

Ongar

Town Council

Bansons Way, CM5 9AS
01277 365348



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

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

MINUTES

121.25 PRESENT AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Chair: Cllr Gunn

Present: Cllrs Cole, Reay, Eydmann, Feetham, Mendoza, Barrell, Vaz, Regan

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

To report, approve & record apologies for absence (and the reasons) from members

Apologies Received: Cllr Walton, Roberts, O' Neill

Motion: The council to record and accept apologies for absence.

Proposed: Cllr Barrell

Seconded: Cllr Reay

Carried: Unanimous

122.25 TO AGREE THE FULL COUNCIL MINUTES OF 19th June 2025

Motion: To AGREE the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on the 19th June 2025 as a true record of the meeting.

Proposed: Cllr Barrell

Seconded: Cllr Eydmann

Carried: Unanimous

123.25 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.

Cllr's Gunn and Cole declared a pecuniary interest in agenda items 128/25 & 133/25 as allotment holders and Chair of the allotment association.

124.25 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.***

No Public Present.

125.25 TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION REGARDING THE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS & EVENT 2025

Postponed until the September meeting.

126.25 CLERKS REPORT

Councillors will be updated by the Clerk of correspondence and information received and actioned.

Clerks Report Meeting

1. The CCTV upgrades have been completed at the Rec and Shelley Play Park, the Cerizay play area will be next week.
2. I have had correspondence from a resident regarding trees falling in the nature reserve as such I have spoken to the outside supervisor to confirm the situation. I have also checked our last survey undertaken in November 2023 which was received by the Council in January 2024 I cannot see any of the remedial works have been undertaken following the survey. I have contacted the company to confirm the costs of a new up to date survey and will await their reply.
3. I have applied for a grant from EFDC for benches at the Nature Reserve along with a table with benches at the Recreation Ground. The £3,114 as previously stated will be granted to a local application. I have been informed that the Petanque and Budworth Hall are also applying for the funding.
4. *I have heard back from our insurer and they have advised that "Should we be unable to make further contact with the client, we will proceed with a liability decision based on the information currently available.
Following our review, we have concluded that liability will be denied in this case. The claimant has resided at the address for over 25 years and was familiar with both the kerb and the absence of the streetlight, which she had previously reported to the council. Additionally, there would have been sufficient illumination from other streetlights and ambient lighting in the area. She could have also used a phone to light up her path.
Could you please confirm this position with the insured and advise whether they are comfortable for us to proceed on this basis?"*
5. Our annual inspection of our streetlights has been completed and report has been sent received and is being worked through currently. As some of the streetlights are LED now and this means we may be able to lower our electricity bill.
6. Lorraine and I have carried out an audit of one section of the cemetery. We have mapped one section and documented clearly the spaces we have in use, free or reserved. We will also be doing Section 3 as they are the sections most in use.
7. Our new VOIP phones will be installed on 5th August.
8. The final invoice for the cost of the elections was **£2,464.73** as issued to us by EFDC.
9. The electrical works at JPP so they can obtain a EICR was reported to the Council to be just under £35,000 which needs to be addresses especially as I have a meeting next

week with the insurance broker to commence with our renewal quotation as our insurance is due in September.

10. I have seen that there is a new round of grant funding from Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner as such I will see if we can apply for funding.
11. Webinar attended for HR with the chairman and consideration needs to be that not all members can be on the staffing committee as this leaves the council vulnerable as to not have an appeals panel of councillors should one be needed.
12. Scouts have instructed solicitors regarding the lease so hopefully it will be agreed shortly.
13. Love Lane office - the client has stated he will sign and return to the solicitor, the council part of the lease is ready for signature and returning to the solicitor.

For Councillors attention I have put in the folder a copy of the report following the issue at JPP with rodent ingress and egress through the pipes. There is a quotation for remedial works of which £12,266.67. I have spoken to the insurance company and he has stated that it does not appear to be tree roots but poor cleaning regime causing the issues. *looking at it now I can't see any mention of tree root damage – It all just seems to be a build up of fatty waste which would be down to poor management of their cleaning regime.*

If that's the case then it looks to be more of a maintenance issue than a claim? As such we would not be able to claim this back on our insurance.

14. The replacement roundabout at the Rec I have three quotes for slightly different things as you gave me delegated powers to arrange this works before I place the order for the replacement I wanted to make you aware that the costs range between 7971.58 for a dizzy roundabout which most of the mechanics are above ground to £14,547.57 for the same as we have which is an inclusive roundabout. Or a rota web climber for £9,873.24.
15. The replacement matting at Shelley play park will be in situ next week just in time for the school holidays. The goal post is ongoing and the whole thing will need to be replaced.

HM Land Registry have acknowledged the receipt of the letter and copy of the lease regarding the stewardship of Shelley Play Park and stated they would respond around April 2026.

127.25 REPORTS & MEMBERS REPORTS

-Chairmans Report

Meetings with the town clerk

Both the vice chair and I have continued to have weekly line management meetings with the clerk during this month to monitor progress. Thank you to those councillors that are following our 'Ways of Working Policy' and for submitting action request forms to the clerk. Please can I remind you that when you do, items that need discussion at council cannot be a request for action, we are a corporate body, and decisions are made in council. As a reminder – the 'who does what' in the Chairmans report for this

year clearly sets out which tier of council has respective responsibilities. The clerk will update on any progress on these in her report.

