**Minutes of the Maiden Erlegh Residents’ Association Executive Committee held at 8pm on Thursday 10 February 2022 at Earley 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 Editor) |
| Anne Booth (Area 9) | Judy Clark (Area 5) |
| Rosemary Cook (Area 11) | Paul Medlycott (Area 12) |
| John Saunders (Area 13) | Celia Smith (Area 6) |
| Elaine Spratling (Area 4)  | Bob Collis (Chairman, Earley Environmental Gp) |

**In the Chair: Colin Mair**

**Apologies received**

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| Ryan Yao-Smith (Treasurer) | Patricia Brown (Editorial Team) |
| Liz Kerry (Magazine Editorial Team) | Pamela Roberts (Area 10) |
| Siyu Smith (Area 2) | Tim Smith (Area 2) |
| Barbara Stansfield (Area 8) | Ray Jones (Resident) |
| Tim Marsh (ACER) | Cllr Taher Mayer (ETC) |

**WELCOME**

The Chairman welcomed Bob Collis, Chairman of the Earley Environmental Group, to the meeting.

**MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**MATTERS ARISING**

**Water leakage at a Lakeside property**

The Secretary confirmed that he had asked Cllr Norman Jorgensen whether he had received options from Borough Council officers for dealing with the water leak at Lakeside.

**Bus service improvement plan**

In line with the decision at the last meeting, the Secretary advised that he had responded to the consultation on bus routes to serve new housing estates and put forward the idea that the proposed new service from the Norreys Estate could be extended to serve Hatchmill, connecting with Maiden Erlegh, the Royal Berkshire Hospital and Reading.

**Overflowing bins**

The Secretary reported that as he had not received a response from the Street Cleansing Specialist, he had written to the Localities Team to advise them that we were awaiting a reply. An acknowledgement had been received and a reminder is being sent.

**Proposed 3G football pitch at Laurel Park**

The Secretary updated the meeting on the current situation regarding the proposed 3G football pitch at Laurel Park. Following the number of posts on Facebook on the subject and a press release from MBOS Residents, Wokingham Today had finally printed the story.

The Chairman and Secretary were meeting with Chairman of MBOS residents and the Chairman of Earley Environmental Group on 14 February to co-ordinate the response to this proposal. However, the Secretary stated that each organisation would be responding to the Council separately.

A revised draft letter of objection was circulated to committee members and comments were invited. The Secretary stated that his preferred response to ensure that all views were taken into account was to welcome the investment in sport for Earley, but to point out that Laurel Park was not the right location for the proposed pitch.

It had been suggested at the previous meeting that English Nature could be contacted to assist with our understanding of the impact of a 3G pitch on the nature reserve. Natural England had now taken over from English Nature, and he understood that Earley Environmental Group would be seeking their assistance.

Bob Collis was invited to address the meeting and he summarised his views on the proposal. These were in line with the concerns that the Committee had been debating, but in addition he pointed out the noise from the maintenance of the pitch was also something that should be borne in mind. He shared concerns regarding the rubber crumb that would be discharged from the pitch with the water run-off, which posed a health risk to insects, and the polluted water would find its way into the brook, the River Loddon, the River Thames and out to sea.

As well as concerns about the impact of the floodlights on the nearby roosting bats, moths would be vulnerable as were attracted to the lights. It did not appear that any noise or drainage assessments had been made to date. The point was made during discussion that if the proposed car park on the western field came to fruition, lighting would be needed, otherwise the field would be pitch black during the winter evenings. This additional lighting would directly affect Instow Road and Sibson back gardens.

Following a detailed discussion, Bob Collis was thanked for his contribution and assured that MERA would continue to work with him and the MBOS Residents to oppose the proposals.

The Secretary then reported that he had received three items of communication from local residents. Two wanted to join MERA as they were opposed to the Laurel Park proposal, but one of them was located outside MERA’s catchment area. A further item of correspondence was received from Liz Kerry, and the points raised would be added to the draft letter of objection.

