

# Ongar

Town Council

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Minutes of a meeting of the full Town Council held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025 8 P.M. held at the Council Offices, Bansons Way CM5 9AS.

## MINUTES

### 83.25 ELECTION OF CHAIR

Cllr Gunn elected as chair

**Proposed:** Cllr Roberts

**Seconded:** Cllr Walton

**For :** 9

**Abstained:** 1

### 84.25 DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

Cllr Gunn signed the declaration of acceptance of office of chair.

### 85.25 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

Cllr Cole appointed as vice chair

**Proposed:** Cllr Roberts

**Seconded:** Cllr Walton

**For:** 8

**Abstained:** 2

### 86.25 THOSE PRESENT AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

**Chair** Cllr Gunn

**Present** Cllrs Cole, Roberts, Walton, Barrell, Vaz, Mendoza, Feetham, Webb, Eydmann

Also Present Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Mary Dadd (ONPCG & District Councillor)

Apolo**g**ies received from Cllrs Reay & O'Neill

### 87.25 DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

To **RECEIVE** any Declarations of Interest by Members.

*Members of the Council are subject to paragraphs 6 (DPs), 7 (Other Pecuniary Interests) and 8 (non-pecuniary interests) of that Code. Members are also subject to paragraphs 9-11 of that Code as regards declaration of interests and participation in the meeting insofar as any item of business involves such an interest.*

Declarations received from Cllrs Gunn & Cole with regards to agenda item 95.25 motion 4

Cllr Eydmann agenda item 101.25

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

To **RECEIVE** questions from members of the public for a period determined by the

Chairperson of the Meeting. The maximum time allowed for this item is 15 minutes. A

member of the public shall not speak for more than three minutes. ***Please NOTE if the Clerk of the Meeting has not been previously notified of the Question, Council may have to note questions and respond to them after the Meeting.***

Mary Dadd invited the councillors to attend a meeting at Budworth Hall on 28<sup>th</sup> May regarding Safety.

#### **89.25 APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES**

It was agreed that all councillors would be members of the following committees:

Planning Committee

Staffing Committee

It was also agreed that there would be no finance committee, and matters concerning this would be considered at full council.

Planning chair and vice chair to be appointed in the next subcommittee meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at 7.00pm.

#### **90.25 APPOINTMENT OF DELEGATES AND REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

The chairman read out the previous year's list of outside bodies and representatives. Councillors put their names forward to be attendees on behalf of the council

**Motion:** The council appoints the delegates and representatives as published at this meeting. Please see **Appendix A**

**Proposed:** Cllr Roberts

**Seconded:** Cllr Barrell    **Carried:** Unanimously

#### **91.25 APPOINTMENT OF CLERK TO ADMINISTER DISPENSATIONS FOR 2025-26**

**Motion:** The clerk as a Proper Officer to the Council will be authorised, where in her view it is appropriate, to administer dispensations for members with disclosable pecuniary interests that would otherwise leave the council inquorate.

**Proposed:** Cllr Walton    **Seconded:** Cllr Cole

**Carried:** Unanimously

#### **92.25 TO AGREE THE FULL COUNCIL MINUTES OF 17<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2025**

In a correction to last month's agenda whereby the item in the confidential items did not have an agenda number the clerk stated that she had used the next agenda number of 82.25 on the Love Lane Lease item.

**Motion** to agree the minutes of the town council meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

Resolved: The minutes of the full town council were approved as a true record of the meeting held on the 17<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

**Proposed:** Cllr Roberts

**Seconded:** Cllr Cole

**Carried:** Unanimously

#### **93.25 CLERKS REPORT**

Following on from the consultation regarding the removal or moving of the streetlight for the resident in Moreton Road, I have been notified by the resident that they are not going to pursue this at this time.

The pétanque emailed the town council to say:

“On behalf of Ongar Pétanque - I just want to thank Ongar Town Council for the funding received towards the Security Lighting at Ongar Boules Piste, as per our grant application. This has made a big difference to this central Community area, and I can confirm the lighting is now in place and operational, plus appears to be effective currently in successfully deterring the vandalism.

