



EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Earley Town Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Radstock Lane, Earley, Berkshire on Wednesday, 20th February 2019 which commenced at 7.45pm.

Present

Chairman – The Mayor, Councillor B Wedge

Councillors J Armstrong, L Blumenthal, A Bradley, Dr N Brock, L Chambers, T Chambers, J Clark, P Dunn, M Firmager, T Holton, R. Houlbrooke, N Jorgensen, P Jorgensen, W Luck, S Matthews, J Rance JP, J Russell, C Smith, A Swaddle and P Willis.

In Attendance: J Friend (Town Clerk), J Shaw (Deputy Town Clerk) and one resident.

A minute's silence was observed at the start of the meeting for Sue Smith, who had very recently died. Sue was a prominent member of the Earley Environment Group and was also one of the Wednesday Volunteers. The Chair of Amenities & Leisure, Councillor Linda Chambers, spoke of the sad loss to the local community and said that she would be greatly missed by many local residents, Council Officers and Councillors.

The first twenty minutes of the meeting were set aside for members of the public to pose questions to the Council.

82. PUBLIC FORUM

A resident asked why the Earley Town Council Plans Working Party had not met to discuss the WBC Local Plan Update Consultation. This group could have met to examine the detail available and formulate a response to be submitted to the Planning Committee. Councillor Luck, Chairman of the Planning Committee, reported that whilst no meeting of the Plans Working Party had been held, a meeting of the Joint SULV Working Party (Site of Urban Landscape Value) had taken place with Woodley Town Council and an official response had been agreed to the Local Plan Update Consultation in relation to the SULV.

Councillor Matthews reported that the Joint SULV Working Party had attended a meeting with the Project Manager on the proposal to expand Addington School within its current boundary and that a drop-in session was planned for Wednesday, 27th February between 5.30pm and 7.30pm at Addington School, Woodlands Avenue.

83. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Ahmed, D Chopping, M De Jong and G Grandison.

84. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

85. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on 28th November 2018 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

86. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor announced that since the last meeting of the Town Council he had attended the following event:

14th Dec 1st Earley St Peter's Beaver Scout Awards Presentations.

87. TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEES

87.1 Planning Committee

87.1.1 Councillor Firmager presented the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 11th December 2018.

RESOLVED to receive the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 11th December 2018 (Minutes 78 - 86).

87.1.2 Councillor Luck presented the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 8th January 2019.

RESOLVED

1. To receive the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 8th January 2019 (Minutes 87 - 94).
2. Councillor Firmager asked for his declared interest in Planning Application 183479 to be noted.

87.1.3 Councillor Luck presented the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 5th February 2019.

RESOLVED

1. to receive the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 5th February 2019 (Minutes 95 - 104).
2. Councillor Firmager asked for his declared interest in Planning Application 190112 to be noted.

87.2 Amenities & Leisure Committee

87.2.1 Councillor Chambers presented the Minutes of the Extraordinary Amenities & Leisure Committee meeting held on 5th December 2018.

RESOLVED

1. To receive the Minutes of the Extraordinary Amenities & Leisure Committee meeting held on 5th December 2018 (Minutes 41 – 45).

2. To alter Minute 4.3.1, Recommendation 1. To add the word ‘up’ to read ‘Hall hire fees be increased by 3%, rounded **up** to the nearest 50p’.

87.2.2 Councillor Chambers presented the Minutes of the Amenities & Leisure Committee meeting held on 16th January 2019.

RESOLVED

1. To receive the Minutes of the Amenities & Leisure Committee meeting held on 16th January 2019 (Minutes 46 – 57).
2. To note that Councillor Holton also attended the Christmas Carol Singing Event at Asda during the first week of December.

87.3 Policy & Resources

87.3.1 Councillor N Jorgensen presented the Minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 21st November 2018.

RESOLVED to receive the Minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 21st November 2018 (Minutes 38 – 50).

87.3.2 Councillor N Jorgensen presented the minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 30th January 2019.

RESOLVED to receive the Minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 30th January 2019 (Minutes 51 – 61).

87.3.3 Councillor N Jorgensen presented the Minutes of the Community & Youth Sub-Committee meeting held on 30th January 2019.

RESOLVED to receive the Minutes of the Community & Youth Sub-Committee meeting held on 30th January 2019 (Minutes 20 – 28).

88. BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2019/20

In considering the recommendations from the Policy & Resources Committee meeting of 30th January 2019, Councillor Jorgensen thanked the Town Clerk and her Officers, and the Committees for their work in producing this budget document.

Councillor Jorgensen highlighted the proposal to increase the Earley Town Council element of the Council Tax by £1.55 per year to £74.14 per Band D household for the year. He stated that the Council plan to continue all services in the coming year and that considerable sums will be spent on the parks, cemetery, allotments, community centres, bus shelters, equipment and facilities in Earley. A number of projects will be undertaken to improve the environment and there are also plans to expand the cemetery.

Councillor Jorgensen confirmed the Town Council’s continuing support to local groups that provide transport services for elderly and less able Earley residents. He also confirmed support for the Citizens Advice Bureau in Wokingham and Reading and other voluntary groups that provide services to Earley Residents.

On the proposition of Councillor N Jorgensen and seconded by Councillor M Firmager it was

RESOLVED

1. The proposed Budget 2019/20, as detailed in the document supplied to Members for the meeting on 23rd January, be approved unamended.
2. The revised charging schedule, including the restructuring of cemetery fees, as recommended by the Amenities and Leisure Committee at their meeting on 5th December 2018, be approved.
3. The Town Council Precept for 2019/20 be set at £881,817.45 as detailed in the 'Summary of Draft Budget Figures Financial Year 2019/20'. This will equate to an increase of £1.55 for the year (or 3p per week) for a Band D household.

89. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2019/20

Councillors considered the Schedule of Meetings for the 2019/20 Municipal Year and the date of the Annual Town Electors' Meeting for 2019. Councillors noted that the Schedule had been compiled with reference to the Draft Meetings Calendar for Wokingham Borough Council. Members agreed that the format of the Annual Town Electors' Meeting could be improved and the meeting could be held on a different date to the Annual Meeting of the Council, however there was insufficient time to implement such changes this year. It was

RESOLVED that

1. the Annual Town Electors' Meeting be held on 15th May 2019, prior to the Annual Council Meeting.
2. the Schedule of Council Meetings for 2019/20 be adopted.

90. INTERNAL AUDIT

Councillors noted the contents of the Internal Auditor's interim report on the audit conducted during December 2018 and January 2019. Councillor Matthews expressed her disappointment that the Council would once again receive a qualified audit as the PAYE and NIC requirements were not properly fulfilled on payments to the previous Town Clerk.

Councillor Luck reported that the Town Clerk had provided him with spreadsheet information on the Council's CIL receipts and the dates by which it will need to be used, and he was pleased to see that this recommendation had already been addressed.

The Mayor asked that thanks go to the Town Clerk and Officers of the Council for the improvements to the finances which have already been implemented.

91. LOCAL ARTS LOAN

Councillors discussed the Town Council's continued participation in the Local Arts Loan Scheme. The Town Clerk reported that the Council had been a member of the scheme since 2013 and currently held three pieces of artwork on loan from Maiden Erlegh School which were displayed in the Council Chamber. The rental costs of £4.00/week include £1 project costs, £1 for More Arts (the charity running the scheme), £1 Maiden Erlegh School Art Department and £1 More Arts Legacy Fund. Members agreed that the Council should be more involved in the choice of artwork and should better promote its involvement in the scheme. It was

RESOLVED that the matter be referred to the next meeting of the Amenities & Leisure Committee for further consideration.

92. WBC CONSULTATION – COMMUNITY ORCHARD

Councillors noted the current consultation being conducted by Wokingham Borough Council regarding the request by the Earley Community Orchard Group for additional land at Laurel Park and

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk submit a response based on the comments and observations in her report to Council (Appendix C), namely that, Wokingham Borough Council do not make a decision on this request at this point in time but allow it to be considered as part of the asset transfer process which will address Laurel Park in its entirety.

93. REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER BODIES

93.1 Reports of Representatives

93.1.1 Highwood Management Conference

Councillors received a verbal report from Councillor A Swaddle on a meeting of the Highwood Management Conference held on 8th January 2019 at which the Countryside Service Rangers' provided a review on the on-going management of the area. The Friends of Highwood also gave a report supporting the work of the Countryside Service.

93.1.2 University of Reading Community Forum

Councillors received a written report on a meeting of the University of Reading Community Forum, held on 29th January 2019, as prepared by Councillor Ralph Houlbrooke. Councillor J Rance requested that her name be added to the list of attendees.

93.1.3 Wokingham Borough Sports Council Executive

Councillors received a written report on a meeting of the Wokingham Borough Sports Council Executive held on 3rd December 2018, prepared by Councillor Michael Firmager.

93.1.4 Wokingham Borough Sports Council AGM

Councillors received a written report on the Wokingham Borough Sports Council AGM held on 29th January 2019, prepared by Councillor Michael Firmager.

93.1.5 Parking Issues – University of Reading

Councillors noted that in response to residents' complaints about University students, staff and Contractors parking on residential roads in Earley, Councillor Jackie Rance and Councillor Chris Smith had met with University representatives on 11th February 2019 to discuss the matter. Correspondence had also been received from a resident asking for assistance in dealing with the parking problems in this area. Members discussed the issue and agreed that it could not be dealt with by the Town Council but should be forwarded to Wokingham Borough Council. They

RECOMMENDED that the resident be informed that the matter would be forwarded to Borough Councillor Pauline Jorgensen, the Executive Member for Highways and Transport.

94. COUNCILLORS' ATTENDANCES

94.1 Record of Members' Attendance

Councillors noted details of Councillors' Attendance 2018/19 at meetings of the Council and its Committees.

95. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT

Councillors noted details of the Orders for Payment since the last meeting of the Town Council (Vouchers 1867 – 1931) and Imprest Account (Vouchers 298 - 304).

96. PUBLICATIONS

It was noted that the following publications had been received and were available for perusal in the Council Offices:

Earley Community Minibus:	Minutes of Meeting held 23 rd October 2018.
Maiden Erlegh Residents' Association	Minutes of Meeting held 14 th February 2019
Earley Community Minibus:	Minutes of Meeting held 12 th February 2019.

97. PRESS RELEASES

RESOLVED that information on Earley Town Council precept and associated comments receive special attention.

98. PART II

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it was resolved that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and the press leave the meeting during consideration of Part II.

98.1 Town Clerk – Employment Contract

Councillor Chambers reported on behalf of the Staffing Review Sub-Committee which had met on 20th February 2019, prior to the Council meeting. The Town Clerk's probationary period is due to end on 28th February 2019 and it was

RESOLVED by unanimous decision of the Council that the probationary period had been satisfactorily completed and the Town Clerk's contract be made permanent in accordance with her Contract of Employment.

99. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 9.01pm.

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Town Mayor