



EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a remote meeting for the Members of Earley Town Council held on Wednesday, 16th June 2021 which commenced at 7.30pm.

Present

Chair – The Mayor, Councillor A Bassett

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

In Attendance: J Friend (Town Clerk) and E Carroll (Deputy Town Clerk), and R Fryer (Democratic Services Officer).

15. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R Cook.

Councillor N Brock entered the meeting

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

17. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no members of the public present.

18. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council (1-14) held on Tuesday 4th May 2021 were a true record and could be signed by the Chair.

19. TOWN MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Town Mayor reported on her attendance at the South East Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association virtual briefing on Tuesday 1st June 2021, and at the Earley Litter Pick on Sunday 13th June 2021.

Councillor Mickleburgh observed that he was aware that local community groups appreciated the Town Council's long-time support for these litter picks in Earley.

Councillor D Chopping entered the meeting

20. COMMITTEE REPORTS

20.1 Amenities & Leisure Committee

Councillor A Newton presented the draft Minutes of the meeting of members of the Amenities & Leisure Committee held on the 26th May 2021. She noted Minute 10 'Tree Replacement – Milton Road', and Minute 11 'Tree Register', requesting a minor amendment

to Minute 11 to the effect that Councillor T Maher had been requested to progress discussions with the Wokingham District Veteran Tree Association.

The draft Minutes of the meeting of members of the Amenities & Leisure Committee held on 26th May 2021 (Minutes 1-15) were received.

20.2 Planning Committee

Councillor G Littler presented the Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 13th April 2021 and 4th May 2021. He noted Minute 146 ‘Displaying of Planning Site Notices’ and that Councillor Neal’s attempt to have the item put on the agenda at the Borough Parish Liaison Forum meeting had been agreed but then blocked by the Service Department at Wokingham Borough Council. The Town Council’s representative to raise this matter at the next meeting of the Forum.

The Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 13th April 2021 (Minutes 136-154) and 4th May 2021 (Minutes 1-17) were received.

20.3 Policy & Resources Committee

Councillor C Jones presented the draft Minutes of the meeting of members of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 2nd June 2021. He noted Minutes 8 ‘Advisor to the Planning Committee’, 9 ‘BALC Membership’ and 11 ‘Chalfont Woods’ and encouraged Members to take advantage of the training available through the Berkshire Association of Local Councils.

The draft Minutes of the meeting of members of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 2nd June 2021 (Minutes 1-20) were received.

20.4 Long Service

It was noted that Councillor D Chopping had served 30 years of unbroken service as an Earley Town Councillor, during which time he had also served as Chair in 2004 and Mayor of Earley in 2006. Councillors were unanimous in paying tribute to his service and contribution over the years.

21. **REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER BODIES**

There were no reports on meetings of outside bodies.

22. **RISK ASSESSMENTS**

22.1 Council Risk Assessment

Councillors discussed the Council Risk Assessment for its assets and operations, the Chair noting that it was a live document and would be kept under regular review. It was

RECOMMENDED that the Council Risk Assessment 2021/22 be signed.

22.2 Covid-19 Risk Assessment

22.2.1 Members noted that the Town Council’s Covid-19 Risk Assessment was regularly updated in line with changes in legislation and government guidance.

22.2.2 It was noted that separate Covid-19 Risk Assessments were in place for each Town Council activity including Playgrounds/Outside Gym Equipment, Community Centres, Help Shop, and Fishing.

Councillor D Ireland left the meeting

23. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

23.1 Financial Statements 2020/21

Members received the financial report prepared by the Senior Operations Support Officer, 'Unaudited Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2021'. Councillors noted that the Transfers total on p10 should read '217,271' and not '207,502'. Councillor C Jones wished to express his thanks to the officers for their efforts in producing a clear report, and to the Town Clerk for her efforts in maintaining a healthy financial position in very difficult and unpredictable circumstances.

23.2 Internal Auditor's Report

Members received the Internal Auditor's report for the year ended 31st March 2021 and were pleased to note that it was again an unqualified report. Councillors noted that there was a need to review the Standing Orders as soon as conditions allowed.

