

EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Earley Town Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Radstock Lane, Earley, Berkshire on Wednesday 15th October 2014 which commenced at 7.55pm.

Present

Chairman – The Mayor, Councillor Mrs L Chambers

Councillors M Ahmed, J Armstrong, Miss L Blumenthal, A Bradley, T Chambers, Ms. M De Jong, Ms. P Dunn, M Firmager, D Hare, N Holloway, N Jorgensen, Mrs P Jorgensen, Mrs J Lissaman, K Miall, N Page, Miss J Rance (until 9.16pm), A Thomas, B Wedge, P Willis (until 9.50pm).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Chopping (holiday), J Eastwell (holiday), G Grandison (WBC Meeting), T Holton (WBC Meeting), T Maher (prior engagement).

Before commencing the meeting a minutes silence was held in memory of former Town Clerk Lesley Norton who had died recently following a long illness. Mr Norton had worked for the Town Council from 1978 to 1991 during which period the work of the Town Council increased significantly as a result of the Lower Earley development.

45. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on 30th July 2014 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

46. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

Before giving details of the various events which she had attended, the Mayor welcomed Councillor Peter Willis who had joined the Town Council following the By-Election in the Radstock Ward.

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

2 nd August	The Green Fair and the re-launch of the “Nail Cabin”
4 th August	World War I Commemoration Service at the Minster Church and a Compline Service at St. Pauls in Wokingham
16 th August	Charity Garden Party
25 th August	Citizens Advice Bureau event
6 th September	Garden Party at Earley Day Centre
13 th September	Lower Earley Baptist Church Fun Day
14 th September	Trinity Concert Band event at the All Saints Church and the opening of the World War I Heritage Club at Wokingham at 11.am
21 st September	Earley St. Peter’s Church World War I Service
23 rd September	Lord Lieutenant’s Cadets Awards at the Madejski Stadium
24 th September	Meeting of the Heartbeat Group for people who had undergone heart surgery
29 th September	10.00am Coffee morning at Earley Day Centre 11.00am Cycle Path opening 2.00pm Berkshire Blind Association event at Wellington College

3 rd October	50 th Anniversary of Aldryngton School event
13 th October	JAC AGM
14 th October	Crown Court opening in Reading
15 th October	Loddon School lesson on democracy

The Mayor announced that her Christmas Reception would be held on Wednesday 17th December and invited all Members of the Town Council to be present.

47. TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEES

47.1 Planning Committee

47.1.1 Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 5th August 2014

The Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 5th August 2014 were presented by the Committee Chairman, Councillor T Chambers.

A Member present gave an update on the planning application in respect of the fencing at Douglas Court and advised that the latest proposal had been refused by the Planning Officers at the Borough Council.

On the proposition of Councillor T Chambers seconded by Councillor Miss L Blumenthal it was

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 5th August 2014 (Minutes 36 - 49) be adopted.

47.1.2 Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 9th September 2014

The Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 9th September 2014 were presented by the Committee Chairman, Councillor T Chambers.

Attention was drawn to the discussions regarding Reading Buses, and it was suggested that, now Mr. James Freeman had left Reading Buses, the new Chief Executive should be invited to a Council meeting in due course.

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 9th September 2014 (Minutes 50 - 62) be adopted.

47.2 Amenities & Leisure Committee

The Minutes of the meeting of the Amenities & Leisure Committee held on 17th September 2014 were presented by the Committee Chairman, Councillor M Firmager.

In presenting the Minutes, Councillor Firmager drew attention to the discussions which had taken place at Minute 32.1 in respect of the Sol Joel car park and confirmed that the Town Council were extremely disappointed with the performance of the Borough Council's Contractor which had delayed completion of the project.

Councillor Firmager continued by drawing attention to the discussions at Minute 33.1 in respect of the Community Orchard Project, Minute 35 relating to the World War I Commemorations and Minute 37 regarding the proposed Earley 10K Fun Run. In respect of this, the Organisers of the Fun Run were present and gave details of the Event to the Town Council.

Councillor Firmager informed the meeting that, on the 9th October, a drop in session had been held for parents, teachers, and potential users to view the various proposals for the new inclusive play equipment area at Sol Joel Park.

