

# Ongar

Town Council

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Minutes of a meeting of the full Town Council held on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2025 8 P.M. held at the Council Offices, Bansons Way CM5 9AS.

## MINUTES

### 57.25 PRESENT & APOLOGIES

Present: Cllr Gunn (Chairman), Cllr Cole, Cllr Barrell, Cllr Eydmann, Cllr Vaz, Cllr Roberts, Cllr Webb, Cllr Reay, Cllr Feetham

Apologies: Cllr Mendoza, Cllr Walton

Also Present: Debra Murray Town Clerk

Press: 1      Public: (0)

**Motion.** To accept the apologies given

**Proposed:** Cllr Barrell **Seconded:** Cllr Reay **Carried:** Unanimously

**Apologies:** from District Councillor Mary Dadd

### 58.25 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Motion: To **AGREE** the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Resolved: The Minutes of the Full Town Council were approved as a true record of the meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025

**Proposed:** Cllr Webb

**Seconded:** Cllr Eydmann

**For:** 7 **Abstained:** 2

### 59.25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None Received

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

None

### 61.25 VE Day Update Presentation by Cath Honeywell

A presentation was given to the Council regarding the plans for the VE Day Festival by Cath Honeywell. Involving the plan of the day and the areas supporting the festival.

The Councillors discussed the funding for the festival.

Motion: Proposed by Cllr Reay to give the festival £2,000 from the festival's budget. Seconded by Cllr Webb      **For. 7   Abstained. 2**

## **62.25 CLERKS REPORT**

1. Following on from the consultation regarding the removal or moving of the streetlight for the resident in Moreton Road, which the resident has stated he is happy to pay for. I had received notification from another resident that back in 2023 another streetlight had been hit by a van and had subsequently been removed and not replaced. I spoke to the insurance company and although they had been informed this had become dormant. This has been picked up again to remedy as the resident who lives where the streetlight had been removed responded to the council and is now suing the council due to injuries, she has sustained due to falling over, and alleging that the streetlight not being replaced is the cause of injury. This has been passed to our insurance company and I am waiting for costs for the streetlight to be replaced to forward to the insurance company.
2. A resident has raised the issue that the Ongar town sign in town is too low. I have approached one company so far for a quotation should you wish to proceed with this being made higher as only one resident has raised this. The first quote is either £485 to make the sign 300mm higher on the existing post and bracket (subject to there being enough post to do so) or second option is to replace the oak post increasing the height by 800mm which would be at a cost of £1400.
3. A resident has raised the Love Lane Road repairs again following the request to pay for the repairs which were discussed last month and the letter from the residents stating they would not be willing to pay. Please note the decision made under item 39/22 To consider repairs to Love Lane, road surface, from the Full council meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025.  
Request have been received to make the road safe for pedestrians. It was confirmed that the road is an unadopted highway and a public right of way footpath. The Town Council has no responsibility to keep the road in good repair but may make repairs on the side of the road adjacent to the cemetery. There was no interest from the other road frontagers in doing more than repairing their part of the road.  
Council Meeting minutes February 2022 3 Published March 8<sup>th</sup> 2022 v1.0  
The Clerk was asked to investigate the cost to maintain a pedestrian pathway along the public right of way and delineating it with white lining to ensure pedestrians had a safe route to follow.
4. Elections notices went out for the by-election this week and will be held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May should there be more than 2 nominations. I will receive an update from EFDC once the nominations date of 24<sup>th</sup> April has passed.
5. The clerk has emailed the chairman of Jubilee Park Pavilion to arrange a meeting with them but as yet I have not received a response.
6. Two of the grounds team attended the monument topple testing on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025 as part of the training planned for the year. Now that they have received the

training a schedule will be put into place for them to perform the testing inhouse thus saving monies for third party suppliers for the service.

