

EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Earley Town Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Radstock Lane, Earley, Berkshire on Wednesday 30th November 2016 which commenced at 7.45pm.

Present

Chairman – The Mayor, Councillor Miss J Rance JP

Councillors Miss L Blumenthal, A Bradley, Dr N Brock, Mrs L Chambers, T Chambers, D Chopping (from 7.55pm), Mrs J Clark, Mrs M De Jong, Ms P Dunn, M Firmager, G Grandison, R Houlbrooke, N Jorgensen, Mrs P Jorgensen, W Luck, Mrs S Matthews, J Russell, C Smith, B Wedge and P Willis

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Ahmed, J Armstrong and T Holton (WBC).

48. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on 19th October 2016 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

49. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor announced that since the last meeting of the Town Council she had been invited to a number of events as follows:-

20 th October	Community Services AGM, Bracknell
21 st October	Berkshire Vision AGM
5 th November	Trinity Church Fair
8 th November	Earley Crescent Community Association AGM
9 th November	Wokingham District Cancer Care Trust AGM at Wokingham Day Hospice
13 th November	St Peters Church Remembrance Service
16 th November	Voluntary Sector Reception at Loddon Hall, Twyford
19 th & 20 th November	Earley Town Council Radstock Christmas Fair
25 th November	Radstock School Christmas Fair
25 th November	Maiden Place to turn on Christmas lights
25 th November	Wokingham Borough Sports Council Annual Sports Awards at Bulmershe School

The Mayor reminded Councillors that by law council meetings should reflect transparency and openness and that whilst mobile phones were not prohibited that they should not unduly interfere with meetings. She requested that members using phones be discreet and considerate and do not distract other Members.

50. WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL, EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Councillor Angus Ross, Executive Member for the Environment and Councillor Parry Bath, Deputy Executive Member for the Environment from Wokingham Borough Council attended the meeting to provide detailed information on the Environment Portfolio.

Flooding and Drainage

Councillor Ross reported that there was a Wokingham Borough Local Flood Risk Strategy and that an associated action plan was currently being developed. This Strategy dealt with drainage at new developments and that there were two members of staff from the planning team who dealt specifically with drainage. In addition the Sustainable Drainage Strategy (SuDS) provided advice to both staff and developers to ensure future development will manage the flood risk and improve the water environment within Wokingham.

A Councillor asked about working links with the Environment Agency and the effect of new developments on drainage and also asked about the effect of new developments on existing drainage. Councillor Ross reported that the Borough and Environment Agency were working together with Thames Water especially on plans around ground water levels rising into sewage systems. He further reported that there were powers under the 2010 Flood and Water Management Act to allow for ditches to be maintained to prevent flooding and in general there was a greater awareness of risks and increased powers to prevent problems.

Waste Collection

Wokingham is in the fifth year of a waste collection contract which ends in 2019. Work had been started to identify future requirements, including improving recycling rates. Difficulty has been experienced providing services that work equally well for different types of buildings (offices, flats and houses) and market research is being carried out to gauge opinion. Food waste collections are being considered but will come at a cost.

Country Parks, Open Spaces and Public Rights of Way

Councillor Ross was pleased to report that Country Parks were now self-funding partly due to the success of the festival held at Dinton Pastures which is once again, due to take place in 2017. He highlighted general difficulties with public rights of way around the current complicated legislation in place.

Sports and Leisure

Whilst sport and leisure is not a statutory duty of the Council, health and wellbeing is a statutory duty and the Borough was taking a positive position toward keeping people active leading to reduced costs for the NHS. The One Life leisure contract ends in 2018 and Councillors were currently considering how best to continue this service. New facilities will be included within the contract offering, including a new gym at Arborfield Green to be shared with Bohunt School, and also a new gym at Ryeish Green.

Councillor Ross was asked whether Wokingham Borough had considered working with Towns and Parishes around sport and leisure and he responded by highlighting that 545 football teams existed within the borough, some within schools and that Earley Town Council had a good reputation for running football pitches. He reported that Town and Parish Clerks were aware of the Health and Wellbeing agenda and that the facilities within the parishes in terms of sports, contributed toward the NHS cost savings.

Minerals and Waste Plan

Wokingham's last plan ended in 2006 however, a new scheme is being implemented to include Reading, Windsor & Maidenhead and West Berkshire Councils. There are a number of current gravel extraction proposals including the area where the Loddon River and A327 intersect, Finchampstead and Eversley. Much work will need to be undertaken to plan how the gravel is extracted, what to put back in the space and how the areas will be used in the future.

As Deputy Executive Chairman for the Environment, Councillor Batth has a remit to oversee and develop the Council's approach to climate issues, including energy efficiency and the management of a Carbon Reduction Plan. Having previously worked for the National Grid,

Councillor Batth explained that the winter was a time of high power demand and it was possible that areas around the Wokingham Borough could be used to site large batteries which charged at cheaper overnight costs and fed power back to the grid when demand was high. He reported that Wokingham were interested in attracting consortium/s that would develop a number of two acre sites each capable of producing 10 megawatts of power, for which a lease for land use would be payable to Wokingham.

In response to a question on the potential sites for batteries, it was highlighted that the area would need to be adjacent to electrical connections and a suitable site was under consideration at Moat House and Lower Earley Way junction. However, due to local flooding issues this would require siting on stilts. This site would not be visible or cause obstruction to residents.

