

# Ongar

Town Council

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Minutes of a meeting of the full Town Council held on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2025 8:16 P.M. held at the Council Offices, Bansons Way CM5 9AS.

## MINUTES

### 106.25 THOSE PRESENT AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

**Chair** Cllr Gunn

**Present** Cllrs Roberts, Walton, Barrell, Vaz, Mendoza, Feetham, Eydmann, Reay, O'Neill, Regan

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

Apologies received from Cllrs Cole & Webb

**Motion:** The council to record and approve the apologies for absence.

**Proposed:** Cllr Walton

**Seconded:** Cllr Eydmann

**Carried:** Unanimously

### 107.25 To Agree the Full Council Minutes of 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025

**Proposed:** Cllr Walton

**Seconded:** Cllr Reay

**Carried:** Unanimously

### 108.25 DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

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

*Members of the Council are subject to paragraphs 6 (DPIs), 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 with regards to agenda item 113.25 Motion 4.

### 109.25 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.***

### 110.25 Receive a talk regarding The 2 Minute Foundation Litter Pick Options

Councillors received a talk regarding the 2 Minute Foundation Litter Pick Options to see if the initiative would be beneficial to the town from an Ongar resident. He explained that he had already raised £250 which could buy a litter pick station and had sought permission from Ongar Library to store this. Councillors asked if he had evidence from other areas of impact and whether this was part of a national scheme which he applied affirmative to both. He agreed to come back to the council with further information once the proposal for Ongar was more developed.

The Councillor's thanked the resident for the information he had supplied.

#### **111.25 Clerks Report**

1. Our internal audit was carried out early this month which was good with only a few recommendations. The report is in the Councillors folder. I would like to thank Steff for her work over the last year and for collating all the documents for the auditor.
2. I met with a member of the Essex Wildlife Trust along with the ground supervisor at the nature reserve we spent approximately 90 minutes on site. He was very complimentary of the site and stated what a lovely site we have. He noted several species of butterflies and small bees and insects we also saw 9 ducklings and a grass snake swimming in Cripsey brook. He has also put feelers out to see if any people would like to undertake surveys of insects etc at the site. Unfortunately, I also saw two shopping trolleys and several tin cans which had been dumped in the area.
3. The consultation results regarding remote attendance and proxy voting were issued by EALC of which the government conclusion is that in person authority meetings remain vital for local democracy, hybrid and remote attendance and proxy voting will enable local authorities in England to develop more modern, accessible and flexible working practices. The government will issue more guidance once it has gone before Parliament.
4. The new staff member commenced at the beginning of June and will be responsible for the cemetery and the website site improvements and ongoing updates. She will also be responsible for improving our online presence on social media platforms in due course. She has been booked in for her cemetery training in November. In addition to this she has also been working on the new governance spreadsheet for the planning and environment committee.
5. I attended the last of my core courses with EALC last week on Law and Procedures.
6. Commencement of the clerks CILCA course will begin next month the course should take between 200 – 250 hours.
7. I attended a team's meeting regarding the claim from the resident in Moreton Road who fell over and injured herself. I have also been working on having the streetlight replaced and will confirm once this has been actioned. This leads me into the streetlight maintenance contract which expired in 2022 and has not been renewed although they are still responding to call outs. A new maintenance contract has been received and is £1,520 per annum which will be in place until 2030. An increase of

£120 per year. This is for an annual maintenance report where lights will be cleaned and tested for correct function and general visual inspection with a written report provided and any obvious worn or broken parts will be replaced. It may be worth council considering replacing broken lights with LED lights going forwards. This would of course need to be costed as we can achieve less expensive electricity costs for LED lights, albeit you will have to pay for the change first. I will advise further with costings which could be budgeted for in the next financial year.

8. Our grounds people cut the verge at the front of the cemetery as neither ECC or EFDC would confirm when they would be doing it, and it was causing complaints from residents. As it is a reflection on the Town Council and the cemetery, I instructed the staff to cut it.
9. I have instructed ROSPA to do their statutory annual inspection of our play areas and play equipment once this has been done, I will then share the report with councillors. Following notification from Cllr Mendoza that the crossbar is missing from the goal posts at Shelley Park, I have requested a cost to replace it.
10. The Scout's lease is with them; they are arranging a meeting of their committee to agree it.
11. Love Lane office lease - our solicitor raised a question with regards to the start date as near as I can find out it was early June 2023 so I have stated 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023 for the lease which should be back for signature asap.
12. Jubilee Park - I have tried numerous times to contact the Chairman of OCST he replied once confirming a meeting for week commencing 12<sup>th</sup> May but then did not confirm which day or time. The secretary of the trust has contacted me stating he would meet with me if agreeable. However, council agreed on November 20<sup>th</sup> 2024 that we would only deal with the chair of the trust, so I am still waiting for him to contact me.
13. Looking at the minutes from April 2022 it states that councillors agreed to move the monies from earmarked reserves for Shelley Bus Stop to Shelter Cleaning cost centre (4420 Bus Shelter Maintenance). As there is no bus stop which is owned by the town council at Shelley, any S106 monies would not be able to be spent on Shelley Bus Stops. Unless the bus shelter on Moreton Road is classed as Shelley? We received £10,000 from ECC on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2013 of which £4,020.00 was paid to the Shelter Store and subsequently lost due to the company going bust which would have left £6,036.00 the s106 monies is £5,196.00. I will investigate this further and bring to council should I need to.
14. I have received notification from EFDC Elections department to say they are still awaiting invoices in from external parties which hopefully they will have at the end of this month before they can invoice the town council for the elections which were held in town both contested and uncontested. I asked if she could let me know what has already been submitted and I was informed approximately £2,500. As you know we had not planned for an election and our earmarked reserve was only £1,500.

