



**EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Meeting of Earley Town Council held remotely on Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020 which commenced at 7pm.

**Present**

Chairman – The Mayor, Councillor D Hare.

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

In Attendance: J Friend (Town Clerk) and E Carroll (Deputy Town Clerk)

---

The Chairman gave a short introduction, explaining how the remote meeting would be conducted.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies of absence.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. PUBLIC FORUM**

No members of the public were present.

**4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

- 4.1 Councillor Bassett requested an update on minute 102 – Sibly Development. The Town Clerk provided the update she had previously provided to the Chairman and the Leader of the Council regarding the matter of the transfer. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic had impacted greatly on staffing levels at the Town Council and had created additional workload for officers. Whilst the Town Clerk reported that she did not want to delay the transfer unnecessarily, as a result of the pandemic current staffing levels would make maintenance of the site difficult and the recruitment of additional staff had not been feasible during the last couple of months. The Town Clerk reminded councillors of the Council Covid-19 Risk Assessment that detailed the extra workload that she and the Deputy Town Clerk had dealt with and continued to face, one of the tasks that had had to be delayed was preparation of transfer documentation. She informed councillors that the current situation had been explained to a representative of the residents of Sibly who had expressed understanding. The Town Clerk hoped that the situation would soon improve, staffing levels would increase and work could resume on the transfer. Councillor Bassett thanked the Town Clerk for the update.
- 4.2 Councillor Chopping requested that an amendment be made to Minute 100, Apologies for Absence, as he had sent his apologies for the meeting in February but they had not been recorded.

- 4.3 The Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2020, as amended in 128.2, were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

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

The details of the Town Mayor's civic engagements had been emailed to Councillors prior to the remote meeting. These included details of visits to the Rainbows at Radstock and to Bulmershe School, before the Covid-19 lockdown. The Mayor was sad to report that he had been unable to attend other scheduled visits. The Mayor has been in contact with Austen House and had gifts for the staff and residents from the Earley Help Hub, which he would deliver when able to do so. The Mayor had also written some words of encouragement at this difficult time, which had been published on the Council's website.

## **6. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **6.1 Amenities & Leisure Committee**

Councillor A Newton presented the Minutes of the Amenities & Leisure Committee meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020, noting that the official opening of the Susan Smith Memorial Bird Hide and the Earley Litter Pick have been postponed due to Covid-19 restrictions. It was

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Amenities & Leisure Committee meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020 (Minutes 72 - 87) be received.

### **6.2 Planning Committee**

Councillor G Littler presented the Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 11<sup>th</sup> February and 10<sup>th</sup> March 2020, thanking all those who had participated in the Draft Local Plan Consultation. Councillor Jones also thanked Councillor Littler and the Deputy Town Clerk for their involvement. Councillor Mickleburgh requested that a copy of Earley Town Council's submission to the consultation be displayed on the Council's website. It was

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020 (Minutes 123 - 134) be received.

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Amenities & Leisure Committee meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2020 (Minutes 135 - 149) be received.

## **7. ANNUAL MEETING**

- 7.1 It was **RESOLVED** that, as permitted under the 2020 regulations, no Annual Meeting of the Town Council shall take place until May 2021 and that all appointments, including that of the Chairman, shall remain in place until that date.

- 7.2 It was noted that should the Council wish to review all or any appointments, including that of the Chairman, this may take place before May 2021.

## **8. ANNUAL TOWN ELECTORS MEETING**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Annual Town Electors' Meeting 2020 shall not be called by the Town Council, in accordance with the current prohibitions on public meetings.

## **9. DELEGATION OF POWERS**

9.1 It was **RESOLVED** that the schedule of delegation of emergency powers to the Town Clerk, plus a nominated Councillor, as adopted by Council prior to the enactment of the 2020 Regulation, be approved.

9.1.1 It was **RESOLVED** that the schedule of delegation of emergency powers to the Town Clerk plus a nominated Councillor would continue as is. This matter to be reviewed at the next meeting of the Town Council, on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

9.2 It was **RESOLVED** that the system of delegation in relation to the operations of the Planning Committee, as adopted by the Council prior to the enactment of the 2020 Regulations, be approved.

9.2.1 It was **RESOLVED** that the delegation of powers in relation to the Planning Committee would continue as is but would be reviewed at the next meeting of the Town Council, on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020. The Chairman of the Planning Committee to deliver a report and recommendation at this meeting in June.

## **10. CASUAL VACANCY - COUNCILLOR**

Councillors noted that an insufficient number of electors had requested an election be held to fill the casual vacancy that had arisen on the Town Council. Therefore, a notice would be published on the Town Council's website informing residents that the vacancy would be filled by co-option at the next meeting of the Council.

## **11. PLANNING ADVISOR**

Councillors agreed that, owing to the confidential nature of the matter, the discussion on the Planning Advisor's contract would be moved to Part II of the meeting. It was

**RESOLVED** that, as no members of the public were present, confidential session be declared and the discussion on Agenda Item 136 – Planning Advisor take place.

## **12. GREEN FAIR**

Councillors discussed whether the Green Fair could still take place this year considering the current Covid-19 crisis. It was agreed that it would be impossible to hold the Fair and adhere to Government guidelines, especially those relating to social distancing. In light of the uncertainty around how the pandemic situation will develop, Councillors also agreed that the postponing of the Green Fair to a later date in 2020 would not be an option. All those present at the meeting expressed their disappointment that this decision had had to be made.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Green Fair 2020 would be cancelled and that stallholders be informed in writing and full refunds be given.

The Chairman said that it was unfortunate that this popular event had had to be cancelled but that the Council were determined to hold it again in 2021.

## **13. COUNCILLORS' ATTENDANCES**

### **13.1 Record of Members' Attendance**

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

- 13.2 Members noted that the 2020 Regulations permitted Councillors to remotely attend meetings of the Council and its Committees by means of video link or telephone. Attendance in this manner will be documented.

**14. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT**

Councillor Matthews and Councillor Bassett queried payment 3077 which referred to gas usage at Radstock Lane Community Centre. The Town Clerk explained that this was an historic issue with the gas supply to the Community Centre following the installation of a new mains supply and that the Senior Operations Support Officer had been working with the Facilities Manager to resolve the matter.

Councillors noted the details of Orders for Payment (Vouchers 2936 – 2939, 2940 – 2966, 2967 – 2997, 2998 – 3026, 3027, 3028 – 3065, 3066 – 3085, 3086 – 3089, 3090 – 3120 and 3121 – 3136), and Imprest Account (430 – 455).

**15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Councillors discussed the schedule of meetings previously set for 2020/21 and it was

**RESOLVED** that the Amenities & Leisure Committee meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2020 and the Planning Committee meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020, would be cancelled. The Policy & Resources Committee meeting originally scheduled for 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2020 would now be held remotely on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2020. Full Council meetings would continue as scheduled, the next meeting would be on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

Councillors thanked the Town Clerk for the work she had done to enable the Council to hold virtual meetings.

**16. PRESS RELEASES**

Councillor Jones requested a press release be issued on the success of holding the Town Council's first virtual meeting, he would send a draft to the Town Clerk for publication. A separate press release would be issued regarding the cancellation of the Green Fair once the stall holders have been informed of the decision.

**17. 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. It was

**RESOLVED** that the remaining items on the Agenda be taken under Part II.

**PART II**

**18. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**19. STAFFING**

**20. TERMINATION OF MEETING**

Councillor Jones thanked the Chairman and complimented him on the delivery of the remote meeting.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 8.46pm

.....  
**Town Mayor**