



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 21st May 2025 which commenced at 7pm.

Councillors: N Brock (Chair), A Bassett, A Bradley, R Browne, A Long, T Maher, and S Matthews

In attendance: J Friend (Town Clerk) and M Brown (Operations Manager)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs R Ahlawat, R Cook, M De Jong and B Owen.

2. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

2.1 Nominations were called for the position of Chair of the Amenities & Leisure Committee. One nomination was received and seconded.

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Nicola Brock be appointed Chair of the Amenities & Leisure Committee.

2.2 Nominations were called for the position of Vice Chair of the Amenities & Leisure Committee. One nomination was received and seconded.

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Andrew Long be appointed Vice Chair of the Amenities & Leisure Committee.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no members of the public present.

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5th March 2025 were approved as a true record and it was **RESOLVED** they be signed by the Chair (Minutes 65-80)

6. MAIDEN ERLEGH LAKE AND NATURE RESERVE

6.1 Inspection Results

The committee noted that the final report from the Section 10 (Reservoirs Act 1975) lake inspection had been received. Members were pleased that the report confirmed the Town Council has been maintaining the lake to a very high standard and continues to comply with all the required health and safety measures.

6.2 Barley Straw ‘Sausages’

Members noted that staff and volunteers had made and installed new barley straw ‘sausages’ at the inlet area of the lake. These assist with maintaining the health of the lake water and help control algae levels by acting as a filter for water entering the main body of the lake, they are replaced at least once a year.

6.3 Time Capsule

Members received a report on the Millenium Time Capsule at the Nature Reserve which was buried in the year 2000. Cllr A Long, who was chair of the Town Council at the time and present when the capsule was buried, explained that the idea of the time capsule was to bury common everyday objects which represented life in 2000. This was one of several events arranged by the Town Council celebrating the turn of the millennium. The time capsule is due to be dug up in 2050.

7. COMMUNITY CENTRES

7.1 Centrepoint Community Centre

The committee was pleased to note the success of the Town Council’s projects based at Centrepoint Community Centre:

The Earley Repair Café, held on the second Sunday of each month, continues to be very popular with both volunteers and residents, with over 40 items being brought into each session and a repair success rate in excess of 50%. The statistics show that the project is making a significant contribution to reducing the number of items that get thrown away and end up in landfill.

The weekly youth club sessions have been well attended; youngsters have taken part in a range of activities including visits to a local park in the nicer weather. The Youth Working Group is planning to meet to discuss the possible expansion of ETC’s youth provision.

8. BOOKING PROCEDURES

Members received a report on amendments to procedures when booking requests are received for the Town Council’s facilities. As part of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, all local authorities have a responsibility under the Prevent Duty strategy to ensure that their venues are not being used to promote radicalisation or extremism. The report detailed what measures have been adopted by staff taking bookings and what training they will receive.

9. TOWN MAPS

The committee received an update on the design of the new Town Maps and were shown a sample of the map. Members made a few, small suggestions but, overall, were pleased with the content, layout and design of the maps. Once the design has been finalised it will be professionally printed and then installed in the four Town Map frames around Earley. Smaller versions will be displayed in the community centres and Council offices.

10. OPERATIONS MANAGER – REPORT

The Operations Manager provided a verbal report on matters relating to assets and facilities. This included:

- Progress on works in Sibly and Redhatch Copse which included the removal of several unsafe trees close to footpaths; ivy banding; re-establishing the footpath through the woods; and vegetation clearance.
- Levelling, topsoiling and seeding of several areas in Mays Lane Burial Ground has taken place, this forms part of our regular ground maintenance and upkeep of the sections maintained as a lawn cemetery.

- Changes in staff
- The arrival of the new cricket roller for Sol Joel Park
- An update on the installation of new noticeboards
- New wildflower seed mix which will hopefully benefit pollinators more than in previous years. The seed mix will be sown in each of the flowerbeds on the verges around Earley
- An update on the town council's plan for monitoring Ash Dieback in MENR
- The start of fishing season, charity fishing competitions and the return of the summer fishing project in conjunction with Reading Football Club

11. COLLABORATIVE WORKING

11.1 Silverdale Road Telephone Box

Members noted that the refurbishment of the red telephone box has been delayed whilst the supplier sources the parts required to repair it. The university confirmed they are happy to wait until the autumn term to liaise with the schools on artwork for the project. Members agreed that, as there was going to be an art element to the project, glass panes would be preferable to Perspex.

12. GREEN FAIR

The committee noted that preparations for this year's Green Fair on Saturday 2nd August are well under way. Bookings continue to be received from stallholders, and confirmation has been received of the return of 1st Class Falconry as well as Aloha Ukuleles.

Councillors were encouraged to consider volunteering for a few hours on the day to support the core team of officers who will be volunteering for the whole day to run and manage the event. Some offers of assistance were received and the Town Clerk confirmed that the Army Cadets had been approached to see if they could help with some of the more physical work required on the day.

13. RECOMMENDATION TO POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Cllr Brock requested that members consider making recommendation to the Policy & Resources Committee with regard to their forthcoming review of the Council's ear marked reserve funds.

Cllr Brock proposed that a request be made for funds to be allocated to improvements to, and redecoration of, areas within the Council offices such as welfare facilities for staff and improvements to storage. These areas had not received attention for several years and are in need of improvement. Councillors agreed that a recommendation be made to the Policy and Resources Committee that a dilapidations fund for Radstock House be considered.

14. BERKSHIRE LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY

Members noted that, in line with discussions at the last meeting of this committee, officers have submitted ETC's comments to the consultation, supporting the documents produced and the strategy as a whole and formally supporting the Green Corridor proposal.

15. CONSULTATION – ROYAL BERKSHIRE TRUST STRATEGY REFRESH

The committee noted that the Royal Berkshire Trust have been seeking input from residents into its strategy refresh which was last revised in 2022. Residents are encouraged to complete a survey online through a link on the RBFT Strategy Team website or by post.

16. PUBLICATIONS

Members noted that the following items had been received and are available for viewing from the Council Offices:

Involve Community Services	E-newsletter – 26 th April 2025 & 9 th May 2025
Connecting Communities in Berkshire (CCB)	E-newsletter – 7 th April 2025
Friendship Alliance	E-newsletter – 30 th April 2025
Me2 Club	E-newsletter – 30 th April 2025

17. PRESS RELEASES, WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

The committee requested the following items to be the subject of a press release at the appropriate time:

- The Green Fair
- The re-design and reinstatement of the town maps

18. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 8.51pm.