Councillor Batth also explained that Wokingham were examining the issue of climate change and energy efficiency measures within the Council and that he would shortly be attending an international conference on flooding.

A Councillor asked how the issue of climate change was being addressed by the Planning Department and whether the strategy was being promoted through new developments? Councillor Batth reported that a new strategy was in place and all future developments are required to comply with the strategy which aimed to reduce both emissions and energy usage. European countries have been told that they need to reduce energy consumption and Wokingham Borough Council are supporting renewable, clean energy initiatives.

Councillor Batth was asked whether there were plans for solar panels on public buildings and reported that the Invest to Save programme in local schools had resulted in a number of successful projects however the roof at Shute End Council Offices had, unfortunately, not proved strong enough for panels to be fitted.

51. TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEES

51.1 Planning Committee

51.1.1 Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 11th October 2016

The Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 11th October 2016 were presented by the Committee Chairman, Councillor A Bradley.

On the proposition of Councillor A Bradley seconded by Councillor P Willis it was

RESOLVED that

1. The Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 11th October 2016 (Minutes 57 – 70) be approved.

51.1.2 Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 8th November 2016

The Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 8th November 2016 were presented by the Committee Chairman, Councillor A Bradley.

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

RESOLVED that

1. the Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 8th November 2016 (Minutes 71 - 84) be approved.

51.2 Amenities & Leisure Committee

The Minutes of the meeting of the Amenities & Leisure Committee held on 26th October 2016 were presented by the Committee Chairman, Councillor Mrs L Chambers.

Councillor Mrs Chambers highlighted that unfortunately an error has been made in the minutes of the Amenities & Leisure Committee Meeting minutes held on Wednesday 26th October 2016 and at Minute 37.1.6 Sports Pitch Fees the minute reads ‘RECOMMENDED that the Sports Pitch Fees be increased by 2% rounded to the nearest £0.50.’ This was incorrect and the minute should read “RECOMMENDED that there be no change to the Sports Pitch Fees.”

Councillor Mrs Chambers asked Members to consider the recommendations at Minutes 37.1.1, 37.1.2, 37.1.3, 37.1.4, 37.1.5 and 37.1.6 pertaining to the fees and charges for 2017/18. On the proposition of Councillor Mrs L Chambers seconded by Councillor B Wedge it was

RESOLVED

1. that the Minutes of the meeting of the Amenities & Leisure Committee, as amended, held on 7th September 2016 (Minutes 22 - 32) be approved
2. the recommendations at Minutes 37.1.1, 37.1.2, 37.1.3, 37.1.4, 37.1.5 and 37.1.6 pertaining to the fees and charges for 2017/18 be adopted.

51.3 Policy & Resources Committee

The Minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 16th November 2016 were presented by the Committee Chairman Councillor N Jorgensen.

In presenting the Minutes Councillor Jorgensen drew particular attention to Minute 33.1 which was the Committee’s recommendation to the Town Council in respect of the various Grant applications received.

On the proposition of Councillor N Jorgensen seconded by Councillor B Wedge it was

RESOLVED

1. that the Minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 16th November 2016 (Minutes 30 – 41) be approved and that the recommendation at Minute 33.1 be approved.

51.4 Staffing Review Sub-Committee

In view of the confidential nature of the item and the discussion it was

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

52. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS

52.1 Mayor's Charity

Members noted that following the Mayor's announcement that she will be nominating a Charity, the Internal Auditor recommended the opening of a separate bank account. The Town Clerk suggested that an approach be made to the current bankers and that four signatories be considered. It was

RESOLVED that

1. A separate bank account be set up
2. The signatories appointed be the same as for the main Earley Town Council Account.

53. REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER BODIES

53.1 Reports of Representatives

53.1.1 Wokingham Borough Sports Council

Councillors noted details of the report of a meeting of the Wokingham Borough Sports Council held on 7th November 2016, prepared by Councillor M Firmager which was previously circulated with the Agenda.

53.1.2 Earley Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG)

Councillors noted details of the report of a meeting of the Earley Neighbourhood Action Group held on 21st November 2016, prepared by Councillor John Armstrong, which was circulated with the Supplementary Agenda.

A number of Councillors expressed concerns that despite the enthusiasm and achievement of the Neighbourhood Action Group, it appeared that they were digressing from their raison d'être and it was

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk make representation to the Police to request they consider investigating the operation of the NAG in respect of their governance and remit and offer the services of the Council to assist.

54. THE QUEENS AWARD FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE

Councillors noted that further to Minute 41, the Town Clerk had received a response from EASI who indicated that they did not wish to be nominated again at the present time.

55. COUNCILLORS' ATTENDANCES

55.1 Record of Members' Attendance

Councillors noted details of the Councillors' attendances during 2016/17, which had been circulated with the Agenda, and which are appended to these Minutes.

56. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT

Councillors were asked to receive details of the Orders for Payment since the last meeting of the Town Council.

RESOLVED that the various Accounts as set out in the list attached to these Minutes (Vouchers 456 – 492) be paid in the sums as stated

57. PUBLICATIONS

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

Maiden Erlegh Residents' Association:	Minutes of the Executive Committee held on 10 th November 2016. The Magazine, Issue 170, Winter 2016.
Neighbourhood Action Group:	Agenda for meeting held 21 st November 2016.
MERA	The Magazine, Issue 170, Winter 2016.

58. PRESS RELEASES

It was

RESOLVED that information regarding the increase in fees and charges with positive news about the potential of hiring the centres should receive special press attention.

59. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 8.55pm.