**Minutes of the Maiden Erlegh Residents’ Association Executive Committee held at 8pm on Thursday 10 March 2022 at Earley Day Centre, Kenton Road, Earley**

**Present**

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| Colin Mair (Chairman/Area 3) | Peter Woodward (Vice Chairman/Area 1) |
| Ryan Yao-Smith (Treasurer) | Steve Feltham (Secretary) |
| Jonathan Brown (Magazine Editor) | Anne Booth (Area 9) |
| Judy Clark (Area 5) | Rosemary Cook (Area 11) |
| John Saunders (Area 13) | Siyu Smith (Area 2) |

**In the Chair: Colin Mair**

**Apologies received**

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| Paul Medlycott (Area 12) | Pamela Roberts (Area 10) |
| Celia Smith (Area 6) | Elaine Spratling (Area 4) |
| Barbara Stansfield (Area 8) | Tim Marsh (ACER) |
| Cllr Taher Mayer (ETC) |  |

**MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**MATTERS ARISING**

**Water leakage at a Lakeside property**

The Chairman stated that Cllr Norman Jorgensen had responded to the Secretary’s request for an update, and he had commented that it was taking some time to receive a response from his officers. Cllr Jorgensen confirmed that he was looking into this.

**Bus service improvement plan**

The Secretary advised that a report on the Borough Council’s decision to investigate the prospect of entering into an enhanced partnership with local bus companies was expected to be submitted to the Executive Meeting on 24 March 2022. He would report further on this at the next meeting.

The Committee was also advised that an announcement was awaited from the government relating an extension of funding to bus companies to address the shortfall in the number of passengers that was caused by the pandemic. In the meantime, the Borough Council agreed a short-term funding plan in case Reading Buses or other public transport operators in the area decided to de-register any bus services under the Covid Regulations that would permit them to withdraw bus services at short notice, as had happened with the Reading to Fleet service 7.

**Overflowing bins**

The Secretary reported that as he was still awaiting a response from the council in respect of overflowing bins in The Parade and at Kenton Road.

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

The Secretary welcomed the success of the campaign to prevent Laurel Park from being fenced off to provide for a 3G football pitch. He stated that he had been asked why it was necessary to continue with the rally the previous Sunday. He advised the Committee that this was an MBOS decision that had been agreed with MERA and the Earley Environmental Group as there was insufficient time to ensure that all those leafleted were notified of the cancellation of the event.

The Secretary reported that all the speakers were very good and well received by those present. It was estimated that about 100 people were present. The event was also attended by Phil Creighton from the Wokingham Today newspaper, who also photographed the event. This had been published on the day of the meeting.

The Secretary thanked those Committee members who had assisted with the distribution of the leaflets advertising the event. He was also extremely grateful to MBOS Residents and Earley Environmental Group for their work in opposing the plans. He expressed his gratitude to Cllrs Pauline Jorgensen and Clive Jones for deciding to align themselves with residents’ views on the unsuitability of Laurel Park as a location for the 3G pitch.

Two issues had arisen in respect of the rally. Firstly, the Secretary reported that he had received an email from Cllr Mickleburgh, who questioned the Leader of the Council’s statement at the rally that Earley Town Council had supported plans for a 3G pitch at Laurel Park. The Secretary had responded that as a residents’ association, MERA did not involve itself in political party issues, and he suggested that the matter be taken up directly with the Leader in Council.

The second issue raised related to the alarm expressed that Maiden Erlegh School could form an acceptable proposal as an alternative to the Laurel Park location. The Secretary advised that such a proposal was unlikely to succeed due to the lack of car parking space at the school.

The Committee debated the legitimate question of how the council consulted with its residents. There appeared to be two main issues – these being the timing of consultations and who was to be consulted. On the first issue, if the consultation was carried out too early, there would not be sufficient information gathered to answer residents’ questions, and this would lead to criticism of the council. If the consultation started once all the details were known, the council could be accused of not consulting residents at an earlier stage, which is what appeared to have happened in this case.

The Chairman had suggested that a policy of advising residents of a notice of intent at an early stage, with full consultation at a later date when details were available might be one way of addressing the matter.

Finally, the Committee’s attention was drawn to the amended letter of objection in respect of the Laurel Park proposal. The Secretary stated that he was still minded to refer the draft letter of objection to the AGM in case the proposal was resurrected in the future under a new administration. He now also intended to put together a further draft letter to cover objections to the Maiden Erlegh School proposal and he would refer this for agreement to the next meeting.

