



EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a remote meeting of the Members of Earley Town Council held on Wednesday, 28th July 2021 which commenced at 7.30pm.

Present

Chair – The Mayor, Councillor A Bassett

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

In Attendance: J Friend (Town Clerk), E Carroll (Deputy Town Clerk), and R Fryer (Democratic Services Officer).

46. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Ireland.

47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

48. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no members of the public in attendance.

Councillor N Brock entered the meeting

49. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

49.1 The Chair noted Minute 23.2 and Councillors discussed the review of the Standing Orders.

Cllr A Long requested an update on Minute 26 ‘Chalfont Woods’, and the Town Clerk reported that there were no further updates since those reported at the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee members on 14th July (Minute 24.2).

Cllr M Shaw requested an update on Minute 27 ‘Climate Emergency’, and the Town Clerk reported that, following the last meeting of the Climate Emergency Working Group, the redrafted letter would be sent to schools in September 2021.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Minutes of the meeting for the members of the Town Council (15-38) held on Wednesday 16th June 2021 were a true record and could be signed by the Chair.

49.2 It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Town Council (37-45) held on Thursday 17th June 2021 were a true record and could be signed by the Chair.

50. TOWN MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Town Mayor reported that she had met with the Wednesday Volunteers whilst they were carrying out work at the allotments. On behalf of the Town Council, she had thanked them for their hard work and enthusiasm.

She expressed her desire to raise the profile of the Town Mayor and that she hoped to be able to attend more events as restrictions were being lifted. The Town Clerk confirmed that the Town Mayor's request for a dedicated page to be added to the Council's website encouraging local groups and organisations to invite the Town Mayor to their meetings and events was in the process of being organised. The Town Mayor announced her intention to visit the Youth Angling Project over the summer.

Councillor G Bhangra entered the meeting

51. COMMITTEE REPORTS

51.1 Amenities & Leisure Committee

Councillor A Newton presented the draft Minutes of the meeting for the members of the Amenities & Leisure Committee held on the 30th June 2021. She noted Minute 21 'Culver Lane Allotments' and requested an update on the earth pile. The Deputy Town Clerk reported that she had contacted the resident, and he had made arrangements for the earth to be removed by the builders. The work had been overseen by the Senior Park Ranger. Cllr A Newton asked if any progress had been made on Minute 23 'Green Fair'. The Town Clerk reported that the budget had been approved by the members of the Policy & Resources Committee on 14th July (Minute 29) and that meetings were being arranged. Cllr A Newton noted Minute 24 'Tree Register', and Cllr T Maher reported that the draft terms of reference had been drawn up and that he was intending to schedule a meeting for the working party in August. Councillors enquired as to the popularity of the Youth Angling Project (Minute 25). The Town Clerk noted that the organisers were Reading FC Community Trust, but that her understanding was that the project had been oversubscribed.

The draft Minutes of the meeting for the members of the Amenities & Leisure Committee held on 30th June 2021 (Minutes 16-31) were received.

51.2 Planning Committee

Councillor G Littler presented the Minutes of the meeting for the members of the Planning Committee held on 8th June 2021, the Minutes of the extraordinary meeting for the members of the Planning Committee held on 22nd June 2021, and the draft Minutes of the meeting for the members of the Planning Committee held on 6th July 2021. Councillor M Eastwell wished to thank the Planning Committee for their comprehensive response to Planning Application 211686, and Cllr G Littler expressed his thanks to the Planning Advisor for his support with this.

The Minutes of the meetings for the members of the Planning Committee held on 8th June 2021 (Minutes 18-33), 22nd June 2021 (Minutes 34-38) and 6th July 2021 (Minutes 39-56) were received.

51.3 Policy & Resources Committee

Councillor C Jones presented the draft Minutes of the meeting for the members of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 14th July 2021. He noted Minute 26 'Financial Update' with

reference to the Earley Station footbridge, a matter which would be further discussed at this meeting under agenda item 11.

The draft Minutes of the meeting of members of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 14th July 2021 (Minutes 21-39) were received.

52. REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER BODIES

52.1 Wokingham Job Support Centre

Councillor A Mickleburgh presented his report on the Wokingham Job Support Centre virtual AGM and noted that the organisation wished to express its thanks to Earley Town Council for its support over the years.

53. COVID-19 - UPDATE

53.1 Community Centres

Members noted that, following the lifting of government restrictions, the Town Council was recommending that face coverings be worn in its public buildings and that hirers continue to observe ventilation, hand washing and other recommended practices. The Town Clerk reported that, with regard to numbers at events, hirers were being dealt with on an individual basis, and that party bookings were not currently being accepted.

53.2 Council Offices and Helpshop

Councillors noted that, following the lifting of government restrictions, the Town Council was continuing with all of the measures previously put in place to protect the health and welfare of staff. Visitors to the Helpshop were being requested to continue wearing a face covering when attending the site.

