



EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Earley Town Council, held in Radstock Lane Community Centre on Wednesday 9th February 2022 which commenced at 7.30pm.

Present

Chair – The Mayor, Councillor A Bassett

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

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

119. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Clark, J Eastwell, M Eastwell and A Newton.

120. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

121. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no members of the public in attendance.

122. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting for the members of the Town Council (94-118) held on Wednesday 24th November 2021 were a true record and could be signed by the Chair.

123. TOWN MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Town Mayor reported that she had enjoyed attending events across Earley and the local area, although there had been some cancelations due to Coronavirus. She noted her visits to:

- The Wokingham Borough Council Sports Awards at Cantley Café on Thursday 26th November 2021, alongside Cllr Tahir Maher, to present the Spirit of Sport award to Colin and Kate Stonehouse for setting up the Berkshire Brigands mixed ability rugby club.
- The 1996 (Earley) Squadron Air Training Corps on Thursday 2nd December 2021.
- The Kenton Road Day Centre Christmas Fair on Saturday 4th December 2021.
- Recording for the Earley St Peter's online Carol Service on Thursday 9th December 2021.
- Attending the PAW Consulting launch event on Thursday 9th December 2021.
- Earley St Peter's Church on Sunday 19th December 2021 for the in-person Carol Service.

Councillor G Bhangra entered the meeting

124. TOWN MAYOR'S RECEPTION – SERVICE TO EARLEY AWARDS

Cllr Bassett updated Councillors on arrangements for the presentation of the 2020 and 2021 Service to Earley Awards. To ensure that the event takes place outside of the election period, and as a result of ETC being unable to hold the traditional Mayor's Reception in December 2021, the Town Mayor proposed holding a reception for the presentation of the Service to Earley Awards on Saturday 19th March 2022, 3-5pm, at Radstock Lane Community Centre. The intention is to invite recipients and their families plus all town councillors to the event. The Chair expressed a desire to hold an event in the summer to thank officers for their efforts during the Covid period.

125. COUNCILLOR ROLES

125.1 Leader of the Majority Party

It was noted that Cllr C Jones had stepped down from the position of Leader of the majority party on Earley Town Council with immediate effect. It was further noted that the ETC Liberal Democrat councillors had selected Cllr D Hare as the new Leader of the majority party on Earley Town Council. Councillors expressed their thanks to Cllr C Jones for his work over the last three years. Cllr C Jones reported it had been a pleasure to work with the other town councillors and made special mention of Cllrs S Matthews and D Chopping whose hard work and experience had benefitted both councillors and residents.

Councillors discussed the correct title for this role, whether it should be Leader of the majority party or Leader of the Council. It was noted that the matter should be clarified in the updated Standing Orders, which are due to go before Council at its meeting of 30th March 2022.

125.2 Chair of Policy and Resources Committee

It was noted that Cllr C Jones had stepped down as Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee with immediate effect. Cllr D Hare was nominated as the new Chair and it was

RESOLVED that Cllr D Hare be elected Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee with immediate effect.

125.3 Chair of Amenities and Leisure Committee

It was noted that Cllr A Newton had stepped down as Chair of the Amenities and Leisure Committee with immediate effect. Cllr N Brock was nominated as the new Chair and it was

RESOLVED that Cllr N Brock be elected Chair of the Amenities and Leisure Committee with immediate effect.

A new deputy chair to be elected at the next meeting of the Amenities and Leisure Committee on 2nd March 2022.

125.4 Standards Committee

Members were pleased to note that Cllr S Matthews had been appointed as a Towns and Parishes representative to the Wokingham Borough Council Standards Committee.

126. COMMITTEE REPORTS

126.1 Amenities and Leisure Committee

Cllr N Brock presented the draft Minutes of the meeting for members of the Amenities and Leisure Committee held on Wednesday 12th January 2022.

The draft Minutes of the meeting for members of the Amenities and Leisure Committee held on 12th January 2022 (Minutes 67-82) were received.

126.2 Planning Committee

Cllr G Littler presented the Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on Tuesday 7th December 2021, and the draft Minutes of the meeting for members of the Planning Committee held on Tuesday 11th January 2022. Cllr Littler highlighted Minute 134 'Wokingham Borough Council's Local Plan Update: Revised Growth Strategy' noting it had been submitted to WBC on 24th January 2022, and thanked Cllr M Smith for his input into the submission.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 7th December 2021 (Minutes 112-124) and draft Minutes of the meeting for members of the Planning Committee held on 11th January 2022 (Minutes 125-137) were received.

