



## ALLOTMENT COMPETITION GUIDELINES

The Town Council's Allotment Competition is held on an annual basis and awards are made for the following categories: -

Best Allotment – receives trophy, certificate and prize

Runner Up (Best Allotment) – receives certificate and prize

Best Raised Bed or Trough – receives trophy, certificate & prize

The competition guidelines are as follows: -

1. A plot holder should advise the Council in writing if they do not wish to be included in any judging of the competition.
2. Judging of the competition is carried out by the Council's Allotment Working Party.
3. The three judging visits are made: -
  - March – April
  - May – June
  - July – August
4. The final judging visit (decision visit) is made in September.
5. The judging panel will be looking for: -

### Variety of Fruit & Veg

A variety of fruit and/or vegetables grown on the plot.

### Flowers

A variety of flowers and/or plants to help assist pollinators.

### Quality of Growth

The general quality of what is being grown on the plot. Plants/crops should be free from disease, pests and damage.

### Neatness/Organisation of the plot

The plot to be well cultivated and organised. Unplanted areas where plants/crops have been planted or are about to be planted should be free from weeds and the soil of a good quality. Any structures on the plot, including cold frames and cloches should be neat, clean and well maintained. Good use of plant supports, where appropriate.

### Environmentally friendly practises

Evidence of good use of compost bins, rainwater collection where possible and any other environmentally friendly practices.

6. Winners/Runner up will be notified in November.
7. Winners/Runner up will be invited to the Mayor's Reception where they will be presented with a trophy/certificate and a small prize. This is normally held in December or January.

8. Trophies will be engraved with the winner of the Best Allotment and the winner of the Best Raised Bed/Trough. The trophies will be held by the winners until the following year's competition winners are decided, when the trophies will then need to be returned to the Council offices.
9. A plot holder may only win the Best Allotment and the Best Raised Bed/Trough categories no more than once every 5 years.
10. The judging panel's decision is final.

## Amenities & Leisure Committee Meeting – 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026

### Agenda Item 6 – MAYS LANE CEMETERY

Work has begun on the first phase of the extension plans at Mays Lane Cemetery. Ultimately the intention is to landscape the whole of the extension area and provide options for the interring of cremated remains whether that be by scattering, burying or other means. In the meantime, the extension of the current Cremated Remains section will provide enough plots to meet demand for a few years thus giving us time to design and plan the larger extension project.

#### The current project:



Blue = Fence lines

Yellow hatched = new area being prepared

The two rows of white squares are in the existing Cremated Remains area, Section S. The work being carried out on the yellow hatched area will expand the lawned Section S and provide enough plots to meet our needs for approximately 5 years.

The blue line represents where a black, bow-topped metal fence will be installed (this is an extension of the same fence installed in the Children's area). Golden privet hedging will be planted alongside the fencing, as it is elsewhere in the cemetery, to maintain a sense of privacy to the area and to make it more visually attractive. To make the new space more accessible, a paved path will be created across the middle, wide enough for people to pass each other comfortably, and two benches will be installed.

### **Details of work**

The area of land in question has been levelled, vegetation, roots and rubble/debris have been removed. The land has been rotavated and topsoil added to bring the levels up to those that are required. A 3-tonne digger and 3-tonne dumper were hired to enable ETC grounds staff to carry out this work, staff have the appropriate licences to use such machines and the vehicles are of similar weight as those used by the grave diggers. Once the topping up has been completed the fencing will be installed and the privet planted. The next step will be to lay the grass seed. It is expected that all this work will be completed by mid/late-March.

The amount of watering required will be weather dependent but the establishment of the privet and grass will be closely monitored. The last stage will be to lay the new path and install the benches. Additional planting of appropriate shrubs will take place if deemed necessary.

Carrying out this work in-house has reduced the cost of the project which is now expected to be in the region of £12-13k.

Jo Friend  
Town Clerk

## Amenities & Leisure Committee Meeting – 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026

### Agenda Item 8 - MEADOW PARK - PLAYGROUND RENOVATION

#### Background

Upgrades to the Meadow Park play area have been on the Town Council's agenda for a number of years. In 2021, the junior swings were replaced and since then various improvements have been made to the toddler area such as the installation of a new roundabout and seesaw, repainting of the fencing and topping up the bark surfacing. Despite these upgrades, there is still scope for a lot of improvement works in order to modernise this park and make it a much-loved community asset.

#### Budget

The Meadow Park Playground EMR currently stands at £114,364. A further £16,559 of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) has also been ringfenced for the project, making the total budget £130,923.

#### Project Scope

The proposal is to make significant improvements in four key areas:

##### **1. Junior Play Area**

The majority of the existing play equipment is in poor condition due to the age of the pieces. There is potential to retain the existing Hip Hop (rotator) as this is in good working order, however the remainder of the equipment is due to be replaced. The fencing will either be restored or replaced. The surfacing will remain bark, but with wetpour wear pads to minimise bark displacement under moving pieces of equipment.

