



**Minutes of a meeting of the Full Council held on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at 8:00, at the Council Offices, Banson's Way, Ongar CM5 9AS.**

MINUTES

49.26

**Present and apologies for absence**

**Present:** - Chairman Cllr Gunn & Town Clerk Mrs Debbie Murray

**Cllrs:** Cole, Eydmann, Reay, Mendoza, Barrell, Hollingum, Parr, Vaz, Walton, O'Neill, Feetham

**Apologies:** Cllrs Regan, Roberts, Wingfield

**Reasons noted with an apology** 2 councillors had medical apologies and 1 had been held up  
District Councillors Dadd & Keska

**Also Present:** Press Officer, 2 Members of the public

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

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

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

50.26

**To agree the Full Council Minutes of 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2026**

**Motion:** to Agree the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2026 with an inclusion of the district councillor report. Cllr Reay requested an amendment to the minutes.

**Proposer:** Cllr Reay      **Seconded:** Cllr Hollingum      **Carried:** Unanimously

51.26

**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 declarations of interest and participation in the meeting insofar as any item of business involves such an interest.

Cllrs Gunn and Cole declared a pecuniary interests in agenda items 55.26 and 57.26 respectively as an allotment holder. The chairman explained to members that due to this another councillor would be needed to be voted in to chair item 57.26.

52.26

**Questions from Members of the public and public participation**

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

Two members of the public who were both allotment holders attended and spoke about the proposed allotment rules in agenda item 57.26.

53.26

**Clerks Report**

1. Following on from our Health and Safety audit the fire risk assessment has been carried out, a copy is in the councillor 's folder for your attention. There is some work which needs to be addressed and will be completed once I have obtained quotes for the work required.

2. The anti-social behaviour issues in town seems to be continuing. With the reports of motorbikes being ridden over the rec field and the scooters being ridden on the pétanque area. I also know of a window being smashed this weekend by youths using a catapult. I have renewed my request for more police presence in the town to try to address some of these issues. I have also been made aware of two wooden bats, and a replica gun being buried on the pétanque area. This has also been passed over the Police.
3. I went to the library yesterday to download some footage regarding the anti-social behaviour at the library which has been passed to the police.
4. The streetlight in Moreton Road for replacement, cannot be carried out due to the garden of the house being dug out for a driveway. I have requested what the cost would be if we moved it further down the road.
5. I heard from the chair of OCST with some dates for a meeting which I was unavailable to attend and have offered alternate dates.
6. The replacement fence at JPP will commence this week.
7. I received an email from a person at Lidl requesting to discuss Lidl's objectives with the town. I have requested further information.
8. The 3<sup>rd</sup> scouts have carried out a litter pick in Bluebell Woods this week using the council's equipment.
9. Preparation for tomorrow's town meeting is in full swing and hopefully it will be a successful event.
10. The outside team had a fire at the cemetery whilst I was away which raised some complaints from residents. I have concluded that the green waste generated will have to be placed in the bin provided or when there are larger amounts an outside service will have to be used so that no further complaints are received.
11. Feedback received following Easter's play in the park. Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March Shelley Park – 20 children, 12 adults (32 total) – last Easter the same site had 25 in total. Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April Love Lane – 15 children and 11 adults (26 total) – last Easter the same site had 19 in total. So however you're sharing the publicity it must be working, we asked families for feedback to try and improve the sessions and find out how they heard about it. And the majority said they'd heard about the sessions through social media, followed by "councils website". I'm pleased to say the feedback was very positive, people highlighted the variety of activities, friendly staff, open ended play, having free activity for families in a location they could walk to. There were calls for longer sessions more regularly.
12. Training undertaken this month includes Canva, Making Council Documents Accessible which we should have been doing this since 2018. New Nalc guidance issued yesterday. Next week we have 'Dealing with Difficult People and Conversations in our Local Council'.
13. There was a sewage leak at the nature reserve whereby a manhole cover had overturned, Thames Water attended and with the work from the outside staff in managing to correctly position the manhole cover again saving the council money as the area was in a copse and would have required a tree surgeon to attend to obtain access. Thames Water returned to clean the area of any residue.

## 54.26 Reports & Members Reports

### Chairman's Report Meetings with the Clerk

I have continued to have weekly meetings with the town clerk to look at progress on motions made in council and other developments on behalf of the town council. I have not received any Cllr request this month to discuss with the clerk for this meeting.

