

## **Council meeting 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023 - Report from Mayor**

### Volunteer Bureau AGM Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October

This AGM was well attended. We all met at the Town Hall and the event started with a talk about all their work, which was interesting, but the bottom line is they need more volunteers, especially for their gardening helpers. There were refreshments afterwards that look very appetizing but unfortunately I had to leave to go to my volunteering job at a Reading based charity shop, especially as it was my last day with that Charity.

### Berkshire Judicial Service Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October

This event takes place every year at the Minster in Reading. It is to mark the opening of the Crown Court in Reading at the start of the judicial year and is a long tradition dating back to the Middle Ages. It is attended by many of the Berkshire Mayors who all met in the Civic Offices in Reading and then proceed to the Minster in St. Marys Butts. This year they had a guest from the youth criminal system who spoke eloquently about many children in the criminal system, which I was surprised by the scale. There was tea refreshment back at the Civic Centre but once again had to leave, this time for a meeting.

### Woodley and Lions 41<sup>st</sup> Charter Night Dinner and Dance Friday 20<sup>th</sup> October

This was a lovely evening and of course a new dress was needed. It was a great honour to be asked to take part and also to give a toast to this great organization – they have raised over £1,000,000. Also, at this evening they held a raffle of which half the proceeds went to my charity Link (£190). I attended on my own and was made very welcome by everyone and it was lovely to see everyone in evening dress and dinner jackets. The event was held at the Sonning Golf Club so the food was great and the disco was also very good, I danced too much and had problems next day walking.

### Rainbows visit Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> of November.

This afternoon visit to the Council Offices and Chamber by the Rainbows group is one the best parts of being the Mayor. This visit was about how the Council meetings work so all the Rainbows sat in the main chair and tested the Gavel and very good they were too – Emma (Deputy Town Clerk) and myself spoke about how meetings work and took questions and posed for photos.

### Earley Crescent Community Association AGM Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> November

This was also an AGM where the Chairman gave his annual report and the Independent Examiner gave a full report on the financial situation of the Chairty. Earley Crescent is facing financial challenges going forward with the loss of a major user. This was followed by a Management report by the Manager Kate Long. A bit of a theme here, we had refreshment afterwards and this time I was able to stay and enjoy a cup of tea and cake.

### Remembrance Sunday Earley St Peters 12<sup>th</sup> November

This is a sombre occasion at which many attended, and the Earley Town Council wreath was the first to go onto the memorial. I gave a reading at the Service.

I attended the AGM of the CResCent Resource Centre on 7/11/23.

The board & sub committees meet regularly to fulfil the obligations of the organisation.

It has been a challenging year -bookings have not returned to pre covid levels & a major booker - Optalis - has reduced from 5 days a week to 1.

A few new bookings have helped finances but there will be an ongoing deficit - at present this is looking like a loss of £4000 a month.

The Earley Charity may move into some office space.

There have been several changes in key staff members.

Accounts were presented, an independent examiner appointed & trustees re-elected.

There have been necessary updates to alarms, electrics & the garden.

The centre is represented & promoted on Facebook, Instagram & its website.

Hirers cover leisure, education, medical, social care & support, 3 churches & various charities.

Outreach & training programmes have continued with a dedicated team of tutors & volunteers - particularly popular are the 5 English courses run per week & pre-employment programmes.

Learners come from a wide demographic- 20% below level 2, 13% have a learning disability, 70 are unemployed & seeking work - 92% of learners make good progress & either find employment, volunteer or continue with their learning.

Partnership working is key -thanks went to Wokingham Volunteer Centre, New Directions Reading, Reading Job Centre, Compass Recovery College, Reading Voluntary Action, Reading libraries & Reading walk-in health centre.

Cllr Nicola Brock

I attended the ARC Management Meeting on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023.

A recent professional training session on Trauma was held in Bournemouth and has proved very beneficial to all those counsellors and trainees who attended. Not only did it increase knowledge but also had a positive effect on team moral.

Eight new counsellors have completed their Level 5 Youth Counselling and are now providing an extra 20 sessions a week. ARC is now interviewing for the next batch of trainee counsellors.

The services of ARC are in high demand with 30 new requests for counselling being received each week.

ARC's finances continue to be under pressure as wages and running costs rise. Applications to charities and other bodies is a time-consuming process as more applications have to be made to cover costs. There have been a small number of donations and fund-raising activities.

