MERA Minutes – 11th January 2018

**Minutes of the Maiden Erlegh Residents Association Executive Committee held at 8pm on Thursday 11 January 2018 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) |
| Constantina Ainsworth (Area 7) | Judy Clark (Area 5) |
| Sheila Quick (Area 12) | Ray Jones |
| Peter Soul (EASI) |  |

**Apologies received**

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| Pamela Tames (Treasurer) | Jean Beck (Area 12) |
| Anne Booth (Area 9) | Vera Box (Area 12) |
| Rosemary Cook (Area 11) | Pamela Roberts (Area 10) |
| Celia Smith (Area 6) | Siyu Smith (Area 2) |
| Tim Smith (Area 2) | Elaine Spratling (Area 4) |
| Barbara Stansfield (Area 8) | Brian Hackett |
| Mary Bather (ACER) |  |

**MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 14 DECEMBER 2017**

SF reported that some minor alterations were necessary in relation to the minutes, which had now been amended. The revised minutes acknowledged that Anne Booth was present at the meeting although unfortunately she had not signed the attendance register. Additionally, the second sentence in the minute relating to the East Reading MRT had omitted the words ‘had been approved’.

The amended minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2017 were accepted as a correct record.

**MATTERS ARISING**

**Silverdale Road bus service consultation**

The Secretary stated that Reading Buses had acknowledged MERA’s concerns relating to the traffic problems in Caversham and how that could cause delays on the new 22 bus service through Earley; the continuing use of the smaller white vehicles, which were unsuitable for infirm or disabled passengers; and the overcrowding of the morning peak hour services on the 19 service, which had resulted in some passengers not being able to board. However, Reading Buses had failed to comment on the issues raised.

**Derelict bungalow**

The Chairman observed that the site of the derelict bungalow was now much tidier and the hope was expressed that the new owner of the property would commence the necessary work to improve or reconstruct the building without delay.

**Potholes in Maiden Erlegh Drive**

The Secretary reported that he had requested an update on the position relating to Maiden Erlegh Drive from the Director of Finance and Operations of the Maiden Erlegh School Trust but that a response had not yet been received.

**New website for MERA**

The Chairman updated the meeting on the proposed website for MERA, stating that he and the Secretary had attended a meeting with Sam Chaher at Reading University. Sam Chaher confirmed that he would ask for volunteers to assist MERA to set up its own website as a voluntary project. This would meet our needs and bring benefits to the university and the students themselves, who would receive recognition for this in their degree work. CM described the web builder that would be used, known as ‘Weebly’, which was a simpler system to use than ‘WordPress’, and more likely to meet MERA’s needs.

The next step was for the Secretary to produce a specification for the work, which he would agree with the Chairman and refer back to the committee for ratification.

**Asda parking restrictions**

The Secretary reported that a reply had been sent to the resident who had complained about the new Asda parking restrictions as agreed at the last meeting. The resident had responded to this to make the point that number plate recognition technology was far from perfect and if a number plate was misread, it could lead to a customer being fined if they returned to the car park the same day.

**AGREED: The Secretary raise MERA’s concerns that Asda customers could be fined incorrectly under the new system and request reassurances on the position including the means of redress where customers have been wrongly disadvantaged as the result of deficiencies in number plate reading technology.**

**East Reading MRT**

The Secretary stated that Jean Hackett had made the point that the East Reading MRT would be available for pedestrians and cyclists to use (as well as buses).

Anne Booth had also emailed the Secretary to add to the statement she made at the last meeting that the buses would run along the MRT on Mondays to Fridays only. Anne wished to point out that an amendment to the Revised Transport Statement had clarified that the potential existed for bus services to operate at weekends.

**TREASURER’S REPORT**

The Chairman reported that the Treasurer had advised him that the annual NORA subscription had been paid. It was also confirmed that most advertisers were paying for placement in the magazine by bank transfer.

**NEW CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED**

**NORA**

The Secretary reported that the government had started to implement most of the measures promoted by NORA to deal with rogue landlords and badly run houses in multiple occupation. The Chairman commented that this highlighted the benefit of continuing membership of NORA.

**NEW ITEMS**

**Graffiti**

PS outlined the actions he had taken relating to graffiti that had appeared on the cycleway, bollards and the telecommunications box, and the response he had received from Wokingham Borough Council. The current policy according to Peter Baveystock, the Service Manager of the Council’s Cleaner, Greener and Reactive Highway Services was that graffiti would be removed from Council owned property but not from private property (although residents would be encouraged to remove this themselves). The presence of graffiti should be reported through Customer Services.

**ACTION: PS stated that he would write to Wokingham Borough Council to report the graffiti on the Lakeside/Beech Lane cycleway and request that it be removed.**

**The Orchard**

The Chairman reported that some trees at The Orchard had been vandalised. The Secretary advised that Jean Hackett had provided him with a report on the situation. It was hoped that the mulberry tree would survive, but the Jupiter apple tree was beyond recovery. Some branches of the walnut tree had been broken. It was hoped that money would be found to install a camera and a motion sensitive light, and an update would be given at a later meeting.

The Secretary advised that the winter pruning would take place at 2pm on 16 January, and if any volunteers would like to participate, they were asked to bring their secateurs with them.

**Consultation**

The Secretary reported that Brian Hackett had raised a query which led to consideration of whether consultations requiring a personal response from individual residents should be notified to the committee as a matter of course. Current consultations being carried out related to Healthwatch Services, which Wokingham Borough Council wished to merge with Reading Borough Council to save money (closing date 6 February); Thames Valley Police consultation on police spending (closing date 11 January) and Wokingham Borough Council’s proposal for the next phase of the California Greenway (closing date 19 January).

JC stated that she would wish to know about these consultations and suggested that the council should do more than simply add the information to their website. SF made the point that other than notifying the press of these consultations, there appeared to be no other ways of communicating such information other than by informing all residents by post or courier, which would be expensive.

The Secretary stated that he would ensure that all consultations, whether calling for individual or collective responses, would be notified to the committee in future.

**Speaker for AGM**

The Chairman reminded the committee that the AGM would be held on 10 May, and it was necessary to find a speaker who could address the meeting on a topical subject. It was agreed that Peter Baveystock would be a suitable choice, if he was available, but in the meantime, members were asked to let the Secretary know if they had any alternative suggestions by the end of the following week.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Beeston Way pedestrian crossing**

The Secretary advised that work was due to commence on the new pedestrian crossing at Beeston Way on 15 January. It was anticipated that the work would be completed by 9 February. The working hours would be from 9.30am to 4pm, and therefore rush hour traffic would not be affected.

**New taxi firm**

SQ advised the committee that a new taxi firm may start operating from the flat above Waterfall in The Parade, and that a planning application had been submitted. The Secretary had responded on behalf of MERA to express concern about taxis using car parking spaces reserved for shoppers and the noise associated with running this business which could disturb the neighbours, particularly at night. It was suggested that the Town Clerk be advised of MERA’s response.

**Earley/Woodley boundary**

PS advised that a resident of the new housing estate on the old Bulmershe Court site off Woodlands Avenue had requested to join EASI, but he had discovered that this estate appeared to lie on the Woodley side of the parish boundary and was actually within the South Lake ward.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8.58pm.

**DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 8 February 2018 at 8pm.