Ongar and District Twinning Association  
Twinning Fundraiser – Bingo Night, Saturday 28 March 2026

Cllrs Eydmann, Roberts and Wingfield, along with the Chairman Cllr Gunn, attended the Ongar and District Twinning Association bingo fundraiser.

The bingo evening and raffle raised £200 towards the association's funds. It was a delightful evening and a pleasure to support the Twinning Association ahead of their forthcoming visit to Cerizay.

Annual Town Meeting. Friday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2026.

All preparations have now been done, as a reminder it starts at 7.00pm at Budworth Hall tomorrow, the full agenda is on our website, please if you haven't done already let the Town Clerk now that you will be attending.

Twining Event in Cerizay 2<sup>nd</sup> –6<sup>th</sup> of April 2026

Cllrs Roberts and Eydmann, Town Council Assistant Mrs Eileen Gough, and Chairman Cllr Gunn represented Ongar Town Council at this year's twinning event in Cerizay, France.

As part of the official ceremony, engraved glasses and wine from Danbury were presented to the Mayor of Cerizay on behalf of both Ongar Town Council and the town of Ongar.

During the weekend's programme of twinning activities, Chairman Cllr Gunn delivered a speech in both English and French, alongside Mr Bob Gammon, Chairman of the Ongar and District Twinning Association; Monsieur Johnny Brosseau, Mayor of Cerizay; and Madame Françoise Ragueneau, Chair of the Cerizay Twinning Association.

On behalf of Ongar Town Council, we would like to thank our hosts for their very kind hospitality. The visit was a fitting celebration of the continued twinning relationship between our two towns.

Based on feedback I had had with regards to my chairman's report, moving forward I will put the entire report on the SHAREPOINT, however, I will continue to supplement this with a briefer verbal report that summarises the key points and headlines. This is to ensure that these are captured in the minutes for residents to read, as well as making sure that any last minute or unexpected points can also be included after the main report is uploaded.

Highlights:

- Extraordinary Meeting of the Ongar Millennium History Society Friday 13 March 2026 – Ongar History Society Museum
- Launch of Epping Forest District Museum CIO Exhibition 'Town and Country: Life in Roman Duroilitum' – Saturday 14 March 2026
- Ongar and District Twinning Association Twinning Fundraiser – Bingo Night, Saturday 28 March 2026
- Twinning Event in Cerizay 2<sup>nd</sup> –6<sup>th</sup> of April 2026
- Nature Reserve – Community Litter Pickers – Reminder

The Full article is on the Cllrs SHAREPOINT:

Copy of the full article for the minutes:

Ongar News – May 2026

### **Extraordinary Meeting of the Ongar Millennium History Society Friday 13 March 2026 – Ongar History Society Museum**

The Chairman, Cllr Gunn, attended an extraordinary meeting of the Ongar Millennium History Society on behalf of Ongar Town Council. The meeting focused on discussions about the future of the society. It also provided an opportunity to formally thank Tonia Hart for her dedicated service as Secretary of the Society. Gifts were presented during the meeting in recognition of her commitment and valuable contribution.

The society is currently looking to expand its committee, and I would strongly encourage anyone with an interest in local history to contact them directly. Further details are available on the society's website.

On behalf of Ongar Town Council, I would like to thank the society for their kind invitation and, in particular, Mike Birbeck, the Society's new Secretary.

**Launch of Epping Forest District Museum CIO Exhibition  
'Town and Country: Life in Roman Durolitum' – Saturday 14 March 2026**

The Clerk Mrs Debbie Murray, Cllr Eydmann, and the Chairman, Cllr Gunn, were invited to the launch of a new exhibition at Epping Forest District Museum CIO entitled '*Town and Country: Life in Roman Durolitum*'.

The exhibition explores what life was like during the Roman period in the Epping Forest District of West Essex, with a particular focus on the Durolitum (Little London) excavations carried out by the West Essex Archaeological Group (WEAG) along the River Roding, between Chigwell and Abridge.

The event included a series of talks, an opportunity to view the new exhibition, and concluded with an immersive theatre experience on Sun Street, made possible through Culture Essex funding.

On behalf of Ongar Town Council, I would like to thank the organisers for their kind invitation and an extremely enjoyable event. I would highly recommend that residents attend and visit the museum.