Cllr Rosemary Cook

## **Sonning & District Welfare & Education Trust**

**Meeting:** Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2023

**Purpose:** The trust provides welfare support for individuals who are in need.

**Report:**

The meeting was attended by ten of the thirteen Trustees.

A new treasurer was voted in following the retirement of the retiring treasurer.

An updated list of the grants awarded over the past few years was distributed.

It was agreed that the application form for grants on the website would be updated.

There were no grant applications to consider at the meeting.

Note: Typically, awards are made to pay for furniture or home appliances or a contribution to school trips. Awards cannot be made to pay off debts.

No applications have been received from anyone living in Lower Earley.

Cllr Bethan Owen

23.10.2023

**Full Council – 22nd November 2023**

**Agenda Item 10. CEMETERY EXTENSION - UPDATE**

As councillors are aware, the cemetery working group (Cllrs A Bradley, G Littler, A Long, T Maher and S Matthews plus Cllr N Brock, the Town Clerk and the Operations Manager) have been meeting regularly to agree the final site plan for the cemetery extension at Mays Lane.

Creating new burial ground is a complex matter and the group has considered a multitude of factors, including, among others:

- Geological studies
- Ground penetrating radar surveys
- Cemetery legislation
- Custom and practice
- Historical usage and future trends
- Location & parking requirements

We have worked with CDS (a cemetery development specialist company) to draw up a site plan suitable for use when we go out to tender for the grounds works. CDS will handle this tender process as it is very technical and requires specialist knowledge.

An A3 copy of the site plan will be provided at the Council meeting but points to note include:

- The provision of 528 new consecrated burial plots (approximately 22 years supply)
- The provision of 136 new Muslim burial plots (approximately 17 years supply)
- The provision of 1,654 new cremated remains plots (approximately 68 years supply)
- Actual burial figures have been used to determine an 80/20 split between consecrated burial land and Muslim burial land
- The cremated remains section uses land where the burial of bodies is not permitted, hence the large number of plots being created
- Design features an access road, vehicle turning head plus 8 parking bays
- Landscaping will be in keeping with current cemetery area, ie sections delineated by hedging and trees retained wherever possible.

Next steps

The diocese requires that the land used for Muslim burials is removed of its consecration (Muslim burials follow a different tradition to consecrated burials and are of a different orientation to the east-west used at consecrated burial grounds). We have therefore contacted the diocese requesting that this be done and have provided them with a site plan. We are awaiting a response.

Provided the diocese approves our request, we can then go out to tender for the grounds works. This will be a huge project where the site will be dug and sifted to varying levels, according to its intended use, the soil replaced and compacted, and new soil added where necessary. The access road and parking area will also be constructed.

Jo Friend  
Town Clerk

**Full Council – 22nd November 2023****Agenda Item 11. GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS**Current Process

The current grant process is advertised on an annual basis, applicants are required to complete an application form and provide a set of accounts as supporting documentation. There is no cap to the amount that can be requested and all applications are considered on an individual basis.

By having an annual application process, the bulk of applications are normally received at the same time. The Council may then receive other applications sporadically across the year, these are dealt with as ‘out of process’, but these later applications are minimal.

So far this financial year, only half the Earley Town Council grant budget has been spent and, after advertising that grant monies were still available, only three additional applications have been received.

The timeframe of the current application process is: -

December/January - Application Intake
Late March - Decision
May - Funds paid

Review

All councillors were invited to join a Grants Working Party which would review the current system and make recommendations for change to the Policy & Resources Committee. Any changes agreed will need to be ratified by Full Council.

Considerations

The Grants Working Party, consisting of Cllr Bradley, Cllr Matthews and the Deputy Town Clerk, discussed how the current once a year intake may deter some groups/organisations from applying, as they may not have the necessary information or plans in place when ETC’s application period is open. Also, the same applicants tend to apply every year and applications are not being received from new groups/organisations, this could be because they are not aware that grants are available from the Town Council. The Working Party agreed that now the Council has social media this will help advertise Town Council grants to a wider audience. They also agreed that the application process should be more flexible, to encourage more organisations to apply.

**Policy & Resources Committee Recommendations: -**

**Intake:** The frequency of application intake be increased to three times a year: June, November and March. This would allow more flexibility and for a controlled rolling intake throughout the year, that would fit in with P & R Committee meetings for consideration. It would also enable payment awards to be made within the financial year.

