

# Ongar

Town Council

Bansons Way, CM5 9AS  
01277 365348



Email. [clerk@ongartowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@ongartowncouncil.gov.uk)  
[www.ongartowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.ongartowncouncil.gov.uk)

*Members of the public and press are invited to attend this meeting*

## TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

You are hereby summoned to a meeting of the Full Council to be held on 21st November 2024 commencing at 8 P.M. at the Council Offices, Bansons Way CM5 9AS.

☎ Murray

Debbie Murray  
Clerk to the Council

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### AGENDA

#### 96.24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To **NOTE** any apologies which have been received. **Motion.** The council to record and accept apologies for absence

#### 97.24 VACANCY FOR COUNCILLOR VIA CO-OPTION

An application for co-option has been received by the council to fill a vacancy. Details of the applicants resume are on the One Drive for members perusal. The applicant will attend the meeting. Members will be asked to review the resume and make a decision on this co-option at this meeting.

<..\OneDrive\Office\Councillor documents\Councillor documents\Full Council\2024\11 November\CV CJR.pdf>

#### 98.24 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

To **AGREE** the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024

<..\OneDrive\Office\Councillor documents\Councillor documents\Full Council\2024\11 November\Ongar Town Council Draft Minutes October 2024.docx>

#### 99.24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To **RECEIVE** any Declarations of Interest by Members.

*Members of the Council are subject to paragraphs 6 (DPIs), 7 (Other Pecuniary Interests) and 8 (non-pecuniary interests) of that Code. Members are also subject to paragraphs 9-11 of that Code as regards declaration of interests and participation in the meeting insofar as any item of business involves such an interest.*

## 100.24 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC & PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To **RECEIVE** questions from members of the public for a period determined by the Chairperson of the Meeting. The maximum time allowed for this item is 15 minutes. A member of the public shall not speak for more than three minutes. ***Please NOTE if the Clerk of the Meeting has not been previously notified of the Question, Council may have to note questions and respond to them after the Meeting.***

## 101.24 CORRESPONDENCE

Members are advised that the Locum Clerk/Clerk has received a number of queries regarding: Several trees and hedgerows that need cutting back and attending to. The locum clerk has been liaising with local residents on this matter. Onslow Gardens quotation to reduce trees back to the hedgerow £1,520. A second quotation has been received for £760 for the car park side of Love Lane.

## 102.24 REPORTS & MEMBERS REPORTS

### -Chairmans Report

### -Town Councillors Reports and for those that attend on committees on behalf of the town council.

It is understood that a number of Cllrs, have attended meetings in their positions as Councillors and will give a brief resume of their attendance.

### -District and County Councillors

To receive a five-minute report from District and County Councillors on matters relating to Ongar.

(The Chairman may bring any Report including the Reports from District & County Councillors to earlier in the meeting if all Councillors are agreeable)

### - Details of Consultations

- a) Cllr Henry Walton will advise Members of the numerous Consultations that have been held with Developers on the Planning Development Sites in Ongar
- b) The locum clerk/clerk will advise of any other consultations that have been received and are not covered separately in this Agenda.

## 103.24 FINANCIAL REPORTS

### Finance reporting

- a. To receive a summary of receipts and payments up to the end of October 2024.
- b. To receive a list of budgetary information on all accounts.
- c. To receive a list of savings options available to the Town Council, to approve a way forward. Options are Unity Savings, Nationwide or CCLA.
- d. To Approve and Minute that Cllr's Gunn and Cole can be added to the Nationwide account as signatories (we currently only have one of the three signatories left).

### Proposed:

### Seconded:

- e. CCLA to Approve and Minute the addition of two new signatories to the account and to confirm the New Clerk Debra Murray and Steff Smith Finance Officer to be added to the account as the main contact.

84/23

Proposed:

Seconded:

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[November\FINANCE\Savings Options for Councils 8.8.24.docx](#)

#### **104.24 CCTV ANNUAL MAINTENANCE**

Members are advised that the clerk has received back the quotation for maintenance from Jessica Pruett at EFDC the costings of annual maintenance is £325 per annum for 3 years. It must be noted that any upgrades during the 3 year period are at the cost of OTC and after 3 years the contract is to be renewed or passed back to OTC. The original quotes are now not valid as they only last for 30 days. The clerk has requested the quotes be revisited and has been advised any change will be only be pennies. The previous quote was £20,785.70. There is a new round of grant funding opening in December via the Police and Fire Commissioner for Safer Environments which will be applied for but must be noted the amount applied for will be under £20,000 otherwise the grant will be rejected.


