



**EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of the meeting of Earley Town Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Radstock Lane on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022 which commenced at 7.30pm.

**Present**

Chair – The Town Mayor, Councillor T Maher

Councillors: A Bassett, G Bhangra, N Brock, J Clark, R Cook, J Eastwell, M Eastwell, D Hare, R Houlbrooke, D Ireland, I Khayinza, G Littler, A Long, S Matthews, A Neal, A Newton, 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)

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**93. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Chopping, A Mickleburgh, and C Jones.

**94. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor D Hare declared a personal interest in Item 9.5 ‘Sports Pitch Hire’ as Chairman of Shinfield Cricket Club, in Item 10 ‘Dog Waste Bags’ as a dog owner and in Item 12 ‘Community Centres’ as he had been involved in meetings discussing leases in his capacity as a borough councillor.

Councillors G Bhangra, N Brock, and R Cook declared personal interests in Item 10 ‘Dog Waste Bags’ as dog owners.

**95. PUBLIC FORUM**

There were no members of the public in attendance.

**96. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of Earley Town Council (72-92) held on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2022 were a true and correct record and could be signed by the Chair.

**97. TOWN MAYOR’S COMMUNICATION**

The Town Mayor reported that, since the last meeting of the Council, he had attended the Earley CResCent Resource Centre AGM on 8<sup>th</sup> of November and the Remembrance Service at St Peter’s Church on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

**98. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

98.1 Amenities and Leisure Committee

Cllr N Brock presented the draft Minutes of the Amenities and Leisure Committee meeting (Minutes 57 – 77) held on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022. The Council received the Minutes.

98.2 Planning Committee

Cllr G Littler presented the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting (Minutes 59 – 72) held on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2022 and the draft Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting (Minutes 73 - 87) held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022. The Council received the Minutes.

98.3 Policy and Resources Committee

Cllr D Hare presented the Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting (Minutes 40 – 62) held on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2022 and the draft Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting (Minutes 63 - 82) held on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022. The Council received the Minutes.

**99. REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES**

99.1 Loddon Valley Leisure Centre

Members received a verbal report from Cllr M Smith on his meeting with Tony Penge, the manager at Places Leisure, Loddon Valley Leisure Centre. Cllr M Smith reported that Mr Penge had indicated that Places Leisure would be interested in having a stall at the Green Fair and had also offered the use of the centre's facilities for council activities, for example, perhaps to act as a base during litter picking initiatives.

99.2 Borough Parish Liaison Forum

Councillors noted the Minutes from the Borough Parish Liaison Forum meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022 had been circulated to Members by the Town Clerk.

**100. DELEGATION OF POWERS**

100.1 Scheme of Delegation - Coronavirus

Members considered the continuation of the additional temporary delegation measures originally adopted at Full Council on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2022 – Minute 15.2. The Council and its committees were continuing to meet face to face which meant that it had not been necessary to use such delegated powers for some time, however, councillors agreed that it would be sensible to retain them for the winter period. It was

**RESOLVED** that the additional temporary delegation measures as detailed in Minute 15.2 at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2022 be continued. The adoption of these measures to be reviewed again at the next meeting of Full Council.

**101. ANNUAL FEES & CHARGES REVIEW – 2023/24**

Councillors considered the recommendations of the Amenities and Leisure Committee with regards to annual fees and charges for the next financial year.

101.1 Mays Lane Cemetery

Councillors discussed the proposed options produced in line with the recommendations of the Amenities and Leisure Committee. Comparisons with other local burial authorities had also been provided. Councillors agreed that increases should be focussed on the cost of the purchase of the exclusive rights of burial to bring this more in line with other authorities. It was noted

that the Council had increased charges by 1% in 2020/21 but there had been no increase in 2021/22. It was

**RESOLVED** that Earley Town Council adopt Proposal 1 for the financial year 2023/24.

#### 101.2 Culver Lane Allotments

It was **RESOLVED** that the schedule of charges be increased in line with the recommendations of the Amenities and Leisure Committee and nominal increases of 50p/£1 be applied with effect from January 2024.

#### 101.3 Hall Hire

Councillors discussed the proposed changes to the charging schedule and considered the potential impact on hirers. Members agreed that the charging schedule should be simplified and were generally in favour of the principle of introducing a charge for the kitchen, this would bring the Council in line with other facilities providers.