15. I had a meeting with a gentleman from EFDC from the economic development department of EFDC who has stated that they have funding available of £3,114 for us to apply for. It was considered by EFDC to spend it on the library car park however there are numerous benches in place along with bins. I put forward the option of putting more benches at the nature reserve, or the Rec. Once I have received the formal information an update will be given.
16. A meeting was had with a representative from another gentleman also from the Economic Development of EFDC they are looking to restart the Town Partnership which ran from 1990 – 2014 within the district. The way this works is that a group of local businesspeople/ people in the community own it. Firstly, there will be a meeting organised with the Chairman of the town council, two district councillors, the community champion, EFDC and myself to discuss this further and see how it would run.
17. Councillor McIvor sent an email asking about faulty Speed Indicator Devices of which I was told by a resident that the one in Moreton Road has not worked for some time and I have passed this on to him to see if he can arrange funding for repair or replacement.

## **112.25 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 to monitor progress. My attention has once again been drawn to what appears as councillors using emails to make requests to the clerk which is not appropriate. As a reminder we adopted a 'Ways of Working Policy' on the 17<sup>th</sup> of October 2024 whereby all requests are to be made using an 'action request form'. It is also a concern that some councillors tone and style of language used in their emails could be seen as vexatious. Some requests and suggestions may also be seen as operational. Email etiquette is detailed in the 'Ways of Working Policy' and we follow the Nolan principles.

May I also take this opportunity to remind new and existing councillors that all communication from the Town council must go through the town clerk as they are the proper officer and we are a corporate body, and decisions are made only in Town Council meetings, please refer to our policies, local and national guidance for further information. To note that the 'Local Councils Explained' has now been revised for 2025 and can be downloaded from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) website. If you have not signed up to the association, I would recommend that you do as this sends out regular email updates. Decisions made in council meetings are a collective response and anything that contradicts this could potentially put the council into disrepute.

## **Stay Safe, Stay Smart” Family Awareness Event in Ongar Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

I had the pleasure of attending the event organised by Cllr Mary Dadd from Epping Forest District council to promote safety with practical advice from a range of speakers. It was an interesting evening with a range of topics covered, it was good to see other councillors in attendance on behalf of the council, I would like to congratulate Cllr Dadd and the speakers on a very informative evening.

**Meeting with a Resident and the Town Clerk on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June with regards to ‘The 2 minute Foundation’ litter pick stations.** This was discussed on item 110.25.

## **Kings Award for Voluntary Service (KAVS) ceremony 10<sup>th</sup> June 2025 3food4you**

I had the great pleasure to be invited to the event held at Mulberry House on behalf of the town council from Pesh Kapasiawala along with over 60 dignitaries and 100 volunteers. This event was to celebrate the well served award given to Chair of Trustees 3Food4u Pesh Kapasiawala who was one of 29 people honoured with a British Citizen Award (BCA) On the 26<sup>th</sup> January 2025 . There were a range of speakers and awards given to 10 volunteers, which were smaller versions of the original award which will be given to all volunteers that take part in this activity, This was then followed by a catered reception which was crafted by the chefs using surplus ingredients which aligns to the charities ethos of treating people with dignity and respect, reducing food waste, and protecting the environment. Also in attendance the Lord-Lieutenant of Essex, two Deputy Lieutenants, the [High Sheriff of Essex](#) High, the Chair and Immediate Past Chairman of [Essex County Council](#), two Past Chairmen of [Epping Forest District Council](#), six Mayors, CEOs of several companies, Carol Byatt Chair [Epping Forest Chamber of Commerce](#), [BBC Essex](#)

On behalf of Ongar Town Council, I would like to thank 3food4you for inviting me to the celebrations and congratulate them for a very well-deserved award and celebration event.