#### **105.24 GRANTS**

##### **A) Applications**

The Clerk/locum Clerk has not received any grant applications this month. Councillors to discuss and agree a process for the grant process for example a financial limit per grant and whether to have two bidding options per annum e.g. twice a year.

#### **106.24 JUBILEE PARK PAVILION & OCST LEASE & LOCUM CLERKS REPORT**

The lease and report by the locum clerk has been forwarded to the Council's solicitors for an opinion, this is still awaited. A verbal report will be given at the meeting. Copies of the Fire Risk Assessment and Fixed Wire Electrical Testing certificates have been received, please note they are dates 2021, no action has been taken on items identified on the Fixed Wire Electrical Wire Testing for items identified.

**107.24 ONGAR CHRISTMAS DISPLAYS – EVENT AND CHRISTMAS MARKET AND EVENT**  This will be going ahead on the 1<sup>st</sup> December, the Clerk has implemented a stall for Councillors to participate with the residents whilst allowing for a ballot box for the Christmas Window Display competition.

### **108.24 COUNCILLOR REMOTE PROXY VOTE CONSULTATION**

Councillors are advised of the Councillor Remote Proxy Vote consultation taking place currently. A formal response from the Council can be uploaded following discussion on whether Councillors should be able to remote proxy vote.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/enabling-remote-attendance-and-proxy-voting-at-local-authority-meetings/enabling-remote-attendance-and-proxy-voting-at-local-authority-meetings>

### **109.24 ONGAR TWINNING 40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY GIFT**

Councillors are to decide whether they wish to give a gift on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the twinning with Cerizay. What gift do you feel is appropriate and the cost is to be agreed e.g. replica coins.

### **110.24 POLICE REPORT**

A police report will be given in persons by PC Shepard.

### **111.24 PUBLIC FACING COMMUNICATIONS**

As you know, all Councillors sign up to the Code of Conduct when they become a Councillor, which includes the Nolan Principles (about respect, integrity, etc). These can be summarised as follows:

**In accordance with the public trust placed in me, on all occasions:**

- **I act with integrity and honesty**
- **I act lawfully**
- **I treat all persons fairly and with respect**
- **I lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of Councillor**

**In undertaking my role:**

- **I impartially exercise my responsibilities in the interests of the local community**
- **I do not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person**
- **I avoid conflicts of interest**
- **I exercise reasonable care and diligence**
- **I ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with my local authorities requirements and in the public interest.**

The Code only applies when you are acting in your capacity as a Councillor. It does NOT apply in your private life; however, Councillors must be mindful of public perceptions as residents will normally see a Councillor as being always on duty. As soon as you act as a Councillor, or a member of the public could by inference think you were acting as a Councillor, you have 'engaged the code' (i.e. the Nolan principles apply). If you talk about something which is Council Business, then you have also 'engaged the code', and this applies even if you are using personal email, phone, or whatsapp with the community. Anything you say about Council business engages the code. The code also applies to all forms of communication (so writing in a newsletter would apply). The town council also has a communications policy which must be adhered to and all formal channels must go through the Town Clerk/RFO.

The November edition of the Ongar News contains an article which although written by a councillor is under a personal column. The residents could see this as a view of the councillor and indeed the council as a corporate body. Therefore, the council would respectfully ask the councillor to include a statement in every monthly edition which clearly indicates that they are not writing as a councillor or commenting on the Town Council as a collective body. The clerk would be more than happy to work with any councillors in this position on the appropriate wording on such a statement.

#### **112.24 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

In the event that the agenda contains Exempt (pink) pages, or an item needs to be discussed confidentially, to **CONSIDER** the following motion to be proposed by the Chairman:

“That the public and the press be excluded from the meeting, the Council believing that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be discussed. However, an item may be placed in the Confidential part of the meeting so long as it is accordance with the Statutory Guidance,

There is currently THREE items to be considered

#### **A) STAFFING MATTERS**

i) Budget setting and Precept – Members were asked to bring any proposals they have to the November meeting for consideration, are any present? The Clerk has already started work on the budget and precept. A separate meeting will be held to review with the Councillors, date to be agreed.

ii) Arrangements for Cemetery Matters over Christmas – There will be cemetery cover from 24<sup>th</sup> December.

iii) Christmas and New Year Opening

The clerk is on leave over the Christmas and New Year period which was pre-booked before her appointment. The office staff are taking their annual leave, as a result the Council offices will be closed from Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December and will re-open Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025. There is remote access in place for the answerphone. Relevant notices will be placed for residents attention.

#### **113.24 ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

Emergency Plan

Chicken Coup – Looking at Policy\*

Various Leases\*

Annual Budget Review (possibly November)

Disability Access – Look at Lease and Contact EFDC\*

- **\* Locum Clerk/Clerk is aware of these**