**AGREED: That:**

1. **If the council decided to proceed with plans to install a new 3G football pitch at Maiden Erelgh School, this would be opposed by MERA on the grounds of insufficient parking provision and disturbance to residents, subject to the views expressed at the May 2022 AGM.**
2. **The Secretary would be asked to contact Cllr Pauline Jorgensen to establish the council’s rules on resident consultation.**
3. **The draft letters of objection in respect of Laurel Park and Maiden Erlegh School be referred to the next meeting of the AGM to be held on 12 May 2022 for endorsement.**

**Annual General Meeting**

The Treasurer reported that he had found the name of an appropriate experienced person who would be able to carry out an audit of MERA’s books in time for the next AGM. The Treasurer and Siyu Smith were thanked for their efforts in enabling the Association to verify the accounts in time for the AGM.

The Secretary stated that he would be requesting at the next meeting confirmation from all officers and area representatives that they wished to put their names forward to continue in their current roles for the period ending May 2023.

**Correspondence with residents: Queen’s Jubilee street parties**

The Chairman and Siyu Smith both expressed interest in holding a street party in their road to celebrate the Queen’s Jubilee this coming summer. The Secretary stated that he would provide Committee members with a link from the government and the Borough Council’s websites, which provided advice on organising such events.

**Beech Lane roundabout on Rushey Way**

In the absence of Paul Medlycott, it was decided that this item would be deferred until the April meeting.

**REPORTS**

**Chairman’s Report**

The Chairman had nothing to report on this occasion.

**Treasurer’s Report**

The Treasurer confirmed that the new members residing in The Crescent had now paid their subscriptions.

**Editorial Report**

The Editor confirmed that the Spring edition of the MERA Magazine would be published later this month.

**CONSULTATIONS**

The Committee was advised of the current consultations that were currently taking place. Full details would be circulated with the minutes:

Parliamentary constituency changes – closing date 4 April 2022.

Joint Minerals and Waste Plan – closing date 11 April 2022.

Election Cycle – closing date 15 April 2022.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**Correspondence from residents**

1. **Dogs**

The Secretary stated that an email had been received from a resident whose dog was being harassed by other dogs that were let off the lead by an owner who did not appear to be in sufficient control of her animals. Rosemary Cook pointed out that there was a sign which made it clear that dogs were not permitted on the field. The Secretary stated he would look into this and request advice from the Borough Council on enforcement.

1. **Speed humps in Beech Lane**

A complaint had been received by a resident who had damaged her car on a speed hump in Beech Lane. It was agreed that the first two humps in Beech Lane from Wilderness Road were too high, and the Secretary stated he would write to the council about this problem.

**NORA**

The Committee was advised that there had been no correspondence from NORA, and a newsletter would normally be expected to have appeared by the date of the meeting. The Secretary would follow this up shortly if no further communications are received in the meantime.

**NEW ITEMS**

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

The Secretary stated that following the withdrawal of the proposal for a 3G football pitch at Laurel Park, the Borough Council would now consider Maiden Erlegh School as an alternative location. Although it appeared likely that this alternative would be rejected due to the parking issues that would be incurred, it appeared to make sense to prepare a letter of objection for submission if required. The Secretary would draw up a draft for the next meeting, but the main areas MERA should consider were:

* Lack of car parking space
* Increased congestion caused by the narrow entrance into the site.
* Daily impact of increased usage on nearby residents
* Polluted water runoff from an additional pitch, which could flood nearby gardens.

The Secretary stated that he intended to submit this letter of objection to the AGM to ensure that residents approved this response. He added that Bearwood was a much more suitable site, and that this was also being considered by the council.

It was suggested that the more regular use of floodlights was another issue that nearby residents were likely to have if this option was implemented, and that there were occasions when the lights were not switched off again once they were no longer needed. The Secretary agreed to add this issue to the letter of objection.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Royal Horticultural Society: car parking areas**

Rosemary Cook drew attention to an article that had appeared in the Royal Horticultural Society magazine concerning ways to create better, softer car parking spaces in front gardens. The Secretary requested a copy of the article, which would be circulated with the minutes.

**NAG**

The problem relating to inconsiderate parking was raised, and it was suggested that particular examples could be raised with the Neighbourhood Police Officer. A Neighbourhood Action Group meeting was scheduled for 14 March, when it was hoped that the name of the officer replacing Julie Susel could be established.

**Kenton Road Day Centre**

The Committee was advised that the Day Centre was keen to hear of any volunteers who would be interested in assisting with the running of the Day Centre, or any events held there.

**DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

14 April 2022.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.00pm.