##### **2. Gym Equipment**

Currently, Meadow Park has an all-in-one gym unit and although repairs have been made to the gym equipment over the last couple of years, two of the elements remain out of action and there are signs of corrosion to the frame. The current equipment is situated in between the toddler and junior play area, whereas the recommendation is for adult outdoor fitness equipment to be installed a minimum of 25m away from a children's playground or separated and screened to discourage access by younger children.

The suggestion is therefore to remove the existing gym equipment and install some more modern standalone items in an alternative area of the park. The equipment will be situated further away from the play areas and potentially surrounded by knee-high fencing to discourage use by young children.

##### **3. Sensory / Quiet Area**

The removal of the gym equipment would open up the area between the two play areas. The proposal is to utilise this space as a sensory area incorporating a sensory pathway, play panels, seating and planting. Some children find the busyness and noise of a standard play area overwhelming, this Sensory/Quiet area would be designed to address their needs.

##### **4. Toddler Play Area**

Although some improvements have been made to the toddler area in recent years, there is still scope to improve the area further. The suggestion is to replace the existing slide tower, with a small multiplay unit offering more play value. The swings are also to be replaced.

### **Division of Budget**

Having had site visits with two play companies to discuss initial ideas, the suggestion is for the budget to be split roughly as follows:

1. Junior Play Area: £70k
2. Gym: £20k
3. Sensory Area: £10k
4. Toddler Play Area: £30k

### **Next Steps**

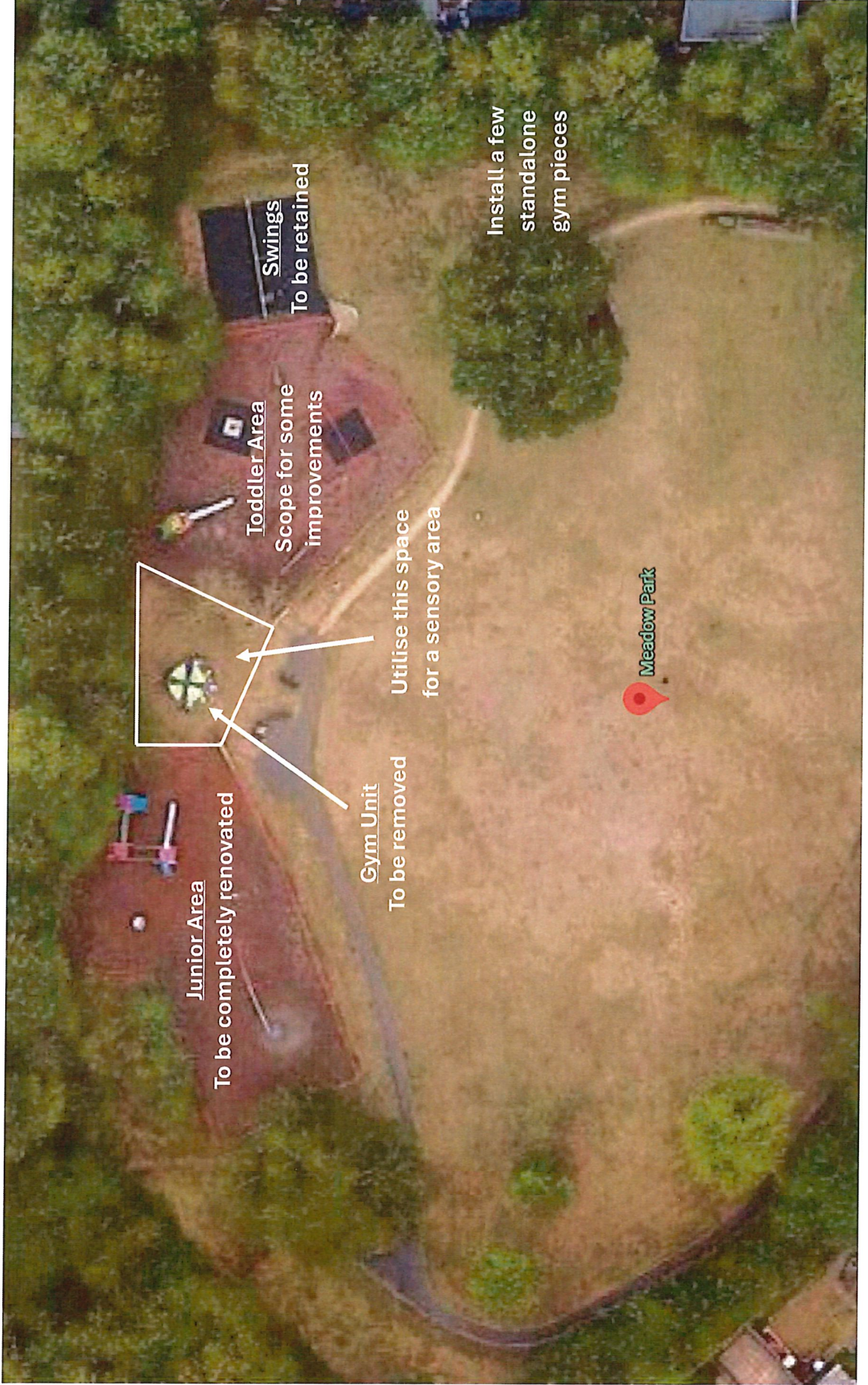
An initial sticker board consultation activity was conducted at the Green Fair 2025 where residents voted for their favourite pieces of playground equipment. The results of this can be used to inform the detailed specification for the project.

