**Minutes of the Maiden Erlegh Residents Association Executive Committee held at 8pm on Thursday 10 October 2019 at the Kenton Road Day Centre, Kenton Road, Earley**

**Present**

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| Peter Woodward (Vice Chairman/Area 1) | Pamela Tames (Treasurer) |
| Steve Feltham (Secretary) | Constantina Ainsworth (Area 7) |
| Pamela Roberts (Area 10) | Celia Smith (Area 6) |
| Tim Marsh (ACER) | Ray Jones (resident) |

**Apologies received**

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| Colin Mair (Chairman/Area 3) | Jonathan Brown (Magazine/Editorial Team) |
| Patricia Brown (Magazine/Editorial Team) | Anne Booth (Area 9) |
| Judy Clark (Area 5) | Rosemary Cook (Area 11) |
| Paul Medlycott (Area 12) | Siyu Smith(Area 2) |
| Tim Smith (Area 2) | Elaine Spratling (Area 4) |
| Barbara Stansfield (Area 8) | Caroline Smith (Hillside WBC councillor) |
| David Chopping (Luckmore RA/ETC councillor) | Mary Bather (ACER) |
| Sion Williams (ACER) |  |

**In the Chair: Peter Woodward**

**MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 12 SEPTEMBER 2019**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2019 were accepted and signed as a correct record.

**MATTERS ARISING**

**Community and Youth Sub Committee**

The Secretary advised that the Town Clerk had confirmed that ‘Keep Mobile’ was welcome to apply for funding from Earley Town Council once a review of the funding criteria and application process was carried out, which should be completed shortly.

**AGREED:** That the Chief Executive Officer of Keep Mobile be advised that an application for funding would be considered by Earley Town Council after the approval of the new funding criteria, and that Shelagh Quick also be informed of the position.

**Pavement parking**

The Secretary reported that a pilot scheme to discourage parking on pavements was to be introduced by Wokingham Borough Council later in the month. This would enable parking infringement notices to be issued by Parking Enforcement Officers to motorists whose cars were parked in a dangerous manner (including on footpaths and too close to corners) where there were no traffic regulation orders in force. Martin Heath has advised that the information on the notices issued would be stored in a database which would be made available to the police, who would consider whether further enforcement action was necessary. This addressed the idea that notices could be placed on car windscreens to tackle this problem.

The Committee recognised the helpful involvement of Cllr Mickleburgh for his work on dealing with the problem of pavement parking in Earley.

**Maiden Erlegh Drive**

The Secretary reported that the Maiden Erlegh Drive resurfacing works would be carried out on 28 October 2019, weather permitting.

**Membership update**

The Secretary confirmed that he had sent a copy of the latest letter for prospective new members to Tim and Siyu Smith, as requested at the last meeting.

**Climate emergency initiatives**

The Secretary reported that the Park Ranger had been asked for his suggestions as to where the oak trees discussed at the last meeting could be planted. He had responded that most of Earley was now either built upon or was already either woodland, football pitches or wild meadows. However, there was a site at Paddick Drive (off Meldreth Way) that might be suitable. The Secretary stated that he would look at this site and report back to the next meeting, but in the meantime, he would welcome any more suggestions to identify other alternative sites.

It was suggested at the meeting that trees might also be planted at roundabouts, provided that the roots did not cause problems for the nearby road surfaces. The Secretary agreed to raise this suggestion with the Park Ranger for his advice before forwarding this suggestion to the Borough Council.

**Responses from local primary and senior schools**

The Secretary reported that Aldryngton Primary School had now responded to the request for information on their travel plans. A summary of responses received from the three local schools was circulated at the meeting and the Committee was informed that the travel plans for Loddon Primary and Maiden Erlegh Schools were available on their respective websites. The committee was asked to consider these, and an item would be added to the next agenda for a discussion to take place on the adequacy of these plans.

**McColls**

The Secretary reported that a tenant had been found to take over the McColls shop as a whole unit. The lease would provide for the property to be used for the sale of dry food products within ‘Class A1’, or for any other use within the same Use Class Order. Class A1 use included shops, retail warehouses, hairdressers, undertakers, travel and ticket agencies, post offices, pet shops, sandwich bars, showrooms, domestic hire shops, dry cleaners, funeral directors and internet cafes.

There was no indication yet whether the new tenant was interested in accommodating the post office, but the Secretary was trying to establish whether that was the case.

It was reported that separately, Cllr Chopping had drawn up contingency plans to ensure that the shop did not close if a new tenant could not be found. These plans were confidential, and clearly would not need to be acted upon now, given that the new tenant would be moving in as soon as possible after the closure of McColls.

