**Minutes of the Maiden Erlegh Residents’ Association Executive Committee held at 8pm on Thursday 10 November 2022 at Earley Day Centre, Kenton Road, Earley**

**Present**

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| Colin Mair (Chairman/Area 3) | Peter Woodward (Vice Chairman/Area 1) |
| John Saunders (Area 13/Treasurer) | Steve Feltham (Secretary) |
| Jonathan Brown (Magazine Editor) | Anne Booth (Area 9) |
| Judy Clark (Area 5) | Rosemary Cook (Area 11) |
| Chris Haines (Area 12) | Pamela Roberts (Area 10) |
| Celia Smith (Area 6) | Tim Marsh (ACER) |

**In the Chair: Colin Mair**

**Apologies received**

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| Siyu and Tim Smith (Area 2) | Elaine Spratling (Area 4) |
| Barbara Stansfield (Area 8) | Cllr Tahir Maher (Wokingham BC) |

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Chairman expressed his sadness at the news that a former Area Representative, Verity Smith, had passed away. Verity had served as MERA’s Area 2 representative from 2013 until 2018, when she retired from her position due to ill health. The Chairman had been informed that the funeral would be held at 2.30pm on 18 November at Reading Cemetery, Henley Road, Caversham.

**MINUTES**

The Chairman confirmed that the amended minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2022 were signed by the Vice-Chairman following the last meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2022 were signed as a correct record.

**MATTERS ARISING**

**Proposed 3G football pitch at Maiden Erlegh School**

The Secretary confirmed that MERA’s views on the proposed 3G football pitch at Maiden Erlegh School had been sent to the council and other interested parties. If the review that was being carried out by the council resulted in a planning application, the approved document would be sent to the council as it set out fully MERA’s objections to the proposal.

The Secretary also advised that the residents had commenced a petition protesting about the location of the 3G pitch. He suggested to the Area Representative concerned that members of the MERA Executive Committee may also wish to sign it, although he had not yet been approached.

**Member review of Brookside surgery**

The Secretary confirmed that MERA’s letter to Sir John Redwood regarding the NHS had now resulted in a response from his Parliamentary Assistant, who advised that the MP appreciated that the residents of Earley were concerned about NHS and GP services and that he would raise these concerns with Ministers in the Government for a reply. A further communication would be sent when that response was received.

**MERA modernisation programme**

The Secretary confirmed that he would be bringing forward a draft report shortly for consideration by the next AGM. In the meantime, the costings information from the printers was awaited.

**Local Government Boundary Commission**

The Chairman announced that as there did not appear to be any serious concerns about ward boundaries and given that any changes that may be made were likely to have little impact on MERA’s members, he had taken a decision not to take this matter any further.

**Sevenoaks Road/Radnor Road/Avalon Road staggered crossroads**

The Secretary advised that he had written to Martin Smith regarding the complaint about the inadequacy of road markings at the junctions of Sevenoaks Road, Avalon Road and Radnor Road, as well as the view expressed that a ‘Stop’ sign should replace the ‘Give Way’ markings for safety reasons. A response had now been received, and the Committee was advised that highways inspectors will look at the quality of existing signage and one of his team would consider the request for ‘Stop’ signs, after which, he would update MERA the Committee.

**REPORTS**

**Chairman’s Report**

The Chairman reported that would attend the NAG meeting scheduled for 14 November 2022.

**Treasurer’s Report**

The Treasurer reported that reminders had been sent to advertisers for the last issue of the magazine and that subscription monies were outstanding for only one area. The balance of the current account had now increased to £2473.49 and the reserve account remained at £836.49.

Tim Marsh commented that ACER was now able to collect subscriptions using a Pay Pal system. The Secretary stated that MERA had considered this previously, but there was a concern that with almost 1,000 members, introducing such a system would be onerous for the Treasurer to keep track of who had paid their subscriptions. However, the matter would be kept under review.

**Editorial Report**

The Editor had no further news to report on this occasion.

**CONSULTATIONS & PETITIONS**

The Chairman advised of the following ongoing consultations and petitions:

**Refuse services** – The Borough Council’s proposals relating to changes to refuse services were currently subject to a consultation period, the closing date for which was 5 December. Area Representatives were asked to report any general reactions expressed to them to the Secretary, who would consider whether a formal response should be sent to the Borough Council.

**Petitions**

The petition opposing the council’s decision to construct 4,500 houses at Hall Farm was due to expire on 22 December 2022.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**NORA AGM**

The Committee was reminded that the Secretary had circulated details of the NORA AGM with the agenda. Anne Booth stated that she had registered to attend the meeting virtually.

**NEW ITEMS**

**Proposed Borough Council cuts**

The Secretary advised the Committee that although not subject to a consultation, the proposed expenditure reductions currently being planned by the Borough Council would be likely to impact adversely on MERA members. The implications of the various proposals was considered in detail, but ultimately, the Committee’s view was that MERA should not respond as an organisation, but leave any reaction to the proposals for individual resident comments. This was in recognition of the fact that there would be differing opinions amongst our members, which should be respected.

**Speaker for 2023 AGM**

The Chairman stated that it would be appropriate to commence consideration of a speaker for the next AGM in May. This matter would be added to the December meeting’s agenda, and the views of the Committee would be sought at that stage.

**Back issues of MERA newsletters and magazines**

The Chairman advised that he was intending to establish an archive for back copies of the MERA Magazine. This would ensure that we had a library of all the past magazines for anyone to refer to in the future.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Amenities & Leisure Committee: 2 November 2022**

The Chairman stated that he and the Secretary had attended the Community Groups session of the Amenities & Leisure Committee on 2 November 2022. It was intended that MERA’s position on the refuse and grass cutting proposals and resident dissatisfaction with NHS front line services should be communicated to the Town Council to inform them about resident concerns, but the Chairman ruled that refuse services was not a matter that was within the Town Council’s jurisdiction and therefore the brief presentation that had been prepared did not proceed as planned. MERA’s position on NHS front line services was noted.

**Accountant**

The Committee was advised that Rosemary Cook had emailed the Secretary to state that she had found an auditor who might be able to assist with MERA’s audit of accounts. It was agreed that it was worth keeping the details on file for when our existing audit arrangements were no longer offered.

**Citizens’ Advice Bureau**

The Committee was informed that Citizens’ Advice Bureau sessions would be made available at Asda. A list of dates would be available on the Earley Town Centre website.

**DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

8 December 2022 (Christmas meeting) at Kenton Road Day Centre.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.25pm.