**Minutes of the Maiden Erlegh Residents’ Association Executive Committee held at 8pm on Thursday 8 September 2022 at Earley Day Centre, Kenton Road, Earley**

**Present**

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| Colin Mair (Chairman/Area 3) | John Saunders (Area 13/Treasurer) |
| Steve Feltham (Secretary) | Jonathan Brown (Magazine Editor) |
| Pamela Roberts (Area 10) |  |

**In the Chair: Colin Mair**

**Apologies received**

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| Peter Woodward (Vice Chairman/Area 1) | Anne Booth (Area 9) |
| Judy Clark (Area 5) | Rosemary Cook (Area 11) |
| Chris Haines (Area 12) | Celia Smith (Area 6) |
| Siyu and Tim Smith (Area 2) | Elaine Spratling (Area 4) |
| Barbara Stansfield (Area 8) | Tim Marsh (ACER) |
| Cllr Tahir Maher (Wokingham BC) |  |

**MINUTES**

The Chairman pointed out that the previous minutes failed to include one of the items discussed, and this was rectified in the revised copies circulated. The amended minutes of the meeting held on 11 August 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Vice-Chairman.

**MATTERS ARISING**

**Bus service improvement plan**

The Secretary stated that he had written to the Community Transport Manager at Wokingham Borough Council to convey MERA’s view that the existing Toutley Road service run by Thames Valley Buses could be extended to connect with Hatch Farm Way, Rushey Way, Gypsy Lane and Silverdale Road into Reading via the Royal Berkshire Hospital. The Secretary was of the view that such a service would require a much-reduced subsidy than the continuation of the 19a/c service along Silverdale Road, and may even become commercially viable.

The Secretary reminded the Committee that Reading Buses was reported to have dismissed the idea that some of the Claret 21 services could be diverted through Silverdale Road. The contracts for the 19 routes were expected to be re-tendered either in April or September 2023.

**Proposed 3G football pitch at Maiden Erlegh School**

The Secretary circulated a draft response to the consultation relating to the Council’s proposal to establish a 3G football pitch at Maiden Erlegh School, which was agreed.

He stated that two objections had been received in the Askmera mailbox since the last meeting from residents living close to the site. The objections were similar to those which MERA had addressed in the proposed consultation response, except that attention was also drawn to the moths and bats in the vicinity that would be impacted by the floodlights. Accordingly, that point had been added to the proposed MERA response. The potential for loss of property value was also cited, but it was thought that this was unlikely provided the mitigations requested were implemented.

The Committee was informed that two drop-in sessions had been arranged by the Borough Council to be held at Maiden Erlegh School between 6pm and 7.30pm on 20 and 21 September. The Chairman and Secretary intended to be present on the second day.

MERA’s response to the consultation would be sent after the final drop-in session.

**Member review of Brookside surgery**

The Secretary referred to the proposed letter drafted to Sir John Redwood MP regarding the deteriorating service offered by the NHS. He advised that Judy Clark had contacted him to suggest that the point could be made that NHS funding had not kept pace with inflation, but it was thought that it would be better to leave any political points out of the submission.

**AGREED:** That subject to any further comments in the next two weeks, the draft letter be approved.

**‘The Duck and the World’**

The Chairman reported that a favourable response had been received from Earley Town Council regarding MERA’s request to the signage regarding ‘The Duck and the World’ sculpture on Maiden Erlegh lake, and the council had carried out the repair work free of charge. This required only the replacement of the Perspex, as the text underneath appeared to be undamaged. A works order had also been placed to remove the vegetation hampering the view of the sculpture from the viewing point.

The Secretary had written to the Operations Manager at the Town Council to thank him for his response.

**MERA modernisation programme**

The Secretary reported that consideration of the further modernisation measures discussed previously was ongoing and that any further observations on the proposals to extend the catchment area and to make copies of the magazine available to ACER members for a £1 charge would be discussed over the next few months. In the meantime, there would be further discussions with the Magazine Editor and the ACER Chairman before a detailed proposal was put before the Committee closer to Christmas.

**REPORTS**

**Chairman’s Report**

The Chairman reported that he would be attending the next meeting of NAG on 12 September 2022.

**Treasurer’s Report**

This item would be covered under the ‘New Items’ section of the agenda.

**Editorial Report**

The Editor confirmed that the copy date for the next MERA Magazine was 20 October 2022.

**CONSULTATIONS**

The Committee was advised of the following consultations:

Proposed 3G football pitch at Maiden Erlegh School – Closing date 3 October 2022.

Local Government Boundary Commission: council wards review – closing date 7 November 2022. The Chairman advised that the Commission was seeking views on whether boundaries should be changed to reflect local circumstances. This would be discussed further at the next meeting.

There were a number of petitions on the Borough’s website, including the MERA petition for the roundabout at Rushey Way/Gipsy Lane. There had been only one response to this petition so far and the closing date for responses was 21 September 2022.

The petition for the proposed the installation of a pedestrian and cyclist crossing on Wokingham Road, opposite Earley Station would be running until 21 October 2022.

The petition to save the skylarks at Hollow Lane, Shinfield would be running until 27 September 2022.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

*(No new correspondence except in relation to the 3G football pitch at Maiden Erlegh School as discussed earlier in the meeting).*

**NEW ITEMS**

**Treasurer vacancy**

The Chairman reported that Ryan Yao-Smith was commencing further studies with Bristol University this autumn term, and as previously discussed, he had stated his unavailability during that time to carry out his duties as Hon Treasurer for MERA. Siyu Smith had kindly volunteered to act as Co-Treasurer while Ryan was completing his course, but due to unforeseen work commitments, she was now unable to undertake this role at all. On further discussions with Ryan, it was confirmed that his future plans included working in London, and it was agreed that he was unlikely to be in a position to return to his duties as Hon Treasurer.

The Chairman stated that on behalf of the Committee, he would like to express his appreciation to Ryan for the outstanding work he had carried out in modernising MERA’s accounts and for providing him with regular updates on the state of its finances, which remained in good shape. He also thanked Siyu for stepping up to assist while Ryan was not available before her circumstances changed.

The Committee was then advised that the resultant vacancy would have proved difficult to fill, but John Saunders had come forward and he has volunteered to take on the role of Hon Treasurer until the next AGM in May 2023. To ensure that there was no break in service, Chairman’s Action had been taken in line with the Constitution to appoint John Saunders as Hon Treasurer, subject to the agreement of the next scheduled meeting of the Executive Committee.

Accordingly, the Chairman put forward a motion that John Saunders be elected as Hon Treasurer until the next meeting of the AGM to be held in May 2023. This motion was agreed unanimously. John Saunders was congratulated on having been elected to his new position in addition to his Area Representative duties.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Neighbourhood Watch**

John Saunders announced that a Neighbourhood Watch scheme would be set up to cover The Crescent. The Magazine Editor agreed that an item could be submitted to the next edition of the MERA Magazine.

**DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

13 October 2022 at Kenton Road Day Centre.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8.35pm.