**Ongar and District Twinning Association**

**Twinning Fundraiser – Bingo Night, Saturday 28 March 2026**

Cllrs Eydmann, Roberts and Wingfield, along with the Chairman Cllr Gunn, attended the Ongar and District Twinning Association bingo fundraiser.

The bingo evening and raffle raised £200 towards the association's funds. It was a delightful evening and a pleasure to support the Twinning Association ahead of their forthcoming visit to Cerizay.

**Twinning Event in Cerizay 2<sup>nd</sup> –6<sup>th</sup> of April 2026**

Cllrs Roberts and Eydmann, Town Council Assistant Mrs Eileen Gough, and Chairman Cllr Gunn represented Ongar Town Council at this year's twinning event in Cerizay, France.

As part of the official ceremony, engraved glasses and wine from Danbury were presented to the Mayor of Cerizay on behalf of both Ongar Town Council and the town of Ongar.

During the weekend's programme of twinning activities, Chairman Cllr Gunn delivered a speech in both English and French, alongside Mr Bob Gammon, Chairman of the Ongar and District Twinning Association; Monsieur Johnny Brosseau, Mayor of Cerizay; and Madame Françoise Ragueneau, Chair of the Cerizay Twinning Association.

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**Nature Reserve – Community Litter Pickers – Reminder**

Ongar Town Council has previously published articles about community litter picks on our Nature Reserve. As a reminder, we are looking for interested residents to form a community group to assist with future litter picks and help protect our Nature Reserve and other outdoor spaces.

We have the full support of Essex Wildlife Trust, who would be happy to provide advice and guidance to those interested.

If you would like to get involved, please contact the Town Clerk:

 [clerk@ongartowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@ongartowncouncil.gov.uk)

 01277 365348

The following equipment is available for individuals or groups to use:

- Litter pickers
- High-visibility jackets
- Bags

Any resident wishing to book some time with the Town Council Chairman should email the Town Clerk on [clerk@ongartowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@ongartowncouncil.gov.uk) or alternatively call 01277 365348, as they coordinate the diary.

All updates, live consultations and information on the Town Council can be found on our website: <http://www.ongartowncouncil.gov.uk/>

Our Contact information is as follows:

Address: Ongar Town Council, Basons, Basons Way, Chipping Ongar, Essex, CM5 9AS

Telephone: 01277 365348

Email: [clerk@ongartowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@ongartowncouncil.gov.uk)

The office is normally open on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but it is best to call ahead to make sure there is someone there to meet you.

Chairman Cllr Jason Gunn

Clerk Mrs Debbie Murray

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.

-Town Councillor's reports and for those that attend on committees on behalf of the town council.

Cllr Feetham gave a report to the council following her attendance at the Epping Forest District Council Local Councils Liaison Committee. The chairman thanked Cllr Feetham for both attending on behalf of the council and her verbal report to members, he also reminded councillors that all Epping Forest District Councils meeting are recorded on webcast can be found on their website, Cllr Reay requested the following link in the minutes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3HJbtdrBaU>

#### ONPCG - **Report from ONPCG**

The clerk read the following report sent in by the chairman of ONPGC:

#### **Speculative development in Green Belt**

ONPCG does NOT support speculative development around Ongar whether for housing, solar farms etc. ONPCG considers that the present allocation of over 500 new homes in EFDC Local development Plan to 2033 is more than enough for Ongar to assimilate (for a number of reasons.)

Following Friday's well attended public meeting, ONPCG is working with residents groups to help coordinate as robust a defence against inappropriate development as possible. Clearly each site that comes forward -such as the Bloor Homes proposal -will have different characteristics. It is hoped that OTC will be willing to work with us as well

Ongar's GB is threatened ONPCG is working closely with specialists and other groups nearby to build our evidence base to support keeping GB as food producing land

Changes to supportive information against Refusals that go to (Written Representation) Appeals fo 1sr April 2026

I sent OTC the Govt announcement to the change in process for appeal. This will mean that Town Councils and Objectors will no longer be able to add further reasons for refusal or add further evidence to the information submitted to EFDC prior to a decision being made. Videos of the Committee Meeting will also not be accepted.

Twinning Association Cllr Eydmann – Spoke briefly about the Twinning event held in Cerizay during the Easter weekend.

There were no other updates from the chair of planning.

There were no other updates from the Clerk to report.

**55.26****Financial Reports****Finance reporting**

- a. To receive a summary of receipts and payments up to the end of March 2026.
- b. To review a list of budgetary information on all accounts.

