**Minutes of the Maiden Erlegh Residents’ Association Executive Committee held at 8pm on Thursday 13 April 2023 at the Earley Day Centre, Kenton Road, Earley**

**Present**

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| John Saunders (Area 13/Treasurer) | Steve Feltham (Secretary) |
| Judy Clark (Area 5) | Chris Haines (Area 12) |
| Pamela Roberts (Area 10) | Celia Smith (Area 6) |
| Siyu and Tim Smith (Area 2) | Elaine Spratling (Area 4) |
| Tim Marsh (ACER) |  |

**Also present**

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| Patsy Collis |  |

**In the Chair: Steve Feltham**

**Apologies received**

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| Colin Mair (Chairman/Area 3) | Peter Woodward (Vice Chairman/Area 1) |
| Jonathan Brown (Magazine Editor) | Patricia Brown (Editorial Team) |
| Anne Booth (Area 9) | Rosemary Cook (Area 11) |
| Barbara Stansfield (Area 8) | Cllr Tahir Maher (Wokingham BC) |

**INTRODUCTION**

The Secretary welcomed Patsy Collis, who had put herself forward for election as Area Representative for the vacancy at Area 8.

**MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2023 were signed as a correct record.

**MATTERS ARISING**

**Protective stones on grass verges**

The Secretary confirmed that no reply had been forthcoming in respect of MERA’s request for those who were given permission to lay stones on their grass verges to be advised of the change of policy. Accordingly, MERA members had been notified via the MERA Magazine and website.

In the meantime, the Committee was advised that Tim Marsh was looking at possibly using Wokingham’s own byelaws as a means to deter parking on grass verges. Tim Marsh stated that it was the Highways Authority that could place objects on highway land, and there was speculation about whether they could, in fact, authorise others to do this. Chris Haines drew attention to the fact that posts had been put up on the verges in Hillside.

Tim Marsh stated also that trees on grass verges was also being pursued by ACER, and he acknowledged that MERA was also attempting to persuade the council of the advantage of doing so. He noted that wild flowers planted on grass verges also discouraged motorists from parking there. ACER had written to the MP for the area, Matt Rodda.

Judy Clark asked whether the existing byelaws prohibiting Wokingham residents from parking on the verges applied only in certain locations, and Tim Marsh responded that they were in force Borough-wide. The Secretary pointed out that unfortunately, the council was not prepared to enforce the byelaws due to the cost of taking cases through the courts. This was why he thought that the proposal to extend the parking law in London to the rest of the country was a better proposition, as this would mean that the Parking Enforcement Service could simply issue tickets to offending motorists.

The Treasurer advised that he had spoken to residents of The Crescent about the stones that some had placed on the verges outside their homes, and they were not perturbed by the fact that the Borough Council had withdrawn their policy. It appeared that the residents would continue to leave their protective stones in place.

The Secretary stated that he would write to Sir John Redwood MP requesting that the new parking legislation include grass verges as well as pavements, as there was concern that the verges may be omitted from the new arrangements.

**Tesco cycle racks**

The Secretary reported that following a further exchange of emails, the council had finally decided to write to Tesco to point out that their cycle rack was in need of repair, and Tesco had repaired it without further delay.

**Parking problem at Silverdale Road residence**

The Treasurer advised that this complaint had now been referred to the Highways Department.

**Preparations for AGM**

The Secretary updated the Committee on the arrangements for the AGM on 11 May and confirmed that all actions in preparation for the meeting had now been taken. He requested that the flyers be distributed by no later than one week before the AGM, or by 20 April if the magazines had not yet been delivered.

John Saunders and Siyu Smith were thanked for ensuring that the audit report had been completed promptly. The Secretary confirmed that this and the Treasurer’s Report had been included in the agenda, which had now been printed.

The Secretary reported that only one member of the Executive Committee had decided to stand down this year, creating a vacancy in Area 8. He thanked Patsy Collis for putting her name forward for election to replace Barbara Stansfield.

It was confirmed that the rule change on MERA’s catchment area appeared to be acceptable to the Executive Committee and the report on this had now been finalised for consideration at the AGM. Pamela Roberts stated that the missing houses in Radstock Lane should also be included in the catchment area.

