

EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL

Full Council Meeting 25th March 2026

Agenda Item 5 - TOWN MAYOR'S COMMUNICATION

Mayors Reception 9/2/2026

I am very grateful to all the ETC officers for organising this wonderful evening.

There was a wide spectrum of the community represented & everyone I talked to was enjoying the opportunity to share their knowledge & experience with others they may not have met before.

There was a great selection of food & the sticky sausages were particularly remarked upon!

It was a privilege to present the Allotment & Service to Earley awards.

I was delighted by how many generous donations to my chosen charity Pets as Therapy were received.

Thank you to everyone who made this such a great evening.

1st Lower Earley Friday Scouts Iftar Event 21/2/2026

I was invited to give a few words on the importance of children growing up in a safe environment & the value of nurturing faith, culture & identity.

The cubs & scouts gave short demonstrations of what they had learnt relating to Ramadan & received some certificates for their fund-raising activities.

A short video was shown of the activities they had taken part in during the past year.

I wished them every success as they continue to grow in numbers (both young people & volunteers) & making a valuable contribution to the local community.

The volunteers & parents had brought in a wonderful selection of homemade dishes for after the performances.

Community Education Trust Community Iftar at Reading Football Club 27/2/2026.

The CET aim to bring together people of different faiths, cultures & backgrounds in a spirit of mutual respect, understanding & civic unity, to foster meaningful dialogue & strengthen community cohesion.

There was informal networking, reflections on the significance of fasting & its universal value (from an Imam & a medical doctor) & sharing the Iftar meal.

There were several interesting speakers including the CEO of Reading Football Club, Rt Hon Baroness Teresa May, Deputy Vice Chancellor Reading University, Wokingham Borough & Reading Borough Mayors.

The picture of a flower stuck with me, that the individual petals are important to make up the whole flower & how lots of different colours & varieties make a garden interesting & beautiful.

We were also encouraged to think of 3 gates to go through before we speak, asking ourselves is it true, is it necessary, is it kind?

It was an enjoyable evening and good to meet so many different people that make our community a great place to be.

Magistrates' Court Mock Trial Competition-Berkshire Heats 14/03/2026

I attended the afternoon session in which 6 local schools competed. The students & teachers had put a lot of time & effort into preparation. I talked to some students who had worked on how to portray their persona & speech all year & were aspiring to study law as a career.

Each school took turns to be prosecution or defence with students playing barristers, magistrates, witnesses, ushers & the defendant. Most spoke with confidence beyond their 14/15-year ages but with a few the nerves, made them a little more hesitant.

In both mock trials I witnessed the defendant was found not guilty, but the lead magistrate discussed how a sentence would have been calculated if the verdict had been guilty.

This was a fantastic opportunity for all the students to hone public speaking & other skills to add to their portfolio.

Centenary Court University of Reading 17/3/2026

The annual meeting of the University of Reading's Court was particularly special this year as it marked 100 years since His Majesty King George V granted the Royal Charter that established the University of Reading as an independent institution dedicated to education, learning & research for public benefit.

The University celebrated a century of achievement, recognised the invaluable contributions of partners & supporters & is looking ahead to the next 100 years of creating possibilities for tomorrow.

The evening commenced with His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of the Royal County of Berkshire reading an excerpt from the Charter of Incorporation 17/3/1926.

There was a welcome from the Chancellor, an address by the Vice-Chancellor, presentation of Centenary Community Pledges & performances by the University Choir & a piano solo.

There were inspiring & amusing experiences of studying at Reading by a selection of Alumni.

The President of the University Council shared reflections & thoughts of looking forward to the next 100 years & the Chancellor closed the meeting.

There was a celebratory reception in a marquee after the meeting.

Cllr Nicola Brock, Town Mayor

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Agenda Item 7 - Representatives on Other Bodies

7.1 Wokingham Borough Council's Standards Committee

Wokingham Borough Council's Standards Committee met on 10th March 2026.

The only point to note is that the Annual Report can be access via WBC's Standards Committee agenda details on WBC's website.

Councillor Sheena Matthews
12.03.2026

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Agenda Item 8 - CHAIRS' MEETING NOTES

Chairs Meeting 11th February 2026

Present: Cllr N Brock, D Hare, A Neal and the Town Clerk

Cemetery Footbridge

It was noted that a WBC response to ETC's letter had been received, agreeing to a meeting but it had no officer name or contact details on it and was sent from a no reply email address. Town Clerk will follow this up. Discussed who is best placed to attend a meeting with WBC on this matter and agreed attendees should be Earley Town Councillors only, not dual hatted. Cllr Brock and Cllr Neal would be representative of both A & L and Planning & Transport committees and Cllr Littler's legal background would provide useful insights. The Town Clerk would also attend such a meeting.