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 17th September 2014 (Minutes 29 – 41).be adopted.

47.3 Policy & Resources Committee

The Minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 1st October 2014 were presented by the Committee Chairman, Councillor N Jorgensen. In presenting the Minutes Councillor Jorgensen drew attention to Minute 23 in respect of the very positive report from the External Auditor and the recommendation at Minute 22.1 regarding the limit for sealed tenders.

With regard to the resolution at Minute 24, a Member present indicated that he had not received the Minutes of the last Borough/Parish Council Working Group and the Town Clerk was asked to resend this information. It was confirmed that the Agenda for the next meeting would be distributed shortly, and it was confirmed that an item with regard to the Council Tax Base Report was included for discussion.

On the proposition of Councillor N Jorgensen seconded by Councillor T Chambers it was

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 1st October 2014 (Minutes 20 - 29) be adopted and the recommendation at Minute 22.1 be approved

48. REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER BODIES

48.1 Reports of Representatives

Councillors noted the written reports in respect of the Wokingham Youth Counselling Service (ARC) and the Sonning & District Welfare & Education Trust which had been circulated with the Agenda and Supplementary Agenda.

48.2 Loddon Valley Leisure Centre

Councillors' attention was drawn to Minute 36 of the Amenities & Leisure Committee where it had been resolved that Councillor M Firmager be nominated to serve on the Community Engagement Forum for Loddon Valley Leisure Centre on a temporary basis.

Councillors were reminded that nominations to outside bodies were normally considered by the Town Council at its annual meeting in May of each year but, since

this was a new invitation for a representative mid-year, and also because there may have been a meeting convened before a Town Council meeting, the Amenities & Leisure Committee took the decision to put Councillor Firmager's name forward until a more permanent representative could be nominated by the Town Council.

Councillors were asked to consider the nomination of a representative to stand until May 2015.

On the proposition of Councillor N Jorgensen seconded by Councillor A Bradley it was

RESOLVED that Councillor B Wedge be appointed as the Town Council's representative to the Community Engagement Forum for Loddon Valley Leisure Centre.

49. **"THE MAIDEN OVER" PUBLIC HOUSE**

Councillors were advised that this item had been placed on the Agenda at the request of a Councillor.

Members were reminded that Tesco were intending to take over the premises and convert them into a local supermarket facility. Under planning law, this did not require planning permission since the change was considered to be permitted development.

A report, prepared by Councillor D Chopping, had been circulated with the Agenda for Councillors' consideration, and which included a proposed draft motion.

The leader of the Council said there was considerable concern about how the change of use of the premises had come about, and it was seen as a *fait accompli* by many people.

The Leader of the Opposition indicated that Members of the Liberal Democrat Group had been very pro-active in supporting local residents in their concern for the proposals for the Maiden Over Pub, and had also been investigating the possibility of introducing an Article 4 Declaration, and had delivered over 2000 leaflets to local residents.

Councillors were asked to consider the draft motion contained within the paper work produced by Councillor Chopping.

On the proposition of Councillor N Jorgensen seconded by Councillor K Miall it was

RESOLVED that

- 1 the Mayor, Leader and Town Clerk to write to the Secretary of State at the Department of Business Innovations and Skills supporting plans to introduce a statutory code to ensure Tied Publicans are treated fairly, and community wishes are properly considered in any proposed changes such as this.
- 2 the Town Clerk be requested to send copies of the motion to local MP's.

50. COMMUNITY & YOUTH CENTRE LEASES

In view of the confidential nature of the item under discussion is was

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of this item.

51. THE QUEEN'S AWARD FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE

Councillors were reminded that at Minute 38 it had been resolved that, subject to confirmation of the organisation's eligibility for the Award, the Town Council's nomination for 2014 should be The Earley Charity. Following contact with that organisation, The Earley Charity had indicated that it did not wish to be nominated for the Award because it felt that it could not meet the eligibility criteria.

In view of the above, the Town Clerk had been in contact with the Earley Volunteer Driver Bureau as the reserve nomination for 2014, and the relevant information was in the process of being collated.

