



## **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 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023 which commenced at 7pm.

### **Present**

Chair – Councillor N Brock

Councillors: R Ahlawat, A Bassett, A Bradley, R Cook, M De Jong, A Long, T Maher, S Matthews, C Smith, and B Owen

In attendance: J Friend (Town Clerk), M Brown (Operations Manager) G Hawker (Senior Park Ranger)

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### **57. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were apologies for absence from Cllr R Browne.

### **58. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **59. PUBLIC FORUM**

There were no members of the public present.

### **60. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023 were approved as a true record and it was **RESOLVED** they be signed by the Chair (Minutes 37 - 56).

### **61. MAIDEN ERLEGH LAKE AND NATURE RESERVE**

#### **61.1 Emergency Flood Plan Test**

Members received a report on the Emergency Flood Plan Test which took place on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2023. The Senior Park Ranger, the Lead Officer on the day, commented that he was pleased with the outcome of the test.

Although the Town Council is only required to carry out the test every five years, it has been agreed that it will be conducted on an annual basis utilising different members of staff to increase the number of trained people available at any given time.

### **62. CULVER LANE ALLOTMENTS**

Members received an update from the Allotments working party on the annual Allotments Competition. Members noted that the awards will be presented at the Mayor's Reception in January.

### **63. EVENTS**

#### **63.1 Wind Turbine Visits**

Members were informed that the Wind Turbine visits arranged by ETC for residents were hugely popular with over 100 people on the waiting list and interest from local schools and Reading University.

Members noted that the original three dates were oversubscribed and so officers organised a further four dates, places for which were all filled. Those present at the meeting, who were able to attend one of the visits, commented on how interesting they found the event.

#### 63.2 Macmillan Coffee Morning

Members noted that officers held a Macmillan Coffee Morning in the Council Chamber on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023. Residents and their dogs joined council staff for cake and a chat. A total of £111.80 was raised during the morning. The Chair expressed thanks to officers for organising the event and to the residents who attended and donated to the charity.

#### 63.3 Rainbow's Visit

Members noted that a visit to the Council Chamber has been arranged for 2<sup>nd</sup> Lower Earley Rainbows during 'Parliament Week'. The youngsters (ages 5 – 7) will see the Council Chamber set up for a Council meeting and will meet the Deputy Town Clerk and the Town Mayor.

#### 63.4 FUTURE EVENTS

##### 63.4.1 Carols at the Lake

Members received a report from the Town Clerk that officers are working with Earley Environmental Group to arrange an afternoon of carol singing at Maiden Erlegh Lake and Nature Reserve in the run up to Christmas.

The plans include a lantern making session (booking required) followed by a lantern procession leading to the Green Fair site where Christmas carols will be sung. Further details to follow.

##### 63.4.2 Joint Events with EEG

Members noted that following a recent meeting between ETC officers and EEG representatives it was agreed that joint events would be planned. These will build on the series of environmental themed activities ETC has been staging since COP 26 and will supplement EEG's calendar of events. The following has been agreed:

- Bird Box Decorating – February half term
- Dawn Chorus Walk – April
- Bat Walk - September

#### 64. **2024/25 BUDGET – IDEAS FOR CONSIDERATION**

Members discussed ideas for projects the Amenities and Leisure Committee would like to put forward for action in the 2024/25 financial year. Members noted that consideration of such projects will take place during the 2024/25 budget setting process. Suggestions included hanging baskets and flowers in the town; appointing a person to conduct a significant tree survey; solar panels on other ETC buildings; setting up a Toy Library; and pursuing the introduction of an online asset register and appointing someone to populate this.

##### 64.1 CIL Expenditure

Members discussed their preferences for suitable uses of the Town Council's community infrastructure levy funds and noted that currently, ETC has approximately £17,000 of unallocated CIL funds to be spent in 2025/2026. Councillors would like to increase the number of ETC notice

boards that are upgraded to modern, ETC branded ones, and also favoured investing in replacement play equipment at Meadow Park.

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

Members received a report from Cllr S Matthews on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy webinar held on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023. A link has been established between the LNRS lead Rosie Street and Earley Environmental Group and the LNRS is on board with the Earley Green Corridor proposal. Earley Town Council is waiting to find out more information to determine the best way of supporting the Earley Green Corridor project.

**66. OPERATIONS MANAGER – REPORT**

Members received a verbal report from the Operations Manager on various matters, including:

- Repairs to play equipment and pitch renovations carried out at Sol Joel Park.
- Meetings held to explore upgrades to the Council's current CCTV systems.
- The completion of the annual noticeboard, bus shelter and bench inspections.
- The arrival of the benches for Paddick Drive and their schedule for installation.
- Water meter monitoring.
- Maintenance carried out on the footbridge at Maiden Erlegh Nature Reserve Lake.

**67. CEMETERY EXTENSION - UPDATE**

Members received an update from the Town Clerk following further meetings of the Cemetery working party. ETC is awaiting the final draft of the site plan and is in communication with the Diocese. A more detailed report will be provided to Council at its meeting in November.

**68. DEFIBRILLATORS**

Members noted that officers are in the process of arranging for defibrillators to be installed at Maiden Place Community Centre and Sol Joel Pavilion. The devices will be available 24/7 and will be registered with the emergency services. Training sessions for local residents at both locations will be arranged.

**69. SOLAR PANELS PROJECT – RADSTOCK HOUSE**

Members noted that, in accordance with the terms of delegation agreed by Council, the Solar Panels working party has agreed to commission the installation of solar panels, including a battery for storage, at the Council's office building, Radstock House. The order for the works will be placed once a revised quote has been received from the installer. Works are due to be completed before the end of the year.

**70. PUBLICATIONS**

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

Friendship Alliance	E-newsletter 4 <sup>th</sup> October 2023
MERA	Minutes of Executive Committee meeting – 26 <sup>th</sup> September 2023
Involve Community Services	E-newsletter 6 <sup>th</sup> October 2023

**71. PRESS RELEASES, WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA**

A press release on the solar panel installation at Radstock House will be made once an installation date has been received.

**72. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

There were no members of the public or press present.

**73. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**74. TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 8.47pm.

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Chair, Amenities & Leisure Committee