



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 March 2020 which commenced at 7.45pm.

Present

Chair – Councillor A Newton

Councillors: A Bassett, N Brock, 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), and Councillor A Mickleburgh.

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.

72. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G Bhangra and M Eastwell.

73. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

74. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15th January 2020 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

75. CULVER LANE ALLOTMENTS

75.1 Community Request

The Town Clerk reported on the request from the Aisha Mosque for the use of an allotment as part of its Reading Mosque Garden Project. It was noted that there were not currently any vacant 8 Pole allotments, and also noted that there were people on both the residents and non-residents waiting lists. Councillors were broadly supportive of the idea in principle, but concerns were discussed with regards the creation of precedent, maintaining the security of the site and possible legislative complications. It was agreed that the applicant would be informed that they could be added to the waiting list and that officers would investigate the granting of allotment agreements to community groups. Consideration to be given to the creation of a policy for community project allotments, covering matters such as the legislative requirements, access agreements and charging.

75.2 School Visit

Councillors noted that pupils from Radstock Primary School would be visiting the Culver Lane allotments as part of a school project.

76. MAIDEN ERLEGH LAKE AND NATURE RESERVE

76.1 Susan Smith Memorial Bird Hide

The Senior Park Ranger reported on the planned official opening of the memorial bird hide on Wednesday 1st April 2020 at 11am. The Town Mayor will be in attendance and he extended an invitation to all who would wish to join him. The Town Council will provide refreshments for the reception at the Interpretation Centre afterwards.

76.2 Lake Inspection

The Facilities Manager reported that the annual lake inspection had been carried out, and that the annual testing of the Penstock valve would take place this month. Councillors were reminded this was a legal requirement to mitigate potential flood risks.

77. COMMUNITY AND YOUTH CENTRES

77.1 Centrepoint Community Centre

Councillors noted that the office space and foyer, previously occupied by the After School Club, were scheduled for redecoration prior to new hirers being sought. The Facilities Manager noted that this work should be completed by the end of March 2020.

77.2 Community and Youth Meetings

Members noted the dates set for the meetings of the Community & Youth Sub-Committee: 29th April 2020, 24th June 2020, 30th September 2020 and 18th November 2020. It was confirmed that meetings were scheduled to start at 7:30pm.

78. ANNUAL INSPECTIONS

78.1 Play Equipment

Councillors noted that the annual ROSPA play inspections at Sol Joel Park and Meadow Park had been completed. All equipment had been rated as either low risk or very low risk, and minor remedial works had been completed by the Town Council's maintenance officers.

78.2 BMX Track at Paddick Drive

The Facilities Manager reported that the annual ROSPA inspection of the BMX track had been completed and that no significant issues had been raised. Councillors enquired as to what maintenance had been carried out since the previous summer, and were informed that minor repair work had been undertaken in November and December 2019, and that further repair work had been budgeted for and would be completed once the weather allowed. The Facilities Manager reminded Councillors that it was a dirt track not a tarmacked one and therefore wear and tear would be a regular feature.

79. EARLEY SCARECROW TRAIL

The Town Clerk reminded Councillors of the success of last year's Earley Scarecrow Trail and reported that she had met with the organiser to discuss Town Council involvement in this year's event which will take place in the autumn half term, the theme being 'Historical Figures'. As this is a volunteer run operation, Members agreed that Town Council support would be given in terms of selling the maps in the Help Shop, publicising the event and

laminating notices for the organisers. It was suggested that the organiser be offered space on the Town Council's stall at the Green Fair to promote their event.

80. BOROUGH COUNCIL MATTERS

80.1 Waste Resources

Members noted that the Town Council had agreed to store a small number of black recycling boxes, food waste caddies and caddy liners at the Town Council offices in Radstock Lane on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council for the convenience of Earley residents.

80.2 Ali's Recycling

The Deputy Town Clerk reported on recent communication with the organiser of Ali's Recycling, a scheme which recycles some of the items that Wokingham Borough cannot. She works in partnership with TerraCycle and monies raised from the scheme are donated to local schools and charities. The Town Council has agreed to act as a collection point for the scheme and has been provided with a wheelie bin for that purpose.

Members welcomed the initiative and noted that Radstock Women's Institute also participate in such a project. A small bin will be placed in the Help Shop at the council offices and the new collection point will be advertised. A sign will also be placed on the bird feeding platform at the Nature Reserve, advising people that plastic bread bags can be recycled as part of this scheme. Councillors expressed a wish to publicise the new initiative on their social media pages.

80.3 Fly-tipping

Councillors noted the success of the new, online fly-tipping reporting initiative operated by Wokingham Borough Council. The Chair raised the issue of abandoned vehicles, and the Town Clerk advised that such items could be reported to the Localities Officer at Wokingham Borough.

81. HUGE EARLEY LITTER PICK

It was noted that this year's Huge Earley Litter Pick (HELP) would take place on Sunday 29th March 2020. Councillors were pleased to note the increased interest in the event, and the extension of areas covered. A question was raised about available equipment to reach litter in hard to reach areas, and the Facilities Manager cautioned Members not to endanger themselves in trying to clear litter and to notify officers of difficult to reach items. The Senior Park Ranger noted such areas were cleared periodically.

82. BEAT THE STREET

Councillor Newton presented on the Beat the Street initiative, run by Intelligent Health, a one year program that is intended to improve long term health outcomes through changed behaviours, primarily by engaging school children in a 6 week competition.

Councillor Hare left the meeting

Members were supportive of the aims and discussed the cost implications and whether the benefits were commensurate with the expenditure. Concern was raised in regard to organising a mass participation event in the current health climate. It was agreed that, rather than just one costly project, a larger number of smaller projects would probably return better value for residents.

Councillor Hare re-entered the meeting

83. 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 13 th February 2020
Earley Neighbourhood Action Group:	Spring 2020 Newsletter

84. PRESS RELEASES

Consideration was given to whether any of the foregoing items should be the subject of a press release. It was agreed that the Susan Smith Memorial Bird Hide and Ali's Recycling should receive special press attention at this time.

85. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

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

PART II

86. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

87. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 9.14pm.

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Chair, Amenities & Leisure Committee