



Minutes of the annual meeting of Ongar Town Council

Held on 11th May 2023 commencing at 8 P.M. at the Council Offices, Bansons Way.

83/23 The councillors signed their declarations of acceptance of office in the presence of the Town Clerk.

84/23 Election of Chair.

The outgoing Chair, Derek Birch called for nominations.

Cllr Gunn was nominated by Cllr Cole and seconded Cllr Roberts. With no other nominations, Cllr Gunn was elected.

85/23 Declaration of acceptance of office of Chair.

Cllr Gunn signed the Declaration in the presence of the Proper Officer.

86/23 Appointment of Vice Chair

Cllr Cole was nominated by Cllr Mendoza seconded by Cllr Roberts. With no other nominations, Cllr Cole was appointed.

87/23 Those present and apologies for absence.

Outgoing Chair Derek Birch (for item 84/23)

Chair Cllr Gunn.

Councillors Acornley, Barrell, Cole, Feetham, Mendoza, Roberts, Vaz.

Also present The Locum Clerk, The Press Officer, seven members of the public.

88/23 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

There were no declarations of interest.

89/23 Public participation.

There were seven members of the public present.

Item 95/23, response to appeal against refusal for the application to build a housing estate in Greensted was moved here.

90/23 Appointment of Committees.

Resolved. The Council appoints the members of committees as published at this meeting. Proposed Cllr Cole seconded Mendoza and carried unanimously.

91/23 Appointment of delegates and representatives to outside bodies.

Resolved. The Council appoints the delegates and representatives as published at this meeting. Proposed Cllr Cole seconded Cllr Mendoza and carried unanimously.

92/23 To note the advertisement of vacancies for co-option

There are currently seven vacancies to fill. As the recent election counts as a call for poll, the council is free to move to the next step and publish a call for co-optees.

93/23 To agree the programme of meetings for 2023-24

Resolved. The council will continue to operate the current rolling programme of meetings as shown in the published terms of reference. Proposed Cllr Cole seconded Cllr Mendoza and carried unanimously.

94/23 Appointment of Clerk to administer dispensations for 2023-24

Resolved. The Locum Clerk as Proper Officer to the Council will be authorised, where in his view it is appropriate, to administer dispensations for members with disclosable pecuniary interests that would otherwise leave the council inquorate. Proposed Cllr Mendoza seconded Cllr Cole and carried unanimously.

95/23 To consider a response to an appeal against refusal of planning application APP/J1535/W/23/3318699 for 95 residential units in Greensted.

The application for a housing estate of ninety-five buildings in Greensted has been refused and the developer has lodged an appeal against this decision. Mary Dadd gave an update on the developer's appeal which is available online for inspection with a closing date of 25th May. The developer has highlighted a previous failed appeal for Epping Forest District Council, which gives them an opportunity to challenge the competence of the District Council's Planning Department.

The Neighbourhood Plan Committee has responded on behalf of the Town Council, assembling a sound body of evidence to demonstrate how the application and the appeal are contrary to the Town's Neighbourhood Plan and Epping Forest District Council's Local Plan and policies, pointing out the misleading aspects of the appellant's statements.

The allocated sites are no longer the in green belt.

All applications must comply with Neighbourhood Plan and design guide.

The Neighbourhood Plan Committee is still keen to speak to developers.

The Clerk will provide additional evidence to support the challenge and a joint submission will be made. The Council's prompt approval of any documents will be essential.

Resolved. The Council will receive and approve a joint statement which, once agreed, will be sent by the Locum Clerk under delegated power. Proposed Cllr Mendoza seconded Cllr Cole and carried unanimously.

96/23 Project update.

Love Lane footway. Work completed.

Playground upgrade – further quotes for alternative equipment to be considered at a later meeting.

Town Sign – quote received for like-for-like replacement.

Love Lane Office – tenancy let, lease under preparation and occupancy to start in May.

97/23 Correspondence

A letter covering an allotment tenant's concern about tendering process, tree maintenance and competence of contractors was noted. Her request to meet with the chair and another councillor was noted.

An insurance claim for damaged storage bin on allotment was considered.

The Chair, Cllr Feetham and Cllr Cole, who is also the Chair of the Ongar Allotment and Garden Society were delegated to review the matter and consider the claim for a damaged storage bin. The Clerk was asked to contact the contractor for his response to the claim for damages.

Correspondence concerning the redevelopment of Ongar Garden Centre was noted.

Correspondence concerning the redevelopment of Essex House was noted. It was confirmed that the only application received was for rooflights. There has not been an application for change of use to residential, nor has there been any indication of use as temporary accommodation.

Correspondence from the District Council concerning potential funding for youth projects in Ongar. It was suggested that the enquirer should first discuss the proposal with the Ongar Community Sports Trust then bring a specific proposal to the council for consideration.

98/23 Consultations.

None this month.

99/23 Reports from District and County Councillors.

There was no report from the County Councillor.

Cllr Keska attended to congratulate the new Councillors and expressed his strong wish that the council remained apolitical. He reported that Ride London has not been confirmed for 2024 but all those involved are working towards mitigating the worst effects while getting the best from the event. The Council were advised that new housing developments are under way, and it is concerning that the developers are going straight to appeal rather than talking to the District Council Planning Department.

100/23 Police matters.

The report on Rural Policing initiative operation 'Brazil' was noted.
The update on Special Constable recruitment was noted.

101/23 To agree the Full Council meeting minutes of 20th April 2023

Resolved. The minutes of the Full Council Meeting are approved as a true record. Proposed Cllr Mendoza seconded Cllr Vaz and carried unanimously.

102/23 Finance reporting.

a. To receive a summary of receipts and payments up to the end of April 2023.

Resolved. The Council notes the draft budgetary information and confirms that the account balance £10,279.85 agrees with the reconciliation. Proposed Cllr Mendoza seconded Cllr Cole and carried unanimously.

The end-of year procedures are under way. The Council's accounts will be closed on 18th May so the Annual Governance Audit Review and Audit Reports will be considered at the June meeting.

103/23 To appoint new signatories to the bank account

Resolved. The Council will appoint Cllrs Gunn and Barrell to authorise bank payments and activities. Proposed Cllr Mendoza seconded Cllr Roberts and carried unanimously.

104/23 To consider funding for the Edwyn Gylmore memorial bench.

Resolved. The council will provide the balance of funding and purchase a bench at the cost of £1,700 ex VAT. Proposed Cllr Roberts seconded Cllr Mendoza and carried unanimously.

105/23 To note the Elector's meeting will be held on 18th May. Starting at 8.00 pm at the Budworth Hall after the planning meeting which will be held in Basons as usual.

106/23 Items for later agendas.

- Risk assessments.
- Cemetery price structure.
- Year-end closedown.
- Ride London Debriefing.
- Proposals for love lane fence.
- Trees and benches in nature reserve.

Meeting closed at 8.59 p.m.