Our Club members will continue to monitor and maintain this area to our best ability for the future benefit of all users.

We are still hoping to find an extra picnic table and possibly 2 extra litter bins to enhance and encourage the cleanliness in this area. Please also let me know when the CCTV is in operation again, and who will be overseeing the footage.

My [Congratulations](#) to all the Ongar Town Council involved in an excellent Twinning Weekend! “

I took a call from a gentleman outside of the area to say what a wonderful event the festival was and how good the town council were for supporting the event and giving him the opportunity to spend quality family time here. He will be visiting more in the future. I have passed these comments on to the organisers of the festival.

The Year end accounts have now been completed, and we are awaiting our internal audit which is at the beginning of June.

The nature reserve has been given a new lease of life over the last month the outside staff have been working very hard to enhance the area. I have been in touch with Essex Wildlife Trust and will be meeting them to go around the nature reserve to see how further it can be improved.

With regards to Cripsey Brook I have been in contact with Thames 21 who have asked the assistance of the town council to monitor the brook and report back to them.

I have received an inquiry from a resident to Purchase of Land which backs on to the recreation area – please see additional paperwork on the councillors ONEDRIVE

I have received information about a Transport Meeting – please see additional paperwork on the councillors ONEDRIVE.

*Following a report of a possible target handbag snatch I have received a response from PC Warren Shepherd. He confirmed that although he had been informed of this situation a few days after it occurred he checked the incident reporting system in case he had missed anything, He looked back as far as 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 and there had been no reports from anyone for the two people reported 2, He also checked the crime recording system for the same*

*period and again there were no reports. He even spoke with officers on different teams to and they haven't heard anything or been to incidents like that recorded, so he can only assume that this incident wasn't how it was perceived to be.*

## **94.25 REPORTS & MEMBERS REPORTS**

### **-Chairmans Report**

#### **Chairmans report:**

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

I have continued to have weekly line management meetings with the clerk during this month. I am quite surprised that despite the last full town council meeting when I kindly reminded councillors about protocols, the clerk has still been receiving email request some of which imply council decisions. Councillors are to contact the Town Clerk and not the staff unless you have a responsibility for a subcommittee when you need to work with other staff. So, as a reminder:

Councillors are 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, this must be completed on an action request form and not 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. As they are her staff, we 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 decide what goes on the agenda. Council business and decisions are not made via email.

#### **Ongar Town Council Assembly Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

Thank you to those councillors that attended the assembly on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May and thank you again to all the staff for organising the event we had 60 residents attend this year. I have requested that both the report and the PowerPoint presentation are uploaded to our website.

#### **Councillors attend the official opening of Budworth Hall on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

Budworth Hall Open Day on Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> April, between 10:00am and 4:00pm. Cllrs Mendoza, Reay and Walton attended the event which showcased the newly refurbished ballroom, with improved disabled access and toilet facilities. I would like to congratulate them on the renovations

#### **Ongar Town Council Twinning 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reception Friday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

Ongar Town Council and the Ongar Twinning Association welcomed the mayor and people of Cerizay at The Ongar Academy for a reception organised by Ongar Town Council and the entertainment by The Ongar academy, which included staff, local primary schools and the Ongar Singers before a weekend of activities to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the twinning arrangement between the two towns. Ongar Town Council would like to thank the

Ongar Academy for both organising the entertainment and hosting this event, along with the PTA.

Ongar Town Council commissioned a piece of artwork through Ongar Art Society, painted by Mr Joe Charman, which depicts local landmarks the Budworth Hall, the Epping Ongar Railway, St Martin's Church, Ongar, St Andrew's Church, Greensted, and the town sign which was presented to the Mayor of Cérizay Monsieur Johnny Brosseau by town council chairman councillor Jason Gunn. Ongar Town council were then presented with a bottle of wine to commemorate the 40<sup>th</sup> year partnership which has a barcode with a link to a presentation with images of the historic twinning along with a framed print. On behalf of Ongar Town Council, I would like to thank the Cérizay Twinning Society for their generous and thoughtful gifts. These will be on display in the council chamber.

