

EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL
Council Meeting 27th March 2024

TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT

Berkshire Vision Evening - 8th February 2024

This event was held in Reading in the charity's new premises off Castle Hill. The evening was to celebrate the joining of Berkshire Vision with a small Reading based blind charity – making it a charity that truly covers the whole of Berkshire. The evening was about finding out about the charity from the trustees. There were plenty of people involved in the evening and lots of opportunities to talk to everyone there.

Barkham Wives Talk

This was not an official event but still enjoyable - I was asked to give a talk about being a Mayor in the Borough and in Earley Town. I was asked lots of interesting questions which mostly I could answer. The Barkham Wives presented me with a donation which went to my chosen charity, Link Visiting Scheme.

Mock Trials

This is an event where pupils from schools take part in a mock trial at the Crown Court in Reading. The event is very informative and the children who take part are very confident. The schools are given a case to work on and their roles vary from Magistrates to defendant. There is also a lead and support lawyer plus witnesses. Even the court officials are all played by the children. I went to the morning session, where 8 schools across Berkshire took part. The case given to all the schools is the same and they are judged on all the parts they play. There is an outcome of guilty or not guilty and last year the two trials I watched had different outcomes even though the participants had the same basic information.

Wokingham Waterside Centre (WCC) Meeting on 13 February 2024

Report by Cllr Sheila Jordan

A Board meeting was held at the Wokingham Waterside Centre on Tuesday 13th February. I was unable to attend but have compiled this report from the minutes.

The Centre Manager reported that river levels had only improved in the two weeks before the meeting, having been unsuitable for any canoeing on the Thames for four months since October. This made it a very difficult quarter. Unlike most years, the bi-weekly pool sessions were fully booked, which enabled valuable contact to be kept with customers.

The Canoe clubs have run a number of trips elsewhere over the winter and plan some big events at WCC in the summer.

A great deal of building maintenance and repair work has been completed over the winter, after all the equipment was moved to ensure it was not damaged during flooding.

Whilst revenue so far this year is slightly higher than last year, expenses are considerably higher. The Centre may not generate any surplus of income over expenditure this year. The bank balance is still OK, but the Trustees agreed to hold an independent meeting to plan how the centre can remain financially sustainable over the longer term, particularly in view of how climate change is impacting the river conditions.

There were no accidents or near misses reported in the period, and risk assessments are in place for the maintenance work.

The anti-social car meets at the Park and Ride car park, just by the centre, continue to be a problem. NHS staff from RBH who park there are intimidated when retrieving their cars late at night and are understood to be raising this with WBC.

The next meeting will be the AGM on Tuesday 14 May 2024.



EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL

CANADA GEESE POLICY

CANADA GEESE POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Maiden Erlegh Lake & Nature Reserve is a 12 hectare site owned and managed by Earley Town Council. Within the nature reserve there are ancient woodlands, meadow land, pathways, the Interpretation Centre and a large lake. Fishing is permitted at the lake, under permit and from designated fishing bays. Management of the site balances protection of the flora and fauna alongside the need to provide a welcoming environment for visitors to the site. MELNR supports a wide range of creatures such as small mammals, insects and birds. The lake supports various waterfowl including swans, coots, ducks, moorhen, crested grebe, Egyptian geese, heron, cormorants and Canada geese.
- 1.2. Earley Town Council received communications from a residents' association, MERA, informing it that Canada geese were causing nuisance to local residents. MERA suggested that the problems were most prevalent during the summer months when geese are raising their young in nests at Maiden Erlegh Lake & Nature Reserve. Issues reported by MERA included:
 - Canada geese and goslings entering residents' front gardens to feed on grass,
 - Geese and goslings walking in roads and on pavements, resulting in a possible hazard to drivers and pedestrians,
 - Droppings left by the birds in gardens and on the public highway which were unsightly and could pose a health risk, especially to children.
- 1.3. MERA reported that, in 2023, the number of Canada geese in this part of Earley had increased and asked that the Town Council consider taking action towards the eggs to reduce the number of hatchlings next Spring.
- 1.4. MERA requested that the Town Council assume responsibility for cleaning pavements during the summer months.
- 1.5. In response to these reports and requests, the Town Council sought expert advice and information on the behaviour and management of Canada geese in a nature reserve environment in order to develop a policy on the matter. ETC councillors and officers attended an informative presentation on 'Canada geese at MELNR', delivered by a local resident who has been studying them for several years.
- 1.6. This policy is intended to provide a guideline for the management of Canada geese at Earley Town Council owned and managed locations.

2. CANADA GEESE

- 2.1. Canada geese are wild birds and as such are protected in law.
- 2.2. They are attracted to areas with water sources such as rivers, canals and lakes. Canada geese nest close to bodies of water and are primarily herbivorous.
- 2.3. The geese form permanent breeding pairs, an average clutch size is 6 eggs.
- 2.4. Canada geese use a creche system whereby a small number of adults will 'mind' a group of goslings.
- 2.5. Geese like to walk but do not like climbing over barriers.

