



## **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, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020 which commenced at 7.45pm.

### **Present**

Chair – Councillor A Newton

Councillors: G Bhangra, N Brock, M Eastwell, D Hare, D Ireland, A Long, S Matthews and K Yabsley.

In attendance: Jo Friend (Town Clerk), E Carroll (Deputy Town Clerk), S Walton (Facilities Manager), G Hawker (Senior Park Ranger), A Prior (Park Ranger), R Fryer (Democratic Services Officer), Councillor D Chopping and 2 members of the public.

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

### **58. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A Bassett.

### **59. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **60. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

*The Town Clerk introduced Richard Fryer, the new Democratic Services Officer, to the Committee.*

### **61. CONFERENCE REPORT – CONNECTING COMMUNITIES IN BERKSHIRE**

The Facilities Manager gave a verbal report on his attendance at the Community Buildings Conference on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019. The event looked at environmental issues and ways of improving our carbon footprint, with a focus on community buildings. He found the event to be very informative, as was the Environmental & Energy Audit Tool template which was provided. The Facilities Manager intends to use this Tool to create benchmark data for the Town Council's buildings. A copy of the template will be emailed to the Committee.

### **62. TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY**

The Town Clerk reported on the need for a Tree Management Policy in order that the Town Council meet best practice standards. Whilst site-specific tree management policies will be developed for areas such as the Nature Reserve, the Town Clerk recommended the Council adopt a general policy to cover all Town Council areas. It was

**RESOLVED** to recommend to the Policy and Resources Committee that the Tree Management Policy be adopted.

**63. MAYS LANE CEMETERY**

Members were asked to consider the cemetery charges for 2020/21. The spreadsheet they had been provided with, detailing cost comparisons with other burial authorities, was discussed. The Town Clerk reported on national trends such as the increase in cremations as opposed to burials and explained that accurate forecasting of cemetery income over the next 12 months was difficult as there were so many variable factors involved. The Committee noted that the proposed cemetery extension would be necessary in order for the Town Council to continue providing a cemetery service and agreed that the Cemetery Working Party should be convened at a date in the future. After much discussion, it was

**RESOLVED** that an increase of 10% to cemetery charges in 2020/21 would be recommended to the Policy and Resources Committee.

**64. MAIDEN ERLEGH LAKE AND NATURE RESERVE**

The Senior Park Ranger provided an update on the work of the Earley Conservation Volunteers, the Wednesday Volunteers group consisting of 10-12 members, who work 51 weeks a year, from 9.30am – 1pm, providing 2000 volunteer hours per year. These volunteers assist the Town Council Rangers in carrying out duties such as tree planting, path work, weeding, litter picking etc. The Senior Park Ranger also detailed the construction of a new bird hide, which will be dedicated in memory of a volunteer who passed away.

Councillor Long advised he had attended the volunteers' AGM which included a presentation and photos of the activities they had undertaken, underlining the invaluable service they give to the town.

Councillors wished to record their thanks to both the Wednesday Volunteers and the Town Council's Park Rangers.

*Councillor Hare exited the meeting*

**65. CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS**

Councillor A Newton reported on the success of the Town Council's Christmas Carol Singing events which took place during the first week in December at the Asda store. Three local primary schools took part. The sessions were thoroughly enjoyed by the children and the many parents who accompanied them. The monies raised will be donated to the Mayor's Charity which this year is EarleyBus.

Councillors noted that the Christmas Celebrations Working Party would consider whether any alterations to the event should be adopted for the coming year and noted a suggestion that particular attention should be paid to the marshalling of such events.

**66. PUBLICATIONS**

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

Maiden Erlegh Residents Association:	Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 <sup>th</sup> December 2019
Earley Neighbourhood Action Group:	Minutes of Community Forum held on 2 <sup>nd</sup> December 2019
Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management:	Winter Journal 2019

*Councillor Hare re-entered the meeting*

**67. PRESS RELEASES**

No press releases were requested.

**68. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

It was **RESOLVED** that the remaining items on the Agenda be taken under Part II.

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor D Chopping could remain in the meeting but would not contribute.

*The two members of the public exited the meeting*

*Councillor Long exited the meeting*

**PART II**

**69. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**70. CENTREPOINT HIRER**

*Councillor Long re-entered the meeting*

**71. TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 8.40pm.

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 Chair, Amenities & Leisure Committee