7. Defibrillator – The clerk has have spoken to the East of England co-ordinator again this week, the de-fib has not been found. The coordinator has approached London Heart to see if they have funding or a way to supply a replacement. He works as one of the town's first responders and as such he stated that it would be possible to secure a defib for £700.
8. The bridge between Shackleton's and the footpath behind was reported as broken and dangerous. Following the inspection yesterday by the clerk and grounds staff it has been replaced today with removal of the rotted wood which has been replaced with new treated redwood timber.

**Training undertaken this month** Code of Conduct, Financial Regulations and website training, that will leave me to do one core course when the CILCA training starts in June.

## **63.25 REPORTS & MEMBERS REPORTS**

### **Chairmans report:**

#### **Meetings with the town clerk**

The chair has continued to have weekly line management meetings with the clerk during this month. All councillors are reminded to follow the 'Ways of working policy', adopted and agreed on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024. When making any requests to the town clerk, these must be completed on an action request form and not as an email. This makes it easier for the clerk to prioritise work and indeed ascertain what comes under the town councils' remit. Operational tasks are delegated by the town clerk/proper officer as they see fit. All employed staff come under the responsibility of the clerk; councillors are strategic, and the town council clerk and staff are operational. If there are items for whole council consideration, then they must be reported to the clerk so that they can be considered for inclusion on an agenda. Council decisions are not made via email.

#### **Citizen of the year nominations for the annual town assembly**

I have been liaising with the assistant clerk on the Nominations for Citizens of the Year as per the last Town Council meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025 agenda item number 39.25, the results from this will be discussed under agenda item 75.25 in tonight's meeting.

#### **VE Day**

The poster and information for VE day has now been done and is on both the council's website and social media, it would be good to see as many councillors as possible there on either both or at least one of the events. The assistant clerk has sent out invites. VE day celebrations – 9.00am flag raised and 9.30pm the lighting of the lamp and readings

#### **Annual Town assembly and report update**

Annual Town assembly report – The chair has now done a draft of the report which will need to be finalised at least two weeks before the Annual Town assembly, as council agreed in the last meeting for the report to be written on agenda item number 38.25. Once completed this will be sending this out to all councillors via email for comment and this will have a very quick turnaround,

so that we can meet the deadline for publication. The chair has kept to the same format and style as last year including the 'who does what' insert which has been coded this year instead of colours so that the format is more inclusive, being mindful of those people that may suffer from dyslexia or have colour blindness and may have found last year's version a challenge to read. Invitations have gone out which all councillors were copied into, an agenda and last year's minutes will be published soon on both the website and social media.

**Twinning – an update will be made later by our liaison councillor, councillor Eydmann**

### **Official opening of the Essex Museum exhibition 'Calm and courageous'.**

Cllrs Bas, Mendosa, Eydmann and the chair (after receiving an official invitation to join as the chairman of Ongar Town Council) attended the official opening of the exhibition, firstly listening to the U3A group performing songs from the 1940's outside the museum, followed by informative presentations from both the Museum Manager Mr Ian Channel and Ongar Millennium History Society chair Mr Chris Prince. Also, in attendance and giving a welcome speech was from Cllr Holly Whitbread in her role as chairman of the museum trust. Invitees were then given time to walk around the new display

### **Annual Council Meeting**

As a reminder the annual council meeting will be held on the 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025 for council to consider nominations for chair/vice chair, committee chair/vice chair and representation on external bodies on behalf of the council.

### **Councillors checks and balances with our financial accounts**

Cllr Roberts and the chair have now checked both January and February accounts as part of our internal financial controls, it would be good practice to identify additional councillor who might be able to undertake this. Any councillors willing to provide this role are asked to contact the clerk directly.

Information for Ongar News:

- VE Day poster (information from OTC website and social media)
- Information about the Ongar Town assembly – a list of the proceedings which covered the same format as last year, which was again agreed in the last full council meeting.
- Report on the visit to the new display for 'Calm and Courageous' at the Epping Forest Museum

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

Cllr Reay has attended both the Local Council Liaison Committee and the Urban Design and Quality Review Panel training and gave a verbal updates on both.

