

Amenities & Leisure Committee Meeting – 20th May 2026

Agenda Item 6 – MAYS LANE CEMETERY

Update on S- Section (cremated remains) expansion:

Work has progressed as planned and the expansion of S section has now been completed. The grass has established as have many of the golden privet hedging despite there having been a slight issue with rabbits feeding on the hedging closest to the railway fence at the end of the section. The team have installed chickenwire fencing as a deterrent, this has been so far very successful.



Please note that the patch in the centre is where the ground naturally dipped forming a puddle, this has now been filled with topsoil and reseeded.

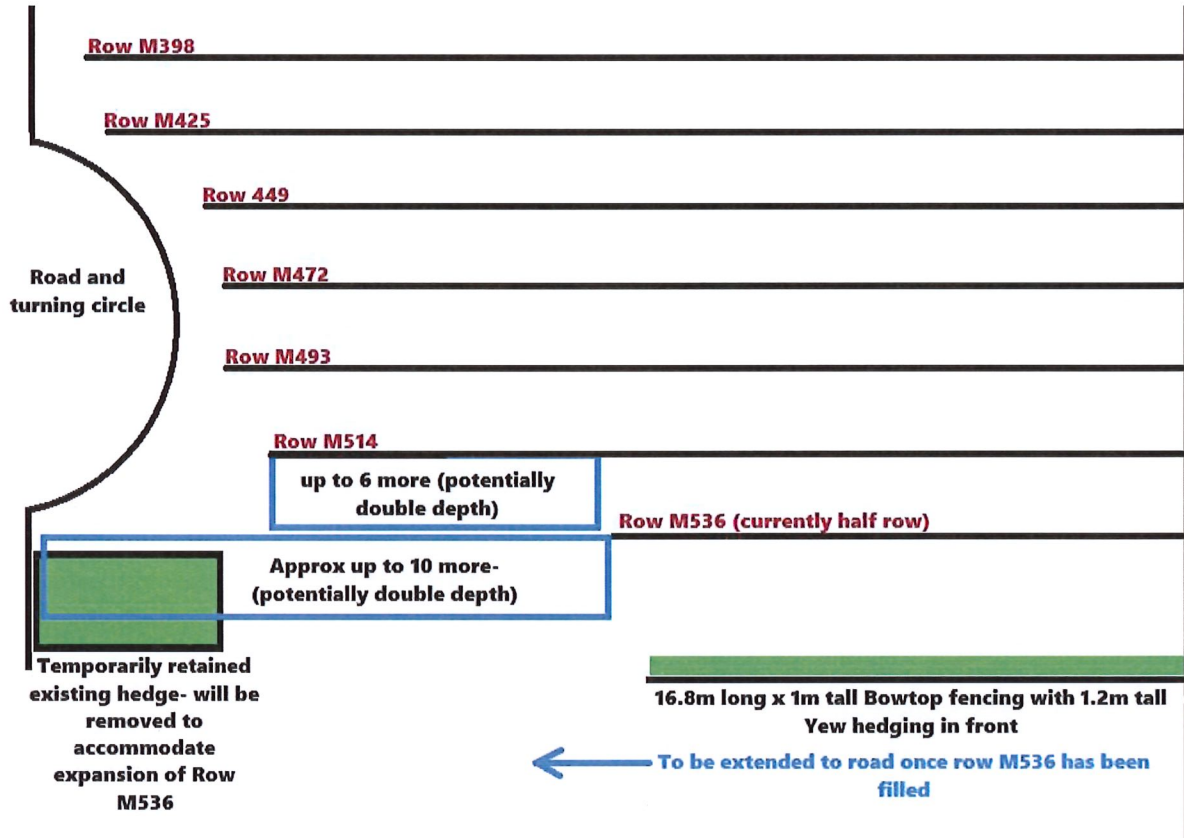
M section (burials) - Fencing and hedging

A fence has been installed at the bottom of M section (burials) to enclose the end of the section, the same 1m bowtop fencing as used in other areas of the cemetery has been installed and 1.2m tall Yew hedging has been planted in front.



M section- Additional graves

With the installation of the new fence/hedgeline, most of the old existing hedging has been removed to provide access to dig the remaining 6 graves on the end of row M514. Once these have been used the intention is to extend the spine on row M536 to provide approximately 10 more double depth graves. When both of these rows have been used, the new fenceline with Yew hedging will be extended to meet the road thus finishing the section completely, see plan below:



Previously we have uncovered buried items such as railway sleepers in parts of this area whilst digging new graves which has led to restrictions on how deep we are able to dig or whether we have been able to use the space at all. We are anticipating similar issues with the new grave spaces so it should be noted that the 16 additional double depth graves mentioned above is the best case scenario and may be reduced depending on what is uncovered whilst digging.



