

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS AT  
THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF THE  
ONGAR TOWN COUNCIL  
HELD AT JUBILEE PARK PAVILION, ONGAR  
AT 8PM ON THURSDAY 16<sup>th</sup> MAY 2019**

**PRESENT:**

**Councillors:**

D. Birch (chair)	J. Reynolds (vice chair)
J. Battersby	L. Mendoza
S Cole	B. Vaz
J. Browning	C. Feetham
M Dadd	

**Officers:**

K Smiles Office Manager  
E Gough Assistant to the Clerk

**Also present:** 9 members of the public.

**Apologies for absence:** Dist Cllr Kesksa & Glenda Templeman – community agent ECC,

Cllr D Birch, Chairman of the Council, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Guest speaker, Mrs Mary Dadd (Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Community Group) gave a presentation on the Neighbourhood Plan, what it means and what the residents can do to get involved.

**Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on**

The minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2018 were agreed and signed by the chairman.

**Ongar Town Council Annual Report**

Ongar Town Council made significant savings over the last financial year which allowed it not to increase the precept for 2019/2020.

The savings have been achieved by consultation with staff to improve efficiencies, restructuring the council's administration and reviewing staff levels and working hours.

The formation of the Ongar Community Sports Trust will ensure the long term future of the Love Lane facility and contributed to reducing the council's expenditure.

The savings helped to absorb the loss of the Local Council Tax Support Grant which was withdrawn from this financial year.

Despite the council's best efforts the mini bus usage has been declining and is an unnecessary financial burden for Ongar. Sadly, the decision has been taken to sell it and money received will go towards a replacement utility van.

The savings are being used for community improvements, support for local organisations, and to promote and enhance Ongar:

- CCTV upgrade
- Increase community grant contributions, supporting local organisations
- Allocated funds to promote Ongar
- Fixed sum to financially support the Ongar Town Forum with the Christmas lights
- Fixed sum to financially support Ongar in Bloom High Street floral displays
- Increase the council's general reserves

The council will contribute £2,000 for the floral displays in the High Street through its support of Ongar Allotment and Garden Society and Ongar in Bloom.

Councillors working with the Shelley Residents Association have agreed improvements to the Shelley Park play area and will be funded from previous housing developments.

The council continue working and supporting the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Community Group to produce a plan to ensure Ongar residents have an input into future development of the town. It provides financial support and grants to support them and the council thanks them for all the tireless work they have undertaken so far.

The council held the annual remembrance service and laid wreaths at the Ongar War Memorial Medical Centre to celebrate the 100 anniversary of the ending of World War 1 and remember all those who have died in other conflicts. The service was led by a representative of the Lord Lieutenant of Essex and attended by our MP, Alex Burghart, local churches, organisations, schools and many residents.

Following concerns from residents, the council together with Essex County Council installed two new street lights on the footpath between the Fyfield Road and Queensway.

The council continues supporting residents who object to planning applications that have an impact upon them; it provides advice and attends meetings to speak on their behalf, which has resulted in planning applications being refused.

Cerizay, our twin town in France, made a welcome visit to Ongar and the council hosted a reception with the Cerizay Mayor and the Council's chairman exchanged gifts to commemorate 35 years of twinning between Ongar and Cerizay.

Following the recent elections the council have five vacancies for councillors which it will be actively looking to fill.

Thanks go to all the council's staff for their support and dedicated work during the year.

#### **Representatives from Ongar Groups to make individual one minute reports**

- Ongar news – Kate Carr
- Ongar Library – Heather Ancient

**Open Forum**

Members of the public addressed councillors with regard the following:-

- Are you a full council now?
- Where have the biggest cuts been made?
- Unable hear what the councillors are saying at council meetings.

The meeting was closed at 8.53pm.

Signed.....

Date.....

DRAFT