



EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Earley Town Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Radstock Lane on Wednesday 8th February 2023 which commenced at 7.30pm.

Present

Chair – The Town Mayor, Councillor T Maher

Councillors: A Bassett, N Brock, J Clark, R Cook, J Eastwell, M Eastwell, D Hare, R Houlbrooke, D Ireland, I Khayinza, G Littler, A Long, S Matthews, M Shaw, C Smith, M Smith, and K Yabsley.

In Attendance: J Friend (Town Clerk), E Carroll (Deputy Town Clerk) and two representatives from the Earley Environmental Group.

115. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

116. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

117. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no questions from the members of the public in attendance.

Councillor I Khayinza arrived.

118. EEG GREEN CORRIDOR PROPOSAL

The two representatives from the Earley Environmental Group (EEG) presented their Earley Green Corridor proposal to the Council, a hardcopy of which had been provided to councillors in their agenda packs. The proposal is at a draft stage and aims to create four green corridors consisting of greenspace, parks and gardens, along with green links such as pathways and trees. Green corridors would help to protect and enhance natural habitats and provide routes for wildlife and residents with leisure space. EEG would like the town council to adopt the document as part of its Green Infrastructure Plan and will be seeking support on the proposal from Wokingham Borough Council and other neighbouring parish and town councils into which the corridors extend. The group are delivering a presentation on the Earley Green Corridor proposal on 21st February 2023 at Maiden Place Community Centre at 7.30pm.

The two EEG representatives left the meeting.

119. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of Earley Town Council (93-114) held on Wednesday 23rd November 2022 were a true and correct record and could be signed by the Chair.

120. TOWN MAYOR'S COMMUNICATION

The Town Mayor reported that, since the last meeting of the Council, he had attended the 35th Anniversary of Lower Earley Library and a Meet the Artist event at St Nicolas Church.

121. COMMITTEE REPORTS

121.1 Amenities and Leisure Committee

Cllr N Brock presented the draft Minutes of the Amenities and Leisure Committee meeting (Minutes 78 – 98) held on 11th January 2023. The Council received the draft Minutes.

Councillor Bassett expressed her dismay at the closure of the Post Office at McColls in Asda and requested that a letter be sent to the Post Office highlighting the impact the closure will have on local residents and the resulting lack of facilities for a town of approximately 34,000 residents. It was

RESOLVED that a letter be sent to the Post Office raising these concerns.

121.2 Planning Committee

Cllr G Littler presented the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting (Minutes 88 – 102) held on 6th December 2022 and the draft Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting (Minutes 103 – 115) held on 10th January 2023. The Council received the Minutes.

121.3 Policy and Resources Committee

Cllr D Hare presented the draft Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting (Minutes 83 – 99) held on 25th January 2023. The Council received the draft Minutes.

122. REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES

122.1 Kenton Road Day Centre

Members received a report from Cllr A Bassett on her attendance at Kenton Road Day Centre's Committee Meeting held on 17th January 2023.

122.2 Borough Parish Liaison Forum

Council noted Councillor Littler's attendance at the Borough Parish Liaison Forum at which there had been discussions on speed limits outside schools and plans to adopt a partnership working approach between the Borough Council, Town/Parish Councils and other third-party organisations.

123. DELEGATION OF POWERS

123.1 Scheme of Delegation - Coronavirus

Members discussed whether to continue the additional temporary delegation measures adopted at Full Council on 11th May 2022 – Minute 15.2. As the Council and its committees have continued to meet face to face it has not been necessary to use these delegation measures for some time and councillors agreed that the situation was unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. It was

RESOLVED that the additional temporary delegation measures detailed in Minute 15.2 at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 11th May 2022 would not be renewed.

124. BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2023/2024

Members noted the corrections to meeting dates in agenda item 10.1 – Policy & Resources meeting 25th January 2023 and Budget Working Party meeting 18th January 2023.

Members considered the recommendations made by the Budget Working Party and those made by the Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 25th January 2023.

124.1 Town Council Budget 2023/2024

Councillors thanked the Town Clerk and all officers involved in producing a very detailed budget, which was clear and transparent. It was

RESOLVED that the proposed Budget 2023/24 be approved.

124.2 Town Council Precept 2023/2024

Members considered the recommendation from the Policy and Resources Committee that a 2% increase be applied to the Town Council Precept for 2023/24. Councillors had considered the pressures faced by all from the rising costs of living and stated that they continue to be committed to enhancing the lives of Earley residents. It was

RESOLVED that a 2% increase be applied to the Town Council Precept for 2023/24. The precept 2023/24 to be set at £1,007,815.

125. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2023/2024

125.1 It was **RESOLVED** that the proposed Schedule of Meetings 2023/2024 be approved.

125.2 Councillors discussed the current start times of Council and Committee meetings and agreed that starting times for all meetings of the Council and its standing committees would be the same.

It was **RESOLVED** that future Council and Committee meetings would commence at 7.00pm.

126. COUNCILLORS' ATTENDANCE

126.1 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.

127. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT

Councillors noted the details of Orders for Payment (Vouchers 5511-5522 and 5523-5549 and Imprest vouchers 758-760).

128. PUBLICATIONS

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

Friendship Alliance	E-newsletter 25 th January 2023
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TVP Police & Crime Bulletin	January 2023
Hardship Alliance Action Group	E-newsletter 23 rd January 2023

129. PRESS RELEASES

No press releases were requested but it was noted that, as required by the regulations, a precept leaflet would be published in due course.

130. 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

131. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

132. COMMITTEE REPORTS

133. SERVICE TO EARLEY AWARD 2023

134. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 8.38pm.

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Town Mayor