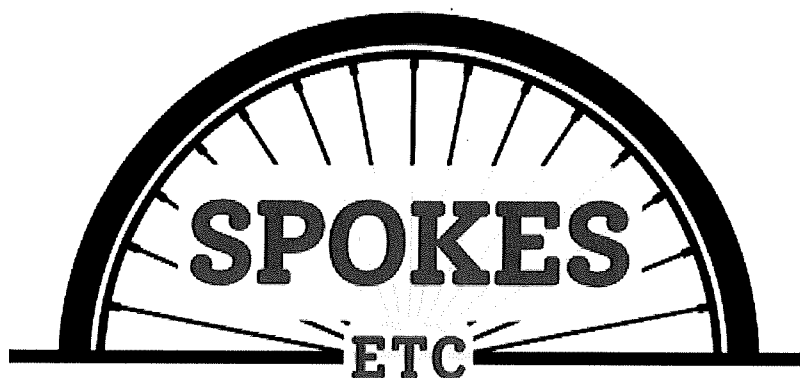
Space for new graves

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Agenda Item 7.1.1 – SPOKES ETC - BIKE WORKSHOP

Update

ETC's bike workshop now has a name and a logo:



We have recruited a part-time Bike Workshop Co-ordinator, Gianpiero, who has initially been setting out the workshop ready for its launch, identifying any gaps in tools or equipment and creating processes and procedures for the running of the facility. The Co-ordinator has also completed his Cytech training.

We have recruited three volunteer bike mechanics, all of whom have met with the Co-ordinator and viewed the facility. Although we aim to try to recruit more volunteers in the future, having four mechanics will be sufficient to get the project off the ground. Gianpiero will work with the volunteers to agree times and dates for both open and closed workshop sessions.

How will Spokes ETC operate?

This new facility will offer servicing, basic maintenance and repairs for family bikes. The aim is to carry out work on everyday bikes, not expensive top-end bikes or electric bikes. There are already bike mechanics offering such services to the serious cyclist and owners of bikes at the more valuable end of the market – Spokes ETC is not competing with them, rather it is aiming to help local residents maintain and stay safe on their bikes. There will be a low cost, simple charging schedule for Spokes services and replacement parts will be charged at cost.

The Co-ordinator and volunteers will agree times when Spokes will be open to the public for them to bring along their bikes for repair etc or ask for advice. There will also be 'closed' sessions when the bike mechanics will be working on the bikes but the workshop will not be open to the public. The details of these are still to be agreed. Volunteers at the Earley Repair Café currently use the bike workshop facility to repair any cycles that residents may bring to the ERC session. From June, this service will be available under the Spokes set up and repairs will be available at ERC sessions but will be charged for rather than coming under the Repair Café's donation system. This change will be advertised.

We will be promoting Spokes ETC and its services through a variety of means such as posters, social media, partners' communications etc and will be looking to put a large sign on the side of Centrepoint, advertising the youth services, Repair Café and the new bike workshop.

We expect to open Spokes ETC w/c 8th June.

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Agenda Item 8 – SAFE PLACES – RADSTOCK HOUSE

Safe Places is a national movement to support people with additional needs in the community. Venues that sign up become ‘Safe Places’ that people can go to for a friendly face when they feel scared, threatened or lost when out.

Optalis approached the Town Council and asked if we would be willing to have the Helpshop and Council Offices designated a Safe Place.

As we are open to the public all day Monday to Friday and, during the day there are always staff here, we agreed. Officers from Optalis visited us and explained the scheme in more detail to our Helpshop staff. It is simply an extension to the service we already offer and all staff are happy to help.

The Safe Places sticker has been put on the door to the Helpshop and on the wall at the front of the offices and ETC has been added to the Safe Places database and app.

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Agenda Item 9 – BUS SHELTER – CHURCH ROAD

Members of the Amenities & Leisure Committee are asked to discuss the missing bus shelter on Church Road, outside 134A, and agree a way forward. This shelter has now been removed three times since 2022 due to separate vehicle collision incidents.

Timeline

Pre 2022: Bus shelter was reported as leaning due to suspected vehicle collision but otherwise stable, this became the first bus shelter to be replaced by officers in recent years.

Officers worked to determine suitable shelter types, compatible with WBC Bus Shelter Policy with regards to size and distances from the road. The aim was to provide a blueprint that could be rolled out as a programme of replacements over the years. Quotes obtained & company selected based on value for money and specifications of their particular shelters.

