



**EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Meeting of Earley Town Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Radstock Lane, Earley, Berkshire on Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> February 2020 which commenced at 7.30pm.

**Present**

Chairman – The Mayor, Councillor D Hare.

Councillors A Bassett, G Bhangra, N Brock, J Clark, R Cook, J Eastwell, M Eastwell, R Houlbrooke, C Jones, I Khayinza, G Littler, A Long, S Matthews, A Mickleburgh, A Neal, A Newton, R Sangster, M Shaw, C Smith and K Yabsley.

In Attendance: J Friend (Town Clerk), E Carroll (Deputy Town Clerk) and R Fryer (Democratic Services Officer), plus two members of the public.

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The first twenty minutes of the meeting were set aside for members of the public to pose questions to the Council.

**99. PUBLIC FORUM**

A member of the public requested clarification on the transfer of Redhatch Copse, having spoken with the Monitoring Officer at Wokingham Borough Council and queried the legal advice Earley Town Council had received regarding purdah. The Town Clerk confirmed she had spoken with the Monitoring Officer who had confirmed that the Town Council had followed the correct course of action.

**100. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Ireland, T Maher and P Stothart.

**101. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**102. SIBLY DEVELOPMENT**

102.1 Councillors agreed to bring forward discussions regarding the Sibly Development.

102.2 Councillors **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Order 30 for this meeting in order that speakers could remain seated.

*Councillor Sangster entered the meeting*

102.3 Members considered the report as presented by the Town Clerk. The replacing of a number of trees has been an outstanding matter between Wokingham Borough Council and the developer, Persimmon, and the Town Clerk confirmed that remedial works in this regard were due to start on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> February. Councillor Bassett confirmed that the replacement trees were on site awaiting planting. The Town Clerk reminded Members that the land and assets were the responsibility of Persimmon until the transfer was completed. Councillors said

WBC should be encouraged to ensure that Persimmon monitor and water the new trees until the transfer is completed. It was agreed that the Town Council would monitor the situation. Councillor Matthews expressed her thanks to the Town Clerk for the work she had done in progressing this matter.

*Councillor Yabsley entered the meeting*

Following discussion, it was

- 102.4 **RESOLVED** that Earley Town Council would now start the legal process to transfer the Sibly outside space and Redhatch Copse to the Town Council.
- 102.5 **RESOLVED** that The Town Council would use Shared Legal Services at WBC to carry out the legal work involved in the transfer.
- 102.6 **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk be authorised to use the Council seal on the document of transfer.
- 102.7 **RESOLVED** that the payment of all monies owed by Persimmon to be paid on completion of the transfer.

*A member of the public exited the meeting*

*Councillor Brock exited the meeting*

The Town Mayor thanked the Town Clerk for her efforts in bringing this longstanding issue to a resolution.

### **103. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

*Councillor Brock entered the meeting*

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2019 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

### **104. TOWN MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Town Mayor's list of civic engagements, circulated as Appendix A, were noted. He expressed his thanks to the Senior Operations Support Officer for her efforts in making the Mayor's Reception a success.

### **105. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **105.1 Planning Committee**

Councillor G Littler presented the Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 10<sup>th</sup> December and 14<sup>th</sup> January. It was

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2019 (Minutes 103 - 111) be received.

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2020 (Minutes 112 - 122) be received.

#### 105.2 Amenities & Leisure Committee

Councillor A Newton presented the Minutes of the Amenities & Leisure Committee meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> January noting the Environmental & Energy Audit Tool which is being used to create benchmark data for the Town Council's buildings. It was

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Amenities & Leisure Committee meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020 (Minutes 58 - 71) be received.

#### 105.3 Policy & Resources Committee

Councillor C Jones presented the Minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> January. He expressed his thanks to the Town Clerk for her work in preparing the budget documents, and to the Budget Working Party for its work in producing a thorough and balanced budget which increased the level of the Council's reserves.

Councillor Jones expressed his disappointment that funds had not been put aside by the previous Council for the extension of Mays Lane Cemetery. In reference to the method by which this budget was financing the extension project, he noted that there was a precedent, part of the funding for the building of the Sol Joel Pavilion had been sourced in this way. It was

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2020 (Minutes 63-76) be received.

### 106. **REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER BODIES**

#### 106.1 Reports of Representatives

##### 106.1.1 Highwood Management Conference

Councillor A Neal provided a report on a meeting he attended with Councillors G Littler and D Hare, on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2020. He made reference to a scheme whereby Network Rail provide grants for woodland work, suggesting this may be of interest to the Town Council.

##### 106.1.2 Design our Neighbourhood Event

Councillor N Brock gave a brief report on a meeting she attended with Councillors S Matthews and D Hare, on 22<sup>nd</sup> January at Sindlesham Court. She advised that a further meeting was scheduled to develop ideas generated at this meeting.

##### 106.1.3 Borough Parish Liaison Forum

Councillor A Neal reported on a meeting he attended with Councillor G Littler, held on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2020. He made particular note of the discussion of the Children's Book Festival held in October, which incorporates outreach to local schools.

##### 106.1.4 Cleaner Air and Safer Transport Forum

Councillor A Long presented a brief verbal report on a meeting he attended on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2020 which focused on a range of transport topics in and around Reading.

