

EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Earley Town Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Radstock Lane, Earley, Berkshire on Wednesday, 18th February 2015 which commenced at 8.00pm.

Present

Chairman – The Mayor, Councillor Mrs L Chambers

Councillors M Ahmed, J Armstrong, Miss L Blumenthal, T Chambers, D Chopping, Ms P Dunn, J Eastwell, M Firmager, D Hare, N Holloway, N Jorgensen, Mrs P Jorgensen, Mrs J Lissaman, T Maher, K Miall, N Page, A Thomas, B Wedge, P Willis

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Bradley, Ms M de Jong (holiday), G Grandison (work commitment), T Holton (WBC meeting), Miss J Rance (personal commitment)

74. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on 26th November 2014 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

75. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor announced that she had attended the following events since the last meeting of the Town Council:-

28 th November	Radstock School Christmas Fair
28 th November (evening)	The Sports Awards at Bearwood College where she had presented the Town Council Trophy.
2 nd December	Tree Planting at Aldryngton School
12 th December	84 th Reading Beavers where she had presented some of the Queen's Awards.
12 th December	Visited local resident celebrating his 100 th birthday
13 th December	Air Cadets Dinner
14 th December	Berkshire Schools Carol Concert at Loddon Valley Leisure Centre
15 th December	Earley Environmental Group Christmas Social event
16 th December	Radstock School Christmas Tree Decorating Competition
17 th December	Mayor's Christmas Reception
19 th December	The Wokingham Mayor's Christmas Carol Concert at St. Pauls Church
21 st December	Earley St. Peter's Carol Concert
8 th January	XN Magazine 3 rd Birthday celebration at Woodley Hill House
14 th January	1 st Stop Pharmacy Bus at Earley CResCent
21 st January	Loddon School year 6 democracy lesson
30 th January	Attendance at 'The Nest' facility for two to three olds which had been taken over by Loddon School

In addition the Mayor announced that the Deputy Mayor had also attended on her behalf:-

6th December A Community Event at Winnersh Garden Centre
Lower Earley Baptist Church Fun day

The Mayor said that she had written to the Lord Lieutenant for Berkshire, Mrs. Mary Bayliss, regarding her retirement and had received a letter of thanks.

The Mayor advised that she had received a response to her letter to the Secretary of State regarding the Town Council's concerns about the loss of local public houses. The Town Clerk was asked to circulate a copy of the letter to all Town Councillors.

A Member present thanked the Mayor for her commitment in promoting the Town Council, evidenced by the number of events which she had attended.

76. TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEES

76.1 Planning Committee

76.1.1 Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 2nd December 2014

In presenting the Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on the 2nd December 2014, the Committee Chairman, Councillor T Chambers, drew particular attention to the details of the 2015 litter pick which was due to take place on 22nd March.

On the proposition of Councillor T Chambers seconded by Councillor B Wedge it was

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 2nd December 2014 (Minutes 87 - 100).be adopted.

76.1.2 Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 6th January 2015

The Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on the 6th January 2015 were presented by the Committee Chairman, Councillor T Chambers.

On the proposition of Councillor T Chambers seconded by Councillor J Armstrong it was

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 6th January 2015 (Minutes 101 - 111).be adopted.

76.2 Amenities & Leisure Committee

The Minutes of the meeting of the Amenities & Leisure Committee held on 14th January 2015 were presented by the Committee Chairman, Councillor M Firmager.

On the proposition of Councillor M Firmager seconded by Councillor B Wedge it was

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Amenities & Leisure Committee held on 14th January 2015 (Minutes 61 – 69).be adopted.

76.3 Policy & Resources Committee

The Minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 28th January 2015 were presented by the Committee Chairman, Councillor N Jorgensen.

The Town Clerk drew Councillors' attention to one amendment to the Minutes in the confidential section where the date of the meeting was given incorrectly.

In presenting the Minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting, the Committee Chairman detailed the work of the various Standing Committees of the Town Council and highlighted the aspirations of the majority group for the Town Council in the future. These included plans to improve the two Community and Youth Centres which the Town Council had taken over from Wokingham Borough Council in October 2013 and the successful transfer of Redhatch Copse to the Town Council upon occupation of the 50th dwelling, which was anticipated would be towards the end of 2015. Councillor Jorgensen continued by confirming that the Town Council would continue to support local services and voluntary groups, through maintenance of the Help Shop facility based at the Town Council Offices and through financial support and encouragement to those groups providing voluntary services to Earley residents.

