**Minutes of the Maiden Erlegh Residents’ Association Executive Committee held at 8pm on Thursday 12 March 2020 at the Kenton Road Day Centre, 1 Kenton Road, Earley**

**Present**

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| Colin Mair (Chairman/Area 3) | Peter Woodward (Vice Chairman/Area 1) |
| Pamela Tames (Treasurer) | Steve Feltham (Secretary) |
| Jonathan Brown (Magazine Editor) | Constantina Ainsworth (Area 7) |
| Paul Medlycott (Area 12) | Siyu Smith (Area 2) |

**Apologies received**

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| Patricia Brown (Magazine/Editorial Team) | Anne Booth (Area 9) |
| Rosemary Cook (Area 11) | Pamela Roberts (Area 10) |
| Celia Smith (Area 6) | Tim Smith (Area 2) |
| Cllr Caroline Smith (Hillside WBC) | Cllr David Chopping (Luckmore Drive RA) |
| Mary Bather (ACER) | Tim Marsh (ACER) |
| Ray Jones (resident) |  |

**In the Chair: Colin Mair**

**MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 13 FEBRUARY 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2020 were accepted and signed as a correct record.

**MATTERS ARISING**

**Pavement parking**

The Secretary reported that the Traffic Management, Parking & Road Safety Team Manager had reaffirmed that he was unable to accede to MERA’s request for a bollard to be installed at The Parade by the telephone box. He advised that in his opinion, the bollard would not only obstruct the dropped kerb but would also be more likely to exacerbate any collision injury severely.

**McColls**

The Chairman reported that the agent acting for the owner of the shop previously occupied by McColls had advised that there had been no progress that they were able to communicate at this stage on the transfer of the lease to the prospective new tenant, who was said to be eager to commence business as soon as possible. The agent had declined to provide any further details, but the Secretary had registered concern that the prospective tenant may pull out if the delay continued.

**Report for Earley Town Council**

The Secretary reported that the next meeting of the Bus Working Party would be convened on 28 April 2020 at 7pm. In the meantime, he had written to Cllr Pauline Jorgensen to request support for MERA’s report to Earley Town Council as well as the overcrowding problem on the Silverdale Road and Beech Lane morning rush hour services during term time. Cllr Jorgensen had requested a copy of MERA’s report, which was duly provided, and she had asked the appropriate officer, Rebecca Brooks, to comment on the continuing service 19 issues.

**Smallmead waste disposal facility**

The Chairman advised that a leaflet distributed with the blue refuse bags that were delivered the previous month contained information about the need to produce ID when visiting the Smallmead Waste Disposal site.

**Annual community litter pick**

The Chairman confirmed that details of the meeting points and times for the annual litter pick had been uploaded onto MERA’s website. These were:

Interpretation Centre, Instow Road (10am-12.30pm; 2-4pm)

Carnival Field, Maiden Place (10am-12.30pm; 2-4pm)

Sutton Seeds Bowling Club car park off Chalfont Way (10am-12.30pm; 2-4pm)

Kwik-Fit layby, Pitts Lane (10am-12.30pm; 2-4pm)

Sol Joel Park, Mays Lane overflow car park (2-4pm).

**Draft Local Plan**

The Chairman reported that having looked at the Local Plan in detail, he was of the view that it would be inappropriate for MERA to respond on behalf of its members. The main issue was housing development and while MERA was opposed to the disproportionate amount of housing imposed on the Borough by the Government, the Secretary had already made the Committee’s position on this clear to the council. Furthermore, the council had made representations to the government on the amount of housing required in line with the earlier public consultation. He stated that assuming the government did not revise its requirement, the council had a responsibility to find a location within the Borough for the housing to be built.

The Committee was reminded that Tim Marsh (ACER) had made the point at the last meeting that the Grazeley development would impact on Earley, and it was true that the proposal would be likely to lead to increased congestion and pollution for its residents. However, this would happen wherever such a sizable development was to be located within the Borough, and it was noted that the design features, including the public transport proposals, would ensure that carbon emissions were kept to a minimum under these arrangements. It was appropriate to note that Grazeley was geographically close to Reading, and the proposed location, being near to a major conurbation, made some sense in terms of the need to protect as much of the countryside as possible in the rest of the Borough.

