



Minutes of a meeting of the Full Council held on 19 March 2026 at 8:30, at the Council Offices, Bansons Way, Ongar CM5 9AS.

MINUTES

34.26 Present and apologies for absence

Present: - Vice Chairman Cllr Cole

Cllrs: Eydmann, Reay, Mendoza, Barrell, Hollingum, Parr, Vaz, Roberts, Walton, Wingfield

Apologies: Cllrs Gunn, O'Neill, Regan, Feetham 2 x medical, 1 x Awards event, 1 x EFDC meeting

Also Present: District Councillors Dadd & Keska, 4 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 Eydmann **Carried:** Unanimously

35.26 To agree the Full Council Minutes of 19th of February 2026

Motion: to Agree the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 19th February 2026.

Proposer: Cllr Reay **Seconded:** Cllr Eydmann **Abstained:** Cllrs Roberts, Walton

36.26 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.

Cllr Cole declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 40.26 as an allotment holder.

37.26 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.

Members of the public raised concerns regarding the closure of Ongar Bridge Car Park.

The Vice Chair asked if it would be agreeable to move agenda item 43.26 forward along with agenda item 42.26? Councillor's agreed to this agenda item to be brought forward.

43.26 Ongar Bridge Car Park

Councillor's to discuss and agree the closure of Ongar Bridge Car Park closure.

The clerk informed members why the car park was being closed after both corresponding and meeting with the current owner (Ongar Bridge Motors), this was after numerous years of misuse by the users of the car park the owner had decided enough was enough. The main reasons for the decision to close were fly tipping, general waste, human excrement. The owner has displayed a sign and place a barrier to close it. The clerk also stated that she had been in communication with one of our Epping Forest District Councillors Cllr Dadd, Alex Burghart MP. The chair of planning has organised a meeting with the owner on 30th of March on behalf of the town council to see if there

is any way the car park could remain open. Following the meeting the outcome will be reported back to council members in the next available meeting. District Councillor Dadd updated members of her endeavors to keeping the car park open. The land has value, however District Councillor Keska reminded the members that the car park is privately owned.

42.26

Budworth Hall Clock Repair

A request was made by District Councillor Keska, for the town council to pay for the repair of the Budworth Hall Clock. The quotation received from Paul Keska was for the sum of £3,218.40. The clerk confirmed that in 2016 the then council administration agreed to pay for the regular annual service of the clock (This budget line has since then been in the accounts each year). However, it is not responsible for the maintenance or for insuring the clock. Following debate the motion proposed was.

Motion: To work with the Ongar & District Community Association to set up a 'GoFundMe' fundraising page for the cost of the clock repair.

Proposed: Cllr Reay

Seconded: Cllr Barrell

Carried: Unanimously

38.26

Clerks Report

1. Following on from our Health and Safety audit I can confirm that some members of staff have attended first aid training. The other members will be trained shortly. One of the biggest concerns is the lone working, and how we monitor it. I will be investigating options to use with the focus on the outside staff over the next few weeks. The action list has decreased considerably by the work which had been carried out prior to the audit however this work will be continuing. The Fire Risk Assessment will be carried out next week.
2. I have been informed of several anti-social behaviour issues in town the last couple of weeks which are motorbikes being ridden over the recreation ground, electric scooters being ridden on the Pétanque area and daffodil's being pulled and thrown around the Cerizay play area along with rubbish strewn everywhere. Along with boys causing problems at the library. I have contacted PC Shepherd and asked if we could have some more police presence in town to help prevent these incidents occurring.
3. A resident from Millbank has contacted us to ask for assistance in the parking issues for Millbank and Rodney Road. I have investigated and Eileen Gough (Assistant) informed me that back in 2018 we were on the list for works to be carried out with Highways, but this got stopped due to budget issues. We have contacted Highways again to see if anything can be done.
4. The streetlight Queensway to Fyfield Road has been replaced which was found to be dangerous on our structural survey undertaken last year. This was the only urgent streetlight needing replacement urgently.
5. Regarding the streetlight which was knocked down in August 2023 the insurance company has agreed to pay for the UK Power Networks costs to replace the streetlight in Moreton Road with exception of the excess amount of £500.
6. I attended the opening of the exhibition on Saturday of Town and Country: Life in Roman Duroilitum' exhibition at Epping Forest Museum with both the Chairman Cllr Gunn & Cllr Eydmann whilst there I was given the replica premises ready for the presentation to the Ongar Millenium History Society at this year's Annual Town Assembly.