Epping Forest Museum were also present with a display for attendees to look at the small gold coins (known as tremisses) dating to the Anglo-Saxon period which were found by a metal detectorist near Greensted in 2017 and are now on display at the Epping Forest District Museum, on behalf of Ongar Town Council I would like to thank them for attending.

### **Ongar Town Councillors attend the Town Festival on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

Ongar Town councillors participated in the VE Day parade that took place on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> May at 3.30pm from the Ongar Heritage Railway through the town to the Two Brewers pub and then returning to the station. Chairman Cllr Jason Gunn, and Cllrs Eydmann and Roberts took part in this procession, along with other community and national service groups. On behalf of Ongar Town Council, I would like to thank the organisers of the Town Festival Cath Honeywell and Kelly Stone, for a truly rememberable day, it was pleasing to see the Ongar residents and visitors to our town engaged in the various activities; this was a remarkable effort and highly commendable.

### **Ongar Town Councils acts of remembrance for VE Day 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

Ongar Town Council organised the raising of the VE day Flag next to Pleasance car park at 9.00am and then the lighting of the beacon at the Ongar War memorial at the Ongar surgery 9.30pm. The town council would like to thank all those who attended to mark these acts of remembrance.

### **RECENT IMPROVEMENTS TO THE NATURE RESERVE**

Ongar Town Council were recently successful in getting a grant towards essential improvements to the Nature Reserve. These include the following: -

1. Clearing an area to enable the installation of the two commemorative benches to mark the Coronation of HM King Charles III.
2. Planting a commemorative tree and plaque in memory of Felicitie Barnes founder member of Ongar & District Twinning Association.

3. Clearing the area by Ongar Bridge to improve both pedestrian access and to make it more appealing for residents and visitors.
4. There are plans to add a lectern which will have information about the Nature Reserve, i.e. flora and fauna of note.
5. Improving the signage to the Nature Reserve.

Thank you to staff for all their hard work (Sean), on working in this area for the benefit of both the residents and visitors to our town.

**Residents Survey open now until the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2025.**

Survey launched on our website, can I please ask ward Councillors to sign post residents to the survey please, this data is important not just so that we can make improvements but also for reporting methods back to EFDC for the grant. The survey can either be accessed using the website address or scan the QR code.

**RECENT IMPROVEMENTS TO THE NATURE RESERVE - Residents Survey open now until the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2025.**

Cllr Cole wished to thank Sean and his team for the work at the nature reserve.

These reported items have been sent to Ongar News for the June publication along with a statement which will appear on every article:

**‘Articles written in this column are checked and verified as accurate by the Ongar Town Council Clerk as part of the Town Councils communications policy. The information presented is factual and based on council activity. In addition to these official updates, the Town Councils’ collective views as a corporate body can be found through our official social media channels, and online on the Ongar Town Councils website. This includes verified and adopted council meeting minutes.’**

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

As a reminder Cllr Roberts and I have now checked both January and February accounts as part of our internal financial controls, it would be good practice to see if there are others that might be able to volunteer to do this, if councillors are free and happy to do this, can you please contact the clerk directly.

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

None reported in this meeting.

**-District and County Councillors**

To receive a five-minute report from District and County Councillors on matters relating to Ongar.

Cllr Dadd gave an update on the new bins which will be issued to residents sometime in June/July

Cllr McIvor as the County Council representative did not attend that evening and no report was sent along with any apologies received.

- **Details of Consultations**

- a) Cllr will advise Members of the numerous Consultations that have been held with Developers on the Planning Development Sites in Ongar

Cllr Walton confirmed the position of the larger developments with R6 having been approved, details of the other developments were given to council in the Planning Meeting that evening.

- b) The clerk will advise of any other consultations that have been received and are not covered separately in this Agenda.

The clerk had not received any other consultations for discussion.

## **95.25 FINANCIAL REPORTS**

### **Finance reporting**

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

**Motion:** The Council noted the budgetary information and confirms that the account balance of current account at £6,362.05 agrees with the reconciliation.

