

Ongar

Town Council

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Minutes of a meeting of the full council. Held on 20th July 2023 at the Council Offices, Bansons Way CM5 9AS.

134/23 Those present and apologies for absence.

Chair Cllr Gunn

Councillors Cllrs Acornley, Barrell, Cole, Feetham, Mendoza, Roberts, Vaz.
(from 137/23) Cllrs Eydmann, O'Neill, Walton.

Also present Locum Clerk, press officer Deputy Monitoring Officer, three members of the public until co-option at 137/23.

135/23 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

Cllr Walton declared a non-pecuniary interest in the consultation on parking restriction in Manor Square. Cllr Gunn declared a non-pecuniary interest in co-options of Eydmann and O'Neill who are known to him.

136/23 Public participation.

There were no members of the public following the next item.

137/23 To consider applications for co-option.

Cllr Gunn left the room.

Following a short introduction with question-and-answer sessions from each of the candidates, the council considered the applications.

Conrad Eydmann was nominated for Marden Ash by Cllr Roberts seconded by Cllr Barrell and elected unopposed.

Cormac O'Neill was nominated for Chipping Ongar by Cllr Vaz seconded by Cllr Mendoza and elected unopposed.

Henry Walton was nominated for Chipping Ongar by Cllr Acornley seconded by Cllr Cole and elected unopposed.

Cllrs Eydmann, O'Neill, and Walton signed declarations of acceptance of office in the presence of the Locum Clerk.

Cllr Gunn returned to the room.

138/23 The Deputy Monitoring Officer, Lynn Ridley introduced herself as an officer of the District Council who would be observing the meeting.

139/23 Project update.

Playground upgrade. With no clear preference for either of the current proposals, it was agreed to undertake consultation with the children over the summer holiday using a notice and QR code to link to a survey monkey.

Town Sign – work under way.

140/23 Correspondence.

A complaint about maintenance in burial ground was noted.

A Request for a Freedom Parade was noted and agreed in principle with a request for more details and an expression of interest in assisting with the planning.

An application for Girl Guide Roverway support was noted and declined as the Town Council was already considering ways to support the local group.

The Hedgehog highway request for support was noted and will be forwarded to planning committee as a requirement for inclusion in new build housing designs. The matter will be forwarded to the Ongar Wildlife Society who can consider a proposal to purchase and distribute the hedgehog fence holes if there is any interest from the public.

A Freedom of information request for the Council's CO₂ emissions was noted.

A request for a memorial bush to commemorate the founder of the twinning association was noted and it was agreed to consider it as part of the Jubilee commemorative planting scheme.

141/23 Community updates.

A request for additional work on the nature reserve bridge has been noted by highways. There is general concern about the proposed housing estate in Greensted. Concern is being expressed about the antisocial behaviour and littering from local youths. A request to support proposals for parking restrictions in Manor Square was noted and agreed as originally raised in minute 142/20.

142/23 Consultations.

The community safety consultation was noted with a closing date of 20th August. Councillors were reminded that uptake on these surveys tends to be low and skewed to those with specific issues, so it is important to encourage participation, even from those with no concerns or fears. Individual councillors were encouraged to participate.

The bus network consultation was noted, and residents will be encouraged to participate. The Council's objective will be to receive the survey results and act on them.

143/23 Reports from District and County Councillors.

Cllr Vaz reported that there was an official unveiling of a new thermal efficiency cover for the swimming pool at the Leisure Centre.

County Councillor McIvor congratulated the new co-optees and apologised for his lack of previous engagement with Council. After a brief introduction to his roles as District and

County Councillor he explained that one of his main County Council concerns was highway maintenance. Currently, the highway budget is 23% of County Council spend – approximately £460m. An extra £15.5M has funded additional maintenance 14 crews to make more repairs to the infrastructure. Cllr McIvor has now been appointed to the County Council Cabinet with the Adult Social Care portfolio and is gaining an insight into just how much money these services demand. In conclusion, he reminded councillors that he is always available to speak to councillors and residents.

Councillors asked if there would be an opportunity for Cllr McIvor to present more about his portfolio work looking at safeguarding and anti-social behaviour.

144/23 Police matters.

The Rural Policing update was noted.

Cllr Vaz gave an update on criminal incidents in a town shop.

It was noted that a potential special constable has been identified and is being trained.

The Council noted a revised advertisement for a second special constable.