June 2022: The replacement shelter on Church Road was ordered costing £3,907.50

October 2022: After months of chasing and being let down by the supplier the new bus shelter was finally installed and the old leaning shelter was removed..

December 2023 We had a report from a resident that this bus shelter had been hit by a passing bus. The resident claimed to have doorbell footage, however, when officers met with them to recover the footage the resident discovered they had accidentally deleted it. As well as ETC reporting the incident to the police, Reading Buses were contacted but, as we could not provide evidence they refused to respond to our requests. ETC claimed against its insurance and our insurance company were unable to recover the cost from the third party responsible for damaging the shelter.

August 2024: ETC's insurance paid out £5,448.40 to cover the cost of replacing the shelter.

Before replacing the bus shelter for a second time officers reached out to WBC officers to ask if there had been a history of vehicle collisions along this stretch of road as we needed to understand why the same thing kept happening to this particular shelter.



WBC Transport and Planning reported that they did not have any records of traffic related incidents happening around the location of this bus stop saying that the only incidents they had from the last 5 years all involved the junction of Woodland Avenue. Helpfully they sent an officer to review the location of this bus shelter and and reported that they “could not see any safety reason as to why the bus shelters would be regularly hit as the visibility is good at this site”.

January 2025 We found a more reliable supplier who, although a bit more expensive, worked closely with WBC already thus simplifying the streetworks application process. This new shelter cost £5,859.98 and the design was changed from a cantilever design to one with quarter width end panels for extra stability. The design featured a concrete base which was covered in tarmac and curbed as well as a narrower roof to set it further back from the road to avoid further potential for collision by a bus.

May 2025 The bus shelter was installed

March 2026 Officers saw a post on social media reporting the bus shelter had been damaged. In the post a resident had come forward claiming that their neighbour had captured the incident on doorbell footage and that it was hit by a Sainsburys delivery vehicle.

ETC reported the incident to the police who were told about the possible doorbell footage but the police told us that they were unable to recover the footage. ETC contacted Sainsburys as well as our insurers, But Sainsburys would not engage and, as there was no evidence, our insurers paid out but were unable to recover the cost from the third party responsible for causing the damage.

April 2026 A payout was received, a sum of £4,767.99 after deducting the policy excess of £500.

Additional Considerations

- Each time we claim against our insurance we have been unable to recover the cost from the 3rd party responsible for the damage, this will most likely increase our premium
- Would insurance company continue to pay out if the shelter is replaced and then knocked down again
- Due to the varied nature of the collisions it is possible that any additional measures we could consider such as moving the shelter further back or installing bollards would still be unlikely to prevent this from happening again, any additional measures would also require further investigations for underground services as well as permission from WBC.



Should ETC replace this particular bus shelter again?

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Agenda Item 11 – EMERGENCY PLANNING EXERCISE

Wokingham Borough Council recently contacted ETC about collaborating on an Emergency Planning Exercise to be held in October 2026.

On 28th April 2026, the Deputy Town Clerk met with one of WBC's Emergency Planning Officers to discuss the details of the exercise and possible scenarios. Planning is at an early stage, but the exercise will be based on a mock Reception Centre, which WBC would set up in the event of a widespread emergency, a place residents would be directed to, if they were affected by an emergency situation.

WBC will lead on the setting up of the mock Reception Centre and will be using volunteers to act as residents who have been affected by the situation and who are looking for help.

ETC is supporting the exercise with the provision of Maiden Place Community Centre which will become the Reception Centre and WBC has asked if ETC staff can participate in the exercise acting in various roles such as helpers at the Reception Centre and as affected residents. The Emergency Planning Officer is currently working on the number of volunteers required and character scenarios.

The Deputy Town Clerk will meet the Emergency Planning Officer again in June to carry out a site visit of MPCC, so that he can plan the set up and layout of the Reception Centre.

WBC's Emergency Planning Team are to hold a Reception Centre training session in September 2026, which ETC staff will be invited to attend (numbers tbc). The training session will cover the types of facilities used for Reception Centres, the aims of a Reception Centre, the different roles within a Reception Centre and it will refer to various case studies.

Further details about the Emergency Planning Exercise will be reported once WBC has more definite plans in place.

Emma Carroll, Deputy Town Clerk
12th May 2026

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Agenda Item 12.1 – GREEN FAIR - UPDATE

ETC's Green Fair – Saturday 1st August 2026

The preparations for this year's Green Fair are well underway, with staff offering to volunteer and plans being put into place.