The Committee was also reminded that the Secretary had responded with MERA’s observations on the Transport Plan proposals.

All things considered, the Chairman advised that apart from the size of the development, there was no other reason to be concerned about the plan, which in relation to housing simply responded to government requirements. Accordingly, it was his view that residents should respond individually to this consultation if they wished to do so, which was due to be completed on 20 March 2020.

**Complaints from residents**

The Secretary advised that he had received a response from Reading Buses indicating that it was difficult for them to remedy the overloading issues on the rush hour services on the 19b and 19c bus services given their available resources, but they were in talks with Wokingham Borough Council to establish whether the subsidy could be used more flexibly. The company also indicated that a review of services in the area would be carried out shortly, with a view to improving services in Earley.

The Secretary also stated that he had noticed a longer vehicle being used on the 7.50am journey on Silverdale Road that morning. It was not clear whether this would be a regular feature, but if so, this would resolve the problem on that journey.

**REPORTS**

**Chairman’s Report**

There was nothing to report on this occasion.

**Treasurer’s report**

There was nothing to report on this occasion.

**Editorial Team report**

The Newsletter Editor stated that the spring edition of the MERA Magazine was now available for Area Representatives to distribute.

**CONSULTATIONS**

The Chairman reminded the committee of the closing dates for responses to the Draft Local Plan, the Joint Minerals & Waste Plan and the Climate Emergency Survey.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**NORA**

The Secretary advised that the latest communication from NORA relating to AirBnb would be circulated with the minutes.

**Drivers parking on pavements**

The Secretary stated that NORA had drawn attention to the consideration being given by Ministers for the prosecution of drivers for a new offence of ‘obstructive parking’ or ‘unnecessary obstruction’. Details would be circulated with the minutes.

**NEW ITEMS**

**Coronavirus outbreak**

The Chairman reported that a recent Neighbourhood Watch Alert provided information about the coronavirus outbreak and the need to protect isolated and vulnerable people in this situation. He advised that the Secretary would upload this advice to the website. It was hoped that the virus would not impact on the AGM next May, but the situation would be monitored carefully.

**Potholes**

The Secretary advised that he had become aware of the considerable number of potholes that had appeared in the Borough and that he had reported those in Betchworth Avenue. The council’s response was that all potholes reported would be attended to within 28 days.

The efficacy of the new system of filling potholes was questioned, as potholes that had been repaired previously appeared to return very quickly. The Secretary stated that he would write to the council about the new system and he would report any further potholes he discovered or that were drawn to his attention within the Maiden Erlegh catchment.

The Treasurer added that the condition of Lind Close should be considered, and Hartsbourne Road was also said to require attention.

**MERA AGM**

The Chairman advised that the preparations for the AGM would be discussed at the next meeting. He stated that he did not intend to bring forward and proposed resolutions or rules at the meeting, but that if such changes were necessary, these should be raised and debated in April.

The Chairman reminded members that a vacancy for the Treasurer had arisen following the notification from Pamela Tames that she wished to step down from her role, and there was also a vacancy for an Area Representative for Area 13. Members were asked to encourage anyone who may be interested in these vacancies to put their names forward for election in May.

Apart from the Treasurer, all members present indicated that they would stand again at the next AGM. The Secretary requested that if any member wished to stand down, they should let him know by the date of the next meeting in April.

**Litter bin in Kenton Road**

Paul Medlycott drew attention to a litter bin close to the letter box in Kenton Road, which often overflowed all over the pavement. He wondered if it was possible to have a separate dog bin to avoid this waste being deposited in this over-used bin. The Secretary advised that he would write to the council regarding this problem. It was observed that dog bins were no longer being installed by the council.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Bulmershe Leisure Centre**

The Committee was advised that the Bulmershe Leisure Centre was due to open on 22 April 2020, enhancing options available for Maiden Erlegh residents. The Carnival Pool would close on 10 May, following which a new centre would be built on the land.

**The Oracle**

The Committee was advised that to replace the House of Fraser in The Oracle, plans had been submitted and approved for a food hall accessible from the Riverside; adventure golf and ten-pin bowling; retail shops on the lower ground floor and upper ground level; and a retail shop or café on Bridge Street.

**DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

9 April 2020.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8.55pm.