



## **EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Meeting of Earley Town Council held remotely on Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020 which commenced at 7:30pm.

### **Present**

Chairman – The Mayor, Councillor D Hare.

Councillors: A Bassett, N Brock, 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), Jess Friend (Senior Operations Support Officer) and R Fryer (Democratic Services Officer).

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### **39. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G Bhangra, D Chopping and J Clark.

### **40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **41. PUBLIC FORUM**

There were no questions from the public.

### **42. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Councillor Bassett requested an amendment be made to Minute 32, to read ‘the inclusion of the Harris Gardens and the Wilderness’ rather than the inclusion of Redhatch Copse’. It was

**RESOLVED** that, subject to the above amendment, the Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

### **43. TOWN MAYOR’S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Mayor reported on his visit to the opening of the footpath by the Loddon Bridge on Wokingham Road, which now includes disabled access.

### **44. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **44.1 Amenities & Leisure Committee**

Councillor A Newton presented the Minutes of the Amenities & Leisure Committee meeting held on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2020. The Deputy Town Clerk provided an update on the installation by Maiden Erlegh School of electronic gates and Councillors noted that communication from

the school had been poor and expressed concern that what was being proposed could have a detrimental effect on Silverdale hirers, particularly the Youth Club. The communication issues had been compounded by coinciding with the start of the summer holiday period. Councillors were keen that a meeting be arranged with the head of Maiden Erlegh School to attempt to resolve the matter. Deputy Town Clerk to action.

Members noted that Wokingham Borough Council had not provided a positive response in regard to planting on the roundabout at Meldreth Way, Councillor Jones agreed to follow this up with Councillor Jorgensen.

The draft Minutes of the Amenities & Leisure Committee meeting held on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2020 (Minutes 1-16) were received.

*Councillors J and M Eastwell entered the meeting.*

#### 44.2 Policy & Resources Committee

Councillor C Jones presented the Minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020. He noted the redecoration and re-opening of the Helpshop to the public and expressed the Council's thanks to the staff for their hard work in achieving this. The Town Clerk reported on the high number of interactions since the re-opening, Councillors were pleased to note the popularity of the service. Members noted that no response had yet been received from the letters sent to local MP's. In response to a question on Ali's Recycling, the Town Clerk confirmed that Earley Town Council's collection was not currently active, but would re-open once collections had been agreed.

The draft Minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020 (Minutes 21 - 37) were received.

### 45. RISK ASSESSMENTS

#### 45.1 Council Risk Assessment

Members discussed the Council Risk Assessment and noted the improvements that had been made to the document. They considered how best to provide oversight of a live document, whilst acknowledging the role of officers and it was agreed that the Town Clerk would update Councillors when any significant changes were made. It was

**RESOLVED** that the Council Risk Assessment be signed, and that it be reviewed bi-annually.

#### 45.2 Covid-19 Risk Assessment

Councillors noted that the Town Council's Covid-19 Risk Assessment had been updated in line with changes in legislation and government guidance, and that separate Covid-19 Risk Assessments had been created for each Town Council activity as it resumed. Members were keen that the Covid-19 Risk Assessment remain a full council agenda item for the foreseeable future. Councillors were also minded to put an abridged version on the Earley Town Council website.

## **46. FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

### **46.1 Financial Statements 2019/20**

Members were pleased to receive the financial report prepared by the Senior Operations Support Officer 'Unaudited Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2020'. They expressed their thanks to the officer for making the information available in such a clear and concise format whilst also overseeing the installation of the new finance system. Councillors were particularly pleased to note that the debtors figure had halved and that the promptness with which the Town Council was paying invoices had improved significantly.

### **46.2 Internal Auditor's Report**

Councillors received the Internal Auditor's report for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 and were pleased to note the positive nature of the report. Members were keen to move forward with updating the Standing Orders (Appendix 1 – Item C) but recognised that it was not a priority in the current conditions.

