



## **EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of the meeting of Earley Town Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Radstock Lane on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2023 which commenced at 7.00pm.

### **Present**

Chair – The Town Mayor, Councillor C Smith

Councillors: R Ahlawat, A Bassett, A Bradley, N, Brock, R Browne, R Cook, J Eastwell, M De Jong, D Hare, T Holton, M Iyengunmwena, S Jordan, N Jorgensen, P Jorgensen, I Khayinza, G Littler, A Long, T Maher, S Matthews, S Newton and M Smith.

In Attendance: J Friend (Town Clerk), E Carroll (Deputy Town Clerk) and Y Crocker (Committees Officer)

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### **62. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs A Neal, B Owen and H Sarasan.

### **63. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **64. PUBLIC FORUM**

No members of the public were present.

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

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of Earley Town Council (43 - 61) held on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2023 were a true and correct record and could be signed by the Chair.

### **66. TOWN MAYOR'S COMMUNICATION**

66.1 Councillors received a written report from the Town Mayor detailing the events she had recently attended. These included Berkshire Vision's AGM, the High Sheriff Reception and His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of the Royal County of Berkshire Awards 2023.

66.2 Councillors were asked by the Town Mayor to consider ideas on how the Town Council could celebrate Christmas. Several ideas were put forward, including possible events for the New Year. The Town Clerk reported that, following a meeting with Earley Environmental Group (EEG), a joint Christmas event at MELNR had been suggested. Officers are currently working on the details of such an event.

Councillors **RESOLVED** that the suggested joint Christmas event with EEG be held and for a budget of £500, from general reserves, to be allocated to the event.

### **67. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

67.1 Amenities and Leisure Committee



Cllr N Brock presented the draft Minutes of the Amenities and Leisure Committee meeting (Minutes 37 - 56) held on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023. The Council received the draft Minutes.

67.2 Planning Committee

Cllr M Smith presented the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting (Minutes 32 - 45) held on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023. The Council received the Minutes.

Cllr M Smith presented the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting (Minutes 46 - 59) held on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2023. Councillor Smith highlighted that there had been a Wokingham Borough Council consultation on local Traffic Regulation Orders. The Council received the Minutes.

67.3 Policy and Resources Committee

Cllr D Hare presented the draft Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting (Minutes 41 - 61) held on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2023. The Council received the draft Minutes.

Several questions from Councillors were raised in relation to Minute 53 – Bus Shelter Advertising and it was agreed that the Town Clerk will contact WBC to find out more information and the matter will be discussed again at the next meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee.

**68. REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES**

68.1 Wokingham Waterside Centre

The Committee received a written report from Cllr S Jordan on her attendance at a Wokingham Waterside Centre meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

68.2 Highwood Management Conference

Councillors received a written report from Cllrs G Littler and S Matthews on their attendance at the Annual Highwood Management Conference on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

68.3 Borough Liaison Forum

Members received a written report from Cllr R Browne on his attendance at the Borough Parish Liaison Forum on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

68.4 MoreArts

Councillors received a written report from Cllr S Matthews on her attendance at the MoreArts Trustees meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2023.

68.5 Queen Victoria Institute Fund

The Committee received a written report from Cllr Hare on the Queen Victoria Institute Fund. The report observed that the charity no longer provides foot care and is selling its property in Reading.

68.6 Kenton Road Day Centre

Councillors received a verbal report from Cllr A Bassett on Kenton Road Day Centre who are still having issues with the driveway, in that repairs have not yet been undertaken. The centre



is also still in need of more members.

**69. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY**

Members received the recommendation from the Policy and Resources Committee for some of Earley Town Council's CIL funds to be spent on the playground replacement project at Collins Drive. A site survey has been carried out by a playground supplier on potential options and a consultation with residents is currently taking place.

Members **RESOLVED** that £22,184.53 of CIL monies, those which have to be spent by April 2024, be allocated to part-fund the project.

**70. SOLAR PANELS**

*Councillor J Eastwell left the meeting.*

The Committee received a report on the ETC project to use Wokingham Borough Council's Community Solar Panel Scheme, Solar Together to install a solar panel energy scheme at Radstock House, the Council offices. The Town Clerk reported that a surveyor had carried out a site visit and Councillors were presented with a detailed report of the survey.

*Councillor J Eastwell entered the meeting.*

There followed a lengthy discussion between Councillors on batteries, optimisers, energy usage, suppliers, tariffs and electric vehicle charging points and at the end of the discussion: -

Councillors **RESOLVED** that a Working Party consisting of Councillors M Iyengunmwena, S Newton and M Smith and the Town Clerk would meet to review the survey and technical design and agree the details of the scheme. The Working Party to be delegated the power to make a final decision, without the need to refer back to Council.

Councillors **RESOLVED** that funding for the project would be taken from the Environmental Projects ear marked reserves, which currently has a balance of £30,000.

Councillors **RESOLVED** that the requirement to obtain 3 quotes, Financial Regulations 10.3 and 11.1(h), be suspended, in accordance with Financial Regulation 11.1(d). The reason for the suspension being that Wokingham Borough Council has carried out best value evaluations when awarding Home Smart Energy the contract for this Community Solar Together scheme.

**71. WBC LITTER BINS**

Members received the recommendation from the Policy and Resources Committee that Earley Town Council do not agree to fund the emptying of the WBC litter bins identified for removal in its recent consultation. The Committee were of the view that WBC's contract costs appeared excessive and there were concerns about the accuracy of WBC's Asset Map used to identify the locations of bins. It was:

**RESOLVED**, with one abstention, that ETC refuses the request from WBC that the Town Council funds the emptying of the litter bins identified for removal in Earley.

**72. COUNCILLORS' ATTENDANCE**

Record of Members' Attendance

Councillors noted the details of Councillors' attendance during 2023/24 at meetings of the Council and its Committees.



**73. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT**

Members noted the details of Orders for Payment (Vouchers 6122 – 6127, 6128 - 6176 and 6177 - 6199) and Imprest vouchers 864 – 867 and 77 - 81).

**74. PUBLICATIONS**

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

Friendship Alliance	E-newsletter September 2023
Involve Community Services	E-newsletter 22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2023
Me2 Club	E-newsletter September 2023
ACER	E-newsletter – Autumn 2023

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

The following press releases and posts were agreed:

- The outcome of the recent audit.
- The solar panel scheme (when agreed)

It was agreed that publicity about the replacement play area would be delayed until such time as the details had been agreed and a date for installation received.

**76. 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**

**77. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**78. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**79. CENTREPOINT COMMUNITY CENTRE**

**80. TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 8.40pm

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**Town Mayor**