- 2.6. Canada geese numbers nationally have increased over the last 50 years.
- 2.7. Licenses may be granted permitting the pricking or oiling of eggs. This is more efficient than removing the eggs from a nest (parents may lay another clutch) as these methods kill the embryo and prevent the eggs from hatching.

3. CANADA GEESE AT MAIDEN ERLEGH LAKE & NATURE RESERVE

- 3.1. The lake at MELNR is one of several lakes in the locality, all of which attract Canada geese. If the birds were to be removed from one lake, other geese would soon move in hence it would not be possible to eradicate Canada geese from one of these local lakes.
- 3.2. Outside of the breeding season, the majority of Canada geese at MELNR are day visitors who fly onto the lake in the morning and fly out in the evening.
- 3.3. Although for most of the year the geese remain on the nature reserve, often in the water, it is when the goslings are being cared for in the creche system that adults and goslings are most likely to temporarily leave the nature reserve during the day. Reasons for this include:
 - Swans – the territorial behaviour of the resident pair of swans on the lake has a significant impact on goose behaviour. Previous swans at MELNR have attacked and killed goslings, however the current swan pair appear to prefer attacking the adult geese, driving them from the lake and surrounding waterside.
 - Geese will therefore seek safety for themselves and their young further afield.
 - Adult geese and their creche of goslings will also seek food away from the lake, in surrounding roads. A significant food source for them is short, fresh grass, ie front lawns and grass verges.
- 3.4. The number of clutches of eggs per year have reduced slightly since 2021 when there were nine clutches, however, the number of goslings surviving longer have increased slightly (in 2023 there were 27 goslings in total). This is primarily as a result of a change in the behaviour of one of their main predators, the swans.
- 3.5. Predators also include rats, birds of prey and foxes.
- 3.6. Any action taken to deter Canada geese, for example removing suitable nesting sites, may also impact other species of wild birds at the nature reserve.

4. CONTROLLING NUMBERS

Any method used to control the number of Canada geese at MELNR should be appropriate to the scale of the issues being reported and the nature of those issues. The Council is aware that the geese, and especially their goslings, are very popular with many residents in the town, with some welcoming their presence in their front garden.

- 4.1 Culling (by contractor under licence) – this would reduce goose numbers only temporarily. Councillors do not support this course of action.
- 4.2 Egg pricking/oiling – reduces the number of eggs hatching but does not deter geese from nesting. Councillors do not support this course of action.

4.3 Habitat management – for example steepening banks, removing islands, landscaping, allowing grass to grow long. Such measures will also affect other waterfowl, expert advice would need to be sought to avoid unintended consequences.

5. POSITIVE ACTIONS

5.1. By understanding goose behaviour there may be positive actions that the Town Council and residents can take to reduce any inconvenience the geese and goslings may be causing:

- ETC can keep areas of grass on the nature reserve at a suitable height so as to encourage Canada geese to feed there.
- Residents can reduce the frequency of mowing their front lawns as geese do not like grass over about an inch in length.
- Residents can erect low temporary barriers to deter geese from going onto their front lawns.

6. CONCLUSION

EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL'S POLICY ON CANADA GEESE

- ETC recognise that MELNR is a nature reserve and acknowledges the Council's commitment to improving the environment, increasing biodiversity and caring for the natural world.
- ETC recognises that Canada geese are wild birds.
- ETC does not support the culling of geese nor the control of goose eggs at Maiden Erlegh Lake & Nature Reserve.
- ETC will seek to ensure that MELNR is attractive to as wide a variety as possible of wild birds and waterfowl. This will apply to the provision of suitable nesting sites and food sources within the reserve as well as to other relevant aspects of habitat management. Expert advice will be sought when necessary.
- ETC will advise residents on simple measures they can take to deter Canada geese from venturing onto their lawns or into their gardens.
- ETC encourages residents to contact the Council directly with any complaints about matters relating to its sites or services in order that they can be addressed.
- ETC does not assume responsibility for the cleaning of highways land, ie roads and pavements. Highways land comes under the remit of the principal authority, in this case Wokingham Borough Council. The Town Council does not have the resources to undertake such a responsibility.