Councillors were advised that should all the information not be ready by the forthcoming meeting in time for the 2014 Awards, The Earley Volunteer Driver Bureau would automatically be carried forward by the Lord Lieutenant's Office for the following year.

52. OPENNESS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES REGULATION 2014

Councillors were advised that these new regulations allowed for the recording and reporting by electronic means of Council proceedings by members of the public and formed part of the transparency agenda of the government. The new regulations allowed the filming, photographing or audio recording of proceedings of meetings, or using any other means, to enable persons not present to see or hear proceedings of a meeting as it takes place or later. Councillors were advised that this would include blogging, tweeting and e-mailing as well as the use of cameras or smart phones to record the proceedings at the meeting.

Councillors were further advised that the Town Council would be required to provide facilities; in other words a space to view and hear the meeting and seating, ideally, a desk. Additionally, the policy on recording of meetings would need to be agreed, and, as a consequence, there would have to be alterations to the Council's Standing Orders.

It was confirmed that there was no entitlement to film confidential sessions or meetings which were not in public and this would include discussion on conduct of employees, negotiations of contracts, or terms of tender and early stages of a legal dispute. The Town Clerk reported that Councils had been advised to produce some form of guidance leaflet for the public and to place this on a notice board and website. Additionally, although there was no requirement, people who wished to record the meeting could be asked to let the Council know in advance because that may help to facilitate the process.

Suggested guidance notes for press and public on attending and reporting meetings of local Councils and a draft notice to be displayed at meetings had been circulated with the Agenda for Councillors' consideration.

Councillors were further advised that the second part of the new regulations related to the recording of decisions delegated to Officers. The threshold for what was considered to be material was a matter for each individual body and the Town Clerk suggested that the tender limit of £40,000 should be the threshold for recording decisions. It was confirmed that consequential changes to the Standing Orders would be required.

A Member present said that he felt that it was imperative that those wishing to film or record the proceedings of a meeting should inform the Clerk or Chairman. The Town Clerk advised that it was not a statutory requirement of the regulations and could not be enforced. The Town Clerk also confirmed that the regulations were in respect of the filming of Members of the Council and if an individual was seen to be filming members of the public this could be stopped immediately.

Concern was expressed that individuals, if so inclined, could issue edited versions of any recordings after the meetings, and it was suggested that the Town Council should have its own recording system to ensure that a true record of events was available. Concern was expressed about the cost of this to the Town Council, and the fact that it would require further staff input to organise, initiate and store the proceedings of the meetings.

On the proposition of Councillor N Jorgensen seconded by Councillor D Hare it was

RESOLVED that the Town Council should not record the proceedings of its meetings for the time being, but that this decision should be reviewed as necessary.

Discussion then turned to whether Councillors should be allowed to blog or tweet or e-mail during Council meetings. A Member present said that they felt that Councillors carrying out these activities could disrupt the meeting.

On the proposition of Councillor Mrs P Jorgensen seconded by Councillor K Miall it was

RESOLVED that Councillors be given the same rights as members of the public as regards the recording of meetings and that any resulting disruption should be dealt with as already allowed for within the Town Council's Standing Orders.

After further discussion, on the proposition of Councillor N Jorgensen seconded by Councillor D Hare it was

RESOLVED that

- 1 with any necessary amendments to correct any grammatical errors, the Town Clerk arrange for the guidance notes and notice to be brought forward to the next Council meeting
- 2 notice be received that the resultant proposed amendments to the Town Council's Standing Orders would be considered at the next meeting of the Town Council
- 3 the threshold above which Officers' decisions should be recorded be set at £40,000.

53. **TOWN PLAN**

Councillors were reminded that the bi-annual review of the Town Plan was now due and that Council Officers had undertaken an initial re-draft of the document, which had been circulated with the Agenda under separate cover.

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

RESOLVED that

- 1 the Committees be asked to look at the various sections of the Town Guide at the next appropriate meeting
- 2 any Councillors unable to attend the various Committee meetings be requested to submit any proposed amendments in writing to the Town Clerk.

