



## **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 24<sup>th</sup> July 2024 which commenced at 7pm.

### **Present**

Chair – Councillor N Brock

Councillors: R Ahlawat, A Bassett, A Bradley, R Browne, R Cook, A Long, T Maher, S Matthews and B Owen.

In attendance: J Friend (Town Clerk)

---

### **18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Smith.

### **19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **20. PUBLIC FORUM**

There were no members of the public present.

### **21. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2024 were approved as a true record and it was **RESOLVED** they be signed by the Chair (Minutes 1–17).

### **22. CULVER LANE ALLOTMENTS**

Members discussed the responses to the consultation with plot holders over rules around having bonfires at the allotment site. Councillors agreed that a balance needed to be struck between the need for plot holders to dispose of diseased or excessive amounts of vegetation and keeping any impacts on neighbouring residents to a minimum. Councillors expressed a wish for Council to retain the power to review the rules around bonfires in the future, should it be deemed necessary.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

Plot holders to be permitted to hold bonfires on condition they act in a courteous manner. Explanation be given to plot holders as to what ETC considers courteous, for example minimising impact on local residents, avoiding sunny days when residents are enjoying their gardens, avoiding the burning of wet materials and so on. Encourage plot holders to use a container rather than have an open fire. Earley Town Council to retain the right to review its position should it consider it necessary. All plot holders, and the Allotment Association, to receive written notice of the updated guidance.

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

### **23.1 Section 10 Reservoir Inspection**

It was noted that the Section 10 Reservoir Inspection was carried out on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2024 and no issues of concern were raised.

### **23.2 Water Bailiffs**

Councillors were pleased to note that three new volunteer water bailiffs had been recruited.

### **23.3 Green Fair – Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2024**

Members received the written update on preparations for the Green Fair.

## **24. COMMUNITY CENTRES**

### **CENTREPOINT**

#### **24.1 Repair Café for Earley**

Members considered the written report on progress made on the Repair Café project. They were pleased to hear of the very positive response to ETC's call for volunteers and were supportive of the management plan provided by the working group. There was discussion around the request for funds to cover set-up costs, this expenditure would include the purchase of a first aid kit, health & safety equipment such as safety goggles, gloves and masks, and items to go into an 'essentials toolkit'.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

A budget of £2,000 would be allocated to Repair Café set-up costs, these funds to come from the Environmental Projects budget,

#### **24.2 Radstock Lane Community Centre**

Members considered the two requests from Wokingham Borough Council departments for free use of the Elizabeth Room or other ETC facilities. All agreed that whilst they would like to support such worthwhile services, the Town Council uses public money to operate its community centres as public assets and therefore it is important that all hirers pay at least something towards the operating costs. The Elizabeth Room is offered at a low rate specifically for particular groups and organisations and, like other hirers, councillors felt that it was reasonable for WBC and NHS services to expect to pay a similar rate as a contribution towards caretaking costs, waste disposal costs and so on. Members were concerned that permitting one service to use the facilities free of charge could set a precedent and would not be seen as fair on all the other groups and organisations that do pay, some of whom have very limited access to funds.

It was **RESOLVED** that Earley Town Council's rooms or community centres should not be hired out free of charge.

## **25. OPERATIONS MANAGER – REPORT**

The Operations Manager was unable to attend this evening's meeting so the Town Clerk gave a brief verbal update on recent matters, including:

- Bike Workshop – work continues on installing the Bike Workshop at Centrepoint Community Centre. New lighting has been installed and the room is being redecorated, prior to the fitting of the workshop bench.

- We have suffered two water leaks in recent weeks, one at the Interpretation Centre and one at Maiden Place Community Centre. The Operations Manager will be contacting WBC to inform them of the leak at MPCC and suggest they may wish to inspect the pipework in the roof as this is the second leak in recent months there and some preventative work may be required to avoid further leaks.
- Grass cutting – weather conditions and staff absences meant it was a slower than wished for start to our grass cutting schedule but we're catching up now.

## 26. **EVENTS**

It was noted that the following Town Council events would be taking place over the next month or so – Bug Hunt at MELNR, Defibrillator Training for residents, Wind Turbine visits and a Bat Walk at Bulmershe Park. The Town Clerk confirmed that all three dates for the Wind Turbine visits were fully booked within a matter of days.

## 27. **COLLINS DRIVE PLAY AREA**

Members were pleased to hear the play inspection had been carried out and that the contractor had completed the majority of the snagging work. The heras fencing has been removed and children were now able to use the facility. A formal opening event has been organised for 8<sup>th</sup> August, flyers advertising this will be delivered to local residents.

## 28. **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL'S SCHOOL STREET INITIATIVE**

The Town Clerk confirmed that Wokingham Borough Council had cancelled this project. No reason for their decision has been provided.

## 29. **PUBLICATIONS**

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

Involve Community Services	E-newsletter 5 <sup>th</sup> July 2024
Connecting Communities in Berkshire (CCB)	E-newsletter July 2024
Friendship Alliance	E-newsletter 10 <sup>th</sup> July 2024

## 30. **PRESS RELEASES, WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA**

It was agreed that a press release would follow the formal opening of the new Collins Drive play area.

## 31. **TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 7.53pm.

.....  
Chair, Amenities & Leisure Committee