## **Nature Reserve Survey – a reminder of the closing date**

Can I remind ward councillors to promote the Nature Reserve Survey which closes on the **30<sup>th</sup> of June**, this was reported in the last full council meeting, it was placed in the June edition of the Ongar News and our website and social media channels.

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

Further to my update in the last full council meeting, just to note that in addition to the speakers already mentioned, we also had a short report from Mr Sands the Headteacher from Ongar Academy and in addition to this EFDC Cllr Keska reported on the reorganisation of local government. Mary Dadd gave an update on the ONPG. Unfortunately, these were not mentioned in the article for the Ongar News, and therefore I would like this minuted for the record.

## **Ongar News:**

Articles written, please see ONEDRIVE for information:

- **The Ongar Town Assembly held on the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2025 – due to the deadline of the 10<sup>th</sup> May , occurring shortly after the last publication and not sufficient time for this to be checked by the Town Clerk/Proper Officer as part of our communications policy.**
- **Information about the ‘Play in the Park scheme’ for this summer.**
- **Nature Reserve visit and survey.**

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

Cllr Roberts reported that the Twinning Association had met and that they were looking to broaden their membership, she raised an issue that the meetings are currently take place during the working day and to encourage more people to join this would have to be moved to a more convenient time. Cllr O’Neal asked if they could target the schools to encourage younger participants and Cllr Roberts confirmed that this was already in hand.

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

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

Cllr Dadd had stated she would send a report to the clerk for councillors to read.

Cllr Mclvor as the County Council representative gave a verbal report which the councillors noted.

He confirmed that the streetlamp replacement outside the Senner’s business premises was interim and would be replaced with a more in keeping one.

He reported that some potholes had been filled in, in the Ongar area.

Included in this report he stated that certain opinions were being stifled in schools and that Cllr Mclvor did not see this acceptable in an educational environment.

He also reported that he had facilitated premises in the town centre for the provision of additional primary care services which the ICB were not pursuing at this time.

Cllr Eydmann asked whether the Herts and West Essex ICB had made their plans for required running cost efficiencies available to the county council and whether or not there was a formal response to those plans from the county council in the public domain. Cllr Mclvor agreed to bring back further information on this issue when available.

- **Details of Consultations**

- a) Cllr's 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 in the planning committee regarding the meeting held to discuss the Shelley Recreation Area.

- 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.

### **113.25 FINANCIAL REPORTS**

#### **Finance reporting**

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

**Motion:** The Council noted the budgetary information and confirms that the account balance of current account at £11,881.61 agrees with the reconciliation.

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

**Motion:** The Council notes the budgetary information and confirms that the account balance of deposit at £664,700.74.

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

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

**Proposed:** Cllr Eydmann      **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 Roberts      **Seconded:** Cllr Eydmann      For: 11      **Abstained:** 1

### **114.25 POLICE REPORT**

A Police report was **NOTED** by Cllrs from PC Warren Shepherd.

### **115.25 VOIP TELEPHONE SYSTEM**

**Motion:** To agree to change the telephone system over to a VOIP system with AEON.

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

### **116.25 INTERNAL AUDIT 2024/25**

**a. 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 Reay      **Seconded:** Cllr Roberts      **Carried:** Unanimously

**b. To approve and sign the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/25.**

**Resolved.** The council approves the governance statement for signature and publication. Cllr Gunn, Chairman of Ongar Town Council signed the statement in the meeting.

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

**c. To approve and sign the Accounting Statements (Section 2) of the AGAR for 2024/25.**

**Resolved.** The council approves the financial statement for signature and publication.

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

Cllr Gunn, Chairman of Ongar Town Council signed the statement in the meeting.

**d. To note the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights as 30<sup>th</sup> June to 8<sup>th</sup> August 2025.**

**Resolved.** The Council approves the period of public rights from 30<sup>th</sup> June to 8<sup>th</sup> August 2025.

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

**e. To appoint Heelis and Lodge as the Internal Auditor for the 2025/26 financial year.**

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

**117.25 PLAY EQUIPMENT REVIEW**

The clerk advised the councillors that the annual inspection of play equipment had been instructed to commence. Following an email query from Councillor Mendoza stating the cross bar at the Shelley Play Park was missing the clerk advised that a quotation had been sought to repair the goal. The roundabout in the recreation area was discussed and the clerk was instructed to obtain a quotation to replace the equipment.

**Motion: Instruct the clerk to have delegated power to carry out repairs and maintenance for the play equipment.**

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

**118.25 GRANT APPLICATION REQUEST**

Councillors discussed the grant application received from Voluntary Action Epping Forest.

**Resolved: Councillors agreed to support the grant application.**

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

**118.25 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.

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| There were currently zero items to be considered |
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**120.25 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 21:42