

Ongar

Town Council

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Minutes the full council to be held on 18th June 2023. Held at the Council Offices, Bansons Way CM5 9AS.

107/23 Those present and apologies for absence.

Chair. Cllr Gunn.

Present Cllrs Acornley, Barrell, Cole, Mendoza, Roberts, Vaz.

Also present Locum Clerk, Press officer 5 members of the public. Cllr Keska.

Resolved. The council accepts apologies for absence from Cllr Feetham. Proposed Cllr Gunn and carried unanimously.

108/23 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

There were no declarations of interest.

109/23 Public participation.

A resident raised concerns about development in Kempton's Close as part two of the planning application has been approved by Epping Forest District Council. To ensure that residents' interests are represented, Cllr mendoza was delegated to attend the planning meeting at Epping Forest District Council on Wednesday 5th July.

Two residents raised objections to plans for another Ride London. The cost to business is too high to sustain, the road closures and inability to leave the house during the event makes it uneconomic to run a business on what should be the busiest day of the year.

Not enough effort has put into asking residents about their view on the value of the event. The behaviour of participants was also a cause for concern; cyclists were trespassing and were seen relieving themselves on private property even though there are numerous official comfort stops provided. Unless action is taken, residents will seek other ways to protest.

District Cllr Keska reported that he had a meeting with County Cllr Lee Scott where these problems were aired but not resolved. Another meeting was promised, and it was confirmed that no decision has been made about holding the event in 2024.

Lisa Portman spoke in support of an application for renewing the Scout Hut lease, explaining that the longer the lease, the better their prospects for getting significant amounts of money to fund the redevelopment of their headquarters. Item 125/23 was brought forward to be considered here.

110/23 To consider applications for co-option.

There were no co-optees to consider.

111/23 Project update.

Playground upgrade - further quotes for alternative equipment to be considered at this meeting.

Town Sign – quotes to replace like-for-like to be considered at this meeting.

Love Lane Office – tenancy let, lease for consideration at this meeting.

112/23 Correspondence

The request for free public parking at Jubilee Park was noted.

A complaint about tree maintenance in the Castle Road allotment site was further noted, a meeting between the complainant and the Chairman will be arranged.

A complaint about Essex Highways lack of maintenance in Church Road, Greensted was noted.

A complaint about Essex Highways lack of maintenance in Stondon Road, Marden Ash was noted.

113/23 Community updates

Cllrs Gunn, Barrell and Vaz reported discussions with shop keepers concerning antisocial behaviour. The Clerk will follow up on an offer from Head of Ongar Academy to visit and discuss. Councillors suggest that residents are directed towards the Epping Forest District Council website to report antisocial behaviour. Councillors and residents are disappointed by a lack of response by the police.

A resident has been supported in finding assistance dealing with services that are only available online.

Concerning problems with antisocial behaviour at academy, residents of The Gables are asking for support in restricting access by children and parents who are taking shortcuts to school.

Councillors report that there are concerns about the poor state of Millbank Road.

114/23 Consultations.

None this month.

115/23 Reports from District and County Councillors.

Cllr Vaz reported on a hate crime meeting.

There was no report from the County Councillor – as there is a new council and chair, the invitation to attend will be re-extended with an emphasis on discussion highway maintenance.

116/23 Police matters.

The rural policing newsletter was noted.

Recruitment of special constables. Fresh proposals are needed to enliven the recruitment campaign. Following the County-wide special constable recruiting workshop, Councillors will reconsider how to will refresh the advertisement.

117/23 To agree the Full Council meeting minutes of 11th May 2023

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

118/23 Finance reporting.

a. A list of all payments up to the end of May 2023 was noted.

b. A list of budgetary information on all accounts was noted.

Resolved. The Council notes the budgetary information and confirms that the account balance £25,694.26 agrees with the reconciliation. Proposed Cllr Vaz seconded Cllr Acornley and carried unanimously.

119/23 To receive the internal auditor's report and note the action and recommendations.

Resolved. The Council notes the audit report and confirms that there are no corrective actions to consider. Proposed Cllr Mendoza seconded Cllr Barrell and carried unanimously.

120/23 To approve the end of year accounts.

Resolved. The Council approves the year end accounts for publication. Proposed Cllr Mendoza seconded Cllr Cole and carried unanimously.

121/23 To approve the annual return governance statement.

Resolved. The council approves the governance statement for signature and publication. Proposed Cllr Mendoza seconded Cllr Acornley and carried unanimously.

122/23 To approve the annual return financial statement.

Resolved. The council approves the financial statement for signature and publication. Proposed Cllr Mendoza seconded Cllr Cole and carried unanimously.

123/23 To consider opting-in to the salt bag partnership.

Resolved. The council will order one pallet of salt for issue in advance of adverse weather. Proposed Cllr Cole seconded Cllr Barrell and carried unanimously.

124/23 Love Lane office lease.

Resolved. The council approves the lease on the Love Lane office for adoption. Proposed Cllr Mendoza seconded Cllr Barrell and carried unanimously.

125/23 To consider an application to extend the lease on the Scout Hut.

The Council noted the advice from their solicitor that commercial leases are seldom more than 25 years but did not consider this to be a normal commercial lease. They noted that

a longer lease would improve the opportunities for funding and further noted that the Scouts had occupied the site for sixty years already. The Council would seek guidance from the solicitor about suitable break clauses, and confirmation that the lease will revert to the Town Council should the Scouts surrender it for any reason.

Resolved. The Council appoints Leonard Grey to renew the scout hut lease for ninety-nine years on a peppercorn rent with break clauses as advised by the Solicitor and with legal expenses to be met by the tenant up to a maximum of £1,500. Proposed Cllr Mendoza seconded Cllr Barrell and carried unanimously.

126/23 To consider a quote for repairing the Ongar Town Sign.

A replacement green oak post is available for £548 + £200 carriage. If the Council wishes to carve additional decoration, this will be a separate project and is not costed into this proposal.

Resolved. The council approves the manufacture of a replacement sign at a cost of £6,422 and the purchase of an oak post for £548. Proposed Cllr Cole seconded Cllr Barrell and carried unanimously.

127/23 To consider approving a request for parking restrictions in Great Lawn

Resolved. The council supports the Parking Partnership application for residential parking restrictions in Great Lawn. Proposed Cllr Acornley seconded Cllr Cole and carried unanimously.

128/23 To consider a quote for installing a new piece of play equipment.

Motion. The council authorised the purchase of one piece of Proludic Play equipment for up to £13,000 with the funds being drawn from general reserve and being repaid at £4,300 per year. With no proposer, the decision will be deferred while Councillors consider the most appropriate piece of play equipment to install.

129/23 To define the location and species of seven Jubilee trees and the location for two coronation benches in the nature reserve.

The decision will be deferred pending a site visit.

130/23 Ride London debriefing.

Following comments and concerns raised by residents and businesses, the Councillors are waiting for the debriefing date to be confirmed.

131/23 Significant planning updates.

Greensted Road planning appeal. It was noted that the revised comments were accepted but the appendices were not. There will be a wait of several months for the appeal to be heard. The council thanked Mary Dadd for her skilful work at short notice.

132/23 To set a date for in-house councillor training.

The Locum Clerk will be delivering an introduction to the Council on June 29th 7.30 pm.

133/23 Items for later agendas.

Risk assessments.

Cemetery price structure.
Applications for grants.
CCTV.
Ongar Town Strategic Plan Workshop.
Traffic Calming.
Future Events.
Quarterly report from Ongar Community Sporting Trust.
Process of recruitment for special constables