Bob Collis left the meeting at this point and was thanked for his advice.

**Consultations**

The Chairman confirmed that he had put his name forward to contribute to the discussion on the climate emergency as agreed at the last meeting.

**Annual General Meeting**

The Secretary referred to the proposed agenda for the AGM in May 2022 and asked the Committee to note that there were three proposed items under the ‘Resolutions and Rules proposed by the Executive Committee’. The Committee was asked to agree these three items under this heading and whether there were any further items that needed to be identified. He reminded the Committee that all proposed new resolutions and rules had to be lodged with the Secretary at least 14 days before the AGM and they must be agreed by at least five members of the Association in line with the Constitution. However, it was better to ensure that any new rules were debated by the Executive Committee first to ensure that the matter was properly debated and that there was support from the Committee on any suggestions put forward.

The Secretary also announced that he had asked the Treasurer to work on trying to find an auditor to sign off the books in time for the AGM, and that it might be necessary to pay for the service.

**AGREED: That the following new rules and resolutions be recommended to the May AGM:**

1. **That the draft MERA response to the Borough Council’s proposal to convert the lower field at Laurel Park into a 3G football pitch be approved.**
2. **That the interim measure for the properties located in The Crescent to be included within MERA’s catchment area be approved and the Constitution be amended accordingly.**
3. **That an online petition be submitted to Wokingham Borough Council calling for a mini-roundabout to be installed at the junction of Gypsy Lane and Rushey Way.**

**REPORTS**

**Chairman’s Report**

The Chairman had nothing to report on this occasion.

**Treasurer’s Report**

The Treasurer was unable to attend the meeting, but submitted a written report confirming that all 2021 subscriptions had now been received and that the main account remained in a healthy position ahead of the next AGM and the next issue of the magazine.

**Editorial Report**

The Editor confirmed that the copy date for the next MERA Magazine would be 20 February 2022. The Chairman stated that the issue number and season/year on the front of the magazine was difficult to read and would benefit from a better colour contrast. The Editor agreed to look at this.

**CONSULTATIONS**

The Committee was advised of the current consultations that were currently taking place:

Taxi fare increases – closing date 16 February 2022.

Wokingham Borough Active Travel Fund – Woodley to Reading Active Travel Route – closing date 21 February 2022.

Tackling financial hardship – closing date 21 February 2022.

Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment Survey – closing date 28 February 2022.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**Correspondence from residents**

The Secretary stated that as well as the three emails from residents concerning Laurel Park, he had also received a question from a member who wanted to know whether MERA was planning to provide advice on organising street parties. The Secretary reported that he would provide information on how to ensure that all the appropriate steps were taken from government and local authority websites, but he asked whether any members wished to organise such events in their area. If so, he asked that they register their interest with the Secretary or alternatively bring this forward at the next meeting.

**NORA**

The Committee was advised that recent correspondence from NORA included the latest newsletter, which would be circulated with the minutes.

**NEW ITEMS**

*No new items were raised.*

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Residents asked to report suspicious activity**

The Secretary advised that Thames Valley Police had asked residents to report any suspicious activity they detected and to forward any relevant CCTV, dashcam or video doorbell footage to them in an effort to increase arrests and prevent further crimes taking place.

**New blue bags and food caddy liners**

The Borough Council was reported to have commenced distribution of their waste blue bags and food caddy liners, which would be completed by mid-March.

**Earley Orchard meetings**

The Earley Orchard Working Meetings would re-commence every month from Saturday 12 February and members were invited to attend.

**Beech Lane roundabout on Rushey Way**

Paul Medlycott raised again the issue of vegetation on the roundabout at Rushey Way with Beech Lane, which he claimed was obscuring clear vision of traffic from the opposite direction. The Secretary stated that he could not identify the problem when he inspected the roundabout some weeks ago, but he would look again and report back to the next meeting.

**DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

10 March 2022.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.25pm.