



AMENITIES & LEISURE COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Amenities & Leisure Committee held remotely on Wednesday, 3rd March 2021 which commenced at 7.45pm.

Present

Chair – Councillor A Newton

Councillors: G Bhangra, N Brock, M Eastwell, D Hare, D Ireland, A Long, S Matthews and K Yabsley.

In attendance: J Friend (Town Clerk), E Carroll (Deputy Town Clerk), G Hawker (Senior Park Ranger), R Fryer (Democratic Services Officer), Councillor C Jones, A Sharma (NHS), J Morrison (CABW) and 6 members of the public.

67. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from A Bassett.

68. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

69. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no questions from the public.

70. MENTAL HEALTH PILOT - PRESENTATION

Members received an update from Dr Amit Sharma and Jake Morrison on the Mental Health Pilot Project in Earley. Following the presentation, Councillors asked questions and were encouraged to hear that the pilot had demonstrated positive impacts. Members noted that MIND would be joining the project in the near future and would be providing wellbeing workers.

*Councillor D Ireland entered the meeting
A Sharma and J Morrison left the meeting*

71. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13th January 2021 were approved as a true record and their signature by the Chair authorised (Minutes 52–66).

72. EARLEY ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP PROPOSAL

Members thanked the Earley Environmental Group for a detailed, informative and ambitious proposal for the creation of a Lower Earley Local Nature Reserve. They noted that the EEG had submitted its proposal to Wokingham Borough Council and were minded to support the

proposal. Members discussed how that support could best be provided and whether this proposal should be recommended for inclusion within the Borough's Local Plan. It was

RESOLVED that Earley Town Council would write to Earley Environmental Group and to Wokingham Borough Council stating that the Town Council supports, in principal, EEG's proposal for the creation of a Lower Earley Local Nature Reserve.

The letter to Wokingham Borough Council would express the desire that WBC make a prompt decision to support this proposal and that this support would not be delayed by decisions relating to the Wokingham Borough Local Plan. Notwithstanding this, the LELNR should still form part of said Local Plan.

The letter to EEG would ask for details of any specific assistance that might be sought from the Town Council, either now or in the future, in relation to this proposal.

Two members of the public left the meeting.

73. CORONAVIRUS - UPDATE

Councillors noted that, in accordance with the current National Lockdown restrictions, the Town Council's community centres remained closed to hirers, except for registered pre-schools. The Town Clerk reported that Wokingham Borough Council would be conducting risk assessments of Radstock Community Centre and Maiden Place Community Centre in relation to their use as polling stations on 6th May 2021. Members were pleased to note that officers would continue to follow Government guidelines and restrictions when making decisions on the use or reopening of any Town Council facility.

74. CULVER LANE ALLOTMENTS

The Committee noted that officers had carried out an initial inspection of the allotments in January, resulting in a small number of letters being sent to particular plot holders. Formal inspections are scheduled to resume towards the end of March.

75. MAIDEN ERLEGH LAKE & NATURE RESERVE

Members received a verbal report from the Senior Park Ranger on the extensive works undertaken at Maiden Erlegh Lake and Nature Reserve over the past few months by the Park Rangers and, when possible, the Wednesday Volunteers. It was noted that there had been a fivefold increase in visitor numbers to the amenity since the start of the pandemic. Members were impressed with the wide range of maintenance and improvement works that had been carried out. They were pleased to note that the Annual Reservoir Inspection had resulted in a very positive report.

76. SOL JOEL PARK

Councillors noted that extensive grounds maintenance work had been scheduled to be carried out at Sol Joel Park in March, the exact date to be weather dependent.

Two members of the public left the meeting

77. TREE REPLACEMENT – MILTON ROAD

The Deputy Town Clerk reported on her communications with officers at Wokingham Borough Council. The Committee noted that WBC were facing a significant backlog of work due to Covid working restrictions and the weather, and would therefore be unable to commit

to completing tree-planting before the end of the planting season. WBC had confirmed that its contractors, Volker, would need to undertake a CAT scan of the area before any works could commence.

Two members of the public left the meeting

78. MAIDEN ERLEGH PRE-SCHOOL REQUEST

Members considered a request from Maiden Erlegh Pre-School that the Town Council give approval, as landlords, for the replacement of outdoor surfacing in the Pre-School's play area. The environmental and aesthetic impacts of the works were discussed. It was

RESOLVED that Earley Town Council agree in principle to give approval for the replacement of outdoor surfacing in the Pre-School's play area. A request to be made that consideration be given to the environmental impact and the use of environmentally friendly products and suppliers.

79. PUBLICATIONS

The Committee noted that the following items had been received and were available for viewing from the Council Offices:

AMERA	Executive Committee Meeting – 11 th February 2021
Involve	Local Charity Sector e-newsletter – 15 th February 2021

80. PRESS RELEASES

Councillors requested that press releases be prepared on the Mental Health Pilot Project, the Town Clerk to consult with Jake Morrison on this, and on the proposal for a Lower Earley Local Nature Reserve, in co-operation with the Earley Environmental Group.

81. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 9.05 pm.

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Chair, Amenities & Leisure Committee