The meeting was advised that the Secretary had attended ACER’s AGM on 29 March, and that it was agreed in principle that ACER would pay MERA a reduced rate of 80p for three magazines per member in the first year as a pump priming exercise, subject to the agreement of the MERA AGM and a sub committee to be set up by the Executive Committee to agree the detailed working arrangements. Should this trial period of a year be successful, the cost of the magazine to ACER members would increase to £1 per member for three magazines.

The Secretary thanked Siyu and Tim Smith for agreeing to provide the food, disposable plates and cutlery at the event, and Colin Mair for providing the wine and fruit juices.

Committee members were requested to arrive at the AGM by 7.15pm if possible to ensure that adequate ‘meet and greet’ arrangements were in place and to assist with any final arrangements that needed to be made on the day as required.

**Proposed changes in The Parade**

The Secretary advised that he had written to the Borough Council’s highways officer Abdul Karim to ask whether the Borough would object if Earley Town Council applied to erect a bus shelter at the new location of the Silverdale Road bus stop. The officer had also asked whether there had been any agreement to mark out the parking spaces in front of the shops to avoid having a pinch point at the new entrance to the car park. A response was awaited.

**King’s Coronation celebrations**

The Chairman reminded the Committee that road closure applications for the King’s coronation celebrations had to be requested by 16 April.

**REPORTS**

**Chairman’s Report**

The Secretary conveyed the Chairman’s Report, including the discussions and content of the NAG meeting that was held on 13 March. The complaints raised by MERA members regarding vehicles being parked too close to junctions was discussed and the NAG members agreed that this was an issue.

The Laurel Park barrier was now up and running and any further concerns of nearby residents would be addressed outside of the NAG meetings.

There were concerns about the time taken to make repairs to streetlights and it was explained that the problem lay with the SSE where cables needed to be repaired. Efforts were being made to speed up the process. The inadequacy of the system of reporting faults was also addressed, and the council would be looking to amend their website to address this.

The NAG Chairman reported that he had some useful information from recent meetings where the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme had been discussed and he offered to submit relevant items for publication in the MERA Magazine on this and the Speedwatch scheme.

The Chairman also attended the Earley Town Council electors’ meeting and gave a brief presentation on the work of MERA, which was well received.

A response from the Borough Council on his request to plant trees on grass verges was still awaited.

**Treasurer’s Report**

The Treasurer reported that the invoices for issue 189 of the magazine had been sent. Seven had paid and this left nine to come. One advertiser had now cancelled her advertisement as she now had enough work for the time being. The bill for printing of the AGM papers had now been settled, but this had not yet fed through in the bank balances. The current account now stood at £2,394.90 and the deposit account at £839.67. The interest accrued was 71p and was included in the bank balances provided.

**Editorial Report**

The Editor was unable to attend the meeting, but the Secretary reported that the magazine circulated to Area Representatives last month should be distributed before 20 April to ensure that due notice of the AGM was given in line with the Constitution.

**CONSULTATIONS & PETITIONS**

The Secretary advised of the following ongoing consultations and petitions:

**Right Spaces, Right Places** – The Borough Council was striving to ensure that there were sufficient spaces for children with special educational needs and disabilities in the Borough, and a survey was available for residents to complete on the council’s website. This was required to be submitted within 10 days.

**Petitions**

One petition was displayed on the Borough Council’s website, as reported at the last meeting. This related to the need for continued support to Home Start, which provided support to families including those having to contend with mental health problems and for families with SEN children. 8 people had signed the petition to date.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

The Secretary reported that a response had finally been received from the Traffic Management, Parking and Road Safety Team confirming that a site assessment would be carried out in relation to MERA’s proposal for a roundabout to be installed at the junction of Gipsy Lane and Rushey Way.

**NEW ITEMS**

**Parking at junctions**

The Secretary reported that he had written to NORA to establish whether there would be national support for an increase in the distance motorists could park close to junctions. He was hopeful that with a national campaign, pressure could be applied on the government for legislation to be introduced to resolve the problem that had been raised by members in this regard. The Secretary stated that he would report back at the next Executive Committee meeting.

It was pointed out that there was probably a case for adding yellow lines opposite junctions as well to prevent parking where this caused difficulty in turning into and out of the junction.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

*No further matters were raised.*

**DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

11 May 2023 at St Nicolas Church (AGM)

8 June 2023 at Kenton Road Day Centre (Executive Committee).

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8.52pm.