In conclusion, Councillor Jorgensen confirmed that the Town Council's finances were tightly controlled but were subject to the pressure of increases in costs. The Town Council endeavoured to ensure that the effect of these increases was kept to a minimum, and the Policy & Resources Committee was recommending an increase in the Council Tax for Earley Town Council of 1.6% for 2015/16. Councillor Jorgensen, proposed that the Town Council should adopt the recommendations under item 44.2 and 44.3 of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting Minutes now under consideration, that the Town Council's precept for 2015/16 be set at £747,387.00, as detailed in the Precept Working Papers accompanying the Minutes.

Attention was drawn to part two of the recommendation at 44.2 regarding the procurement of a new server for the Town Council Offices and the Committee Chairman confirmed that he felt that it would be appropriate for additional quotations to be sought for the hardware and licensing upgrade to allow the procurement to be fully considered.

With regard to Minute 46, the Committee Chairman gave details of the meeting of the Staffing Review Sub-committee which had taken place prior to this meeting of the Town Council and asked Councillors to consider the recommendation of the Sub-committee.

On the proposition of Councillor N Jorgensen seconded by Councillor M Firmager it was

RESOLVED that

- 1 the recommendations at Minute 44.2 and 44.3 be adopted
- 2 the Town Council's Precept for 2015/16 be set at £747,387.00

- 3 the Town Clerk be requested to arrange for the Council Tax leaflet to appear on the Town Council's website, and a small number of paper copies to be made available.
- 4 The press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the report of the Staffing Review Sub-committee Meeting detailed in the preamble to this resolution.
- 5 The report of the meeting of the Staffing Review Sub-committee Meeting be approved and the recommendation be adopted.
- 6 the Minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on the 28th January 2015, as amended, be adopted (Minutes 43 – 51).be adopted.

77. REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER BODIES

77.1 Reports of Representatives

Councillors noted details of the written reports, which had been circulated with the Agenda as follows:-

Councillor B Wedge – Borough Parish Council Working Group
 Councillor B Wedge – ARC Management Committee
 Councillor B Wedge – C-Salt Community Forum
 Councillor Ms P Dun – Earley Volunteer Driver Bureau
 Councillor Mrs L Chambers – Earley Day Centre

With regard to the Borough Parish Conference the Town Clerk advised that the draft notes of the meeting were available and it was confirmed that these could be circulated.

With regard to C-Salt, the organisation which currently managed the Loddon Valley Leisure Centre, Councillor Wedge gave further information regarding the status of that organisation and said that C-Salt was interested in working with the Town Council to use Silverdale and Centrepont Community and Youth Centres and was also interested in entering into discussions with the Town Council about extended use of the sports hall at the Leisure Centre.

The Town Clerk advised that the proposed new Youth Group, to be run at Centrepont on a Saturday evening, including use of the sports hall at the Leisure Centre, would have its first meeting on the 28th February.

78. ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Councillors were advised that the Town Clerk had been made aware of the Local Government (Electronic Communications) (England) Order 2015 which came into force on 30th January. The Order amended the Local Government Act 1972 and now permitted that a summons to attend a meeting specifying the business proposed to be transacted could be sent by 'an appropriate method'. The Order further allowed that where a Member had given consent for the summons to be transmitted in electronic form, sending it in that form was an appropriate method of communication. Councillors were asked to consider whether transmission of agendas and associated

papers may be transmitted by electronic means in the future and, if so disposed, to make a decision in principle.

The Town Clerk confirmed that this new legislation represented a change which many Town and Parish Councils had been lobbying for for a considerable amount of time. He suggested to Councillors that, if the idea was accepted in principle, the target for its implementation should be for it to be introduced for the new Council which took over after the May Elections. The Town Clerk confirmed that, at this stage, he was seeking the Council's decision in principle to support the initiative but to defer how it would be actually be implemented for Council Officers to investigate further and to report back to the next meeting of the Council.