**Start Date:** For the new process to start as of June 2024, as there are still grant monies available for financial year 2023/2024.

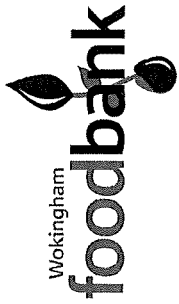
**Application:** To be updated, as an administrative action by an ETC Officer.  
**Forms**

**Policy:** To be updated, as an administrative action by an ETC Officer, and presented at the next Policy & Resources Committee meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024, for recommendation to Full Council on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

Members to discuss and **RESOLVE** accordingly.



**1<sup>st</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> November**



# Reverse ADVENT CALENDAR

Donations can be accepted at 498 Reading Road, Winnersh, RG41 5EX on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays between 10-12. We will also be running a special Christmas Donation session on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> November between 10am and midday.

**\*\*All donations need to be received by Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December\*\***

<b>1</b> Chocolate Coins	<b>2</b> Small non-alcoholic Christmas Pudding	<b>3</b> Packet of Festive Biscuits	<b>4</b> Selection Box or Box of Chocolates	<b>5</b> Tomato Ketchup	<b>6</b> Tinned Ham
<b>7</b> Small Christmas Cake	<b>8</b> Christmas Crackers	<b>9</b> Savoury Snacks (crisps or nuts)	<b>10</b> Hot Chocolate	<b>11</b> Tinned Fruit	<b>12</b> Jam/Preserves
<b>13</b> Dried Stuffing Mix or Gravy Granules	<b>14</b> Tinned Custard	<b>15</b> Microwave Rice Sachets	<b>16</b> Tinned Meat Pie	<b>17</b> Tinned or Instant Potatoes	<b>18</b> Chutney/Pickle
<b>19</b> Tinned Hot Dogs	<b>20</b> Long Life Fruit Juice	<b>21</b> Tinned Carrots	<b>22</b> Shampoo	<b>23</b> Washing Up Liquid	<b>24</b> Small Packet Washing Powder



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	04	06	07	09	11	01	03
R. AHLAWAT	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓											
A. BASSETT		✓	✓	✓				✓							✓					
A. BRADLEY	✓		✓	✓				✓												
N. BROCK	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓											
R. BROWNE	✓		<b>R</b>	✓				✓	✓											
R. COOK	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓												
M. DE JONG	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓							✓				
J. EASTWELL	✓	✓		✓											✓					
D. HARE	✓		✓	✓											✓					
T. HOLTON	✓	✓	✓	✓											✓					
M. IYENGUNMWENA	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓											
S. JORDAN	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓											
N. JORGENSEN	✓	✓	✓	✓																
P. JORGENSEN	✓	<b>B</b>	✓	✓						✓					✓					
I. KHAYINZA	✓	✓	✓	✓																
G. LITTLER	✓	✓	✓	✓											✓					
A. LONG	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓						✓					
T. MAHER	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓						✓					
S. MATTHEWS	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓						✓					
A. NEAL	✓	✓	✓	<b>B</b>						✓										
S. NEWTON	✓	✓	✓	✓											<b>B</b>					
B. OWEN	✓	✓	✓						✓											
H. SARASAN	✓	✓	✓																	
C. SMITH	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓							✓					
M. SMITH	✓	✓	<b>B</b>	✓					✓							<b>A</b>				

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



**IMPREST ACCOUNT - Reimbursement Vouchers 877 - 887**  
Vouchers between 24th October 2023 - 7th November 2023

<b>Number</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Amount</b>
877	Damage Deposit Refund SB	£50.00
878	Damage Deposit Refund HY	£50.00
879	Damage Deposit Refund AAV	£50.00
880	Damage Deposit Refund NH	£50.00
881	Damage Deposit Refund ST	£50.00
882	Fuel YK60UUJ (S Barker) Allstar card not taken	£83.17
883	Prudential AVC's P8 November	£200.00
884	HMRC PAYE/NI P8 November	£10,551.06
885	LGPS Pensions P8 November	£12,979.93
886	Salaries P8 November	£31,069.47
887	Damage Deposit Refund GS	£50.00
	<b>Total Payments</b>	<b><u>£55,183.63</u></b>