54. DELEGATION OF POWERS

54.1 Use of Delegated Powers

Members received a report detailing the use of delegated powers since the last meeting of the Council on 16th June 2021.

54.2 Full Council

Members considered the continuing impact of the pandemic on the Council's ability to hold all meetings face to face whilst ensuring the safety of all participants. The Chair noted that continuing the schedule of delegated powers did not preclude the holding of physical meetings provided these could be held safely. Councillors discussed the 6-month rule [Local Government Act 1972 s85 (1)] and its potential impact on Earley Town Councillors. The Town Clerk is considering a range of solutions and will advise accordingly. After discussion it was

RECOMMENDED that the schedule of delegated powers detailed in Minutes 7, 7.1 and 7.2 'Delegated Powers' at the Annual Meeting of the Council, 4th May 2021, be continued. The continued adoption of the scheme to be reviewed again at the next meeting of full Council.

55. CITIZENS ADVICE WOKINGHAM – FUNDING REQUEST

Councillors considered the request from Citizens Advice Wokingham for a grant to support the purchase and running of a mobile advice unit, as discussed at the meeting for members of the Policy & Resources Committee on 14th July 2021. Councillor C Jones reported on his

discussion with Jake Morrison, CEO of Citizens Advice Wokingham, who had advised that the van should be ready for use sometime in September. Members were keen to support the work of CAB. It was

RECOMMENDED that Earley Town Council provide a grant of £3,000 to Citizens Advice Wokingham to support the purchase and running of a mobile advice unit. It was agreed that £1,000 should come from the Grants Budget and the remaining £2,000 be taken from general reserves.

56. MAYS LANE CEMETERY

The Town Clerk provided an update on the matter of Wokingham Borough Council's intention to replace the footbridge at Earley train station and the potential impact on both Mays Lane Cemetery and the Town Council's plans to extend the burial ground. The Town Clerk reported that WBC officers had refused to meet with the Town Council to discuss the matter, even though the current footbridge pillars are on Earley Town Council land, and the only information available was a document WBC had mistakenly posted on the planning portal which suggested the impact could be significant. Councillors were frustrated by this continuing lack of communication on the part of the borough council.

Councillors expressed an interest in visiting the site with the Town Clerk to better understand the situation. It was noted that the preliminary phase actions of the cemetery extension had been completed but the next phase would involve a substantial amount of work and expenditure. Members were united in their dissatisfaction with WBC's actions. It was

RECOMMENDED that a formal letter be sent to Wokingham Borough Council demanding a site meeting between borough officers, the Chair of the Town Council, the Leader and the Town Clerk.

57. BULMERSHE PARK – TOWN GREEN PROPOSAL

Councillors considered a proposal from the Friends of Bulmershe Open Space that Earley Town Council petition Wokingham Borough Council to designate Bulmershe Park as a Town Green. It was noted that Woodley Town Council would also be considering this matter at its next meeting. The sequencing of the support was considered and the Town Clerk suggested that if the proposal was agreed by the Town Council, the Friends of Bulmershe Open Space could co-ordinate the timing of the letters of petition. It was

RECOMMENDED that Earley Town Council agree to petition Wokingham Borough Council to designate Bulmershe Park as a Town Green.

58. LOCAL CYCLING & WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

Members noted that comments were invited on WBC's draft Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan. In view of the short timescale for the submission of comments, and the comprehensive document which the working group had already produced and submitted, consideration was given to authorising the LCWIP working group to respond to this consultation. It was

RECOMMENDED that the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan working group be authorised to submit a response to Wokingham Borough Council's draft Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan.

59. REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES

Councillors received information, provided by the Hampshire Association of Local Councils, on the consultation currently being conducted into the review of Parliamentary constituencies.

60. COUNCILLORS' ATTENDANCE

60.1 Record of Members' Attendance

Members noted details of Councillors' attendance during 2021/22 at meetings of the Council and its Committees and at remote meetings held for members of Council and its Committees. It was requested that the notation for Councillor absence be used for remote meetings for members as well as for face-to-face meetings.

61. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT

Councillors noted the details of Orders for Payment (Vouchers 4116 – 4118, 4119 – 4144), and that there were no Imprest Account vouchers to report.

62. PUBLICATIONS

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

NERA	Minutes of Executive Meeting – 8 th July 2021
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63. PRESS RELEASES

Councillors requested the following press release be issued:

63.1 The Town Mayor's visit to the Summer Holiday Fishing Project (once the visit had taken place).

64. 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

65. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

66. COMMITTEE REPORTS

67. DELEGATION OF POWERS

68. SERVICE TO EARLEY AWARD

69. COVID AWARD

70. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 9.30pm.

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Town Mayor