**Minutes of the Maiden Erlegh Residents Association Executive Committee held at 8pm on Thursday 14 March 2019 at the Kenton Road Day Centre, Kenton Road, Earley**

**Present**

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| Colin Mair (Chairman/Area 3) | Peter Woodward (Vice Chairman/Area 1) |
| Steve Feltham (Secretary) | Jonathan Brown (Magazine/Editorial Team) |
| Anne Booth (Area 9) | Judy Clark (Area 5) |
| Rosemary Cook (Area 11) | Pamela Roberts (Area 10) |
| Celia Smith (Area 6) | Peter Soul (EASI) |
| Ray Jones (resident) |  |

**Apologies received**

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| Pamela Tames (Treasurer) | Patricia Brown (Magazine/Editorial Team) |
| James Barr (Area 13) | Jean Beck (Area 12) |
| Barbara Stansfield (Area 8) | Brian Hackett (resident) |
| Jenny Lissaman (ACER) | Mary Bather (ACER) |
| Cllr David Chopping |  |

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

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

**MATTERS ARISING**

**Maiden Erlegh Library**

The Secretary stated that Cllr Chopping’s view was that the proposal for a ‘pop-up’ library at St Nicolas Church was unlikely to succeed as the use of the library would be very limited. He pointed out that the former Maiden Erlegh Library was under-used by the general public, which rendered it virtually impossible to argue with credibility that it should not be closed when the school gave notice that it wished to use this space for the benefit of the school. The Secretary advised that this viewpoint was not surprising to hear, given the limited finances available and the pressures on more essential services such as adult social care and schools.

**Tesco**

The Chairman reported that the problem of lorries from Tesco using Sevenoaks Road in breach of the conditions attached to their planning consent had been reported to the council.

**MERA Constitution**

The Chairman confirmed that the amendment to the draft Constitution relating to Honorary Membership had been made and the proposed new Constitution had been circulated.

**RECOMMENDED TO THE** **AGM**: That the draft Constitution be agreed in place of the existing Constitution last amended in May 2012.

**Earley Town Council – Readibus**

The Secretary reported that Rebecca Brooks at Wokingham Borough Council had confirmed that the council’s agreement with Readibus remained unchanged for April 2019. The Committee was further advised that a recent newspaper article had suggested that Reading Borough Council no longer intended to proceed with its plans regarding bus passes for disabled people living in Reading, but it was not clear whether this included the Readibus proposals. However, it was at least clear now that Wokingham residents would continue to benefit from existing arrangements.

**Beech Lane**

The Secretary stated that the council had assured him that the blocked drains on Beech Lane would be cleared on 18 March 2019. It was also confirmed that the sight line at the Springdale junction with Beech Lane would be looked at by the Cleaner and Greener Team when they carried out the next cut. The owner of the Silverdale Road property at the junction with Lakeside would be contacted by the council requesting that they minimise the height of the vegetation in their front garden to improve the sight line there.

Members observed that the trees along Beech Lane had recently been cut back substantially.

**Homes for rent aimed at students**

The Secretary advised that he had received a response from the council regarding the question of parking where an application had been made for an HMO licence. It was confirmed that HMO licences were concerned with the suitability of the accommodation for multiple occupation and parking was not a consideration. It was, however, a consideration in respect of any planning application made in connection with this although such applications would be refused only in exceptional circumstances, such as where all resident parking spaces in a controlled area were allocated.

The Secretary observed that the property in question did have parking space in the driveway for at least four cars. The information on HMO legislation had been circulated to members as promised.

**Review of parking**

The Chairman confirmed that the Secretary had written to the council regarding concerns about extended kerb dropping to make way for additional space on driveways.

**Asda**

The Chairman reported that the Store Manager of Asda had stated categorically in response to the Secretary’s email that the decision to close Martin’s was taken by the management of the shop and that there had been no rent increase as reported in the press. A further claim by the Liberal Democrats in their ‘Focus’ publication was drawn to the Store Manager’s attention, but he confirmed that the position had not changed and that the article was incorrect in claiming that Asda had increased rents. No further information regarding the Post Office was yet available.

**Street lamps in Lakeside**

The Chairman confirmed that the electrical fault which had affected the three street lamps in Lakeside had now been fixed and the lighting restored.

**NAG meeting: 14 January 2019**

The Chairman confirmed that the Secretary had prepared an article for the next MERA Magazine relating to telephone scams.

**Front gardens**

The Secretary confirmed that he had linked the matter raised by Jenny Lissaman (ACER) regarding the need for new driveways to be constructed using porous surfaces with the dropped kerbs issue reported in relation to the Parking Review item.

**REPORTS**

**Chairman’s report**

The Chairman stated that he had asked the council to advise on whether the work undertaken on the Silverdale Road structure that had been subject to an enforcement letter met their requirements.

**Treasurer’s report**

The Treasurer had tendered her apologies for absence and had not provided any updated information for her report.

**Editorial Team report**

Jonathan Brown advised that the Spring MERA Magazine was now with the printers.

**CONSULTATIONS**

The Chairman reported that a consultation was being carried out by the council on Phase 2 of the Greenways Project. Project Information Sessions were planned for 15 and 18 March 2019 and the closing date was 1 April 2019.