126.3 Policy and Resources Committee

Cllr C Jones presented the draft Minutes of the meeting for members of the Policy and Resources Committee held on Wednesday 26th January 2022. He noted Minute 80.1 'Draft Budget' and expressed his thanks for the efforts of councillors, the Town Clerk and the Deputy Town Clerk in producing it. He also noted Minute 90 'Loddon Bridge Viaduct'.

The draft Minutes of the meeting for members of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 26th January 2022 (Minutes 76-97) were received.

127. REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER BODIES

127.1 Kenton Road Day Centre Management Committee

Cllr A Bassett reported on her attendance at the Kenton Road Day Centre's Committee meeting in January 2022.

127.1.1 The Chair noted that as Cllr I Khayinza had been unable to attend Kenton Road Day Centre Management Committee meetings as the ETC representative, Cllr A Bassett had volunteered to serve as a substitute ETC representative.

128. BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2022/23

Members considered the recommendations made by the Budget Working Party and those made at the Policy and Resources Committee meeting of 26th January 2022.

128.1 Town Council Budget 2022/23

Councillors considered the proposed Budget 2022/23, as detailed in the document supplied to the Policy and Resources Committee on 26th January 2022 and recommended by the Budget Working Party at its meeting on 17th January 2022. It was

RESOLVED that the proposed Budget 2022/23 be adopted.

128.2 Town Council Precept 2022/23

Members considered the recommendation from the Policy and Resources Committee that a 0% increase be applied to the Town Council Precept for 2022/23. Councillors were aware of the pressures that would be faced by residents from the rising cost of living over the next year and the Chair noted that, thanks to prudent financial management, the Council was in a position to be able to consider not increasing the precept for 2022/23. It was

RESOLVED that a 0% increase be applied to the Town Council Precept for 2022/23.

129. **DELEGATION OF POWERS**

129.1 Use of Delegated Powers

Members received a report detailing the use of delegated powers since the last meeting of the Council on 24th November 2021. Cllr G Littler asked that the submission of a response to Wokingham Borough Council's Local Plan Update: Revised Growth Strategy be included as a delegated decision from the meeting for members of the Planning Committee on 11th January 2022.

129.2 Full Council

Members considered the continuing impact of the pandemic on the Council's ability to hold all meetings face to face whilst trying to ensure the safety of all participants. Councillors noted the current high levels of Covid infection in Wokingham, that bookings may need to be cancelled if community centres were used as meeting venues, and that, in their opinion, the schedule of delegated powers had worked well so far. Members were keen to meet in person when possible but were mindful that it was good to have a fallback position should circumstances dictate that a remote meeting would be advisable. It was

RESOLVED 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 for Full Council meetings, whilst meetings of committees should be held in person if possible. It was agreed that the relevant officer, along with the Chair of each committee, would decide which format a committee meeting should take. The continued adoption of the scheme to be reviewed again at the next meeting of Full Council.

130. **SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2022/23**

Councillors considered the proposed Schedule of Meetings 2022/23, noting that the date of the Annual Meeting had moved from its usual date due to the local elections being held on 5th May 2022. It was

RESOLVED that Earley Town Council adopt the proposed Schedule of Meetings 2022/23.

It was suggested that members of the Amenities and Leisure Committee may wish to consider whether to alter the start time of their meetings in the next municipal year.

131. **COUNCILLORS' ATTENDANCE**

131.1 Record of Members' Attendance

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

132. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT

Councillors noted the details of Orders for Payment (Vouchers 4575 – 4605, and 4606 – 4644) and that there were no Imprest Account vouchers to report.

133. PUBLICATIONS

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

Berkshire Youth	e-newsletter January 2022
Me2Club	e-newsletter January 2022

134. PRESS RELEASES

Councillors requested the following press release be issued:

An announcement that a 0% increase to the precept had been agreed, to include the budget priorities of ETC in the year ahead.

135. 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

136. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

137. COMMITTEE REPORTS

138. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 8.20pm.

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Town Mayor