### **-District and County Councillors**

County Councillor McIvor gave a verbal report to the Council.

- Cllr McIvor and volunteers from the local reform party undertook planting around the town sign and undertook to cut back a hedge on the B184 that was considered to be an obstruction.

- Cllr McIvor reported that the provision of primary care services at the War Memorial Health Centre are inadequate for the town, with the distance of the current location proving to be a barrier for elderly residents to access essential services. He identified that he had located available premises in the town centre and would be advocating for the expansion or redistribution of primary care services to incorporate this new facility.
- Cllr McIvor reported that some residents were not satisfied by the online booking system for appointments.
- Cllr McIvor reported that he has a meeting arranged with the Ongar Surgery to talk through his concerns.
- Cllr McIvor volunteered to crown-fund for the replacement defibrillator.

District Councillor Mary Dadd sent a report to the Council in her absence.

Cllr Chairman Jason Gunn read out the report and asked Cllr McIvor if he had anything to add to this as he had suggested when he stood up to give his County Councillor update that he could also speak on behalf of the district council, no other points on this update were made by him.

- **Details of Consultations**
- None to be report

## **64.25 FINANCIAL REPORTS**

### **Finance reporting**

Members agreed with the list of budgetary information up to the end of March 2025 on cashbook 1.

**Motion:** The Council noted the budgetary information and confirmed that the account balance of cashbook 1 at £11,686.77 agrees with the reconciliation.

Proposed: Cllr Eydmann      Seconded: Cllr Webb      For: 8    Abstained: 1

**Motion:** The Council noted the budgetary information and confirmed that the account balance of cashbook 2 at £560,463.24.

Proposed: Cllr Eydmann      Seconded: Cllr Roberts      For: 8    Abstained: 1

**Motion:** The Council noted the budgetary information and confirmed that the account balance of cashbook 3 at £29,288.15

Proposed: Cllr Eydmann      Seconded: Cllr Roberts      For: 8    Abstained: 1

## **65.25 POLICE REPORT**

No report available

## **66.25 VOIP Telephone System**

Councillors to **AGREED** to defer the agenda item to allow as more information was required.

## **67.25 Ongar Bridge Car Park**

Councillors **AGREED** to defer the discussion regarding Ongar Bridge car park area as Councillor Mendoza who wanted the item on the agenda was unavailable to attend the meeting.

#### **68.25 Litter Picking Option**

Following discussion it was agreed to contract the resident to see if they would like to work with the current litter picking initiative in Ongar, which is organised by another resident. There also needs to be further discussion regarding the costs as they appeared to be absent from the website and stewardship of the 2 minute litter picking stations. The clerk will contact the resident.

#### **69.25 Phoenix Hotel Family Displacement**

The councillors discussed support for Ongar Academy children who are displaced due to the fire. A letter will be sent to Ongar Academy to support their efforts.

**Proposed:** Cllr Reay                      **Seconded:** Cllr Roberts                      **For: 8   Abstained: 1**

#### **70.25 Worknest Renewal Quotation**

Councillors discussed the proposal for HR Support at the Council and instructed the Clerk to obtain additional quotations.

#### **71.25 Jubilee Park Pavilion Invoice**

Councillors discussed the invoice received from Jubilee Park Pavilion dated 8<sup>th</sup> August 2023 however further issues were raised as to why the Council should be paying for a loft hatch to be formed and noted that we should not be considering meeting any costs relating to betterment, rather than reparation or restoration. The Councillors also requested that the clerk confirm that this has not already been paid in 2023/4.

#### **72.25 Grant Funding Review**

Councillors discussed the changes to the grant policy and agreed that the amount of grant which can be applied for will be limited to £500. The chairman presented the current grant form and asked councillors for comments and suggestions in light of the budget meeting in January 2025. Councillors have been asked to submit suggestions for changes to the current form to the clerk, which will then be ratified in the next council meeting. However, as an interim councillors agreed to set amount per applicant.

