**Minutes of the Maiden Erlegh Residents Association Executive Committee held at 8pm on Thursday 12 December 2019 at the Kenton Road Day Centre, Kenton Road, Earley**

**Present**

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| Colin Mair (Chairman/Area 3) | Steve Feltham (Secretary) |
| 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) | Caroline Smith (Hillside WBC councillor) |

**Apologies received**

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| Peter Woodward (Vice Chairman/Area 1) | Pamela Tames (Treasurer) |
| Pamela Roberts (Area 10) | Celia Smith (Area 6) |
| Tim Smith (Area 2) | Elaine Spratling (Area |
| Barbara Stansfield (Area 8) | Mary Bather (ACER) |
| David Chopping (Luckmore RA/ETC councillor) | Jennifer Lissaman (ACER) |
| Ray Jones (resident) |  |

**In the Chair: Colin Mair**

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Chairman welcomed Committee members to the festive meeting, and he thanked Siyu Smith for providing the food to accompany the wine and juices that were available.

**MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 14 NOVEMBER 2019**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2019 were accepted and signed as a correct record.

**MATTERS ARISING**

**Pavement parking**

The Secretary reported that following his reminder to Martin Heath regarding the parking problems on the corner of Allendale Road and Silverdale Road as well as the sight line issues at the junctions of Lakeside and Betchworth Avenue, confirmation had been received that these matters had been noted. A site inspection would be taking place at Allendale Road, and action would be taken in any case of footway obstruction. A reassurance was also given that the overgrown bushes on key routes, including those that MERA had specified, would be considered for inspection.

The bollard previously promised by a Highways Inspector to be located near to the telephone box at The Parade was also raised, and the response received was that given this was private property, the council was unable to install a bollard but would instead move the litter bin to discourage vehicles from mounting the pavement. The Secretary stated that this would help but it did not entirely remove the hazard for pedestrians at this location and he would therefore write to the property agents to establish whether they would be willing to install a more robust barrier at this location.

**Climate emergency initiatives**

The Secretary confirmed that he had written to the Park Ranger regarding the proposal that a tree be planted together with a plaque to celebrate the work of Peter Soul, who established EASI and ensured that a comprehensive litter picking service was established across Earley. The Park Ranger advised that he would discuss the idea with the Town Clerk to establish her views.

The Secretary confirmed that he would be responding formally to the consultation on climate emergency initiatives and he would include the additional matters that had been suggested by the committee since the first response to Cllr Murray.

**McColls**

The Chairman confirmed that McColls had closed its doors for the last time on 15 November and that the lease expired on 24 December 2019. The property agents anticipated that the new shop would open around mid-January 2020 at the earliest, subject to a required dilapidation inspection.

**Report for Earley Town Council**

The Secretary stated that he had not been made aware of any further problems on the 7.40am Beech Lane bus service into town or the 3.30pm service from Reading to Lower Earley following the problems reported during the first two weeks of the new arrangements. However, a complaint had been received from another resident that the 7.50am journey from Silverdale Road was now encountering overloading problems since the start of the current school term. The Secretary was hopeful that this problem would be resolved through those passengers who had transferred from the 19b service reverting to that route now that a relief service had been provided. However, he would monitor the situation in the new school term during January 2020 and would also raise the issue at the Bus Working Party.

The committee was advised that the Working Party had now been set up by Earley Town Council and the Secretary had been asked about his availability to attend. Having responded, he now awaited a firm date for the first meeting. He had asked that ACER be allowed to contribute to the review and the Town Council had responded positively to this request. It was heartening to know that as well as bus routing and frequency, the Working Party would be discussing bus shelters and real time bus information at bus stops.

**NORA – Relaxation of planning permissions**

The Secretary reported that the Town Clerk had confirmed the new rules regarding two storey extensions to properties were already in the process of being phased in and that it was too late to have the proposals changed at this stage. It was pointed out that Sajid Javid had outlined the changes over 18 months ago and that the proposals had now been approved. NORA had confirmed that this was correct.