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

**Motion:** The Council notes the budgetary information and confirms that the account balance of deposit at £694,700.74.

**Proposed:** Cllr Eydmann      **Seconded:** Cllr Cole      **Carried:** unanimous

**Motion:** The Council notes the budgetary information and confirms that the account balance of Nationwide at £29,288.15

**Proposed:** Cllr Roberts      **Seconded:** Cllr Roberts      **Carried:** unanimous

**Motion:** The Council notes the budgetary information and confirm that the account balance of allotment deposit account £2,400.

**Proposed:** Cllr Eydmann      **Seconded:** Cllr Barrell      For: 8      **Abstained:** 2

## **96.25 TO APPROVE THE END OF YEAR ACCOUNT 2024-25**

Councillors reviewed the previous year's accounts of 2024-25.

Motion to approve the accounts of 2024-2025.

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

### **97.25 INCREASE TO EARMARKED RESERVES**

Cllrs discussed making increases to the earmarked reserves to move monies from general reserves and to work towards an action plan future development.

**Proposed:** Cllr Mendoza

**Seconded:** Cllr Roberts

**Carried:** Unanimously

### **98.25 POLICE REPORT**

A Police report was shared with Cllrs from PC Warren Shepard and read out by the clerk in the meeting:

#### **Crime stats for last 3-month period:**

Stats for period 05/02/25 to 05/05/25

184 calls to police, of these calls 119 crimes were recorded. Of those 119 crimes the following are crimes considered to have an impact on community:

1 Residential Burglaries

1 Attempted Residential Burglary

0 Residential Burglaries of Unconnected Buildings (garage or shed break in etc)

9 Theft of Motor Vehicle

8 Theft from Motor Vehicles

2 Vehicle Interference (Trying Car Door Handles etc)

Stats for period 05/02/24 to 05/05/24 to compare.

204 calls to police, of these calls 147 crimes were recorded. Of those 147 crimes the following are crimes considered to have an impact on community:

3 Residential Burglaries

5 Attempted Residential Burglary

0 Residential Burglaries of Unconnected Buildings (garage or shed break in etc)

9 Theft of Motor Vehicle

5 Theft from Motor Vehicles

6 Vehicle Interference (Trying Car Door Handles etc)

Summary, burglaries are down but vehicles being broken into is slightly up, so I keep an eye on this to make sure it doesn't get out of control. Overall stats show calls to police down by 9.8% and crime is also down by 19%

### **99.25 JUBILEE PARK PAVILION INVOICE**

Motion: To agree to pay the invoice for the storm damage to the roof of Jubilee Park Pavilion back in December 2020.

**Proposed:** Cllr Feetham

**Seconded:** Cllr Mendoza

**Carried:** Unanimously

### **100.25 GRANT FUNDING REVIEW**

Councillors **Discussed** the revised grant policy, including dates for submissions (2 per year), amounts per bid and information with deadlines for organisations that have a wider impact on the community requesting a larger capital investment to be considered for the next annual budget review and precept. The amounts per bid was agreed in a previous meeting



which then left whether to have two submissions for grants or to keep it in its current format.

**Motion:** To continue with the current grant submissions process.

**Proposed:** Cllr Feetham

**Seconded:** Cllr Cole

**Carried:** Unanimously

#### **101.25 DEFIBRILLATOR**

Cllrs discussed the missing defibrillator and agreed to purchase one to replace the lost one.

**Motion:** To agree to purchase one defibrillator for the telephone box in Ongar Highstreet.

**Proposed:** Cllr Cole

**Seconded:** Cllr Walton

**Abstained:** 1

#### **102.25 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 two items to be considered

103.25 Staffing- Cllrs were advised that a new burial/admin clerk has been employed and will commence their employment in June.

104.25 Lease for Scouts Hut – the lease has been completed by the Councillors Solicitors and a copy was shared with Cllrs for their attention.

**Motion:** To issue the new lease with the Scouts.

**Proposed:** Cllr Webb

**Seconded:** Cllr Eydmann

**Carried:** Unanimously

#### **105.25 ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

Emergency Plan

Various Leases\*

Disability Access – Look at Lease and Contact EFDC\*

Strategic Development Plan – Working Group

Annual Residents Survey

- **Clerk is aware of these**

Meeting ended at 21:40