



AMENITIES & LEISURE COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting for the Members of the Amenities & Leisure Committee held remotely on Wednesday, 26th May 2021 which commenced at 7.45pm.

Present

Chair – Councillor A Newton

Councillors: A Bassett, N Brock, D Ireland, A Long, T Maher, S Matthews and K Yabsley.

In attendance: J Friend (Town Clerk), E Carroll (Deputy Town Clerk), G Hawker (Senior Park Ranger), J Friend (Senior Operations Support Officer), R Fryer (Democratic Services Officer), and a resident.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Eastwell and J Eastwell.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. PUBLIC FORUM

A resident voiced their support for Item 10 – Tree Replacement, and noted that since this item had been agreed, a third tree had been demolished in a road traffic accident. They requested that a third replacement tree be provided and installed. The resident also voiced their support for Item 11 – Tree Register, and hoped that such a register would provide a good basis for improving the street scene of Earley.

Councillor N Brock entered the meeting

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd March 2021 were agreed as a true record and their signature by the Chair was recommended (Minutes 67–81).

- 4.1 Councillor K Yabsley requested an update on Minute 72 – Earley Environmental Group Proposal. The Town Clerk confirmed that letters had been sent as requested, and Wokingham Borough Council had responded stating they would contact the EEG directly. The EEG had reported that no contact had been received from WBC, the matter was now being followed up.

5. CORONAVIRUS - UPDATE

5.1 Community Centres

Councillors noted that the relevant risk assessments had been updated in line with the easing of restrictions, that occupancy rates were currently subdued, and that the use of Maiden Place and Radstock Lane Community Centres as polling stations had gone well.

5.2 Helpshop

Members were pleased to note that the ETC Helpshop had returned to normal opening hours on 29th March, and that it was now supplying the new green recycling bags on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council.

5.3 Health and Safety Executive Inspection

Members were pleased to note that the processes created by senior officers throughout the pandemic to ensure that safe operating practices were in place had resulted in ETC passing a HSE spot inspection ‘with flying colours.’ The Chair expressed her thanks to officers for their efforts.

6. CULVER LANE ALLOTMENTS

The Deputy Town Clerk reported on the plot inspection visit made by officers on 19th May, accompanied by a representative from the Culver Lane Association group. The general level of cultivation was good, and a small number of letters had been generated to remind users of their responsibilities. Regular monthly inspections would continue.

Councillors discussed the membership of the annual allotment awards inspection team. Consideration was given to the inclusion of previous award winners into the process, and the need to be mindful of logistical concerns, especially with regards to coronavirus issues. It was

RECOMMENDED that Councillors A Bassett, N Brock, J Eastwell and M Eastwell comprise the core annual allotment award inspection team, and that previous winners and an allotment association representative be included in visits at a later stage.

7. MEADOW PARK

Councillors considered the Senior Operations Support Officer’s report on the planned replacement of a major piece of play equipment at Meadow Park and the proposed use of CIL money for the project. Members were pleased to note that the project was on track and discussed the inclusive seating options available and issues around fencing. Councillors requested that the environmental credentials of the proposals be considered as part of the decision making process.

8. YOUTH ANGLING PROJECT

The Town Clerk’s report on a prospective partnership with a local charity, Reading FC Community Trust, on a youth angling project at Maiden Erlegh Lake during the summer holidays was considered. Members were very supportive of the initiative. The Town Clerk will progress this.

9. LAKESIDE

Members discussed a resident’s suggestion that consideration be given to the planting of trees within the grass verge at Lakeside. The Park Ranger noted that much of the responsibility for this was with WBC as it was not Town Council land, but that, in principle, there was no reason why ETC shouldn’t support the initiative. He noted that front gardens might be a better location for individual tree planting, and that promoting appropriate hedgerow planting may be a more suitable avenue for exploration in terms of positive environmental impact. It was

RECOMMENDED that the Town Clerk contact the resident to put forward the Park Ranger's suggestions. Councillors were agreed that a letter of support should be supplied should the resident takes their proposal to WBC.

10. TREE REPLACEMENT – MILTON ROAD

Councillors were pleased to note that confirmation had been received from Wokingham Borough Council that tree replacement works in Milton Road were scheduled to be carried out in November 2021. WBC had confirmed that it would conduct underground services checks, remove the dead trees and plant two replacement trees. Earley Town Council had already agreed to fund the purchase of the new trees. WBC had also confirmed that it would nurture and maintain the trees once planted. Members discussed the request arising from the Public Forum that the Town Council fund the replacement of the 3rd tree. It was

RECOMMENDED that officers contact WBC to find out if the borough could include a third tree in the current plans and also confirm that the existing budget would be sufficient for this. Members of the committee will be informed if further funds are likely to be required.

11. TREE REGISTER

Members considered a councillor's suggestion that ETC consider the creation of a register of all trees of interest within Earley. Councillors discussed the purpose of such a register, what may qualify as a tree of interest, who could collect the information and who would collate it, as well as what records were already in existence. Members were keen not to replicate what was already in place, but to work to enhance it. The Senior Park Ranger suggested a priority should be trying to get protection orders placed on all the veteran trees in Earley, trees that had already been identified by the Wokingham District Veteran Tree Association. It was

RECOMMENDED that Councillor Maher contact the Earley Environmental Group with regard identifying important trees in the town and possible requests for further TPOs, and consideration be given to asking the WDVTA if an extra layer could be added to their website with information on trees that are important although not considered veteran.

12. WBC DRAFT LEISURE STRATEGY

It was noted that WBC was seeking residents' views on its proposals for a leisure strategy.

13. PUBLICATIONS

The Committee noted that the following items had been received and were available for viewing from the Council Offices:

Involve Community Services	E-newsletter – 1 st April, 26 th April, 10 th May 2021
MERA	Executive Committee Meetings – 8 th April & 13 th May 2021
Me2 Club	E-newsletters – 31 st March & 30 th April 2021
Community Council for Berkshire	E-newsletter – 6 th May 2021

14. PRESS RELEASES

No press releases were requested.

15. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 8.56 pm.

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Chair, Amenities & Leisure Committee