murray, and Ubah
Essex Police local community meetings	Cllrs S Fontenelle, House and Wixley
Roding Valley Nature Reserve Consultative Group	Cllrs MacKinnon and Wixley (with Cllr Murray as a District Councillor on the Management Committee) Cllr Fricker would also attend as a reserve, depending on prior commitments.
Loughton High Road Town Centre Partnership	Cllr Riley would act as a representative if the Town Centre Partnership were agreeable.

Cllr Davies left the meeting.

191.2 To review arrangements for reporting back on the activities of outside bodies

Representatives were requested to provide a written report, which is attached to the next Council agenda, on meetings which they have attended. A verbal report can be made on meetings attended within ten days of the Council meeting. Members AGREED that the wording 'Members are also requested to provide an annual report for the final Council meeting of the municipal year ' was no longer appropriate.

The Council confirmed these arrangements.

191.3 Joint Standards Committee

Cllr Pond remained as the representative on the Joint Standards Committee for 2026/27.

191.4 Grievance Hearing and Disciplinary Appeal Panels

Cllr MacKinnon remained as the additional member to sit on both the Grievance Hearing Panel and the Disciplinary Appeal Panel.

192 Membership of Internal Council Groups

192.1 Strategy and Staff Group (includes the Complaints Panel)

Membership to continue as: Town Mayor, Deputy Town Mayor and the Chairman of each of the Committees, S Murray as a representative from the minority group. Cllr Brookes (as Vice Chairman of the Resources and General Services Committee) would attend in the absence of the Chairman of the Resources and General Services Committee.

Note: It is always open to the group to invite a member to a particular meeting if special knowledge, etc. is required.

192.2 Financial Assistance Working Group

Membership to continue as: Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Resources and General Services Committee, Cllr Murray and the immediate past Town Mayor.

The Group usually meets in January to consider the annual round of applications.

192.3 Recreation Projects Working Group

Membership: Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Recreation Committee and other members to be nominated by this Committee at the next Recreation Committee meeting.

193 General Power of Competence

The Council AGREED to reassert the use of the General Power of Competence in the forthcoming Civic Year.

194 Confirmation of Standing Orders

Members AGREED the Standing Orders, noting the existing document is on the Town Council website.

195 Confirmation of Financial Regulations

Members AGREED the Financial Regulations, noting the existing document is on the Town Council website.

196 Year End Financials 2026/27

196.1 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ending 31 March 2026, including.

- (i) The Council AGREED AGAR (Section 1) for the Year ended 31 March 2026.
- (ii) The Council AGREED AGAR (Section 2) for the Year ended 31 March 2026.
- (iii) The Council AGREED the AGAR, noting that the internal auditor has completed and signed the Annual Internal Audit Report on page 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26.

196.2 Annual Accounts

The Council APPROVED the Annual Accounts for the Year ended 31 March 2026. This statement of accounts had been prepared in accordance with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

The Town Clerk reported that the Council's financial accounts were in a much better position than the last few years (Covid, financial crisis and escalating utility bills, being negative factors previously). A major benefit was the huge reduction in utility charges (particularly electricity), which had now stabilised, and continued control of costs, which had enabled the opportunity to set up a number of earmarked funds for new Town Council projects. A healthy increase in General Reserves was achieved, to comply with statutory financial ratios.

Cllr Murray thanked the Town Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and officers for their preparation and work for the audit and year end financials.

197 Loughton Town Council's 30th Anniversary

To mark the 30th Anniversary of the conception of Loughton Town Council, long serving certificates were presented to the following Town Council members.

Cllr Chris Pond founding member joined in 1996 was awarded a special certificate for his continuous service of 30 years and a gold certificate of 20 years +

Cllr Stephen Murray, also a founding member, who had a break in service from 2004-2008 was awarded a gold certificate of 20 years plus.

Cllr Rose Brookes, who joined in 2004 but had a break in service from 2012 – 2016, Cllr Carol Davies who joined in 2008 and Cllr David Wixley who joined in 2004 were all awarded a silver certificate for services of 15 years plus.

Cllrs Stella Murphy and Mick Stubbings who both joined in 2016 were awarded bronze certificates for services of 10 years plus.

Members congratulated the councillors for their service to Loughton Town Council.

Signed
15 July 2026