145/23 To agree the Full Council meeting minutes of 15th June 2023

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

146/23 Finance reporting.

a. The Council received a list of all payments up to the end of June 2023.

b. The Council received a list of budgetary information on all accounts.

Resolved. The Council notes the budgetary information and confirms that the account balance £9,243.29 agrees with the reconciliation. Proposed Cllr Mendoza seconded Cllr Roberts and carried unanimously.

147/23 Budget – Initial consideration.

The Clerk advised that this was a simple projection of the existing budget to remind councillors of the current position. There will be changes to consider as the council develops its plans to widen the scope of its actions. There will be a budget workshop in October with a view to setting the 2024-25 budget in December.

148/23 To consider renewal of membership Rural Community Council Essex.

Resolved. The council approves expenditure of £105.60 for annual membership. Proposed Cllr Mendoza seconded Cllr Barrell and carried unanimously.

149/23 Love Lane office lease.

To note the lease has been agreed for three years.

150/23 To consider authorising the removal or relocation of a streetlight in Moreton Road.

A request has been received to remove or relocate a streetlight in Moreton Road. The cost of removal would be borne by the householders, but it may be necessary to relocate the light if consultation demanded it. If so, relocation would also be funded by the householder.

Resolved. Subject to confirmation that the residents are willing to fund the work, the council authorised consultation on the need for a replacement light in Moreton Road. Proposed Cllr Cole seconded Cllr Mendoza and carried unanimously.

151/23 To approve revisions to the council website.

Resolved. The council approves an addition to the website providing guidance and signposting to support and reporting of Antisocial behaviour. Proposed Cllr Gunn seconded Cllr Cole and carried unanimously.

152/23 To consider a revised grant application pack.

The council approves version 0.1 of the grant application pack for publication. Proposed Cllr seconded Cllr and carried unanimously. **This item was deferred.**

153/23 CCTV contract – and policy.

To consider next steps. **This item was deferred.**

154/23 To consider a first draft of a strategic plan.

Resolved. The council will develop and agree a 5-year strategy. Proposed Cllr seconded Cllr and carried unanimously. **This item was deferred.**

155/23 To consider developing a first draft of a revised emergency plan. This item was deferred.

156/23 To define the location and species of seven Jubilee trees and the location for two coronation benches in the nature reserve.

Following representation from the Twinning Association, an additional tree will be planted in recognition of Felicitie Barnes many years of service to the community. The matter will be deferred pending a decision on what kind of trees and which location would be most suitable.

157/23 Road safety.

To consider funding for gateway signage as part of a road safety programme. The Council will consider using the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, s.72 to fund gateway signage with the agreement of Essex Highways without expectation of funding. The signage would be designed to recognise both the ward and the town Consider having signage recognising the parish / ward names instead of the town council. The matter will be considered as part of the budget process in the coming years. Further guidance on how the community can benefit from these events will be appreciated.

158/23 Ride London debriefing.

It has been agreed that Ride London will be held in Essex, but not necessarily passing through Ongar. As a county wide event, it has been seen as a great success and several communities have received benefit from the money raised. Other Districts have expressed interest in hosting the event. Cllr McIvor will provide a breakdown of where the money has been spent in time for the next Town Council Meeting.

At 9.58, the following motion was made and resolved.

Resolved. The meeting will be extended for 10 minutes to conclude the outstanding business. Proposed Cllr Gunn seconded Cllr Roberts and carried unanimously.

159/23 Significant planning updates.

When considering the Greensted Road planning appeal, the initial resolution was amended.

Resolved. The council approves amendment of the resolution “The Council authorises the challenge letter to the Greensted Road developer’s appeal against previous refusal for planning permission.” Proposed Cllr Gunn seconded Cllr Mendoza and carried unanimously.

Resolved. The council authorises the challenge letter to the Greensted Road developer’s appeal and further supports and endorses the future actions of the Neighbourhood Plan Group when defending the interests of the community in objection to the proposed Greensted development. Proposed Cllr Cole seconded Cllr Mendoza and carried unanimously.

160/23 To set a date for further in-house councillor training.

Initial training for new councillors.

Second training for current councillors – allotments and cemeteries.

161/23 Items for later agendas.

Risk assessments.

Cemetery price structure.

Future Events.

Quarterly report from Ongar Community Sporting Trust.

New play equipment for Recreation Ground.

Ongar in Bloom.

Police and Crime czar – written asking for availability.

Matters deferred from this meeting.

CCTV contract

Grant application policy

Strategic plan

Emergency plan

Meeting Closed 22.05