



POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting for the Members of the Policy & Resources Committee held remotely on Wednesday 14th July 2021 commencing at 7pm.

Present

Chair – Councillor C Jones

Councillors: A Bassett, D Chopping, J Clark, J Eastwell, D Hare, R Houlbrooke, T Maher, and S Matthews.

In attendance: J Friend (Town Clerk), E Carroll (Deputy Town Clerk), R Fryer (Democratic Services Officer) and Councillor M Smith.

21. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Mickleburgh and C Smith.

22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

23. PUBLIC FORUM

No members of the public were present.

24. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

24.1 The Minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 2nd June 2021 were confirmed a true record and recommended for signature by the Chair.

24.2 Councillor Jones requested an update on Minute 11 – Chalfont Woods. The Town Clerk reported that she had presented the Town Council's request to Wokingham Borough Council and had received an acknowledgement and was awaiting further response.

25. DELEGATED POWERS

Members noted the Town Clerk's report on the use of delegated powers since the last meeting of the Council. The Town Clerk reported that the remedial works at Radstock Lane Community Centre had now been completed.

Councillor M Smith left the meeting

26. FINANCIAL UPDATE

Members discussed the Q1 financial update report. Councillor Matthews requested clarification on an income item and the Town Clerk confirmed that this reflected furlough payments in relation to caretakers. Councillors noted that the expenditure on the cemetery extension had not yet been made and requested an indicative timeline for the project. The Town Clerk reported that work on this project had been paused whilst officers tried to find out



what impact, if any, the borough council's plan to replace Earley Station footbridge would have on the cemetery as two of the current bridge pillars are on Town Council land at the site and the footbridge itself traverses Town Council air space above the cemetery.

Officers were aware that the intention was for the current footbridge to be removed and a replacement footbridge to be erected but Wokingham Borough Council would not supply the Town Council with any information on this project. The Town Clerk reported that WBC had uploaded a scoping report on the proposed new Earley Station footbridge onto the WBC planning portal and this document identified the Town Council's cemetery extension land as being required for the footbridge project. The Town Clerk has made numerous requests for information from WBC and has lodged complaints with the Chief Executive of WBC and with other senior officers but, unfortunately, the borough council is still refusing to meet with the Town Council or to provide it with any information regarding the footbridge proposals. Councillor Jones confirmed that a complaint had been lodged with the Chief Executive of WBC, but a meaningful response was still awaited.

Councillors were dismayed by the behaviour of WBC in this regard and expressed deep disappointment with the conduct of the borough council. It was agreed that the Town Clerk should pursue a response from the Chief Executive, and that, at this point in time, it would not be prudent to spend further public money on the extension project until some level of clarity on WBC's intentions had been obtained.

27. BANK RECONCILIATIONS

Councillors noted that the Bank Reconciliations for May 2021 had been made available to the Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee for information. It was agreed that bank reconciliations be presented to the whole Policy and Resources Committee twice a year for information purposes only.

28. CCLA

The Town Clerk provided members with some background on CCLA, an investment management company for churches, charities and local authorities.

28.1 Public Sector Deposit Fund

Members considered updating the signatories on the Town Council's PSDF account with CCLA. It was

RECOMMENDED that Councillors A Bassett, J Eastwell, D Hare and the Town Clerk act as signatories for the PSDF account.

28.2 Property Fund

Members considered updating the signatories on the Town Council's Property Fund account with CCLA (current balance zero). It was

RECOMMENDED that Councillors A Bassett, J Eastwell, D Hare and the Town Clerk act as signatories for the Property Fund account.



28.3 Correspondent

Members considered updating the named correspondent on the two CCLA accounts. It was

RECOMMENDED that the named correspondent be the Town Clerk / RFO.

28.4 Number of Signatories

It was **RECOMMENDED** that any two signatories be required to authorise CCLA transactions.

29. **GREEN EVENTS RECOMMENDATION**

Members considered the recommendation from the members of the Amenities and Leisure Committee that a budget of £4,000 be allocated to fund a series of ‘green’ events and activities during 2021. Councillors were minded to support the project. It was

RECOMMENDED that Earley Town Council allocate a budget of £4,000 (from the Environmental Projects fund) to a series of ‘green’ events and activities during 2021.

30. **CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN**

The Chair read out a written report provided by the Climate Emergency Working Group. Members discussed the group’s suggestions for a dedicated webpage and for the use of a third party’s social media page for dissemination of information and engagement with residents. Councillors were agreed that for the Town Council to have a social media presence, there first had to be a clear policy on matters such as approved platforms, content, oversight and responsibilities, the need for Town Council ownership and control would preclude collaboration with a third party. The Town Clerk to investigate adding a dedicated page to the ETC website.

Councillors discussed the information being provided to Council by this working group and agreed that detailed written reports should be provided to the Policy & Resources Committee in advance of meetings in order that Members had time to digest the information and ask questions of the working group. It was also agreed that, given the scope and importance of the climate emergency agenda, the working group would be requested to provide minutes and reports of its meetings to all councillors on a regular basis. The Town Clerk to speak with the Chair of the working group about these matters.

31. **TOWN COUNCIL GRANTS**

31.1 Citizens Advice Wokingham – Request

The Committee discussed a request from Citizens Advice Wokingham that town and parish councils consider making a grant contribution towards funding the purchase of a modified bus which would provide a mobile Citizens Advice service in the Wokingham area. Councillors were keen to support the idea in principle and requested further information so that an informed decision could be made at the Council meeting on 28th July 2021. Councillor Jones offered to make contact with the CEO of Citizens Advice Wokingham in this regard.



31.2 Town Council Grants 2021/22

Councillors noted that a thank you message had been received from the Earley Day Centre, a Town Council grant recipient.

32. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT

Councillors received details of Orders for Payment made since the last meeting of the Town Council (Vouchers 4039 – 4067, 4068 – 4071, 4072 – 4115) and Imprest Account (Vouchers 592 – 595).

33. PUBLICATIONS

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

Me2 Club	E-newsletter – June 2021
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34. PRESS RELEASES

No press releases were requested.

35. 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

36. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

37. STAFFING MATTERS

38. SIBLY DEVELOPMENT

39. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 8.23 pm.

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Chair, Policy & Resources Committee