

Ongar

Town Council

Bansons Way, Ongar, Essex. CM5 9AS
01277 365348



Email. clerk@ongartowncouncil.gov.uk
www.ongartowncouncil.gov.uk

Minutes of a meeting of the full council held on 18th April 2024 at 8pm Held at the Council Offices, Bansons Way CM5 9AS

54/24 Those present and apologies for absence

Chair: Cllr Gunn

Councillors: Cllrs Barrell, Cllr Eydmann, Mendoza, O'Neill, Roberts, Walton, Vaz, Feetham

Also present: Susan De Luca, Locum Clerk, two members of the public, one member of the press.

Resolved: To record and accept apologies for absence from Cllrs Cole and Acornley. Also noted ECC Cllr McIvor had given his apologies.

55/24 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

Cllr Walton declared a pecuniary interest the agenda item 66/24.

56/24 Public participation

There were two members of the public present. Mrs Mary Dadd addressed the Council, enquiring how recruitment was going for a Police Special Constable, as well as asking if feedback was received from EFDC as to how often the three police officers that they pay for visit Ongar. Mrs Dadd advised she welcomed item 68 on the agenda, stating she had raised the matter 2 years ago at EFDC full Council asking what they were doing to monitor housing mix in the Local Plan. Regarding a possible spreadsheet for planning, it would be helpful to add housing mix and parking, so monitoring could take place as to if the 70% plus 3-bedroom properties was being achieved. There had been another fatality on the 13th April on the A414 where a motorcyclist died, and after looking on Crashmap she had seen that between 2000-2020 there had been 68 serious collisions with serious injury, and numerous minor collisions. There had also been minor collisions on the A113.

Mrs Dadd advised that the road improvement subcommittee of the ONPCG were looking to step up their campaign with either a petition, or to target ECC to find money to improve the roads. Mrs Dadd asked if this Council would sign up to SERP, and if they would support the petition.

57/24 Correspondence

The Locum Clerk advised she continued to review emails that come in daily, and that other staff members were advising her on certain matters. She also advised that after speaking with a staff member, Councillors should note that the new dog signs in the park were expected to arrive on Monday or Tuesday of the following week, and that the rubbish behind the shops in Shelley was being removed the following day.

58/24 Reports from District and County Councillors

No reports.

59/24 Consultations

None.

60/24 Report from ONPCG

The Chairman invited Mrs Dadd to address the Council. Mrs Dadd stated that the ONPCG were very happy to work with the Parish Council to promote some actions once the Parish Council had looked at them. A considerable amount of work was completed on some of the things, but the ONPCG decided not to be too specific. The Chairman stated that at the previous meeting Council discussed elements of the plan that needed to be addressed to which Mrs Dadd stated that a big difference could be made by improving the Town Centre, and after speaking with an officer at EFDC there could possibly be some funding available.

61/24 Police matters

No update from PC Shepherd, however the Clerk tabled information regarding recruitment of a Community Special constables. The Chairman advised that the March update confirmed that our candidate had withdrawn, which was very disappointing as this person had been on portfolio training for some time. The update also stated that the recruitment YouTube video was being taken down, and that the link to this on the Town Councils website should also be taken down (on the Make a Difference page). The Council may now have to go back to our recruitment contact to set up a recruitment drive. Cllr Eydmann suggested that when Essex Police were contacted on this point, it should perhaps be suggested they could do a generic advert as you may have other special constables who would prefer this location, and who don't necessarily need the training, thus recruiting across the existing capacity. It was stated that there had also been an offer to do some promotion in the town, and perhaps this should be considered.

62/24 Minutes

Resolved: To agree the minutes of the Full Council meeting of 21st March 2024.
Proposed Cllr Eydmann, Seconded Cllr Robert.

65/24 Visit to Cerizay

The Chairman advised that himself, Cllr Eydmann and Cllr Roberts had visited Cerizay for this year's twinning event and were given a very warm reception by the Mayor, dignitaries and the host families. There was a large programme of activities over the 6-day trip, with the Chairman giving an informal presentation in both French and English. Council members presented the French representatives with a gift and were in turn presented with a gift. The Twinning Association were presented with an original print depicting one of the roads in the town which is decorated every year with umbrellas, and the Twinning Association have presented this to the Parish Council to display in the Council chamber. A small article has been written for inclusion in Ongar News. Cllr Roberts stated that it seemed that the entire town of Cerizay came together to celebrate this event and were extremely hospitable. There were around 15 representatives from the UK. Cllr Eydmann advised that the UK visitors were all hosted by French families, and the generosity and attention spent to ensure visitors were looked after was brilliant. For future years, perhaps there may be something that Ongar Town Council could do to reciprocate this. The Chairman advised that the Twinning Association would like to hold a celebration event and hire out the Council Chamber for this event.