Community Governance Review

Notes that should the proposals go through, ETC would gain the equivalent of 157 Band D properties in May 2027.

BALC

The 2026/27 subscription has been paid. BALC has asked if a member of ETC would like to join the BALC executive which meets quarterly in Shinfield. Agreed to table this request at the next full council meeting.

Sol Joel Pavilion

Town Clerk informed chairs that in addition to the problem with the roof at the pavilion, there was now a large crack which staff were monitoring. The Operations Manager has arranged for a full structural survey to be conducted. This should alert us to any other problems with the building and will help us plan any required remedial works.

Chairs Meeting 3rd March 2026

Present: Cllrs N Brock, D Hare, A Neal and the Town Clerk

Crescent Centre

Noted that Cllr Brock and the Town Clerk had met with the chair of trustees and the centre manager on 16th February. An update is being provided via the Amenities & Leisure committee agenda on 4th March.

Cemetery Footbridge

The Town Clerk had been told that the officers to arrange the meeting with were the officers who had emailed a borough councillor about the issue last November. Possible meeting dates had been provided to these officers along with a brief outline of what ETC would like discussed at this initial meeting.

Fly tipping

The Town Clerk informed the chairs of a fly tipping incident in the children's playground at Sol Joel park. Good images of the perpetrators had been captured on ETC's CCTV and on residents' doorbell footage and had been submitted to the police along with a report. The perpetrators had spent a couple of hours transporting the waste in a commercial bin from a location on the Wokingham Road to the playground. Unfortunately, the police handling of the case was disjointed to say the least and we were then informed that the police didn't investigate fly tipping, that it was the council, so the police had closed the case. The incident has been reported to WBC but it has been time consuming and frustrating for ETC officers when we know we have good evidence and can direct any investigators to the location the waste bin was loaded.

Cleaner & Greener Walkabout – Chalfont Park

The Town Clerk informed the chairs that she had been invited to Chalfont Park to join a site meeting of WBC officers and WBC councillors plus WBC's street cleansing contractor. The purpose of the Town Clerk's attendance was not clear but she was unable to attend due to a prior meeting engagement. The Town Clerk has conformed that she is happy to meet or talk with WBC officers about matters impacting Earley, she just needs a bit more notice.

Green Space – Gipsy Lane/Mill Lane

The Town Clerk has been contacted by WBC and asked if ETC would be interested in maintaining and administering this newly cleared space 'under the condition that it does not impede with the ditches or headwall' and that we allow WBC access where and when needed. Cllr Neal gave some background to this piece of land. The Town Clerk has responded to say that ETC officers will visit the site and will then ask for any further information needed before referring the request to Council.

RECORD OF COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCES - 2025/26

NAME OF COUNCILLOR	COUNCIL					AMENITIES & LEISURE					PLANNING										POLICY & RESOURCES																
	05	07	09	11	02	03	05	07	10	01	03	12 (E)	12	11	10	09	08	07	06	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	01	02	03	04	06	09	11	01	03		
R. AHLAWAT	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓																										
A. BASSETT	✓	✓	✓	✓			B	✓	✓	✓																	✓				✓						
A. BRADLEY	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓																											
N. BROCK	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓																											
R. BROWNE	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓																											
R. COOK	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓																											
M. DE JONG	✓		✓		✓																																
J. EASTWELL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓																																
D. HARE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓																																
T. HOLTON	✓	✓	✓		✓																																
M. IYENGUNMWENA	✓			✓	✓																																
S. JORDAN	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓																																
P. JORGENSEN	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓																																
I. KHAYINZA	✓		✓	✓	✓																																
G. LITTLER	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓																																
A. LONG	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓																											
T. MAHER		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓																											
S. MATTHEWS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓																											
A. NEAL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓																											
S. NEWTON	✓	✓	✓	B	B																																
A. NEWTON		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓																											
H. SARASAN		✓	✓	✓	✓																																
C. SMITH	✓	B	✓	✓	✓																																
M. SMITH	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓																																
K. YABSLEY																																					

(shaded cell denotes non-representation on Committees)

R = Representing Town Council B = Attending Borough Meeting ✓ = In Attendance F = Attending Fire Authority Meeting A = Approved Leave of Absence