Clerk and Chair attend Scribe Webinar - 2nd July 2025

The clerk and I attended an online free webinar on 'The Clerk as an Employee & HR Advisor'. James Corrigan a returning speaker from 'Council HR and Governance Support', talked about the dual role of the Clerk as an employee and HR advisor. It was made quite clear that as a council we need to look at the current governance of our staffing committee, the clerk will update you all in her report.

As I have reported in previous town council meetings, they are free to attend if you subscribe and are a valuable insight into how town and parish councils work along with important updates to practice. They also email the attended meeting along with any resources that are used.

Epping Forest District News – Statement from council leader following incident in Epping.

For those that subscribe to Epping Forest District News and also thanks to Cllr Vas who has emailed this to some councillors to inform you with regards to the statement from the leader.

You may have seen the statement and video message from the leader of the Epping Forest District Council following the incident in Epping and calling for a closure of the asylum seeker hotel in the Epping Forest District.

To quote 'I urge everyone to rely on official updates from the police and the council. Avoid speculation or misinformation being spread on social media and elsewhere. We will remain calm and united, and we will work to ensure Epping remains a safe place for everyone'.

Ongar News:

Articles written, please see ONEDRIVE for information:

Article for Ongar News August 2025:

- A reminder about the dates, times and locations in August for 'play in the park'.
- A reminder about looking after our assets for everyone to enjoy – using the bins provided and reporting any issues to the Town clerk.
- Summer planters with a mention about the hard work the outdoor teams are doing to both maintain and water these for all residents to enjoy.
- Thank you to those residents that took part in the nature reserve survey which closed on the 30th of June 2025.
- A reminder about how to use our town council website with an update on our new member of staff who will not only be our burials clerk but will also be taking on responsibility for both our website and social media accounts.

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

Councillors reported that there had been no meetings of the ONPCG, Twinning or Transport Groups/committees/associations

-District and County Councillors

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

District Councillor Dadd gave a report to Councillors covering the new waste bins, new trees at St Peters Avenue, Town Partnership and safeguarding.

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

128.25 FINANCIAL REPORTS

Finance reporting

Members agreed with the list of budgetary information up to the end of June 2025

Motion: The Council noted the budgetary information and confirms that the account balance of current account at £7,384.90 agrees with the reconciliation.

Proposed: Cllr Mendoza Seconded: Cllr Reay Carried: Unanimously

Motion: The Council noted the budgetary information and confirms that the account balance of deposit account at £648,386.68.

Proposed: Cllr Cole Seconded: Cllr Mendoza Carried: Unanimously

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

Proposed: Cllr Barrell Seconded: Cllr Reay Carried: Unanimously

Motion: The Council noted the budgetary information and confirms that the account balance of allotment account at £2,409.32

Proposed: Cllr Edymann Seconded: Cllr Regan Carried: Unanimously

129.25 POLICE REPORT

Due to work load no Police report was available.

130.25 SERVER REPLACEMENT

Councillors to DISCUSS and AGREE the purchase of a new server for Rialtas or to use Rialtas in the cloud.

The clerk advised the Councillors that a replacement server was required, as the server only holds our Rialtas software the option was to replace the server and leave it in situ or to move to Rialtas online which would hold the data and backups.

Motion: To move the server to Rialtas online (cloud based).

Proposed: Cllr Regan Seconded: Cllr Cole Carried: Unanimously

131.25 RENEWAL OF HR AND HEALTH & SAFETY SUPPORT

Councillors to were given an update from the clerk that the HR support required to be renewed. Two companies had been approached for quotations with one knowing the industry.

Motion: To renew the HR and H&S support with Worknest

Proposed: Cllr Cole

Seconded: Cllr Reay

Carried: Unanimously

132.25 PROPOSED CHANGE TO SEPTEMBERS MEETING DATE

Due to a number of commitments, it was proposed to change September's meeting date to 4th September. As there will be no meeting in August the proposal was considered.

Motion: To move September's meeting date to 4th September.

Proposed: Cllr Reay

Seconded: Cllr Mendoza

Carried: Unanimously

133.25 ONGAR ACADEMY AND SURGERY BINS

Following a discussion regarding the car park outside the Ongar Academy which both surgery visitors and others use, it was reported that a large amount of waste gets dropped and left in the area. Councillors discussed whether to ask the County Councillor to request some bins for the area. Councillors agreed for the clerk to write to ECC as owner of the land and copy in the County Councillor who may be able to assist with this matter.

134.25 RENTOKIL QUOTE FOR WORK AT JUBILEE PARK PAVILION

Councillors discussed the quotation which the town council had received of the drains at Jubilee Park Pavilion. It was reported that there was a fat buildup in the drains due to poor management of the cleaning process. The clerk was requested to obtain another quotation for the work to be carried out for councillors to consider. The item will be deferred.

135.25 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

136.25 NOMINATIONS FOR KING'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS AWARD 2026

Following discussion regarding possible nominations it was agreed that the clerk would seek assistance from local government officials.

Motion: The Clerk will seek assistance from local government officials, the deadline date would be 31st July 25 to allow the clerk to proceed should there be no responses then the clerk will be unable to proceed.

Proposed: Cllr Cole

Seconded: Cllr Reay

Carried: Unanimously

137.25 ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Emergency Plan

Various Leases*

Disability Access – Look at Lease and Contact EFDC*

Strategic Development Plan*

Residents Survey*

- **Clerk is aware of these**