Due to the proximity of Meadow Park to Loddon Primary School, contact has been made with the Inclusion Leader who has confirmed that the school would be happy to work with us on an additional consultation activity and have suggested involving the members of their school council. Loddon Primary School has a SEND unit and is well placed to contribute to ETC on the specifics, especially of the Sensory/Quiet area.

Following further consultation, a detailed specification for the project will be drawn up and play companies will be invited to submit a formal quotation and design.

Jess Friend, Projects Manager

23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026



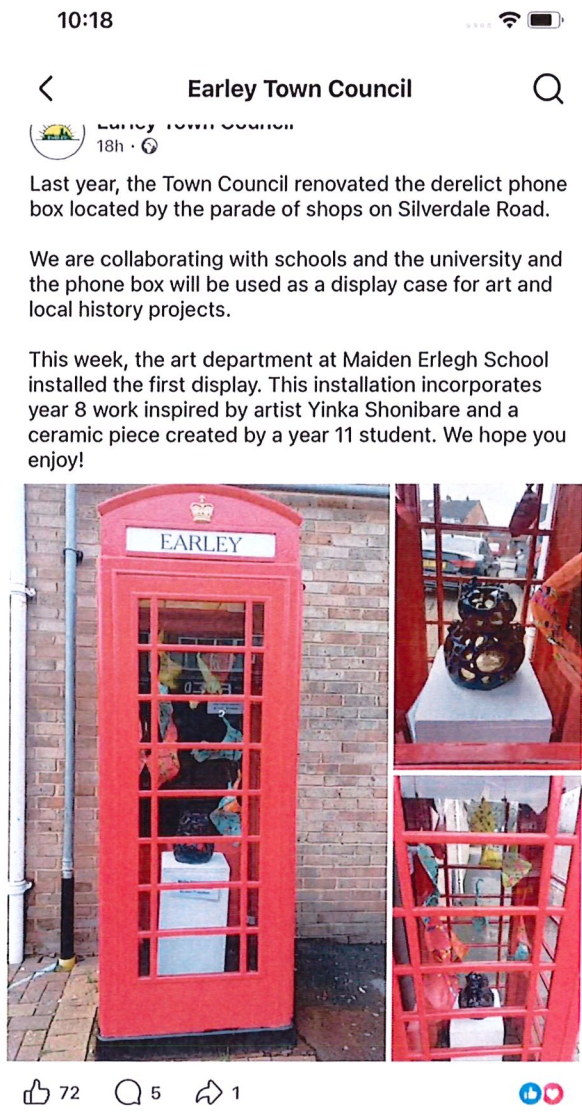
## Amenities & Leisure Committee Meeting – 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026

### Agenda Item 11 – Phone Box Project

The first display of artwork by students at Maiden Erlegh School was installed in the Silverdale Road phone box and received a very positive reaction from residents. ETC's social media page received a large number of comments, all praising the work and commenting how lovely it was to see this old phone box rejuvenated and used in such a novel way.

A second display has now gone up in the Silverdale Road phone box comprising of artwork created by attendees at One Step at a Time sessions, a small, not for profit providing activities for children with additional needs. The art department at Maiden Erlegh School will be displaying their second installation later this month.

Cllr N Brock and the Town Clerk met with the university to discuss how they could be involved in the phone box project. Also present at the meeting was a representative from MERL (Museum of English Rural Life) who expressed an interest in getting involved. Various ideas were put forward and it was agreed that MERL would work with ETC on creating a display focussed on phone boxes and the wider subject of communication. The plan is for this to be an inter-generational project as this will highlight the huge changes that have taken place in this field over the past 50 years or so. The Town Clerk has contacted the manager at Austen House who has expressed a keen interest in involving their residents in the project. There will be a further meeting with MERL to progress the idea, we hope to have this installation ready for display in place in May/June time.






The Mayor of Earley  
invites you to a charity  
coffee morning with a difference

 MEET THE THERAPY DOGS

 BUNTING MAKING WORKSHOP

 PLENTY OF TEA, COFFEE & CAKE!

**Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> April 10.30am – 12.30pm**  
**Maiden Place Community Centre, RG6 3HD**

Free event, with donations gratefully received in aid of the  
Mayor's chosen charity Pets As Therapy