RECORD OF COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCES – 2023/24

NAME OF COUNCILLOR	COUNCIL										AMENITIES & LEISURE										PLANNING										POLICY & RESOURCES									
	05	06	07	10	11	02	03	05	07	09	10	01	03	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	01	02	03	04	06	07	09	11	01	03										
R. AHLAWAT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
A. BASSETT		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
A. BRADLEY	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
N. BROCK	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
R. BROWNE	✓		R	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
R. COOK	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
M. DE JONG	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
J. EASTWELL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
D. HARE	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
T. HOLTON	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
M. IYENGUNMWENA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
S. JORDAN	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
N. JORGENSEN	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
P. JORGENSEN	✓	B	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
I. KHAYINZA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
G. LITTLER	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
A. LONG	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
T. MAHER	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
S. MATTHEWS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
A. NEAL	✓	✓	✓	B	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
S. NEWTON	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
B. OWEN	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
H. SARASAN	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
C. SMITH	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
M. SMITH	✓	✓	B	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										

R = Representing Town Council B = Attending Borough Meeting A = In Attendance shaded cell denotes non-representation on Committees

February 2024 Barclaycard

ORDERS FOR PAYMENT - BY BARCLAYCARD

Number	Supplier	Purchase Description	Amount
6642	Zoom	Subscription Feb 24	£15.59
6643	The Works	Paint Brushes x 10 Green Events	£20.00
6644	Marks & Spencer	Food GH Retirement Party	£44.00
6645	Sainsburys	Food GH Retirement Party	£75.46
Total Barclaycard			£155.05

Date Prepared: 05/03/2023

ORDERS FOR PAYMENT - BY BACS TRANSFER

Number	Supplier	Purchase Description	Amount
6646	2468 Ltd	Water Heater service 2024/25	£110.92
6647	All Electrics	Various Electrical repairs & new lights for IC	£1,308.00
6648	Avoncrop Amenity Products	SJP Grass Seed and fertiliser	£421.50
6649	Brewers Decorating Centres	Bus shelter paint	£90.01
6650	Fleet	Pitch marking paint & aerosols	£688.18
6651	IT QED Ltd	Azure Feb 24	£95.03
6652	Play Inspection Company	Annual Outdoor Playarea inspections MP/Paddick/SJP	£408.00
6653	Tradepoint UK B&Q	Maintenance items various sites	£111.61
6654	Tradepoint UK B&Q	Screws & plugs	£12.10
6655	Tradepoint UK B&Q	Tape measures & door stopper	£55.28
6656	Tradepoint UK - Screwfix	Blades	£19.99
6657	Tradepoint UK - Screwfix	Multipurpose blade	£42.78
6658	UK Tents	2 Gazebos for Events eg Green Fair	£1,398.00
6659	Web Marketing Matters	Website support Feb 24	£216.00

Total: £4,977.40

Date Prepared: 07/03/2024

ORDERS FOR PAYMENT - BY DIRECT DEBIT

February 2024

Number	Supplier	Purchase Description	Amount
6660	Allstar Buisness Solutions Ltd	Fuel YK60UTY 10/1/24 & EN65HDF 12/1/24	£140.17
6661	Allstar Buisness Solutions Ltd	Parks Vehicle Fuel YK60UUJ 29/1/24	£67.60
6662	Allstar Buisness Solutions Ltd	Maint Fuel YS06BSO 31/1/24	£89.36
6663	Castle Water	RLCC Water supply Dec 23	£20.11
6664	Castle Water	SJP Water supply Jan 24	£69.95
6665	Castle Water	IC Water supply Jan 24	£96.30
6666	Castle Water	MPCC Water supply Jan 24	£166.73
6667	Castle Water	RH Water Supply Dec 23	£136.99
6668	Culligan	SJP Water Cooler Jan 24	£50.37
6669	Culligan	RH Water Cooler Jan 24	£100.74
6670	DVLA	Road Tax Vehicle MX19 WFV Feb 24 - Jan 25	£320.00
6671	Elavon	Credit card terminal rental Feb 24	£22.80
6672	Focus Group	RH Telephone line rental Feb 24 & calls Dec 23	£179.27
6673	O2	Mobile phones January 24	£242.82
6674	Regent Gas	Gas supply SJP Jan 24	£255.86
6675	Regent Gas	Gas supply RH Jan 24	£364.21
6676	Regent Gas	Gas supply RLCC Jan 24	£1,035.02
6677	Regent Gas	Gas supply MPCC Jan 24	£1,457.00
6678	SSE	RH Electric 12/12/23-10/01/24	£483.03
6679	SSE	St Light Dec 23	£589.33
6680	SSE	RLCC Elect Dec 23	£321.70
6681	Virgin Media	RH Broadband Feb 24	£51.60
Total Direct Debits			£6,260.96

Date Prepared:

14/03/2024

IMPREST ACCOUNT - Reimbursement Vouchers 932 - 938

Vouchers between 27th February 2024 - 17th March 2024

Number	Details	Amount
933	Damage Deposit Refund RW	£50.00
934	Damage Deposit Refund KB	£50.00
935	Damage Deposit Refund KP	£50.00
936	LGPS Pensions Mar 24	£13,720.80
937	HMRC PAYE & NI Mar 24	£11,067.54
938	Salaries Mar 24	£34,596.89
	Total Payments	<u>£59,535.23</u>