54. **SITE OF URBAN LANDSCAPE VALUE WORKING PARTY**

Further to the discussions recorded at Minute 33 of the meeting of the Town Council held on 30th July, Councillors were asked to receive and consider further correspondence received from Woodley Town Council which had been circulated with the Agenda. The Leader of the Council confirmed that Earley Town Council had supported the setting up of the Working Party which had subsequently done good work, including submissions to the Inspector investigating the soundness of the current Wokingham Plan. However, the suggestions put forward by the Working Party had not been adopted by the Inspector and it was questioned what the Joint Working Party would do and suggested that the future protection of the Site of Urban Landscape Value Working Party was a matter which could be considered as part of the remit of the Highwood Management Conference.

A Member present said that she felt that the consideration of the future protection of the Site of Urban Landscape Value did not “fit” with the work of the Highwood Management Conference. It was suggested that should the work of Site of Urban Landscape Value Working Party become part of remit of the Highwood Management Conference, then the Conference would need to meet more frequently.

After further discussion it was proposed that

- 1 the Town Clerk be requested to investigate whether the future protection of the Site of Urban Landscape Value was a matter which could be considered by the Highwood Management Conference.
- 2 a sub-group of Councillors be set up to draft the Terms of Reference for a joint Site of Urban Landscape Value Working Party and the Terms of Reference be considered at a future meeting of the Town Council.
- 3 the matter be considered again by the Town Council and a way forward decided upon once parts 1 and 2 of the resolution above had been completed
- 4 the sub-group of Councillors to consider the Terms of Reference for the Site of Urban Landscape Value Working Party should consist of, on the Town Council’s side, 3 Conservative and 1 Liberal Democrat and that Woodley Town Council be invited to nominate a similar number to stand on the sub-group

- 5 the Town Council's representatives on the sub-group should be Councillors J Armstrong, D Chopping, Mrs J Lissaman and B Wedge.

Before the vote was taken on the proposition detailed above, a further motion was proposed by Councillor J Armstrong seconded by Councillor Mrs J Lissaman that, since the Site of Urban Landscape Value Working Party nominations had originally been made by the Planning Committee, future nominations to that Working Party should also be considered by the Planning Committee. No vote was taken on this proposal.

Discussion then returned to the first proposal and on the proposition of Councillor D Hare seconded by Councillor N Holloway it was

RESOLVED by majority that, in respect of the 1st resolution detailed in the preamble, a vote be taken on point 1, and then a separate vote be taken on the balance of the resolution.

Councillors voted on part 1 of the proposition detailed above and this was agreed by majority.

Councillors were then asked to vote on parts 2 - 5 inclusive and these were carried by majority

The Town Clerk advised that in view of Town Councillors' agreement to the 1st motion, the 2nd motion proposed by Councillor Armstrong and seconded by Councillor Mrs Lissaman had now fallen.

55. COUNCILLORS' ATTENDANCES

55.1 Record of Members' Attendance

RESOLVED that details of Councillors' Attendances for 2014, as appended to these Minutes be noted.

56. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT

RESOLVED that the various accounts as set out in the list attached to these Minutes (Vouchers 292 – 321) be paid in the sums as stated and details of the Imprest Account (Vouchers 087 – 107) be noted.

57. PUBLICATIONS

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

Maiden Erlegh Residents' Association:	Agenda for Meeting held 11 th September 2014 Agenda for Meeting held 9 th October 2014.
Neighbourhood Action Group:	Agenda for Meeting held 20 th October 2014.
Wokingham Borough Council:	Agenda for Meeting of the Executive held on 25 th September 2014.
Woodley Town Council:	Agenda and Minutes for period 24 th June to 23 rd September 2014.

58. NHS WOKINGHAM CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP

Councillors were advised that, since compilation of the main Agenda, an invitation had been received from the NHS Wokingham Clinical Commissioning Group inviting a representative to attend its Governing Body Meeting in Public on Tuesday, 4th November at the Oakwood Centre, from 1.30pm to 4.30pm.

It was

RESOLVED that

- 1 Subject to availability Councillor D Hare and B Wedge should attend the meeting
- 2 It be noted that the meeting was open to any members of the public to attend.

59. PRESS RELEASES

It was

RESOLVED that the motion agreed in respect of the Maiden Over Public House should receive special press attention.

60. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 10.29pm.