7. The gifts which have been sourced for the Ongar Twinning event to Cerizay are in the office ready for the trip to Cerizay at Easter.
8. I have had correspondence from JPP to say the chairman will be in touch with me in the next few weeks with regards to the insurance premium demand as agreed in council.
9. I was informed yesterday that the dog waste collection costs will increase by just under 8%, a bin collection will rise from £6.50 to £7.00 a bin.
I met with the new website company today, 'Aubergine', and it is currently being worked on, I have to both prepare and pass on a large amount of information that needs to be published on the website.
10. 'Aubergine', offer free training which will be booked in May to attend along with the office staff. Also booked in as part of this training is 'Canva' which is 2 hours of how to produce better posters etc for the council's website.
11. We had to pay to have asbestos removed from one of the Moreton Road allotments last week, this came to light by a new tenant who had just taken this over and cleared it, which we suspect the previous tenant had not.
12. I met with a member of Alex Burghart staff this morning to discuss the situation regarding Ongar Bridge Car Park closure so she can report back to him. Cllr Walton will be meeting with the owner on 30th March at 11am.
13. I met with the contractor today regarding the new fencing at JPP so that work can commence next month and I have emailed the chairman of the OCST to let him know the date of commencement.

39.26 Reports & Members Reports

The vice chairman then read out the following chairman's monthly report for March:

Chairmans Report March 2026

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. Please remember to email me if you have and to be mindful in your requests on matters that should be put forward to the clerk for her to both consider placing on the agenda and not requests that require a motion in full council. These could be for example updates on motions. You do not need to include all councillors in your email request.

Ongar News – March 2026

On behalf of Ongar Town Council I would like to thank the editor of the Ongar News Karen Bush for placing this month's article on the front cover 'Focus on Ongar Town Council', it was a pleasure to read this and I hope that our residents will see the impact we are having and to highlight both the annual town assembly, citizen of the year awards and our representation at the Ongar academies production of 'Annie' this year. There is still time for our residents to nominate, so can I please ask you all to remind your respective wards.

Twinning Event in Cerizay 2-6th of April 2026

Cllrs Roberts, Eydmann and I will be representing the town council from the 2nd to the 6th of April this year in Cerizay, gifts have been purchased by the clerk as agreed in council. We look forward to meeting our twinning friends again and will report back in the April meeting on how this went.

Extraordinary Meeting of The Ongar Millenium History Society Friday 13th March 2026 – Ongar History Society Museum

I attended the meeting on behalf of the town council. This meeting was to talk about the future of the society. I can happily report that the society will continue and the current chairman will continue in their role too. It was a very well attended event which included members of the society, committee and one of our Well-being Champions Cath Honeywell. This was also an opportunity to thank Tonia Hart for her service as the societies secretary and gifts were presented to her in the meeting along with thanks. There was a great deal of support in the meeting with some ideas including how to grow their membership and committee. The society is currently looking to expand its committee, and I would strongly encourage anybody who has an interest in local history to get in contact with them directly, details can be found on their website. We have received a copy of the draft minutes and email from the new secretary, details of which are in the ONEDRIVE for councillors' information. I would like to thank the society for the invitation to the meeting and particularly Mike Birbeck, the new secretary.

Launch of Epping Forest District Museum CIO's new exhibition- 'Town and Country: Life in Roman Durolitum' - on Saturday 14 March at 11.30am.

The clerk, Cllr Eydmann and I were invited to the launch of the new exhibition which was to explore what Roman life was like in the Epping Forest District of West Essex, focusing particularly on the *Durolitum*/Little London excavations conducted by the West Essex Archaeological Group (WEAG) along the River Roding, between Chigwell and Abridge.

There were a series of talks, an opportunity to walk around the new exhibition followed by an immersive theatre experience on Sun Street, made possible through Culture Essex funding.

We have received an email of thanks and some photographs from Ian Channel for attending the event

On behalf of Ongar Town Council, I would like to thank them for their kind invitation and a most enjoyable event, I would recommend that both our councillors and residents attend the museum

Articles for Ongar News submitted for the April edition include the following:

Highlights:

- Shelley Regeneration Project Announcement and agreed statement from Ongar Town Council
- Antisocial behaviour and vandalism – residents help needed – reports of daffodils being ripped up in Cerizay park and reports of motorbikes being ridden on the recreation area.
- A reminder about the town council seeking volunteer litter pickers for the nature reserve
- A reminder about the Annual Town Assembly on Friday 17th of April 2026.

The Full article is on the Cllrs Sharepoint, please see copy below:

Copy of the full article for the minutes:

Shelley Regeneration Project Announcement

Following the Epping Forest District Council announcement, that the Shelley Regeneration Development will pause for the foreseeable future and be considered again at a later date, Ongar Town Council have released the following statement:

“Ongar Town Council (OTC) is disappointed that Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) is no longer committed to the rejuvenation of the Shelley area. Whilst OTC had significant concerns about the most recent proposals, as they represented over-development of the area and not regeneration, OTC is still committed to working with EFDC, the planning authority, to invest in our community and enhance this part of Ongar”.