23.3 AGAR 2020/21 – Annual Governance Statement 2020/21

Members reviewed 'Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2020/21' and it was

RECOMMENDED that 'Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2020/21' be signed.

23.4 AGAR 2020/21 – Accounting Statements 2020/21

Members reviewed 'Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2020/21' and it was

RECOMMENDED that 'Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2020/21' be signed.

24. DELEGATION OF POWERS

24.1 Use of Delegated Powers

Members received a report detailing the use of delegated powers since the last meeting of the Council on 4th May 2021.

24.2 Full Council

Members considered the continuing impact of the pandemic on the Council's ability to hold all meetings face to face whilst ensuring the safety of all participants. After discussion it was

RECOMMENDED that the schedule of delegated powers detailed in Minutes 7, 7.1 and 7.2 'Delegated Powers' at the Annual Meeting of the Council, 4th May 2021, be continued. The situation to be reviewed at the next meeting of full Council.

25. TOWN AND PARISH CHARTER

Members received the Town and Parish Charter, a document jointly developed by representatives from towns, parishes and borough council officers. Councillors expressed the view that this could be a genuine step forward in parish and town councils being treated as equals by the principal authority. The Charter document was discussed and it was

RECOMMENDED that Earley Town Council formally endorse the Town and Parish Charter document.

26. CHALFONT WOODS

Members considered a recommendation from the meeting of the members of the Policy and Resources Committee on 2nd June 2021, that Earley Town Council formally seek the transfer of Chalfont Woods (also known as Area DD) from Wokingham Borough Council with the intention that Earley Town Council maintain the woods as a legally designated nature reserve. Councillors were supportive of the principle of protecting valuable green spaces and mindful of the need to be aware of the potential costs and liabilities involved. It was agreed that any initial approach to the borough should be a request for the opening up of discussions on the possibility of a transfer. Consideration was also given as to the method of the approach. It was

RECOMMENDED that Earley Town Council formally seek discussions with the borough around the transfer of Chalfont Woods (also known as Area DD) from Wokingham Borough Council to the Town Council, with the intention that Earley Town Council maintain the woods as a legally designated nature reserve. The Town Clerk to write to WBC in the first instance.

27. CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Members considered the proposal by the Climate Emergency Working Group for an initiative involving local primary school children. Children would be invited to submit suggestions for tackling climate change and the Council would award small prizes. Councillors were mindful of timescale restrictions and the increased pressures on teachers at this time. Consideration was given to including youth groups as well as schools. It was agreed that the initial letter would be redrafted at the next meeting of the Climate Emergency Working group. It was

RECOMMENDED that a redrafted letter be sent to all Earley primary schools before the end of the summer term, inviting them to participate in a competition in September for imaginative and practical projects to combat climate change.

28. FLOODING ALLEVIATION WORKS

Members considered a suggestion from the Chair that a letter be sent to Wokingham Borough Council thanking them for carrying out the flood alleviation works in Egremont Drive. It was

RECOMMENDED that a letter be sent to WBC, thanking them for carrying out the flood alleviation works in Egremont Drive.

Councillors also wished to express their thanks to the Park Rangers, the Deputy Town Clerk and to Councillors for their efforts in bringing this long running issue to a successful resolution.

29. COUNCILLORS' ATTENDANCE

29.1 Record of Members' Attendance

Members noted details of Councillors' attendance during 2021/22 at meetings of the Council and its Committees.

30. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT

It was noted that there were no Orders for Payment since those reported to the members of the Policy and Resources Committee on 2nd June 2021.

31. PUBLICATIONS

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

Me2 Club	e-newsletter – May 2021
CCB Action for All	e-bulletin 3 rd June 2021

32. PRESS RELEASES

Councillors requested the following press releases be issued:

- 32.1 The Town Mayor’s attendance at the Great British Spring Clean Litter Pick in Earley.
- 32.2 Councillor D Chopping’s thirty years of service as an Earley Town Councillor.

33. 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

34. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

35. COMMITTEE REPORTS

36. DELEGATION OF POWERS

37. STAFFING MATTERS

38. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 9.30pm.

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Town Mayor