#### 106.1.5 Waterside Management Committee

Councillors discussed a written report from J Lissaman on the Wokingham Waterside Centre. They made note of the concerns expressed by the Centre in respect of the Park and Ride development and the proposed Park and Sail and requested that this be discussed further at the next meeting of the Planning Committee.

#### 107. BUDGET & PRECEPT 2020/21

Members discussed the proposals and it was unanimously

107.1 **RESOLVED** that the revised charging schedule, including a 3% increase as recommended by the Amenities & Leisure Committee at their meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020, be approved.

107.2 **RESOLVED** that the revised cemetery fees schedule, including a 10% increase as recommended by the Amenities & Leisure Committee at their meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020, be approved.

107.3 **RESOLVED** that the proposed Budget 2020/21, as detailed in the document supplied to Members for the Budget Working Party meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> January and the Policy & Resources Meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> January, be approved unamended.

107.4 **RESOLVED** that the Town Council Precept for 2020/21 set at £978,271, as detailed in the 'Summary of Draft Budget Figures Financial Year 2020/21', equating to a 3% increase, plus a sum of £70,000 to be ring fenced for the extension of Mays Lane Cemetery, be approved.

#### 108. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2020/21

Councillors considered the proposed Schedule of Meetings for the 2020/21 Municipal Year and the proposed date of the Annual Town Electors' Meeting for 2020. Councillors noted the Annual Town Electors Meeting was being held on a separate day to the Council meeting this year, start time to be confirmed. The Town Clerk reminded Members that the intention was to hold the Annual Town Electors Meeting at Radstock Community Centre, and that the timings would be confirmed once the booking was completed. It was

**RESOLVED** that the Schedule of Council Meetings for 2020/21 be adopted.

#### 109. TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Town Council received the recommendation of the Policy & Resources Committee. It was unanimously

**RESOLVED** that the Tree Management Policy be adopted.

The Town Clerk noted that site specific plans would be developed in due course.

#### 110. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Members noted that the software migration from Sage to RBS Rialtas had been successfully completed and that staff were making good progress with the new system.

Councillor A Long enquired as to progress on the IT upgrade. The Town Clerk responded that she was awaiting a response from MFG on a proposed timetable.

## **111. LOCAL PLAN REVIEW**

Councillor G Littler informed Members that Wokingham Borough Council was looking to update the Local Plan and that the formal consultation period would end on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020. It was noted that the next Council Meeting was scheduled for 1<sup>st</sup> April. After discussion, it was

- 111.1 **RESOLVED** that a Local Plan Update Working Party be convened and report to the Planning Committee. Membership to comprise of Councillors A Bassett, G Bhangra, C Jones, G Littler, S Matthews, A Mickleburgh and C Smith.

and

- 111.2 **RESOLVED** that the Planning Committee receive the recommendations of the Local Plan Update Working Party and be delegated the power to respond to the Wokingham Borough Council consultation, in accordance with those recommendations.

## **112. WBC OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

Members considered the issues they wished to submit for consideration by the Wokingham Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny Committees. These issues included Health and Social Care, Youth Services, Falling School Rolls in Earley, Parking, Pandemics, Flood Risk and Disaster Preparedness, Planting Wildlife Friendly Plants and Integrated & Strategic Co-Ordination. Concern was also noted over the capacity for the Royal Berkshire Hospital to cope with an extra 15,000 homes in Grazeley, and 30,000 employees in the new Science Park. The Town Clerk to submit this list of topics to WBC for its consideration.

## **113. GREEN FAIR**

Councillors had a wide ranging discussion about the Green Fair, with particular emphasis on charges and Public Liability insurance. The Town Clerk clarified that cover under the Council's insurance was available to stallholders not in possession of their own insurance, as long as suitable notification and risk assessment had taken place. Changes had been made to streamline the planning and running of the event and due diligence had been completed on similar events with regard to charges. Members were keen to note that the Green Fair was an important Earley tradition and requested that a review of the event become an annual item on the Amenities & Leisure Committee Agenda.

*Councillor D Hare exited the meeting and Councillor Bassett took up the Chair position*

## **114. COUNCILLORS' ATTENDANCES**

- 114.1 Record of Members' Attendance

Members noted details of Councillors' attendance during 2019/20 at meetings of the Council and its Committees.

*Member of the public exited the meeting*

## **115. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT**

The Town Council noted the details of the Orders for Payment (Vouchers 2882 – 2906, 2907 - 2935) and Imprest Account (421 – 429). Members were of the opinion that the purchase of the new finance software was good value.

**116. PUBLICATIONS**

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

Earley Neighbourhood Action Group	Community Forum Meeting Minutes 13.1.20
Association of Central Earley Residents	Community Meeting Summary 14.1.20
Me2 Club	Newsletter – January 2020
Involve Wokingham	Chain Newsletter – January 2020

*Councillor D Hare entered the meeting*

**117. PRESS RELEASES**

Consideration was given to whether any of the foregoing items should be the subject of a press release. It was agreed that no press releases be published at this time.

**118. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

There were no members of the public or press present. It was agreed that the remaining items on the Agenda be taken under Part II.

**PART II**

**119. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**120. SERVICE TO EARLEY AWARDS**

**121. CENTREPOINT HIRER**

**122. COMMUNITY CENTRE LEASEHOLDER**

**123. STAFFING MATTERS**

**124. TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 9.34pm.

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**Town Mayor**