Cllr Walton requested further information on item 55.26-part a, the clerk explained that the end of year close will be completed on 30<sup>th</sup> April, and this information would be ready for the next full council meeting in May.

**Motion:** The Council noted the budgetary information and confirms that the account balance of current account as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 at £7,367.29 agrees with the reconciliation.

**Proposer:** Cllr Reay      **Seconded:** Cllr Parr      **Carried:** Unanimously

**Motion:** The Council noted the budgetary information and confirms that the account balance of deposit account as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 at £554,937.58.

**Proposer:** Cllr O'Neill      **Seconded:** Cllr Mendoza      **Carried:** Unanimously

**Motion:** The Council noted the budgetary information and confirms that the account balance of Nationwide account as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 at £29,638.73. The clerk advised the account statement had been received the morning of 16<sup>th</sup> April 26 and that no change had occurred.

**Proposer:** Cllr Reay      **Seconded:** Cllr Mendoza      **Carried:** Unanimously

**Motion:** The Council noted the budgetary information and confirms that the account balance of allotment account as of 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026 at £2,499.44

**Proposer:** Cllr Barrell      **Seconded:** Cllr Hollingm      **Carried:** with 2 Abstentions

To NOTE the CCLA balance is £50,788.67

**56.26****Police Report**

The clerk advised that there were two reports in the sharepoint for Councillor's to review one in answer to their question last month which state domestic cases were not reported in the report and the second was for the report for April. There were questions raised around the validity of some of the data sent to council, the clerk explained the data was sent each month by the PC Shepherd.

**57.26****Allotment Rules and Regulations**

The chair asked for nominations for another councillor to chair this item due both him and the vice chair being an allotment holders. Cllr Reay nominated Cllr Walton to chair this item.

**Proposed:** Cllr Reay      **Seconded:** Cllr Barrell      **Carried:** with 2 Absentions

Cllr Cole gave an overview of the history of the allotment rules and regulation changes and why the changes were being made to bring the rules and regulations from 2017 and 2022 to align with current practice.

**Proposer:** Cllr Reay      **Seconded:** Cllr Hollingum      **Carried:** with 2 Absentions

**58.26****Fire Risk Assessment for Basons Way**

The councillors **NOTED** the update fire risk assessment and the remedial work which needs to be undertaken.

**59.26 Citizen of the Year Nominations and Awards** – the chair proposed to move this item to the confidential part of the meeting to ensure privacy in the winners. **Members agreed to this agenda item movement.**

**60.26 Fuel Rationing Policy**  
Following the conflict in the Middle East and the subject of fuel rationing the Clerk had compiled a policy to come into force should fuel rationing commence. Cllr Walton requested that this does not take effect until such time as the situation is enforced by government.

**61.26 Shelley Update**  
Councillors NOTED the update from EFDC Deputy Chief Exec J Gould. Cllr Reay wished to extend thanks for Cllr Whitbread and the Deputy Chief Exec taking the time to meet with the ward councillors on site at Shelley. Items have already been completed with more updates and deadlines mentioned in the correspondence.  
Cllr Reay gave a brief update. The chairman thanked those that attended and he also expressed his thanks to both Cllrs Wingfield and Reay for their written report on Sharepoint.

**62.26 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 in accordance with the Statutory Guidance.

#### **There were three items for consideration**

**59.26 Citizen of the Year Nominations and Awards**  
The Chair explained that the nominations from the electorate had identified the top 4 winners for the resident’s awards for citizen of the year, and that it was now up to council to nominate the 2 council choices.

Each Councillor had two votes whereby they could choose from the remaining nominees.

The four nominees voted by the electorate were Cath Honeywell, Kelly Stone, Adam Maullin & Andrew Deane.

The councillors two nominees were Wendy Pike and Karen Bush.

**63.26 Ongar Bridge Car Park**  
Following Cllr Walton’s meeting with the landowner a written report was compiled for Cllrs to read on Sharepoint. Cllr Walton gave a brief overview of his visit, and the chairman thanked him for both representing the council and producing the report.

**64.26 Staffing Update**  
The chair of the staffing committee gave a update from the grievance which is currently being investigated and as such could not be discussed.

#### **Items for Future Meetings**

Various Leases\*  
Disability Access  
Strategic Development Plan\*

- **Clerk is aware of these.**

Meeting ended 21:36