



EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Earley of Town Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Radstock Lane on Wednesday 8th May 2024 which commenced at 7.00pm.

Present

Councillors: R Ahlawat, A Bassett, N Brock, R Browne, R Cook, J Eastwell, D Hare, M Iyengunmwena, S Jordan, I Khayinza, G Littler, T Maher, S Matthews, A Neal, B Owen, H Sarasan, C Smith and M Smith.

In Attendance: J Friend (Town Clerk) and E Carroll (Deputy Town Clerk)

1. ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR

The outgoing Town Mayor, Councillor Caroline Smith thanked councillors and council officers for the support she had received during her enjoyable time as Town Mayor. Members also noted the outgoing Town Mayor's recent engagements which included a visit to a hospital radio, a night in a cell at Thames Valley Police and the Annual Town Electors' meeting.

- 1.1 The outgoing Town Mayor called for nominations for the office of Town Mayor for the municipal year 2024/25. A nomination for Cllr Mike Smith was proposed and seconded. There were no other nominations. It was:

RESOLVED that Cllr Mike Smith be elected to the office of Town Mayor (Chair of the Council) for the municipal year 2024/25. There were 2 abstentions.

- 1.2 The newly elected Town Mayor signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, received the Chain of Office from Cllr C Smith and assumed the position of Chair.

2. ELECTION OF DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR

- 2.1 The Town Mayor called for nominations for the office of Deputy Town Mayor for the municipal year 2024/25. A nomination for Cllr Nicola Brock was proposed and seconded. There were no other nominations. It was:

RESOLVED that Cllr Nicola Brock be elected to the office of Deputy Town Mayor for the municipal year 2024/25. There were 3 abstentions.

- 2.2 The Town Mayor presented the Deputy Town Mayor with the Chain of Office.

Councillor Khayinza entered the meeting.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Bradley, T Holton, M De Jong, P Jorgensen, N Jorgensen, A Long and S Newton.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no members of the public present.

6. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of Earley Town Council (127 - 146) held on 27th March 2024 were a true record and could be signed by the Chair.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

7.1 Planning Committee

Cllr M Smith presented the draft Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting (Minutes 153 - 166) held on 9th April 2024.

8. APPOINTMENTS

8.1 Leader of the Council

The Chair called for nominations for the position of Leader of the Council, in accordance with Standing Order 5n (v and vii). One nomination was proposed and seconded. It was:

RESOLVED that Cllr David Hare be appointed Leader of the Council. There were 4 abstentions.

8.2 Deputy Leader of the Council

The Chair called for nominations for the position of Deputy Leader of the Council in accordance with Standing Order 5n (vi and viii). One nomination was proposed and seconded. It was:

RESOLVED that Cllr Tahir Maher be appointed Deputy Leader of the Council. There were 4 abstentions.

9. STANDING COMMITTEES

9.1 It was **RESOLVED** that the following Standing Committees shall continue in municipal year 2024/25:

- Amenities & Leisure Committee
- Policy & Resources Committee
- Planning Committee

9.2 Membership of Standing Committees

Members noted that in accordance with Standing Order 4(d) the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor shall be ex officio members of all Committees, this being in addition to the number of committee places fixed by Council.

Members considered the membership of the Standing Committees. It was noted that Councillor De Jong wished to be a member of the Planning Committee and newly appointed Town Mayor Councillor M Smith wished to remain a full member of the Planning Committee. It was:

RESOLVED that, subject to the amendments to the Planning Committee as detailed above, the current membership of the Standing Committees should continue for the municipal year 2024/25, or until such time that the Council agrees otherwise.

9.3 Chairs of Standing Committees

It was noted that no decision was required with regard to the chairs of Standing Committees, as under Standing Order (4e.vii), the Committees would appoint their own chair at the first meeting of the committee.

10. **REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER BODIES**

10.1 Sonning & District Welfare & Education Trust

Councillors received a written report from Councillor Owen on her attendance at a meeting on 27th March 2024. Councillor Owen indicated that the Trust had not received any applications from residents of Earley and suggested that promoting the activities of the Trust may attract such applications.

10.2 Kenton Road Day Centre

Councillors received a written report from Council Bassett on her attendance at a meeting on 9th April 2024.

10.3 Councillors reviewed the current representations on other bodies and the following changes were made: -

Councillor G Littler will step down from the Wokingham Borough/Parish Liaison Forum and Councillor M Smith will take his place.

The Town Clerk reminded councillors of the importance of providing reports and updates for inclusion on future Council agendas when acting as an ETC representative to other bodies.

11. **DEEDS**

Members noted that the various deeds relating to the Council's interests in land are held by the Town Clerk as Proper Officer and are available for Members' inspection.

12. **FINANCE**

12.1 Financial Statements 2023/24

Members received the financial statements prepared by the Finance Officer, 'Unaudited Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024'. Members **RESOLVED** that this document be signed by the Chair.

12.2 Internal Auditor's Report

12.2.1 Members received the Internal Auditor's report for the year ended 31st March 2024. Councillors were pleased to note that the Council's financial records have been well maintained and thanked the Town Clerk and officers for the work involved.

12.2.2 Members received the Internal Auditor's completed Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24, page 3 of the AGAR 2023/24.

12.3 AGAR 2023/24 - Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

Members reviewed ‘Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24’ and agreed the entries. It was: -

RESOLVED that ‘Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24’ be completed and signed.

12.4 AGAR 2023/24 – Accounting Statements 2023/24

Members reviewed ‘Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24’ and it was

RESOLVED that ‘Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24’ be signed.

13. **COLLINS DRIVE PLAY AREA**

Councillors noted that work on the installation to replace the toddlers’ play area at Collins Drive is to start w/c 10th June 2024. An information session will be held on site for residents in May, date to be confirmed, this will provide information on the plans and construction process. ETC Officers and representatives from the contractor will be in attendance to answer any questions from residents about the installation.

14. **COUNCILLORS' ATTENDANCE**

14.1 Record of Members' Attendance

Councillors noted the details of Councillors' attendance during 2023/24 at meetings of the Council and its Committees. Councillor Owen requested that her attendance at the Council meeting in March 2024 be recorded as ‘R’.

15. **ORDERS FOR PAYMENT**

Councillors noted the details of Orders for Payment (Vouchers 6682-6704, 6705-6732, 6733-6743, 6744 – 6746, 6747 – 6754, 6755 – 6768 and 6769-6773) and Imprest vouchers (940-957 and 85 – 89).

16. **PUBLICATIONS**

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

Office of the PCC	E-newsletter April 2024
MERA	Minutes of meeting 11 th April 2024
Involve Community Services	E- newsletters 5 th April & 19 th April 2024
Connecting Communities Berkshire (CCB)	E-newsletter April 2024
Friendship Alliance	E-newsletter 19 th April 2024
Earley NAG	Agenda for meeting 13 th May 2024

17. **PRESS RELEASES**

Councillors requested the following press releases be issued:

- Election of the new Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor
- The Town Council's participation in the No Mow May campaign

18. 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

19. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

20. STAFFING MATTERS

21. PLANNING ADVISOR

22. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 7.58pm.

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Town Mayor