Members agreed that an inflationary increase of 10% on hall hire charges would be appropriate but views differed as to how the kitchen charge should be applied.

A motion was proposed and seconded: an amendment be introduced that the proposed kitchen charge of £5 for up to 4 hours or £10 for over 4 hours be reduced by 50%. Councillors voted, the motion failed.

A motion that an amendment be introduced that a kitchen charge not be introduced during the financial year 2023/24 was proposed but not seconded. The motion failed.

Members discussed the Amenities and Leisure Committee's proposals and it was **RESOLVED** that the charging schedule for halls be simplified and streamlined; that the proposed charge be introduced for use of kitchens; and that the proposed increases to charges as outlined in Appendix D be adopted for the financial year 2023/24. (13 in favour; 5 against; 1 abstention).

#### 101.4 Fishing Permits

It was **RESOLVED** that charges be increased by 10% (rounded to nearest 50p), as outlined in Appendix E, for the financial year 2023/24.

#### 101.5 Sports Pitch Hire

It was **RESOLVED** that charges be increased by 10%, as outlined in Appendix F, for the financial year 2023/24.

### 102. **DOG WASTE BAGS**

#### 102.1 Policy

Members noted the Policy and Resources Committee's resolution that residents be limited to one pack of dog waste bags per month per household (Minute 73.2 – Policy and Resources Committee meeting 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022). The Town Clerk reported that the policy had been introduced and had been fairly well received by residents.

*Cllr A Newton left the meeting*

## 102.2 Charges

Councillors discussed the Policy and Resources Committee's recommendation that a charge be introduced for the provision of dog waste bags to cover the purchase costs of the bags. Members noted that the bag costs had been increasing and they were conscious of the fact that not all residents were dog owners and therefore only a minority of residents were benefitting from the free provision. Consideration was given as to whether the restriction on bags should be maintained and Members agreed that it should be kept in place as the reasoning behind the decision (Minute 73.2 – Policy and Resources meeting 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022) had not changed. It was

**RESOLVED** that a charge of £1 per pack of 50 bags be introduced with effect from Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022

## 103. **GRANTS POLICY - REVIEW**

Councillors considered the amendments to the Council's Grants Policy, as recommended by the Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022. It was

**RESOLVED** that the following two amendments be made to the Council's Grants Policy:

- Council may opt to hold some of the grant budget back for distribution later in the financial year
- Applicants may apply only once during each financial year for the same project

## 104. **COMMUNITY CENTRES**

104.1 In view of the nature of the updates to be discussed, it was **RESOLVED** that Council move to Part II, confidential session, for agenda item 12 – Community Centres.

104.2 It was **RESOLVED** that the meeting leave Part II.

*Cllr D Hare left the meeting*

## 105. **BOROUGH PARISH LIAISON FORUM**

Cllr M Smith noted that there had been no response to the BPLF's previous request that all town and parish councils submit suggestions for topics of discussion at future meetings of the Forum, and so repeated the request. Councillors to suggest potential items for submission to Cllrs G Littler or A Neal, Earley Town Councils representatives to the Forum.

## 106. **LIBRARY SERVICE - CONSULTATION**

It was noted that Wokingham Borough Council had launched a customer feedback survey on its library service provision, with details to be found on WBC's Engage website.

## 107. **COUNCILLORS' ATTENDANCE**

107.1 Record of Members' Attendance

Members noted the details of Councillors' attendance, both remote and face to face, during 2022/23 at meetings of the Council and its Committees.

**108. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT**

Councillors noted the details of Orders for Payment (Vouchers 5299 – 5342, and 5343 – 5349 and Imprest vouchers 734 - 740).

**109. PUBLICATIONS**

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

Berkshire Youth	E-newsletter October / November 2022
CCB	E-Bulletin November 2022
MERA Magazine	Winter 2022

**110. PRESS RELEASES**

Members discussed the appropriate timing for a press release on the Mayor’s Reception, but no other press releases were requested.

*Cllr D Hare returned to the meeting*

**111. 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**

**112. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**113. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**114. TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 9:20pm.

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**Town Mayor**