



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 20th May 2026 which commenced at 7pm.

Councillors: N Brock (Chair), R Ahlawat, A Bassett, A Bradley, R Cook, I Khayinza, A Long, T Maher, A Neal and A Newton

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr S Matthews.

2. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

- 2.1 Nominations were invited for the position of Chair of the Amenities & Leisure Committee. One nomination was received and seconded.
It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Nicola Brock be appointed Chair of the Amenities & Leisure Committee.

- 2.2 Nominations were invited for the position of Vice Chair of the Amenities & Leisure Committee. One nomination was received and seconded.
It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr 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 4th March 2026 were approved as a true record and it was **RESOLVED** they be signed by the Chair (Minutes 68-84)

6. MAYS LANE CEMETERY

Members received a report on the latest extension works at Mays Lane Cemetery detailing the completion of works carried out to extend the cremated remains section as well as the partial installation of a fence and hedge to mark the end of M section (burials). A section of the existing hedgerow has been carefully removed to allow access for further new burials as well as the potential to extend the final row of M section, once these rows have been used the fence and hedge will be extended to fully mark the end of the section.

7. COMMUNITY CENTRES

7.1 Centrepoint Community Centre

7.1.1 SPOKES ETC - Bike Workshop

The committee received an update on the progress of the ETC Bike Workshop project, now named 'Spokes ETC'. A part time Bike Workshop Co-ordinator has been recruited and has completed his

Cytech training. He has been working with the Projects Manager to develop processes for the running of the facility as well as identifying any gaps in tools and equipment. Additionally, three volunteer bike mechanics have been recruited, they will work under the guidance of the Bike Workshop Co-ordinator to offer servicing, basic maintenance and repairs for family bikes. Owners of top end or electric bikes will be referred to existing, more specialist services.

The Co-ordinator and volunteers will agree their availability and then Spokes ETC will offer public sessions as well as closed workshop sessions, hopefully with the potential to expand as new volunteers are recruited. From June the bike repair service carried out during the Earley Repair Café sessions will fall under Spokes ETC, repairs and replacement parts will be charged at cost rather than coming under the Repair Café's donation system, this change will be advertised.

We plan to launch Spokes ETC in the w/c 8th June 2026 , this will be promoted through a variety of means such as posters, social media and partners communications. A logo has been designed in-house and will feature on all signage and promotions.

8. SAFE PLACES – RADSTOCK HOUSE

Members noted that the Council Offices, Radstock House, has been registered with the Safe Places scheme. ETC's Helpshop staff have been provided with the resources they need to fulfil this role which is intended to support people with additional needs in the community by offering a place where people can go for a friendly face should they feel scared, threatened or lost when out.

9. BUS SHELTER – CHURCH ROAD

The committee was asked to consider a report on the bus shelter in Church Road, Earley which has been replaced multiple times due to vehicle collisions. Following a lengthy discussion, Members agreed that, whilst they supported replacing the shelter in principle, investigations should be carried out to see if there are any actions that could be taken to reduce the chances of another vehicle collision with the shelter. Ideas put forward included moving the shelter further back, installing a raised kerb and so on. Officers will liaise with WBC's highways department and report back to the Amenities and Leisure Committee for a final decision.

10. OPERATIONS MANAGER – REPORT

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

- ETC adopting a slightly different approach to No Mow May this year by scaling it back to areas which are generally less visible to the public but continuing to mow neat borders around each designated space.
- The successful community tree planting sessions which were carried out since the last meeting as well as a memorial tree planting session which took place at Sol Joel Park in April.
- The renovation of the brick wall outside the council offices and the replacement of the old signage which had begun showing signs of wear and tear
- Issues with handles on some of the more recently installed noticeboards featuring a closed compartment for public notices, the supplier has been working to improve the faulty design of the mechanisms and is sending replacements to fix the problem.
- A last-minute cancellation of a cricket team a week before the beginning of the season had highlighted the need to update the terms and conditions of hire for next season. Another team has now booked these empty slots filling the capacity for the 2026 cricket season at Sol Joel Park.
- Planned works to use a contractor to repaint the lines of the car parking areas at the council offices and Maiden Place community centre.
- The removal of the Red Oak in the corner of Sol Joel Park following a tomographic survey which resulted in the tree being deemed unsafe.
- Planned works to reduce a leaning Oak tree on the boundary of Redhatch Copse which has been put on hold due to the presence of a Honey Bee colony. The tree is undergoing regular recorded checks by the Park Ranger Service and will be felled as soon as the bees either leave or become dormant due to colder weather, this will allow the works to be carried out safely by the tree surgeons.

- The impending arrival of the first electric van in the Earley Town Council fleet which has been leased as well as the plans to install the means to charge it at the council offices.

11. EMERGENCY PLANNING EXERCISE

Members received a report detailing a joint emergency planning exercise to be held in October 2026, involving Earley Town Council and led by Wokingham Borough Council's Emergency Planning Team, an exercise in setting up of a mock reception centre using Maiden Place Community Centre. The reception centre would be where residents would be directed to in an emergency situation. Volunteers will act as residents who have been affected by the simulated situation. Further details will be reported once they have discussed further with the Deputy Town Clerk and the Wokingham Borough Emergency Planning Team.

12. COMMUNITY EVENTS

12.1 Green Fair

Councillors received an update on preparations for this year's Green Fair. Over 30 stall bookings had been received, these were a mixture of single and double pitches. A food vendor has been confirmed, Maiden Erlegh Rotary Club will provide light refreshments and Ukelele Fun will provide musical entertainment. Options are currently being investigated to offer something different and new to the birds of prey attraction as they have been attending for several years in a row.

12.2 Fishing at the Lake

It was noted that, Reading FC Community Trust will be running its popular summer holiday fishing project for young people at Maiden Erlegh Lake supported by Earley Town Council. As with previous years, the town council will provide the services of one of its experienced staff to assist with the delivery of the project.

13. DEVOLUTION

The Chair led a discussion on general ideas around devolution to gauge whether ETC would have the appetite and resources to take on additional responsibilities if WBC were to consider devolving some elements of its assets and services to town and parish councils. Such devolution is part of a national trend towards town and parish councils delivering more services, where possible. Members were encouraged to think widely about the possible impacts of devolution and were generally positive in principle but agreed that the subject was complex.

Points raised included:

- ETC's Green Infrastructure Policy points in the direction of delivering more services
- Staffing resources would be key
- How will residents gain from any transfer of services or assts? How would the benefits be measured?
- What would be the cost to ETC? Would a transfer require additional equipment, vehicles, insurance etc.
- Should ETC expand what it already does or take on something completely new?

Members agreed that ETC should engage with WBC when requested but that officers would need to provide them with the pros and cons of any transfer before a decision could be taken. Members of the Policy & Resources Committee will also have a discussion on the principles of devolution at their next meeting.

14. TOWN COUNCIL QUESTIONS AT WBC MEETINGS

The committee was asked to consider any councillor requests for specific questions to be submitted to WBC meetings and to also agree the WBC meeting to which the Town Clerk is to submit the question. There were no questions suggested.

15. PUBLICATIONS

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

Involve Community Services	E-newsletters – April & May 2026
Connecting Communities in Berkshire (CCB)	E-newsletter – March 2026
Friendship Alliance	E-newsletters – February, March & April 2026

16. PRESS RELEASES, WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

It was agreed that a press release would be issued to promote the arrival of the new electric van as well as the opening of Spokes ETC.

17. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 8.34pm

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Chair, Amenities & Leisure Committee