



## **EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of the meeting of Earley Town Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Radstock Lane on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025 which commenced at 7.00pm.

### **Present**

Chair – The Town Mayor, Councillor M Smith

Councillors: R Ahlawat, A Bradley, N Brock, R Browne, R Cook, J Eastwell, D Hare, T Holton, M Iyengunmwena, S Jordan, I Khayinza, A Long, T Maher, S Matthews, A Neal, S Newton, B Owen, H Sarasan and C Smith.

In Attendance: J Friend (Town Clerk) and E Carroll (Deputy Town Clerk).

---

The Town Mayor, Cllr M Smith, made the sad announcement that Cllr Norman Jorgensen had died earlier that day. All in attendance observed a one-minute silence as a mark of respect to their fellow councillor.

### **105. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Bassett, M De Jong, P Jorgensen and G Littler.

### **106. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **107. PUBLIC FORUM**

There were no members of the public present.

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

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2025 (Minutes 83 – 104) were a true and correct record and could be signed by the Chair.

### **109. COUNCILLOR ABSENCE**

It was noted that Cllr M De Jong would not be requesting an extension to her leave of absence.

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

110.1 The Town Mayor reminded councillors of the Mayor's Charity "Easter Eggstravaganza" event being held on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2025, 1pm – 4pm at the Interpretation Centre, in aid of his chosen charity Daisy's Dream. Tickets are available for an Easter Trail, along with craft activities and refreshments. Councillors were encouraged to attend.

110.2 Councillors received a written report from the Town Mayor detailing the events he had attended since the last meeting. These included a Men's Breakfast at the Salvation Army; a recording of "Take5" at Hospital Radio Reading at the Royal Berkshire Hospital; the Community

Learning Awards at the Crescent Centre; Link Visiting Open Day at St Paul's Church; the Magistrates Mock Trials; the University Court event and the Care4Calais Concert at St Nicolas Church.

## **111. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **111.1 Amenities and Leisure Committee**

Councillor Brock presented the draft Minutes of the Amenities and Leisure Committee meeting (Minutes 65 - 80) held on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2025. The Council received the draft Minutes.

### **111.2 Planning Committee**

Councillor M Smith presented the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting (Minutes 121 - 137) held on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025. The Council received the Minutes.

Councillor M Smith presented the draft Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting (Minutes 138 - 153) held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025. The Council received the Minutes.

### **111.3 Policy and Resources Committee**

Councillor D Hare presented the draft Minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting (Minutes 77 - 95) held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2025. The Council received the Minutes.

## **112. REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES**

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

Members received a written report from Councillor Owen on her attendance at a meeting of the Sonning & District Welfare & Education Trust on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2025. The Trust provides welfare and educational grant support to individuals in need. It was noted that no applications had been received from residents in Lower Earley and that funds were available. Councillor Owen asked councillors to think of any small voluntary groups who could be encouraged to make their attendees aware of the charity.

### **112.2 Wokingham Borough Council's Standards Committee**

Councillors received a verbal report from Councillor Matthews on her attendance at WBC's Standards Committee meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2025. Due to the increase in complaints about inappropriate behaviour on social media, WBC will be issuing more guidance to councillors on using social media. Dates and details of police security briefings will be sent to Town Clerks for distribution to councillors.

## **113. COUNCIL STRATEGY MEETINGS**

Members noted that the Chair of the Council and the Leader will be holding monthly meetings with the committee chairs and the Town Clerk to discuss council priorities and strategy. Issues and topics will then be referred to the appropriate committee for further discussion and action.

## **114. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

Members received a report from the Community Governance Review Working Group who had discussed the review being carried out by Wokingham Borough Council on town/parish wards and parish boundaries.

The Working Group's recommendations were as follows: -

- ETC should continue to have 25 Councillors
- A previous WBC review recommended that ETC should have seven wards (rather than the current eight). Councillors were happy with this and with the names allocated to the seven wards.
- However, all seven wards should be either three or four councillor wards – it would not be appropriate to have a two councillor ward or a five councillor ward as WBC had indicated. This could be achieved by moving Markby Way/Sellafield Way and roads off into St Nicolas ward to make a three Councillor ward, and reducing Radstock ward to a four Councillor ward
- ETC's external boundaries should remain as they currently are. The Hillside parish ward should remain as is because historically the parish boundary has followed in part Pearmans Lane.

Members discussed the recommendations and also the information that Shinfield Parish Council were planning to recommend that Ryhill Way and Uffcot Close be moved from Earley parish to Shinfield parish. Members acknowledged that they were not aware of any residents expressing a wish to change parish and observed that there was no vehicle access to the roads in question from the Shinfield side, only the Earley side.

The Working Group were thanked for their work and it was: -

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Neal will draft a response to the review based on the four recommendations of the Working Group plus a request that, should WBC still be minded to change the parish of residents in the Ryhill Way area, that it would make more sense to move the Shinfield residents to Earley rather than vice versa. Cllr Neal to send the draft response to the Town Clerk for submission to the consultation.

It was also **RESOLVED** that Councillor Neal be the ETC representative at any WBC panel discussion meeting on the matter.

#### **115. SOLAR PANELS - UPDATE**

Councillors received a written report from the Operations Manager on the performance of the solar panels at Radstock House during 2024. Councillors were pleased to note that the solar panels have provided approximately one third of the electricity used by the offices during the year, this equates to a £1,000 saving. Members expressed their thanks to the Operations Manager for his report.

#### **116. LODDON GARDEN VILLAGE**

Councillors noted that the University of Reading are providing various opportunities for residents and other interested parties to find out about and comment on the plans for the new Loddon Garden Village development, details of which can be found on their website. The University will also be holding drop-in sessions at the University and in Arborfield.

#### **117. BERKSHIRE YOUTH**

Members noted that Earley Town Council's partner in youth services, Berkshire Youth, has been appointed Reading Buses Charity of the Year for 2025. A Berkshire Youth branded bus will run across the network raising the profile of the charity and encouraging donations to fund its work.

#### **118. WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL - CONSULTATION**

Councillors noted that WBC's consultation on its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is now open and runs until 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025. Councillors were encouraged to respond to the consultation individually.

**119. COUNCILLORS' ATTENDANCE**

Record of Members' Attendance

Councillors noted the details of Councillors' attendance during 2024/25 at meetings of the Council and its Committees.

**120. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT**

Members noted the details of Orders for Payment since the last meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee (Vouchers 7609 – 7617, 7618 – 7635, 7636 – 7656) and Imprest vouchers (104 – 105 and 1049 - 1051).

**121. PUBLICATIONS**

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

Office of the PCC	E-newsletter January & February 2025
Involve Community Services	E-newsletter January & February 2025
Friendship Alliance e-newsletter	February & March 2025

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

The following press releases/website posts were requested: -

- Announcement regarding Councillor N Jorgensen
- Huge Earley Litter Pick

**123. 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**

**124. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**125. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**126. MAYS LANE CEMETERY**

**127. TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 8.11pm.

.....  
**Town Mayor**