



## **EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Meeting of Earley Town Council held remotely on Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020 which commenced at 7:30pm.

### **Present**

Chairman – The Mayor, Councillor D Hare.

Councillors: A Bassett, G Bhangra, N Brock, D Chopping, J Clark, R Cook, J Eastwell, M Eastwell, R Houlbrooke, C Jones, I Khayinza, G Littler, A Long, T Maher, S Matthews, A Neal, A Newton, R Sangster, M Shaw, C Smith and K Yabsley.

In Attendance: J Friend (Town Clerk) E Carroll (Deputy Town Clerk) R Fryer (Democratic Services Officer) and M Smith (member of the public).

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### **21. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor A Mickleburgh who was attending a Borough meeting.

### **22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor C Smith declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 9 – Casual Vacancy Town Councillor.

### **23. PUBLIC FORUM**

There were no questions from the public.

### **24. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

Councillor A Bassett expressed her thanks to the Senior Operations Support Officer for further clarifying the situation around payment 3077 which involved a change of gas supplier.

Councillor D Hare thanked the Deputy Town Clerk for her efforts ensuring residents were able to continue enjoying fishing at Maiden Erlegh Lake.

### **25. TOWN MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Mayor reported on his visit to collect Scone Teas from Austen House to give out to some Earley residents, primarily single people. The gifts were well received.

*Councillor Cook entered the meeting.*

## **26. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **26.1 Policy & Resources Committee**

Councillor C Jones presented the Minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2020, noting the Covid-19 financial impact assessments, the CIL co-funding request from Wokingham Borough Council and the internal audit interim report, which was much improved on previous years. Councillor Jones confirmed that it was the Council's intention that the cemetery extension project would go ahead and that Youth projects would remain a priority.

The Minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2020 (Minutes 1 - 20) were received.

*Councillor Shaw entered the meeting.*

## **27. DELEGATION OF POWERS**

27.1 Members discussed the continuation of the schedule of delegation of emergency powers to the Town Clerk, and a nominated Councillor. Councillors considered whether they were still necessary, and the prudence of retaining them in such uncertain times. It was noted that the Town Clerk could use Urgent Matters as an alternative, but that these emergency powers were more tightly defined. It was

**RESOLVED** that the schedule of delegation of emergency powers continue, and that they be reviewed at the next Full Council meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

27.2 Councillors received the Deputy Town Clerk's report on the planning administration process adopted by the Town Council and the schedule of delegation relating to the work of the Planning Committee. Members expressed their discomfort with delegation and were keen to return to meeting as soon as practicable. Councillor G Littler explained the technical issues in displaying plans virtually, and the Deputy Town Clerk reminded members that virtual planning meetings would require additional staff, resources and training to facilitate, and that as a public meeting, it was important there were no technical barriers to public involvement. The Town Clerk noted that Earley Town Council did not have the IT and Democratic Services departments or resources that borough councils had. She suggested that Members could meet virtually to discuss, but not vote, on planning matters if they were so minded. After further discussion, it was

**RESOLVED** that the planning administration process be continued and that it be reviewed on a regular basis.

**RESOLVED** that the system of delegation, as adopted by the Council in relation to the Planning Committee, be continued and be reviewed at the Full Council meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

## **28. FINANCE UPDATE**

There were no updates to receive.

## **29. CASUAL VACANCY – TOWN COUNCILLOR**

Councillors considered the application received for the vacancy on the Town Council from Michael Smith and

**RESOLVED** to co-opt Michael Smith onto the Town Council.

*Councillor C Smith abstained from voting.*

**30. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES**

- 30.1 Members received the nomination of Councillor T Maher as a member of the Policy & Resources Committee and it was

**RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor T Maher to the Policy & Resources Committee.

- 30.2 Members received the nomination of Michael Smith to fill the seat on the Planning Committee, vacated by Councillor Ireland, and it was

**RESOLVED** to appoint Michael Smith to the Planning Committee.

**31. QUEEN VICTORIA INSTITUTE FUND**

Councillors received notification from the QVI of their intention to change status and become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (ICO), a move which would reduce trustees' personal liability. Members were keen to continue a link with the QVI and to nominate a trustee. It was

**RESOLVED** that Councillor I Khayinza would continue as the Council's nominated trustee.

**32. LOCAL GREEN SPACE**

The Council received a verbal report from Councillor G Littler regarding the request from Wokingham Borough Council for the Town Council to identify areas of green, open space which it considered were of importance to the Earley community. Members noted the relevant submission which had already been made by the Town Council to the Draft Local Plan Update.

Members considered the additional draft response and expressed thanks to Councillor A Neal and the Deputy Town Clerk for producing this report at such short notice. They considered the site at the east of Maiden Erlegh Lake as a possible addition to the list and concurred with Councillor J Eastwell's request that the playground area be explicitly mentioned in the text. Councillors requested that Reading University and the Friends of the Harris Garden be notified of the inclusion of The Harris Gardens and The Wildrness in the Council's submission. It was

**RESOLVED** that authorisation be given to the Deputy Town Clerk to submit a response to Wokingham Borough Council by 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

**33. COUNCILLORS' ATTENDANCES**

- 33.1 Record of Members' Attendance

Members noted details of Councillors' attendance during 2020/21 at meetings of the Council and its Committees.

**34. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT**

Councillors noted the details of Orders for Payment (Vouchers 3150, 3151 – 3181, 3182 – 3183, 3184 – 3211), and Imprest Account (Vouchers 1–10, 11–12 and 475 – 498).

**35. PRESS RELEASES**

The Council requested press releases on Earley Town Council's response to the Local Green Space submission, and the co-option of Michael Smith to the Town Council.

*The member of the public left the meeting.*

**36. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

There were no members of the public or press present. It was agreed that the remaining items on the Agenda be taken under Part II.

**PART II**

**37. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**38. TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 9.01pm

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**Town Mayor**