In respect of consultations dealt with at the previous meeting, the deadline for comments on the Wokingham Borough News was 1 April 2019.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**NORA**

The meeting was informed that the next NORA AGM would be held on 2 May 2019 at the Union Jack Club, Waterloo. Members wishing to attend this meeting should contact the Secretary.

NORA had also updated residents’ associations on the legislation and consultations currently under consideration that may be of interest, and details were circulated at the meeting.

**NEW ITEMS**

**AGM**

The Secretary advised the committee that the next AGM would be held on 9 May 2019. He reminded members that under the existing constitution, the normal process for electing officers and area representatives was for nominations to be received by the Secretary in writing not less than 14 days before the Annual General Meeting. In practice, the Executive Committee in recent years had received confirmation of such nominations orally at or before the Executive Committee immediately preceding the AGM.

Although this process was written into the draft revised Constitution, the Secretary confirmed that he would accept oral nominations at the next meeting rather than expect members to put their names forward formally in writing. Accordingly, he asked that all officers and area representatives wishing to have their names put forward for the ensuing year either advise him prior to or at the next meeting. This would enable the selection of new members to fill any vacancies to take place in good time.

The Secretary also confirmed that the Chairman had agreed to submit his Chairman’s Report and prepare the flyers for the AGM at or before for the next meeting. The Treasurer had been asked to let him have the audited accounts and Treasurer’s Report at the same time. These arrangements were necessary because the AGM notifications were required under the Constitution to be sent out at least three weeks before the meeting. Area Representatives were advised that the flyers could be distributed with the next MERA Magazine, provided that distribution was completed within these time constraints.

Finally, the committee was reminded that there would be recommendations from the Executive Committee added to this year’s AGM agenda. These related to the proposed constitution changes and the new policy and privacy notice on data protection to comply with the GDPR.

**Community and Youth Sub Committee: 20 March 2019**

The Secretary reminded the committee that the theme of the forthcoming Community & Youth Sub Committee would be ‘Children and Young People’. Rosemary Cook indicated that she would be interested in attending this meeting.

**AGREED:** That in line with the committee’s view that a lack of amenities tended to lead to anti-social behaviour such as currently seen in Lower Earley as well as loneliness and isolation for older people:

1. Existing amenities such as the Silverdale Centre, St Nicolas Church and The CresCent would be publicised in the next MERA Magazine.
2. Earley Town Council be urged to consider whether further facilities should be made available for young people in Maiden Erlegh and beyond.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**NAG meeting: 4 March 2019**

The Secretary reported that Jean Hackett had attended the NAG meeting on 4 March 2019. The main points of interest included the lack of action on the request for orchard space near the children’s playground in Laurel Park and the inadequate consultation to date about the future use of the field; a visual audit of Chalfont Park that would be carried out by the police and NAG; the sale of Liberty of Earley House to the Reading Almshouses charity, who were applying to convert it into 37 flats with associated parking spaces for vulnerable older adults; and the litter pick that had been arranged for Sunday 24 March 2019.

**Woodley & North Earley Community Forum: 6 February 2019**

The Secretary reported that the main points from the Woodley and North Earley Community Forum held on 6 February 2019 were:

* A total of £280 was being awarded by Woodley and Earley Town Councils for the printing of public safety leaflets and it was hoped that Waingels College students would provide a logo as part of their graphics projects.
* Thames Valley Police were planning to organise two information cafes on two evenings, one at the Oakwood Centre, Woodley, and the other at the CresCent Centre, Earley, focussing on fraud and rogue traders.
* Discussion took place on the method by which Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators would communicate with each other in future, and compliance with the GDPR. There was also discussion on issuing regular information to residents who did not use the internet and whether the scheme was still active in the area.
* The top local policing priorities in Woodley and North Earley were stated to be speeding and anti-social behaviour.
* The AGM would be held on 10 April 2019 at 7.30pm at the Oakwood Centre, Woodley.
* There had been reports of dogs being poisoned by bait at Dinton Pastures.

**Earley Town Council Planning Committee: Presentation by Reading Buses CEO.**

The Secretary advised that Robert Williams, CEO of Reading Buses, had addressed the January meeting of Earley Town Council’s Planning Committee. He stated that continued improvement to the ‘Little Oranges’ 19 routes would be sought in conjunction with the Borough Council, but it was emphasised that the service was not currently financially self-sustaining. He also stated that central government funding had been granted that would enable the company to make improvements in the provision of environmentally friendly buses. Older buses would be fitted with filtration systems that would reduce emissions which would result in buses emitting less particulates than a car. Attention was also drawn to the Reading Buses mobile app which allowed customers to see real time bus locations.

**Road works**

Rosemary Cook drew attention to the number of road works currently being carried out and her concerns that there was a lack of co-ordination which was leading to unnecessary congestion. The Secretary pointed out that much of the work was carried out by statutory undertakers as well as for the purpose of road improvements to enable increased capacity with the number of new developments taking place in the area. However, he would write to the council with a view to ensuring that there were appropriate checks in place to provide optimum co-ordination of road works within the Borough.

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

**DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 11 April 2019 at 8pm.