



POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Council Offices, Radstock Lane, Earley, on Wednesday 22nd September 2021 commencing at 7pm.

Present

Chair – Councillor C Jones

Councillors: A Bassett, J Clark, J Eastwell, D Hare, R Houlbrooke, S Matthews and A Mickleburgh.

In attendance: J Friend (Town Clerk), E Carroll (Deputy Town Clerk), Councillor N Brock and Councillor M Eastwell.

40. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Chopping and T Maher.

41. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

42. PUBLIC FORUM

No members of the public were present.

43. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

43.1 The Minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 14th July 2021 were confirmed a true record and signed by the Chair (Minutes 21-39).

44. FINANCIAL MATTERS

44.1 Completion of External Audit

Members noted the receipt of the completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/21, and the fact that it had been posted on the Town Council website as required by legislation. Councillors were pleased to note that no matters of concern were raised by the auditor and Councillor Jones thanked those ETC staff responsible for managing the finances for their hard work.

44.2 Appointment of Internal Auditor

Councillors received the Town Clerk’s recommendation that Claire Connell be reappointed as Earley Town Council’s internal auditor for 2021/22, annual fees unaltered. It was

RESOLVED that Claire Connell be appointed as Earley Town Council’s internal auditor for 2021/22.



44.3 Financial Update

Councillors had been provided with financial update documents prior to the meeting. Councillor Jones requested clarification on the Environmental Projects budget, the Town Clerk advised that the expenditure for the forthcoming Green Events would see some of this budget being spent. Councillor Jones also questioned the Sports Pitch income which is lower than expected and was advised by the Town Clerk that poor weather had impacted the cricket season this year, so the shortfall would not be recovered. Councillors were pleased to see that the budget remains on track.

45. BANK RECONCILIATIONS

Councillors noted that the Bank Reconciliations for June and July 2021 had been made available to the Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee for information.

46. CCLA

It was noted that the signatories for the Town Council's accounts with CCLA had been updated.

47. TOWN COUNCIL GRANTS

47.1 Citizens Advice Wokingham

Councillors were pleased to note that a letter of thanks had been received following the Town Council's decision to grant Citizens Advice Wokingham £3,000 to support the purchase and running costs of a mobile advice unit. Councillors requested that photos of the mobile unit be put on ETC's website with a link to Citizen's Advice Wokingham.

47.2 Wokingham Borough Sports Council Sports Awards 2021

Members considered the continuation of the Town Council's sponsorship of the Spirit of Sport award at the Wokingham Borough Sports Council Sports Awards 2021. It was

RESOLVED that Earley Town Council provide a grant of £75 to continue the sponsorship of the Spirit of Sport award at the Wokingham Borough Sports Council Sports Awards 2021.

47.3 Members also considered a request from Wokingham Borough Council that the Town Council match fund two young Earley athletes who have been awarded grants by WBC. Earley Town Council has made such awards in the past and it was

RESOLVED that Earley Town Council match fund £350 to each of the two athletes.

47.4 Town Council Grants 2021/22

The Committee discussed a request from Laurel Park Netball Club that their application for a grant be considered outside of the usual Town Council grant timeframe. It was

RESOLVED that a grant of £250 be made to Laurel Park Netball Club as an exceptional payment and Councillors requested that, should the club wish to apply for any future grants, that they do this under the normal grant application process.



48. COMMUNITY SPACE PROJECT

Members received an update from the Town Clerk on the refurbishment of the old Radstock Social Club space, now referred to as Radstock Community Space, and its conversion into a facility for community use. Councillors considered a request from the Town Clerk that a sum from the Covid Recovery budget be allocated to complete the project. It was

RESOLVED that Earley Town Council allocate a budget of up to £5,000 to the Radstock Community Space project, to be taken from the Covid Recovery budget, in order to complete the project. Councillors also thanked all staff who have been involved in the refurbishment.

49. GREEN EVENTS 2021 – ‘26 TO COP26’

Councillors had been provided with an updated schedule of the planned series of events for ETC’s Green Events 2021, taking place in the lead up to COP26. Members noted that event planning was progressing well and that the first activity had taken place, the ETC’s Volunteers Litter Pick, which Councillors Mickleburgh and Bassett both confirmed they had attended. The Town Clerk reported that posters for events had been displayed and residents had expressed interest in attending events. Details of some events were still to be confirmed. Councillors thanked the officers involved in the project.

50. CLIMATE EMERGENCY

50.1 Climate Emergency webpage

Members were pleased to note that a dedicated Climate Emergency page had been created on the Town Council’s website.

50.2 Climate Emergency Working Group meeting

The Committee noted the Climate Emergency Working Group’s notes from their meeting held on 9th September 2021. Councillor Mickleburgh provided the Committee with an update and requested that consideration be given to an offer from Reading University for students to assist with an energy audit. After some discussion members agreed this request would be considered further in 2022, when more resources would be available.

Councillors discussed the proposed letter to schools and it was agreed that this would be returned to the working group for re-drafting.

51. EARLEY STATION FOOTBRIDGE

The Town Clerk provided an update on the Town Council’s continued requests to Wokingham Borough Council for information on its proposals to replace the footbridge at Earley train station and the possible impact of the project on the Town Council’s extension land at Mays Lane Cemetery. The plans provided by WBC following its meeting with ETC representatives on 6th September will be forwarded to the town councillors but some aspects of the proposals and its impact on the cemetery land remain unclear. Councillors agreed that an extraordinary meeting should be held so that councillors could discuss this matter and a site visit should be arranged.



52. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT

Councillors received details of Orders for Payment made since the last meeting of the Town Council (Vouchers 4145 – 4178, 4179 – 4203, 4204 – 4207, 4208 – 4239, 4239 – 4268, 4269 - 4271 and Imprest Account (Vouchers 32 – 38, 596 - 609).

53. PUBLICATIONS

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

Neighbourhood Action Group	Minutes – 2 nd August 2021
Me2 Club	E-newsletter – August 2021

54. PRESS RELEASES

It was requested that a press release be made about ETC’s Green Events 2021 – ‘26 to COP26’.

It was also requested that when the installation of the new swings at Meadow Park has been completed, a press release be issued.

55. 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

56. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

57. STAFFING MATTERS

58. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 9.00 pm.

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Chair, Policy & Resources Committee