



AMENITIES & LEISURE COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Amenities & Leisure Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Council Offices, Radstock Lane, Earley, Reading on Wednesday, 4th September 2019 which commenced at 7.45pm.

Present

Chair – Councillor A Newton

Councillors A Bassett, G Bhangra, M Eastwell, D Ireland, A Long, S Matthews and K Yabsley.

In attendance: Jo Friend (Town Clerk), Stewart Walton (Facilities Manager), Grahame Hawker (Senior Park Ranger), Ashley Prior (Park Ranger), Jess Friend (Senior Operations Support Officer) and Councillor J Clark.

The first twenty minutes of the meeting were set aside for members of the public to pose questions to the Council. There were no members of the public present.

30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr D Hare and Cllr N Brock.

31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

32. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd July 2019 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

33. COMMUNITY & YOUTH CENTRES

33.1 Silverdale Centre

A request for funding for a new mixer had been received from a young person on behalf of a band attending the Music Fusion sessions at the Silverdale Centre.

Councillor Clark reported on recent visits made to the Silverdale Centre and her discussions with the Youth Workers, noting that the Music Fusion Group is a unique youth facility which attracts a number of regular attendees. Councillor Clark explained that the young people submitting the request were willing to fundraise towards the mixer and were also exploring other funding options.

Councillor Clark left the meeting at 7.52pm.

After detailed discussion it was agreed that the following information was required before a resolution could be made:

1. Clarification on whether the request was on behalf of the individual band or on behalf of the Music Fusion Group, this would provide clarification on the ownership of the item if purchased.

2. The suitability of the particular mixer requested and whether there were any alternative options available on the market.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the information would be sought from the youth workers and she would also speak to a contact with extensive music production experience.

Councillors agreed that if the band wished to put on a concert to fundraise towards the mixer, the Council would consider providing complimentary use of a suitable hall. Councillors further agreed that the band should be signposted towards the Earley Charity.

34. MAYS LANE CEMETERY

34.1 Proposed Extension

Councillors noted that Cemetery Development Services (CDS) had completed their Tier 2 Ground Water Assessment and, based on the results of their investigations and on the ground conditions encountered on site, they consider the site to be a low risk site in terms of potential impact to groundwater and surface water features associated with burial contaminants. Full depth burials to maximum depth of 1.8m are considered to be suitable.

They also noted that, following the Town Clerk and Facilities Manager's next meeting with CDS, a report on next steps and associated costs would be provided.

34.2 Railway Footbridge

The Town Clerk presented a report on the Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) project to replace the footbridge over the railway line and the A3290. The Town Clerk explained that one of the bridge pillars is on Earley Town Council (ETC) land and that there will be some realignment of the bridge. However, the impact on ETC land will be minimal and the Town Council were being kept informed of developments.

35. CULVER LANE ALLOTMENTS

35.1 Installation of Beehives

The Facilities Manager provided an update on the proposal to install beehives on Plot 37 at Culver Lane Allotments. Plot 37 is located at the far corner of the site and is greatly overshadowed making it difficult to cultivate. The proposal is to turn over Plot 37 to wildflowers and initially install two beehives, with the potential to expand to four beehives in the future.

The Facilities Manager advised that he had been working with a local Beekeeper with whom the Council would have a contract. The Beekeeper will install, maintain and insure the hives. Netting will be in place to encourage the bees to fly upwards from the hives, meaning they will be flying 20 to 30 meters above the neighbouring allotment plots. The five tenants closest to Plot 37 have responded to the Facilities Manager and are in support of the idea, as is the Allotment Association. Councillors were reassured that the beehives would be at least 30 meters away from any residential dwelling.

The beehives will be installed over the winter months whilst the bees are dormant, with the wildflowers being planted in the spring.

ETC will provide and install the support poles for the netting, however all other costs would be met by the Allotment Association.

After discussion it was

RESOLVED that the installation of two beehives as per the above proposal be approved.

Councillors thanked the Facilities Manager for his work on this project.

36. MAIDEN ERLEGH NATURE RESERVE

36.1 Green Fair

The Senior Park Ranger reported on the Earley Green Fair held on 3rd August 2019 noting that the Fair had now been running for over 20 years. The Fair was well attended by the public and there were 54 stalls ranging from wildlife and environmental stalls to charity and craft stalls.

The Senior Park Ranger thanked all Officers and volunteers who had supported on the day.

Councillors suggested that it would be good to see more press coverage before and after the event in future years.

The Town Clerk thanked the Park Rangers for their hard work on the organisation and running of the event and advised Councillors that more administrative support will be provided for the Rangers next year to assist them with the stall bookings and organisation.

36.2 Reservoir Maintenance

Councillors noted that the Town Council's maintenance programme for the Lake is up to date and in accordance with Environmental Agency standards.

36.3 Earley Environmental Group Calendar

Councillors noted that additional calendars have now been printed and are available for purchase from the Earley Town Council Help Shop.

37. RECYCLING AND WOODCHIP BINS

37.1 Recycling Bins

The Facilities Manager provided an update to the Committee on discussions with WBC regarding the Committee's request for increased recycling facilities within Earley.

A response from WBC was received regarding potential sites across Earley. Some are still awaiting assessment from FCC, WBC's appointed Contractor but three have been deemed unsuitable owing to traffic issues and proximity to a residential area.

Following a suggestion by a Councillor, the Facilities Manager agreed to also put forward the duck feeding platform area at Maiden Erlegh Nature Reserve as a potential site to assess.

A suggestion for researching charity recycling boxes for books and DVDs was also made.

37.2 Woodchip Bins

The Chair suggested that one potential site for a woodchip bin would be Kilnsea.

38. LODDON VALLEY LEISURE CENTRE

Councillor Ireland presented a report on a recent meeting with the Contract Manager and Communities Manager at Places Leisure, the social enterprise managing the Loddon Valley Leisure Centre. The report was looking at how the Town Council and Places Leisure could work together.

Councillor Ireland advised that free NHS Health Checks for residents aged between 40 and 74 years are now available at Loddon Valley Leisure Centre and leaflets advertising the service have been posted on the Town Council noticeboards and uploaded to the Town Council website.

The representatives from Places Leisure have also expressed an interest in taking part in the annual Earley litter pick.

39. AMENITIES & LEISURE COMMITTEE DATES

The Chair asked that the possibility of holding the Amenities and Leisure Committee meetings on a different day of the week be considered. The Town Clerk advised that the WBC meeting schedule would need to be considered in advance of any changes being proposed.

40. PUBLICATIONS

The Committee noted that the following items had been received and were available for viewing in the Council Chamber.

National Association of Memorial Masons:	NAMM News – June 2019. NAMM Review – July/December 2019.
Maiden Erlegh Residents Association:	Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 th August 2019.
Woodley and North Earley Community Forum:	Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 th July 2019.

41. PRESS RELEASES

No press releases were requested.

42. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 8.57pm.