Attention was drawn to work being currently carried out by Wokingham Borough Council in this area and the Town Clerk was given the contact name at the Borough Council. It was also suggested that the Town Clerk may wish to contact Wokingham & Bracknell College for more information.

Whilst most Members present were generally in agreement with the principle, it was agreed that how this would be achieved would require further investigation. Furthermore, some concern was expressed at the cost which may be incurred by Councillors in printing off certain items and documents, and in particular as the Town Council had previously voted not to adopt legislation allowing Town Councillors to claim expenses.

After further discussion it was

RESOLVED that

- 1 the Town Council agrees in principle the initiative to allow distribution of Town Council paper work by electronic means
- 2 the Town Clerk be requested to investigate the mechanism as to how this would be achieved and report back to the next meeting of the Town Council
- 3 any changes agreed as a result of the previous resolutions be implemented after the May Elections.

79. PHOTOGRAPH COMPETITION

Councillors were informed that this item had been included for consideration at the request of Cllr Mrs Pauline Jorgensen, who had advised that, following comments received on Facebook, approximately 80 residents had suggested that there should be a photograph competition, a number of excellent photographs of Earley having already been posted.

Councillors were, therefore, being asked to consider whether to endorse this suggestion and, if so disposed, to agree the setting up of a small working party of Councillors to decide on the 'mechanics' of the competition, such as categories, classes and how the entries will be judged and by whom.

Generally, there was support for the proposal, provided that it did not incur the Town Council in any costs.

Following a question from a Member, the Town Clerk confirmed that he felt that the running of the photographic competition by the Town Council was a legitimate activity.

On the proposition of Councillor Mrs P Jorgensen seconded by Councillor Miss L Blumenthal it was

RESOLVED that

- 1 the Town Council endorses the suggestion of a photograph competition
- 2 Members interested in forming a Working Party to decide on how the competition would run be requested to put their names forward to the Town Clerk
- 3 the Working Party to report back to the Amenities & Leisure Committee.

80. COUNCILLORS' ATTENDANCES

80.1 Record of Members' Attendance

One amendment was read out to the list of attendances, where Councillor T Chambers had been left off the January 2015 Planning Committee Meeting, which he had chaired

It was

RESOLVED that the details of Councillors' attendances for 2014/15, as amended, as appended to these Minutes be noted.

81. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT

Following a question from a Member, the Town Clerk confirmed that Voucher 508 was in respect of the annual cost of providing dust mats at Maiden Place Community Centre. With regard to Voucher 504 the Mayor advised that it was possible to loan glasses from a local store for the Mayor's Christmas Reception, thus saving the Town Council the cost of hiring.

RESOLVED that the various accounts as set out in the list attached to these Minutes (Vouchers 497 - 540) be paid in the sums as stated and details of the Imprest Account (Vouchers 172 – 186) be noted.

82. PUBLICATIONS

It was noted that the following publications had been received and were available for perusal in the Council Offices:

Woodley Town Council:	Agenda for Meeting held 9 th December 2014. Agenda and Minutes for the period 21 st October to 25 th November 2014. Agenda and Minutes for the period 9 th December 2014 to 3 rd February 2015.
ARC Management Committee:	Minutes of Meeting held 14 th January 2015.

Queen Victoria Institute Fund:	Minutes of the Meeting held 27 th January 2015.
Wokingham Borough Council:	Wokingham Borough News, Winter 2014. Agenda for meeting of The Executive held 29 th January 2015. Agenda for Meeting of the Special Council Executive Committee held 29 th January 2015. at the Conclusion of the Executive Meeting. Agenda for Meeting of the Council to be held on 19 th February 2015. Agenda for Meeting of the Executive to be held on 19 th February 2015.
Maiden Erlegh Residents' Association:	The Magazine, Issue 164, Winter 2014. Minutes of Meeting held 11 th December 2014. Minutes of Meeting of 12 th February 2015.
Earley CResCent Community Association	Minutes of Meeting of Board of Trustees held on 16 th February 2015.

83. **PRESS RELEASES**

It was

RESOLVED that the following items should receive special press attention.

- the Town Council's precept for 2015/16, including details of the Town Council's future planned projects.
- details of the proposed photograph competition at an appropriate time

84. **TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 9.41pm.