**Report for Earley Town Council**

The Secretary confirmed that Appendix 2 of the Secondary Bus Services in Earley report, which was agreed at the last meeting, had been submitted to Earley Town Council.

The committee was advised that a news item in a recent edition of the Woodley and Earley Chronicle had confirmed that in a response to a question raised by Cllr Mickleburgh, Cllr Pauline Jorgensen acknowledged that some residents were asking for a direct bus service from Lower Earley and Maiden Erlegh into Wokingham Town Centre and she advised that once the local transport plan was approved, a revised Borough-wide bus strategy would be adopted.

In the meantime, the problem with the 7.40am 19b journey from Beech Lane had returned, with passengers being turned away due to heavy loading. The Secretary advised that he would be posting a notice at these stops to alert passengers to the fact that there was also a service operating on Silverdale Road just ten minutes later. He stated that he would also write to Reading Buses to urge them to address this problem as soon as possible.

**Peter Soul**

The Secretary reported that after consulting Brian Hackett regarding the posthumous award which was being presented in recognition of the work undertaken for the community by the late Peter Soul, he had taken the decision not to be present at the Council meeting as this was regarded as a family event.

**Local Transport Plan**

The Committee was informed that the Secretary had attended the Local Transport Plan meeting at the Earley Town Council Chamber on 19 September, where he presented some of the views that had been debated by MERA over the last few years. The written response was circulated at the meeting. The Secretary stated that he had not been able to bring the document before the committee before sending it due to the deadline imposed. However, if members had any comments to put forward, he would ensure that any further agreed responses were communicated to Wokingham Borough Council.

The Secretary stated that Cllr Mickleburgh had been very helpful in his responses to the points he had made at the meeting and the councillor had advised that he would follow up the suggestion about increasing the number of electric charging points for cars within the Borough.

**REPORTS**

**Chairman’s Report**

There was nothing to report on this occasion.

**Treasurer’s report**

The Treasurer was nothing to report on this occasion.

**Editorial Team report**

The Magazine Editor was not present but the Chairman reminded the committee that the copy date for articles to be submitted was 20 October.

**CONSULTATIONS**

**Climate emergency**

The Chairman advised that the Borough Council was seeking ideas on ways to reduce the Borough’s carbon footprint in a survey launched on 26 September. The closing date for responses was 31 December. MERA’s response had been sent already following the ideas discussed at the July meeting.

**E-petition: Chalfont Woods**

The Chairman stated that the petition designed to prevent the development of Chalfont Woods had received 58 signatures. The closing date for signatures for the petition was 27 October.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**NORA**

**1. Relaxation of planning permissions**

The Secretary reported that NORA had highlighted new legislation that would permit families to add two storeys to their homes without the need for planning permission. The new law would mean that neighbours would no longer have the right to be consulted or submit an objection to such works being carried out. Following the views expressed in the ensuing discussion, the Secretary agreed to look further into ways of ensuring that MERA was able to draw attention to its concerns over the proposal to the Government.

**2. Better Buildings**

NORA had also drawn attention to the fact that communities were to be given the right to oppose ugly buildings and poorly designed new homes following new government guidance that had been published. There would be minimum standards established for new developments, which would be required to be in keeping with their surroundings. One idea was that all new streets should be tree-lined, and the use of local materials should be ensured. Councils would be required to publish a design code against which their aesthetic commitments could be judged.

In addition, money would be made available to help fund infrastructure such as better sewerage systems in the next budget, which could be held as early as November.

**NEW ITEMS**

There were no new items.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**NAG report**

The Committee was advised that at the last meeting of the Community & Youth Committee, Jim Willis reported the matters discussed at its July meeting. He stated that there was a big concern about the anti-social behaviour that had been observed at Maiden Place, including stone throwing. This was becoming very worrying now, with the Chief Constable proposing that neighbourhood policing should be removed due to workload and resources. Jim Willis stated that although more police officers would now be recruited, it would take in the order of two years to achieve this, and many existing officers were likely to retire during that time. Members were told that the police needed more volunteers for policing as well as speed-watch volunteers.

A particularly worrying revelation was that there were sometimes only six officers available to cover the whole of Bracknell and Wokingham Boroughs in the evenings.

**Earley Orchard AGM**

The Chairman reported the Earley Orchard AGM would be held on 20 October at 2.30pm at Maiden Erlegh Interpretation Centre. Refreshments would be served at the meeting.

**Woodley and North Earley Forum**

The Chairman reported that the Woodley and Earley Forum had elected a new Chairman, Jackie Rance. The forthcoming meetings were 23 October, 20 November and 12 February between 7pm and 9pm at the Oakwood Centre.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.02pm.

**DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 14 November 2019 at 8pm.