Accordingly, the Secretary stated that he would write to Maiden Erlegh’s MP after the election to submit MERA’s misgivings about the new legislation and the need to keep the matter under review if it caused significant problems for residents.

Judy Clark was concerned about the rules that would be attached to the new arrangements. In particular, the impact of reduced light and privacy for neighbouring properties, and the impact of such extensions on car parking were likely to be problematical. Rosemary Cook stated that there were rules that homeowners would have to comply with to ensure that developments of this nature were appropriate. In answer to a question, Cllr Caroline Smith thought that one metre had to be left between properties where extensions to properties were undertaken.

**Anti-social behaviour**

The Chairman reported that following the postponement of the November Community & Youth Sub Committee, the Secretary would raise the suggestion that NAG consider pursuing the implementation of a Public Spaces Protection Order at the re-convened meeting.

**MERA AGM proposed speaker**

The Chairman reported that CEO of Reading Buses Robert Williams had agreed to speak at MERA’s AGM on 14 May 2020. As a good turnout was expected, a larger hall would be hired to accommodate the number of residents it was anticipated would attend this event.

**Bus shelters**

The Secretary reported that following his inspection of the Reading bound bus stops on Silverdale Road, he had concluded that all these stops would potentially accommodate a bus shelter. Accordingly, he had written to the Town Clerk with MERA’s suggestions, and these would be considered at the Bus Working Party.

**REPORTS**

**Chairman’s Report**

There was nothing to report on this occasion.

**Treasurer’s report**

There was nothing to report on this occasion in the Treasurer’s absence.

**Editorial Team report**

The Secretary observed that the latest magazine had been well received by residents, as usual.

**CONSULTATIONS**

**Climate emergency**

The Chairman reminded the committee that the climate emergency consultation was due to close on 31 December.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

*No new correspondence had been received.*

**NEW ITEMS**

**Underground electricity cable compensation communication**

The Chairman introduced this item regarding a letter that had been received from Radnor Road residents concerning an offer made by Chartered Surveyors Sherwill Drake Forbes to seek compensation on their behalf for having underground electricity cables under their properties. Concern had been raised that this offer might be a scam.

The Secretary went on to explain that others had also received this letter, as he had himself, but it did appear legitimate on the face of it. Wokingham Trading Standards concluded this as well, but had advised that MERA contact Ofgem to confirm the position. Accordingly, the Secretary had written to Ofgem as well as Southern Electric Power Distribution, against whom this compensation was said to be payable.

A response from Ofgem was still awaited, but the SSE stated that they did not think this was a scam. However, they pointed out that there was a straight forward means of claiming this compensation, by writing direct to the Wayleave Registry, thus avoiding the 20% fee charged by the Chartered Surveyors.

The Secretary confirmed that he would advise the committee when confirmation was received by Ofgem, and he would also post an item on the website.

**Recycling**

The Committee was advised that recycling plants were no longer accepting wet paper and card, and this had resulted in recent batches of recycling sent by Wokingham Borough Council being rejected because it was too damp. Accordingly, residents were now being asked to keep their paper and card recycling dry to prevent this from recurring. The council suggested covering recycling boxes with something waterproof; keeping it inside until just before the collection; or stacking the black crates with paper filled ones at the bottom. The Secretary stated that he would ensure that this request was uploaded onto the website and it was also

**AGREED:** That Wokingham Borough Council be requested to order crates with lids for the future.

**MERA website**

The Secretary reported that Judy Clark had suggested bolstering the front page of the website to provide some further information about Maiden Erlegh, and this had now been done. There was also a question raised about whether the website contained sufficient information about the history of Maiden Erlegh. Members of the committee were invited to provide some further words that could be included in this section.

It was pointed out that there were local publications available that contained this information.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

*There was no further business raised.*

**DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

9 January 2020.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8.46pm.