

# EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL



Town Clerk  
JO FRIEND BA(Hons) PSLCC

Council Offices  
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RG6 5UL

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20 January 2021

Dear Councillor

A meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee will be held remotely\* on **Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021** commencing at 7pm.

Yours faithfully

*Jo Friend*

**TOWN CLERK**

**To: Members of the Policy & Resources Committee**

Councillors C Jones (Chair), A Bassett, D Chopping, J Clark, J Eastwell, D Hare, R Houlbrooke, T Maher, S Matthews and A Mickleburgh.

*Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting which will be held using the Zoom conferencing platform. Meeting ID 941 4399 3191, Passcode 451815.*

*To obtain further login details please email [administration@earley-tc.gov.uk](mailto:administration@earley-tc.gov.uk) by 4pm, Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021.*

\*The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020

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## **AGENDA**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To receive any apologies for absence.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive any declarations of interest from Members.

**3. PUBLIC FORUM**

To receive any questions from members of the public attending the meeting. The Public Forum shall not exceed 15 minutes. If there are no questions, the Council will commence business forthwith.

#### **4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

To consider the Minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and, if appropriate, to authorise their signing as a true and correct record. In view of the current lockdown situation, the Chair to authorise the application of an electronic signature to the minutes document.

#### **5. COVID-19 – UPDATE**

To note that a further lockdown was announced by the Government, taking effect on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

##### **5.1 Help Shop**

To note that, in accordance with the rules of the lockdown, the Town Council Helpshop will be closed to visitors in person from 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Officers will continue to be available to assist residents and answer queries either by email or on the telephone.

##### **5.2 Recreation**

5.2.1 To note that adult and junior football bookings have been suspended with effect from 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021. The situation will be reviewed as and when guidance is amended.

5.2.2 To note that parks, playgrounds and the Nature Reserve remain open. The Town Clerk has requested that the Borough's Covid Marshals include Sol Joel Park and Meadow Park in their patrols.

##### **5.3 Community Centres**

To note that, as a result of the lockdown, the hiring of all the Town Council's community centres has been suspended with effect from 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021. An exception has been made for the two pre-schools operating at Maiden Place CC and Silverdale as they are registered early years settings and therefore permitted to operate during lockdown. The situation will be reviewed as and when guidance is amended.

#### **6. DRAFT BUDGET AND PRECEPT**

6.1 To note that Budget Working Party meetings were held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020, 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Members were provided with detailed income and expenditure records and estimates for the Council's business 2020/21 and 2021/22.

6.2 To consider the recommended budget arising from the Budget Working Party meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and to **RESOLVE** upon putting that recommendation to Council for approval at its meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

6.3 To consider the recommendations arising from the Budget Working party meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021 in relation to the Town Precept for 2021/22 and to **RESOLVE** to recommend to Council accordingly. The precept figure to be formally approved by Full Council at its meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

Reports and recommendations arising from the Budget Working Party meetings have been provided to Councillors under separate cover.

#### **7. BANK RECONCILIATIONS**

To note that the Bank Reconciliations for October 2020 and November 2020 have been made available to the Chair of Policy & Resources Committee for information.

**8. IT UPGRADE**

The planned upgrade of the Council’s IT system is progressing, the broadband change has been commissioned and indicative costs for new hardware and software have either been received or will be received imminently.

8.1 To note that the Town Clerk, along with both the Chair of the Council and the Leader, approved the broadband installation charge under delegated authority. An excess construction charge of £524 was payable in order for a connection to be installed from the highway to the Council offices. The contractor is awaiting the granting of a Street Works permit in order to carry out the work.

8.2 To consider a suggestion from the Town Clerk that the total cost of the IT Upgrade project may exceed the budgeted figure and, if agreed, to **RESOLVE** that a sum may be drawn from General Reserve if that proves to be the case. Further information relating to specific costs will be available at the meeting.

**9. TOWN COUNCIL GRANTS**

To note that applications for Earley Town Council Grants 2021 are now being invited. Promotional information has been posted on the Town Council website and all its noticeboards. In addition, previous recipients are being informed by email. The closing date for receipt of applications is **24<sup>th</sup> February 2021**.

A report on applications received will be submitted to the next Policy and Resources Committee meeting for its consideration.

**10. EARLEY SCARECROW TRAIL**

To consider a request from the organiser of the original Earley Scarecrow Trail that the Town Council consider funding the insurance costs associated with the event, a sum of approximately £400. The organiser is considering holding the trail earlier in the year than previously, possibly around Easter, as 2020 saw the arrival of a Halloween hunt which also proved popular with Earley residents.

Members to discuss and to **RESOLVE** accordingly.

**11. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT**

Details of Orders for Payment since the last meeting of the Town Council were not available at the time of agenda publication. Information will be provided to councillors when it becomes available.

**12. PUBLICATIONS**

To note that the following communications have been received and are available for perusal from the Council Offices:

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Maiden Erlegh Residents Association | Electronic Minutes – 14 <sup>th</sup> January 2021    |
| Involve Community Services          | Electronic newsletter – 15 <sup>th</sup> January 2021 |

**13. PRESS RELEASES**

To consider whether any of the foregoing items should be the subject of a special press release.

**14. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

To ***RESOLVE*** that, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable and in the public interest that the public and press are temporarily excluded and are asked to withdraw for items 15, 16, 17 and 18 on the Agenda.

**15. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

To consider the Confidential Minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and, if appropriate, to authorise their signing as a true and correct record.

**16. CENTREPOINT HIRER – AFTER SCHOOL CLUB**

To receive a verbal update from the Town Clerk.

**17. FORMER TOWN CLERK**

To receive a verbal update from the Town Clerk.

**18. STAFFING MATTERS**

To receive an update from the Town Clerk in relation to matters considered by the Staffing Sub-Committee at its meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2021:

- Salaries Review 2021/22
- Staffing Levels