



AMENITIES & LEISURE COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Amenities & Leisure Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Council Offices, Radstock Lane, Earley on Wednesday 13th September 2023 which commenced at 7pm.

Present

Chair – Councillor N Brock

Councillors: R Ahlawat, A Bradley, R Browne, M De Jong, A Long, T Maher and S Matthews.

In attendance: J Friend (Town Clerk), M Brown (Operations Manager) Y Crocker (Committees Officer)

37. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies for absence from Cllrs A Bassett, R Cook, B Owen and C Smith.

38. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

39. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no members of the public present.

40. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5th July 2023 were approved as a true record and it was **RESOLVED** they be signed by the Chair (Minutes 18 - 36).

41. MAIDEN ERLEGH LAKE AND NATURE RESERVE

41.1 Green Fair

Members received a report on the Green Fair event which took place on Saturday 5th August 2023. The Chair thanked the staff for their work in organising and running the event. Members commented on how popular the birds of prey had been with everyone who attended and agreed that the event was a success despite the bad weather and some stall holders not showing up on the day.

41.1.1 Members discussed an officer recommendation to increase the budget for the Green Fair to £1,200 in 2024 to enable the gradual replacement and upgrading of the Town Council's gazebos. This was agreed in principle and will be included in the Committee's submission to the budget setting process.

41.2 Environmental Events

Members noted that the Town Council had held two 'Moths and Muffins' events at the Nature Reserve in August. A total of 19 people attended and had provided very positive feedback.

41.3 Charity Fishing Match

Members noted that the Town Council's water bailiffs held their annual charity fishing competition at Maiden Erlegh Lake & Nature Reserve on Sunday 27th August 2023. The event raised £120 which will be donated to Swan Lifeline.

42. **BERKSHIRE'S LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY**

Members received a report on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), a government initiative which maps areas important for biodiversity and priority areas for nature recovery, creating local habitat maps. This will help prioritise where and how local authorities should invest and be a crucial delivery plan for long term ambitions of biodiversity plans and climate strategies.

Members were invited to attend one of a series of introductory webinars about the LNRS, arranged by RBWM for borough, parish and town councils, and feed back any comments into further discussions the Town Council may have regarding the Earley Green Corridor Network proposal.

Members noted that the Town Clerk had suggested to Bob Collis (EEG) that he contact the lead officer for the Berkshire strategy, Rosie Street, and make her aware of the EEG's Earley Green Corridor Network proposal. This he had done and the two are due to meet early next month to discuss it further.

43. **EARLEY GREEN CORRIDOR NETWORK PROPOSAL – EEG**

Members discussed the revised summary document and maps received from EEG regarding its Earley Green Corridor Network proposal, which combine Earley's green spaces and green links to provide natural habitats and routes for local wildlife. Cllr Matthews informed Members that she had pointed out to EEG the omission of Bulmershe Park and Bulmershe Field from the maps and that this would be rectified.

The principle of the Earley Green Corridor Network has already been adopted by the Town Council. Further discussions will take place between the Town Council and EEG once the group's meeting with the LNRS lead, Rosie Street, has taken place.

44. **OPERATIONS MANAGER – REPORT**

The Operations Manager provided a verbal report to Members on various matters, including:

- Meadow Park – A replacement roundabout has been ordered for the playground.
- Sibly – Meetings are taking place with play equipment suppliers to discuss an upgrade of the play area. A tree survey of Redhatch Copse has been completed. A Town Council noticeboard will be installed at the site.
- Sol Joel Park – Site visits are planned for three companies regarding installing an artificial cricket wicket. Repairs have been made to the half pipe at the skatepark, feedback from the skaters has been positive.
- Volunteers – Permission has been obtained for ETC volunteers to remove Himalayan Balsam from WBC land along the Loddon. Applications have been received for the volunteer Water Bailiff role. WBC requested assistance with planting Loddon lilies at Riverside but we are still awaiting details.
- Bus Shelters – Installation of two replacement shelters has been delayed due to the supplier building the incorrect size shelter. Currently waiting for an installation date.