Administration

This year's booking process has been changed. In previous years, stallholders would submit a booking form and pay for their pitch at the same time. However, if officers decided that a stall was not suitable, ie it did not fit the theme of the Green Fair, then the Finance team would have to process a refund, creating additional work.

This year, stallholders have been asked to submit a booking form with no payment and on confirmation that they have been allocated a pitch, stallholders will then be able to contact the office to make their payment.

General

Over 30 booking forms have been received (a mixture of single and double pitches) and officers are currently in the process of allocating pitches. Booking forms have been received from new stallholders as well as regulars so the Green Fair should see a wider variety of stalls this year.

Food

Maiden Erlegh Rotary Club have confirmed they will be attending again this year to provide tea, coffee and light snacks.

There will be a new main food provider, Hidden Gem Café, who will be providing a wide choice of food such as jacket potatoes, toasted sandwiches, breakfast rolls, hog-roast baps, wraps and sandwiches.

Entertainment

Ukulele Fun has confirmed that they will be back to provide musical entertainment.

The Council's games stalls of Giant Jenga and Hoopla, which prove popular every year, will operate as usual.

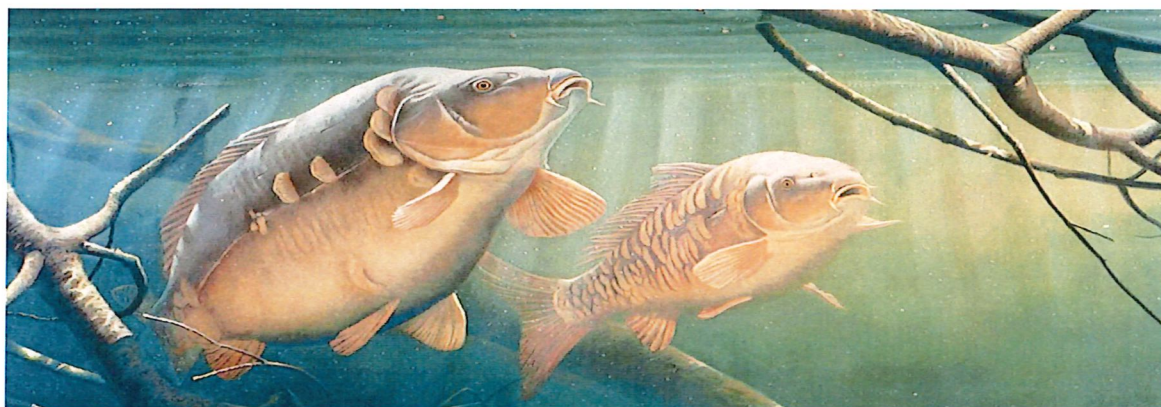
As the birds of prey have attended for several years in a row, officers thought that it would be nice to offer something different this year. Different options are being investigated, unfortunately our first enquiries for presenters such as mobile farms and reptile displays have proven to be too expensive.

Emma Carroll, Deputy Town Clerk
8th May 2026



SUMMER HOLIDAY FISHING PROJECT

**(2026) @ MAIDEN ERLEGH LAKE SUPPORTED BY
EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL AGES 8–13**



Join our experienced members of staff from Reading FC Community Trust at the summer holiday 6-week fishing program (2026). Learn new skills and enjoy the challenges of catching different fish in Maiden Erlegh lake. All equipment will be provided, and you will be supported throughout the session with helpful tips and guidance. Available sessions:

Wednesday 29th July / 10.00am – 3.00pm

Wednesday 5th August / 10.00am – 3.00pm

Wednesday 12th August / 10.00am – 3.00pm

Wednesday 19th August / 10.00am – 3.00pm

Wednesday 26th August / 10.00am – 3.00pm

Interested in booking a free session? please email Mark Edwards: Medwards@readingfc.co.uk

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Agenda Item 13 – DEVOLUTION

There has been much talk about WBC considering devolving some elements of its assets and services to town and parish councils. Each town and parish council would need to decide if it had the resources or the appetite to take on responsibility for some, or all, of these areas before any meaningful discussions could take place.

The Chair of the Amenities & Leisure Committee, Cllr Nicola Brock, requests committee members have a high-level discussion on devolution and the possible impacts on, and the response of, the Town Council. *This is intended to be a general debate on the topic, focussing on principles and goals rather than specifics or details.*

Some suggested discussion points:

- What is the appetite of town councillors for the devolution of assets and/or services?
- What factors would need to be in place for ETC to take over an asset/service?
- Scale of the benefit to Earley residents – measuring this
- Are there things that the Town Council do better?
- Questions on funding and ownership