**Motion:** To limit the amount of grant to a maximum of £500 per year per applicant.

**Proposed:** Cllr Reay                      **Seconded:** Cllr Roberts                      **For: 8   Abstained: 1**

#### **73.25 Heritage Lamp Post Removal from outside Senners**

The Council had received information from District Councillor Mary Dadd as part of her update with regards to this, and because of her intervention, highways have confirmed that this is a temporary measure and that the lamp post will be converted back to the original style once the parts have been sourced. As a request from the district councillor, councillors agreed to write a supporting letter to Highways to ensure that all future lamp post remain their heritage style.

**Proposed:** Cllr Reay                      **Seconded:** Cllr Cole                      **For: 8   Abstained: 1**

#### **74.25 Residents Survey**

Councillors discussed whether to action a resident's survey to enable the residents of the town to participate and have a voice on what is important to them in the town to help with writing a strategic plan for the town.

**Motion:** To plan and consult with the residents via a resident's survey:

**Proposed:** Cllr Reay   **Seconded:** Cllr Cole   **Carried:** Unanimously

#### **75.25 Nominations for Citizens of the Year for the Annual Town Assembly on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May at 6pm at Budworth Hall**

Following the nominations for the citizen of the year four successful candidates were identified from the town survey they were Michelle Russell, Kelly Stone, Amanda McGregor and Catherine Honeywell.

From the survey results Councillors decided that the two Citizen of the year awards elected by the Council would go to Toni Fry and Tracy Fuller.

All winners will be notified and presentations made at the Town Assembly on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May at Budworth Hall.

**Proposed:** Cllr Roberts                      **Seconded:** Cllr Eydmann   **Carried:** Unanimously

#### **76.25 Review of the Chapel Electricity Supplier**

Councillors discussed the quotations and AGREED to Delegate all utility contracts to the clerk.

**Motion:** To delegate all utility contracts to the town clerk.

**Proposed:** Cllr Eydmann                      **Seconded:** Cllr Roberts                      **Carried:** unanimously

#### **77.25 CCLA Mandate Update**

To Update the LAPF Mandate as per the email for an update.

**Motion:** To confirm the removal of Derek Birch, Jane Battersby and Kate Smiles from the LAPF Mandate as they are no longer with the Town Council. To be replaced with Stephanie Smith, and 2 Councillors Jason Gunn and Chris Reay. To retain Cllr Feetham.

**Proposed:** Cllr Reay                      **Seconded:** Cllr Webb                      **Carried:** Unanimously

#### **78.25 CCTV Working Group**

The CCTV working group confirmed their first meeting and Terms of Reference. The working group chairman confirmed with two issues the clerk has been instructed to report back to EFDC to proceed.

**Proposed:** Cllr Eydmann                      **Seconded:** Cllr Webb                      **Carried:** Unanimously

#### **79.25 Removal or moving of Street Light in Morten Road**

Councillors discussed the proposal for removal or moving of the streetlight in Moreton Road. Following an in-depth discussion and following the resident's consultation and also concerns that it is very dark in Moreton Road the council concluded that it would agree to the moving of the streetlight at the resident's expense but it would not agree to the Streetlight being removed.

**Proposed:** Cllr Reay                      **Seconded:** Cllr Roberts                      **Carried:** Unanimously

### **80.25 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 one items to be considered

**82.25** Love Lane Office Lease – Following discussion regarding the lease it was agreed to offer a lease 3 years from January 2025 with the previous 2 years to be included so the overall lease is 5 years.

**Proposed:** Cllr Reay

**Seconded:** Cllr Webb

**Carried:** Unanimously

### **81.25 ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

Emergency Plan

Various Leases\*

Disability Access – Look at Lease and Contact EFDC\*

Strategic Development Plan

Ongar Town Assembly

- **Clerk is aware of these**

**Meeting ended at 21:40**