- Community Centres – Hygiene services contracts have been reviewed, the hand dryers are being replaced with more appropriate models and the overall cost of services will be reduced.
- Radstock Lane Community Centre – Floor resurfacing has been scheduled for 27th -29th October (Half term)
- Cemetery - Maintenance work is taking place and a new concrete spine is being installed in late September.

45. CENTREPOINT COMMUNITY CENTRE

Members **RESOLVED** to move this item to Part II.

46. SEATS AND BENCHES

Members discussed requests received for additional benches to be purchased and installed by the Town Council and viewed maps indicating suggested locations for such benches.

46.1 Paddick Drive (ETC land)

Following a full discussion, Members **RESOLVED** to install two benches in the park area at Paddick Drive.

46.2 Chalfont Park Sports Field (WBC land).

Members considered a request to install a bench at this location, on WBC land. After much discussion, the Committee **RESOLVED** that it would not purchase and install seats or benches at Chalfont Park Sports Field.

47. WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL CONSULTATIONS

47.1 Street Cleaning, Grass Cutting and Litter Bins

Members discussed at length the proposed WBC cuts to street cleaning, grass cutting and the provision and emptying of litter bins. Concerns raised included the accuracy of the asset map used by WBC, the removing of groups of bins and the rationale behind which bins, and how many, had been identified for removal. Members were of the opinion that the consultation itself was overly long and detailed and were concerned that access was only available to those who create an account on the consultation platform. It was agreed that the Town Clerk will submit all the Committee’s comments and observations to WBC.

47.2 Call for Register of Interest in Wokingham Borough Council Sites

Members noted that WBC had issued an appeal on 10th August 2023 for commercial ideas to be put forward for all its land, property, facilities and assets, a response to WBC’s “difficult financial situation.”

48. DEFIBRILATORS

48.1 Residents’ Training Session

Members noted that a free training session for Earley residents on the use of defibrillators will be held at Radstock Lane Community Centre at 7.30pm on Thursday 21st September 2023. The session can cater for up to 50 people and the response to date has been very positive.

48.2 Radstock Lane Community Centre

Members noted that a new defibrillator has been installed on the external wall of Radstock Lane Community Centre This will be available for use by the public 24/7.

49. TELEPHONE KIOSK – SILVERDALE ROAD

Members considered the Town Clerk’s report following the decision by the Amenities and Leisure Committee on 5th July 2023 to repurpose the red telephone box on Silverdale Road. The Town Clerk and Cllr N Brock agreed to attend a meeting with interested parties at Reading University who are keen to work with the Town Council on this project.

50. CORONATION TREE

Members received a recommendation from the Operations Manager regarding a suitable location and species of tree for the Town Council’s commemorative Coronation Tree.

Members **RESOLVED** to plant an oak tree by the line of existing oaks at Paddick Drive and also to purchase a suitable commemorative plaque.

51. ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS

Members noted that officers had registered Radstock House, the Council’s office building, with WBC’s Solar Together scheme. The Operations Manager informed Members that an application had been submitted for solar panels and that an onsite survey was currently pending.

52. PUBLICATIONS

Members noted that the following items had been received and were available for viewing from the Council Offices:

Friendship Alliance	E-newsletter 9 th August 2023
MERA	Minutes of Executive Committee meeting – 13 th July 2023 Minutes of Executive Committee – 10 th August 2023
Involve Community Services	E-Newsletter 19 th August 2023

53. PRESS RELEASES, WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

No press releases were requested.

54. EXTENSION OF MEETING

Members **RESOLVED** to permit the meeting to extend beyond 9pm.

PART II

55. CENTREPOINT COMMUNITY CENTRE

56. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 9.14pm

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Chair, Amenities & Leisure Committee