66/24 Finance

- a. Received a list of all payments up to the end of March 2024.
- b. Defer receipt of the budgetary information on accounts, as it had not been received due to staff absence.
- c. Agreed the appointment of Heelis and Lodge as the Internal Auditor for 2023/2024, with a date set for the audit in May.
- d. Notification of Audit Received 2023-2024, with all paperwork needing to be submitted before 1st July. Cllr Mendoza suggested that each month a list of creditors should be put before Council to review.

67/24 To consider a change to the days that Planning Committee Meetings

Cllr Mendoza had proposed a motion to change the date of the planning meetings to a Monday. Feedback had been received from staff that this would not be ideal. Cllr Eydmann suggested that perhaps alternate Thursdays may be possible. Cllr Walton advised he preferred the meetings being on the same day due to work and childcare commitments. It was agreed to defer this decision until such time as the staffing structure had been reviewed.

68/24 To consider a request from Councillor Mendoza that a formal spreadsheet is kept of Planning Decisions, including Housing Mix, by the Administrative Officer.

Cllr Mendoza had advised one was previously kept in in 2016/2017 (written manually) however felt that it was difficult to extract information from this. Cllr Mendoza stated that he had been advised that Rialtas offered planning software for such a task, and it was agreed to obtain a costing for this software.

69/24 Ongar Medieval Coins

Invitation received from the Epping Forest District Museum as this council had assisted them with the acquisition of two Medieval Coins. Two dates were provided, 9th and 23rd May. The Clerk had been unable to obtain much information about where the coins were found. Councillors briefly discussed the proposed dates of the Parish Council meeting and Annual Meeting of the Electorate (AGM) in May as this had a bearing on acceptance of the invitation, after which it was agreed the Clerk would circulate the invitation from the museum, and Councillors could attend if they so wished.

70/24 Community Updates.

- Annual Meetings – Annual Parish Council meeting agreed as Thursday 16th May, and Annual Meeting of the Electorate (AGM) agreed Thursday 30th May (staff trying to book the Budworth Hall for 7pm). Cllr Eydmann suggested that anybody who had received grant funding from this Council was invited to the AGM to provide an update on how they had used the funding and the impact it had had.
- Civic Awards – There had been one nomination to date.
- Best Kept Playing Field – Cllr Mendoza

71/24 Date of next meeting.

Full Council Meeting Thursday 16th May 2024.

72/24 Items for later agendas

- Memorial management
- Future Events
- Emergency plan
- Review of CCTV system and provider
- Grants and feedback
- Annual report

Cllr Mendoza advised that Risk Assessment, Skate Park, and Projects and Actions had been left off from the previous list. Cllr Mendoza advised that regarding the risk assessment, he had been trying to do something for the Ongar Academy, with the now departed Headmaster agreeing they needed a risk assessment. The Locum Clerk asked why this Council would complete a risk assessment for the school, to which Cllr Mendoza advised that the children who use the school were in danger going through the car park. The Locum Clerk asked if this was Ongar Academy land. Cllr Mendoza advised that Cllr Cole had put together a risk assessment for children going to school in Ongar, and this was linked to the Neighbourhood Plan. The idea was to get somebody to instigate a proper risk assessment, and the Parish Council could support this. The Locum Clerk advised that she didn't feel this was something the Town Council should get involved with either paying or doing. Cllr O'Neill asked for clarification as to if it was a risk assessment for the children going to and from the school, or it was a risk assessment for Ongar Academy, to which Cllr Mendoza advised it was the former. Cllr Walton advised that the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan had a section on safe routes to schools, and that there was a standing item on this subject, including chasing up about a zebra crossing.

Cllr Roberts raised the matter about the nature reserve where the trees had been planted, specifically regarding not having yet purchased the additional tree that was previously agreed to as a memorial tree for Felicity Barns, and secondly regarding land ownership of where a section of the land had been fenced in. It was noted that the cost of the memorial tree would be reimbursed to the Council by Mrs Barns family. This item should be placed on the next agenda.

It was reported that the CCTV at Shelley Park needed propping up.

Meeting closed 9.24pm.