

Ongar

Town Council



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Minutes of the FULL COUNCIL meeting
Held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, BANSONS, BANSONS WAY, ONGAR
17th January 2019.

162/18 Those present and apologies for absence

Chair Cllr Birch
Cllrs Cllrs Browning, Cole, Devonald Feetham, Battersby, Freeman, Keska, Mendoza, Reynolds, Vaz.
Locum Clerk Michael Letch
One member of the public.

163/18 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

Minute 176/18, Cllrs Cole and Reynolds declared non-pecuniary interests as members of Ongar Allotments and Garden Society.
Minute 179/18, Cllr Freeman declared an interest in Castle street allotment works.
Cllr Cole declared an interest as member of, chair of Ongar Allotment and Garden Society and tenant. Cllr Reynolds declared an interest as an allotment tenant.

164/18 Public participation session with respect to items on the agenda previously notified to the Clerk.

One member of the public spoke on the matter of all-night lighting reminding the council that ECC had promised a saving of £600k which had not been returned to the ratepayer so did not see the benefit of additional expenditure incurred by the Town Council. The council should consider adopting LED lighting when updating or replacing damaged units.

165/18 Correspondence

No updates

166/18 Consultations

No updates

167/18 Reports from District and County Councillors

No reports to consider.

The District Councillors were asked to investigate rumoured changes in terms and conditions for parking in Sainsbury's and the Leisure Centre.

168/18 To agree the Full Council meeting minutes of 20th December 2018

141/18 Cllr Cole declared an interest as the Chair of Ongar Allotment and Garden Society.

Resolved. With the above amendment, the minutes of Full Council Meeting held on are approved as a true record. Proposed Cllr Birch seconded Cllr Reynolds and carried unanimously.

169/18 Finance Reporting.

- a. The Council noted the list of all payments up to the end of December 2018
- b. The Council noted the list of budgetary information on all accounts.

Resolved The Council approves the budgetary information for December and notes the account balance of £ 61,191.59 agrees with the reconciliation. Proposed Cllr Reynolds seconded Cllr Battersby and carried unanimously.

170/18 To approve the budget for 2019 – 2020

Resolved. The council approves a budget of £330,174 for the financial year 2019-2020. Proposed Cllr Birch seconded Cllr Battersby and carried unanimously.

171/18 To set the precept for 2019 -2020

The Clerk reported that the finances for the coming year were sound, and the council noted the positive situation. Following a final review of the budget, some amendments have been made. The money allocated to CCTV has been increased to £25,000 which will be spent in partnership with Epping Forest DC who will take the lead in maintaining and monitoring the cameras. Cllrs Birch, Browning and Reynolds would work with the District Council to establish camera locations and move the project forward.

The grant fund has been set at £10,000, Ongar in Bloom has been increased to £500 and the festive lighting fund set at £1,000. The transfer to general reserve has been increased to £30,000.

Resolved. Based on the budget approved in 170/18, the council sets a precept of £307,050 based on an unchanged band D equivalent of £112.46 and a tax base of 2730.3. Proposed Cllr Birch seconded Cllr Reynolds and carried unanimously.

172/18 Framework for liaison with partner organisations – carried forward from November meeting.

To be deferred until the new council forms in May.

173/18 To approve the schedule of subscriptions for 2019-20

The council noted the list of subscriptions and considered that some were of limited value to the organisation and would not be renewed. The subscriptions to be renewed are

Essex Association of Local Councils
Essex Heritage Trust
Essex Playing Fields Association
Institute of Crematorium and Cemeteries Management
Open Spaces Society
Rural Community Council of Essex

Resolved. The above mentioned subscriptions will be renewed for 2019 -20. Proposed Cllr Birch seconded Cllr Browning and carried unanimously.

174/18 To consider renewing the contract with Local Authority Publishing for the production of the Ongar Town Guide

Resolved. The council supports the publication of a 2019 Town Guide. Proposed Cllr Freeman seconded Cllr Browning and carried unanimously.

175/18 To consider an offer to reinstate all-night street lighting.

Cllr Birch proposed that this item was moved to follow public speaking 164/18.

It was generally agreed that the savings made by Essex County Council should not be underwritten by the Town Council. Having noted comments from the public, the council decided that there was not sufficient interest to justify the expenditure; most of the lights in the high street stay on all night and with the one hundred lights provided by the Town Council which also stay on all night. This should provide sufficient illumination in most areas. The Council did note that LED lighting would be more efficient in the long run, and will establish a programme to convert the stock of lights over the next five or ten years.

Motion. The Council is prepared to contribute £5,000 per annum to Essex Highways to maintain all-night street lighting. With no proposer the motion failed. The council would prefer to have the lighting reinstated at Essex County Council's expense.

176/18 Future use of Minibus.

Having established that the bus has a value of £5,000 and noting that hires of the van have dropped-off since the School became an academy which could no longer hire the van, it was considered prudent to sell the vehicle and use the money to part-fund a replacement van for council use.

Cllr Cole's offer to have the vehicle valued and identify the correct framework for selling at auction was noted and accepted.

It was noted that the Council has committed to allowing Ongar Allotment and Garden Society free use of the minibus and consideration would have to be given to an alternative compensation, possibly by way of a grant to fund other minibus hires.

Resolved. The Council will sell the minibus and use the capital to fund a replacement van as specified in 177/18 below. Proposed Cllr Mendoza seconded Cllr Browning and carried with two abstentions.

177/18 Replacement van.

The existing van is nearing the end of its life, and is no longer suitable for the kind of work it is required to do. With funds available from the sale of the minibus, there will be sufficient money available to purchase a used vehicle. Further research will be needed to identify the most suitable vehicle with main consideration being given to purchasing a petrol vehicle.

Resolved. The Council will source and purchase a used van to replace the current vehicle in the coming year. Proposed Cllr Cole seconded Cllr Birch and carried unanimously.

178/18 To note the submission of a petition for a splash park

The Council noted the request for a splash park but did not think OTC could support it. The matter was to be added to the next agenda as it was felt EFDC should fund the project. District Councillor Vaz will investigate this matter on behalf of OTC.'

179/18 CASTLE STREET ALLOTMENTS

- a. Update from Full Council on the 18th. October 2018 (122/18)
- b. Refund from contractor
- c. Quotations for work.
- d. Situation with the Tesco grant.

No updates this month

180/18 Neighbourhood Plan Sub Committee

A questionnaire will be distributed in the next week and volunteers for distribution would be appreciated.

181/18 Items for next agenda.

Framework for liaison with partner organisations to be considered in May.
Castle Street Allotments.
Splash park
Ice cream vendor
145/18 Essex libraries strategy and highways service delivery
Purchase of freehold for council office

Meeting closed at 9.40