

**Amenities and Leisure Committee Meeting – 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023**

**Agenda Item 6 – CULVER LANE ALLOTMENTS**

The principal task of the Culver Lane Allotments Working Party is to inspect plots throughout the year and decided upon the recipients, annually, of the ‘Best Allotment’ award (a plot that is considered to be the overall outstanding allotment) and the ‘Most Improved Allotment’ award (the allotment which has seen the most improvement during the year).

The group is made up of four town councillors plus a representative from the Horticultural Society. Members of the Allotment Working Party carry out three judging visits between March and August, where they look at each allotment and score it using a judge’s scorecard, which considers various categories:

**Variety of Fruit & Veg** – to look for a broad range of different types of fruit and vegetable grown on the plot.

**Quality of Growth** – to look at the general quality of what is being grown on the plot. Plants/crops should be flourishing and free from disease, pests and damage.

**Neatness/Organisation of Plot** – to look at how well the plot is set out in the areas which are cultivated. Unplanted areas where plants/crops have been planted or are about to be planted should be free from weeds and the soil should be in a well cultivated condition. Any structures on the plot, should be neat, clean and well maintained. Good use of plant supports, where appropriate.

**Environment** – to look for evidence of good use of compost bins, rainwater collection where possible and any other environmentally friendly practices.

The judging visits are usually carried out as follows: -

Visit 1 - March – April

Visit 2 - May – June

Visit 3 - July – August

With a final visit made in early September when the decisions are made.

Unfortunately, due to the wet weather, Visit 1 has not been carried out this year. The elections have caused further disruption so, as we are now at the end of May, we would advise that two inspection visits be made in June, one early June and one late June.

After the decision visit in September, members should forward the final scorecard to the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk who will inform the successful plot holders and organise the trophies. The awards are then made at the Mayor’s Reception event in December.

Emma Carroll  
Deputy Town Clerk  
22.05.2023

## **Amenities and Leisure Committee Meeting – 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023**

### **Agenda Item 7.1 – Green Fair**

#### **Background**

For many years, Earley Town Council has organised an annual Green Fair at Maiden Erlegh Nature Reserve. The event takes place on the first Saturday in August, entry is free. The purpose of the Green Fair is to showcase and promote all things ‘environmental’ and this theme is borne in mind when accepting bookings from prospective stallholders.

In recent years we have made improvements to the way the event is organised, stall holders now pre-book items such as tables and chairs and all are issued with an arrival time which alleviates congestion on the entrance road. The health and safety side of the event has also been updated and more staff now volunteer to help for a couple of hours on the day, thus alleviating the pressures on the principal officers.

#### **Green Fair 2023**

42 out of the 63 pitches have already been booked. This includes the Earley Town Council stall which is manned by council officers and offers information to residents as well as putting on free activities for children. Last year, town councillors also had a (non-political) stall, councillors will need to decide if they wish to do the same this year and what the theme of their stall should be.

#### **Refreshments**

Previously, a charity had provided refreshments such as tea and coffee on the day but they are no longer in a position to do this. Last year we booked a commercial contractor to provide refreshments but were let down at the last minute (literally the last minute, they arrived, had difficulty accessing the site and drove off without a word). This year the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk have met with the Maiden Erlegh Rotary Club who have confirmed they would be happy to serve refreshments on the day. Some of the logistics need to be discussed further but both parties have agreed to meet again in the near future to iron out the details.

#### **New for this year**

Whilst many of the stall holders return year after year, we are keen that the event evolves, that new stall holders are encouraged to book and that the fair is always slightly different to the year before.

For 2023 we have booked First Class Falconry to bring along their beautiful birds of prey. Visitors will be able to see up to ten different birds and talk to knowledgeable staff about them. Unfortunately, there will be no full flight demonstrations, as the site is not clear enough, but just seeing these amazing birds, will certainly be an experience.

Emma Carroll  
Deputy Town Clerk  
19.05.2023

## **Amenities and Leisure Committee Meeting – 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023**

### **Agenda Item 8 – Mays Lane Cemetery - Extension Project**

#### **Background**

For some time, officers have been working on a project to extend Mays Lane Cemetery. Although progress has been made, there have been numerous delays for a variety of reasons but we are now in a position to push forwards with our plans.

Owing to concerns about the nature of previous usage of the extension area, the cemetery development company we have been working with arranged for a ground penetrating radar survey to be carried out in order to assist decision making around the suitability of each area of the site for burials. The survey was carried out on 28-03-23. Historical eye-witness accounts suggested that this end of the cemetery land had been used as a 'dumping ground' during the construction of A329 and also during railway works. Isolated incidents of finding concrete debris during the digging of graves in the current section have occurred and officers were concerned that this could be an increasing problem in the extension area.