Acts of anti-social behaviour, residents help needed

We have received some reports lately with regards to our outdoor spaces and what appears to be anti-social behaviour and vandalism. The daffodils have been ripped up at Cerizay play area and reports of motorbikes being ridden over at the recreation play area. This is extremely disappointing that these incidents are taking place, this adds more work for the Town Council staff taking them away from their daily duties which results in additional costs which our residents pay for in their council tax. Please can we respectfully remind people to look after our assets for everyone to enjoy. It is a shame that a small number of people are doing this as these actions do not reflect our community as a whole. Please report anything that you see to our Town Clerk (contact information below). Can we also remind residents that we have a reporting page on our website for antisocial behaviour along with advice and guidance.

Nature Reserve – Community Litter Pickers - reminder

Ongar Town Council have previously written articles about community litter picks on our nature reserve. As a reminder, we are looking for interested residents to form a community group that can assist with future litter picks and get involved in protecting our nature reserve and other outdoor spaces. We have the full support of Essex Wildlife Trust, and I am sure that they would be happy to give advice and guidance to anybody who would be interested. If you want to get involved, please email the Town clerk directly, either by email clerk@ongartowncouncil.gov.uk or telephone on 01277 365348. We have the following equipment for individuals or groups to use

- Litter pickers
- High Visibility Jackets
- Bags

Reminder:

Ongar Town Annual Assembly will take place on Friday 17th April 2026 in Budworth Hall starting at 7.00pm

We are pleased to announce that all residents, groups, societies, and organisations are invited to this year's Town Assembly, All Parish and Town Councils throughout England are legally required to hold an Annual Parish Assembly between the dates of 1st March and 1st June (inclusive). This is not a Council meeting but a meeting of registered electors.

The evening will include the following:

- Annual Town Report from the Chair of the Council
- Stalls from clubs, societies and organisations that support the Ongar residents for attendees to visit.
- Updates from community partners and officials.
- An opportunity for questions and answers from registered electors.
- A questions box for registered electors.
- Civic awards nominated by both residents and the town council.
- Refreshments including wine and soft drinks.

We look forward to seeing as many of our residents as possible at the meeting.

Any resident wishing to book some time with the Town Council Chairman should email the Town Clerk on 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

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.

ONPCG - No meetings

Twinning Association Cllr Roberts – Fundraiser for the Twinning Association - Bingo on 28th of March at the Council Offices 28th March £12 per person, drinks and nibbles bring your own. Resources to cover next year's visit to Ongar.

District Councillor Dadd presented a report to the members in the meeting a copy will be made available in the Sharepoint.

There were no other updates from the Clerk to report.

The Chair of planning Cllr Walton stated that North Weald had issued a consultation for their Neighbourhood Plan.

40.26**Financial Reports****Finance reporting**

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

Motion: The Council noted the budgetary information and confirms that the account balance of current account as of 28th February 2026 at £7,616.50 agrees with the reconciliation.

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

Motion: The Council noted the budgetary information and confirms that the account balance of deposit account as of 28th February 2026 at £566,941.05.

Proposer: Cllr Barrell **Seconded:** Cllr Edymann **Carried:** Unanimously

Motion: The Council noted the budgetary information and confirms that the account balance of Nationwide account as of 28th February 2026 at £29,638.73

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

Motion: The Council noted the budgetary information and confirms that the account balance of allotment account as of 28th February 2026 at £2,436.62

Proposer: Cllr Walton **Seconded:** Cllr Eydmann 1 Abstention

To NOTE the CCLA balance is £50,079.13

41.26**Police Report**

A police report was received from PC Shepherd. Members requested the clerk to go back and confirm the difference in figures between what the clerk can obtain from the Essex Police website and what has been reported this month.

44.26**Meeting Dates 2026/27**

Members discussed the dates for 2026 and 2027 meeting dates.

Motion: To keep to the third Thursday of each month except for August (summer break) and the December which will not be a full council meeting but a Budget Preparation instead.

Proposed: Cllr Reay **Seconded:** Cllr Barrell **Abstained:** Cllr Walton

45.26**Council Risk Assessment**

Members **NOTED** the updated Risk Assessment.

Motion: The staffing committee carry out the tracking and monitoring progress of the Risk Assessment.

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

46.26**Youth Council**

Councilors discussed the merits of setting up a Youth Council for Ongar Town Council, councilors were given extensive pre read material in the Sharepoint on how this works. The clerk reminded council that there had been previous discussions on getting the views of the younger residents and this would be a way of enabling this, together with improving relationships and getting younger residents involved in the town particularly with the recent antisocial behaviour in the clerk's report on item 38.26

Motion: The clerk to investigate the work to set up a Youth Council.

Proposed: Cllr Eydmann **Proposed:** Cllr Reay **Carried:** Unanimously

47.26

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 is currently one item to be considered.

48.26

Ongar Bridge Car Park

Members were informed of correspondence received regarding Ongar Bridge Car Park. Following discussions, it was agreed for the clerk to seek legal specialist advice.

Items for Future Meetings

Various Leases*
Disability Access
Strategic Development Plan*

- **Clerk is aware of these.**

Meeting ended 22:27