### **46.3 AGAR 2019/20 – Annual Governance Statement 2019/20**

Members reviewed the Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2019/20. It was

**RESOLVED** that the Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2019/20 be signed.

### **46.4 AGAR 2019/20 – Accounting Statements 2019/20**

Councillors reviewed the Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2019/20. It was

**RESOLVED** that the 'Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2019/20 be signed.

### **46.5 Updated Financial Regulations**

Members were happy to receive the updated Financial Regulations. Following the recommendation of the Policy & Resource Committee, it was

**RESOLVED** that the updated Financial Regulations be adopted.

### **46.6 Financial Update 2020/21**

Councillors noted the financial update for Q1 2020/21. Members discussed the sequencing of the cemetery extension, and were keen to move the project forward but recognised that the priority was to provide essential services during the pandemic.

## **47. DELEGATION OF POWERS**

### **47.1 Full Council**

47.1.1 The Town Clerk reported on the use of delegated powers in respect of essential works at the Silverdale Centre. Councillors were informed of the details of the process followed, and noted that the necessary remedial works would take place in August.

47.1.2 Members discussed the continuation of the schedule of delegation of emergency powers to the Town Clerk, plus a nominated Councillor. Members requested this be clarified to read 'plus either the Town Mayor, Deputy Town Mayor, Leader or Deputy Leader'. It was

**RESOLVED** that the schedule of delegation of emergency powers to the Town Clerk, plus either the Town Mayor, Deputy Town Mayor, Leader or Deputy Leader continue.

47.2 Planning Committee

Councillors noted that members of the Planning Committee had held some informal meetings recently to discuss issues relevant to the Committee's work. Members discussed the Town Clerk's amended recommendation to hold a virtual Planning Committee meeting and agreed that such a meeting should be trialled on the scheduled date of 11<sup>th</sup> August 2020. It was

**RESOLVED** that the current planning administration process and system of delegation would continue until the 11<sup>th</sup> of August and then be suspended and a virtual Planning Meeting would be held on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

**48. BOROUGH PARISH LIASON FORM**

48.1 Meeting Cancellation

Members noted that the Borough Parish Liaison Forum meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> July had been cancelled and that the next meeting was scheduled for 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

48.2 Scrutiny Request

Councillors welcomed the Borough Council's decision for its Scrutiny Committees to look at the Borough Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic and were keen to provide a submission from the Town Council. It was agreed that the process used to produce the Speed Limit Consultation would be followed. Councillor Mickleburgh will collate submissions from Councillors and provide them to the Town Clerk for formal submission to Wokingham Borough Council.

**49. SPEED LIMIT REVIEW**

Members noted that the Town Council had submitted its recommendations to the Speed Limit Review conducted by Wokingham Borough Council. It was agreed that the submission would be shared with residents on the Earley Town Council website.

**50. LOCAL GREEN SPACE - CONSULTATION**

It was noted that a response to Wokingham Borough Council's request for the Town Council to identify further areas of Local Green Space was submitted on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020. Councillors discussed the recent development work at Addington School, work which impacted on the SULV, and were disappointed to note that Earley Town Council had not been informed of the intended work by either Woodley Town Council or the Borough Council.

**51. COUNCILLORS' ATTENDANCES**

51.1 Record of Members' Attendance

Members noted details of Councillors' attendance during 2020/21 at meetings of the Council and its Committees. It was agreed that meetings that had been cancelled due to Covid-19 would be identified accordingly on the Record of Members' Attendance.

**52. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT**

Councillors noted the details of Orders for Payment (Vouchers 3239-3263, 3264-3294, 3295-3296, 3184 - 3211), and Imprest Account (Vouchers 13-14 and 505-514).

**53. PUBLICATIONS**

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

MERA	Executive Committee Report – 9 <sup>th</sup> July 2020
Involve Wokingham	Newsletter – 20 <sup>th</sup> July 2020

**54. PRESS RELEASES**

The Council requested press releases on Earley Town Council’s submission to the Speed Limit Review and the virtual meeting of the Planning Committee on the 11<sup>th</sup> of August.

**55. 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**

**56. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**57. TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 9.30pm

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**Town Mayor**