Following the survey, a written report was provided by Wessex Archaeology and a follow-up meeting was held with the contractor to discuss the survey results.

#### **Notes from Meeting held on 19-05-23**

Not all the extension land was covered by the survey as there were some areas of dense vegetation and debris, but a significant proportion of land had been cleared by ETC staff in order that a meaningful survey could be conducted.

Ground penetrating radar surveys were taken at 3 depths: 0.50m – 0.60m, 0.70m – 0.79m, and 0.90m – 0.99m.

**Observations** were divided into the following categories:

- Possible archaeology
- High amplitude (metallic items/debris)
- Low amplitude (concrete, bricks etc)
- Modern services (gas, electric, water lines)

There were a significant number of findings in all categories across the site but the incidence of these findings did reduce the deeper the radar went.

#### **Most significant findings:**

- Significant amount of 'possible archaeology' found in the western section, possibly the foundations of buildings but this could just be rubble
- Two findings of 'modern services' traversing the extension site. Further investigations required to ascertain what service they are and if they are in use or now defunct
- Areas of 'high amplitude' deposits found scattered across the site
- Some 'low amplitude' findings but tended to be in northern section of the site

**Primary observations:**

- The cemetery extension project can be done but the site will require significant remedial work before it is suitable for use
- As the area has extant planning permission for a burial ground, they are not too concerned about the 'possible archaeology' findings as archaeologists will not be statutory consultees and, should anything be found it will be small in nature (because of the depth of these findings)
- What will probably be required is a scraping of the site to a specific level (either single depth grave or double depth), sifting of the material and laying back down of the soil
- There will be significant cost implications to this work as contaminated waste must be treated as hazardous waste and the removal of this has a significant cost
- Once the soil has been re-laid it will need to settle for 3-6 months before burials can take place

**Next steps**

A utilities' search will be conducted to ascertain the precise nature of the 'modern services' findings. This has been approved by the Town Clerk.

The cemetery development company to provide a quote for contamination testing. This would comprise of the digging of 10-12 trenches across the site and sending the soil to a laboratory for testing. This work will be approved by the Town Clerk, on condition that the quote is deemed satisfactory.

**Matters for discussion and consideration at a later date**

Once we have a clearer idea of the scale of remedial works required, and associated costs, there are matters that ETC will need to consider and decide upon. These will include:

ETC to decide if it wishes to aim for single depth burials (1.50 – 2.00m) or for double depth burials (2.00 – 2.50m). The deeper you clear, the greater the cost, but double depth will provide more capacity and more income.

To consider if there are areas where it would be more realistic (practically and economically) to use them for the interment of cremated remains as these are buried at much shallower depths.

ETC has not identified any other areas of land suitable for a cemetery so, if Mays Lane is not extended, it will close to all but second interments and cremated remains once the current burial section has been exhausted.

The costs/benefits ratio will require serious consideration by ETC. It may be possible to provide for c.500 burial plots if all the extension land were utilised (very unlikely), the number of actual burials that could be accommodated would be doubled if double depth plots were provided.

The Town Clerk recommends that a Cemetery Working Party is created. This would enable officers to discuss any developments and considerations in detail with these councillors, update reports would then be provided to the committee and to Council. In line with regulations applying to working groups, the CWP would act as an advisory body, it would not have decision making powers outside of the budget already agreed for the extension project.

Jo Friend  
Town Clerk

22/5/23

# Earley Town Council

Thursday 1st & Friday 2nd June 2023

9am - 1pm and 2pm - 4.30pm

Council Offices, Radstock Lane

# CLOTHES



# SWAP



Bring along up to 5 items of clothing and swap them for 5 items to take home.

All we ask is that the items have plenty of wear left in them and would be a great addition to someone else's wardrobe.





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COMMUNITY TRUST**  
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# SUMMER HOLIDAY FISHING PROJECT

*@ MAIDEN ERLEGH LAKE*

*SUPPORTED BY EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL*

*AGES 10 – 16*



*Join our experienced members of staff from Reading FC Community Trust at the summer holiday 6-week fishing program (2023). Learn new skills and enjoy the challenges of catching different fish in Maiden Erlegh lake. All equipment will be provided, and you will be supported throughout the session with helpful tips and guidance. Available sessions:*

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> July / 10.00am – 3.00pm

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> August / 10.00am – 3.00pm

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> August / 10.00am – 3.00pm

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> August / 10.00am – 3.00pm

Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> August / 10.00am – 3.00pm

Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> August / 10.00am – 3.00pm

**Interested in booking a free session? please email Mark Edwards:**

[Medwards@readingfc.co.uk](mailto:Medwards@readingfc.co.uk)