**Minutes of the Maiden Erlegh Residents’ Association Executive Committee held at 8pm on Thursday 14 July 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) | Constantina Ainsworth (Area 7) |
| Rosemary Cook (Area 11) | Chris Haines (Area 12) |
| Pamela Roberts (Area 10) | John Saunders (Area 13) |
| Celia Smith (Area 6) | Siyu Smith (Area 2) |
| Tim Smith (Area 2) |  |

**In the Chair: Colin Mair**

**Apologies received**

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| Ryan Yao-Smith (Treasurer) | Jonathan Brown (Magazine Editor) |
| Patricia Brown (Editorial Team) | Anne Booth (Area 9) |
| Judy Clark (Area 5) | Barbara Stansfield (Area 8) |
| Tim Marsh (ACER) | Cllr Tahir Maher |

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Chairman welcomed new member Chris Haines, who was appointed as Area Representative for Area 12, to her first meeting of the Executive Committee.

**MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Vice-Chairman.

**NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 JUNE 2022**

The record of the informal meeting held on 9 June 2022 in the absence of a quorum were noted.

The Secretary referred to the matter raised at that meeting by Rosemary Cook regarding the accident that occurred outside the entrance to Maiden Erlegh School involving a child. It was reported that a child had fallen against a moving car and was lucky not to have been run over. Earley Town Council had asked that MERA support their request to the Borough Council to appoint an independent inspector to carry out a risk assessment at this location. The Secretary supported this and reminded the Committee that MERA raised the safety issues that were apparent at the school a few years ago, without success.

**AGREED: That the request by Earley Town Council be supported and Wokingham Borough Council be advised accordingly.**

**MATTERS ARISING**

**Water leakage at a Lakeside property**

The Chairman reported that the water leakage at 63 Lakeside had now been fixed and that a connection had been made to the drain. This appeared to have resolved the problem.

**Bus service improvement plan**

The Secretary reminded the Committee that Robert Williams had stated at the AGM that while Reading Borough Council had partially succeeded in its bid for increased funding from the government to improve bus services, the bid from Wokingham Borough Council had been unsuccessful. It was not yet clear whether any further government money would be forthcoming to improve routes and frequencies as previously hoped.

Additionally, the Committee was informed that the Leader of Wokingham Borough Council had been reported in the ‘Wokingham Today’ newspaper as stating there was no money budgeted for the continuation of subsidised bus services after September 2022, when the government funding was likely to be withdrawn. The Secretary advised that he had written to the Community Transport Manager Rebecca Brooks to seek clarity on the position.

The Secretary stated that if the Borough Council proposed not to fund unprofitable bus services in the area, there was likely to be a period of consultation, and as there would probably be a brief period in which to respond, it was important that MERA’s stance on the position was established in advance. He stated that on the basis of the committee’s previous discussions, if the 19a/c were to be withdrawn, the council and Reading Buses should be urged to modify the Claret services 21 route for some journeys to operate via Silverdale Road. There also remained an option to introduce a new service for Beech Lane to operate via the Hatch Farm Estate.

**AGREED: That this approach be endorsed.**

**Overflowing bins**

The Secretary reported that following a request by the Cleaner and Greener Team for any feedback relating to the problems of litter in the area caused by lack of bins, the Secretary had forwarded information provided by the litter picking team, EASI.

MERA had also been requested to provide any useful information on the worst times at which the Kenton Road bins tended to overflow. The Secretary requested that any information Area Representatives may have should be forwarded to him so that he could advise the council accordingly.

**Beech Lane roundabout on Rushey Way**

The Chairman confirmed that having inspected the Beech Lane/Rushey Way roundabout, he had decided to take no further action on this for the time being, but the matter would be kept under review.

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

The Secretary reminded the committee that the recommendations put forward to the AGM in relation to the 3G football pitch proposal for Maiden Erlegh School had been approved, and the Secretary had been authorised to seek mitigation of any disbenefits of the plans.

A meeting with the Head Teacher of Maiden Erlegh School was not held as originally planned because it became clear that the school was not aware of the detailed plans of the council. Accordingly, the Secretary had written to the Leader of the Borough Council, Clive Jones, and to Cllr Pauline Jorgensen, to explain MERA’s concerns. The Secretary had also written to the Sports and Development team who were handling the matter. It was hoped that a response would be received from the officers before the next meeting. The councillors had both acknowledged receipt of the email explaining MERA’S position on the matter.

**Annual General Meeting**

The Chairman summarised the proceedings of the AGM held on 12 May, confirming that sufficient signatures were obtained for the online petition, which the Secretary had now submitted to the Borough Council for uploading to their website. Members were asked to sign the petition if they were in favour of the proposal to construct a mini roundabout at the junction of Gipsy Lane and Rushey Way.

The Secretary thanked Siyu Smith for providing the food for the AGM, and he also thanked the Chairman for providing the wine and soft drinks.

It was confirmed that Ryan Yao-Smith and Siyu Smith were elected to serve as Co-Treasurers and Chris Haines was elected to the Area Representative vacancy for Area 12, replacing Paul Medlycott, whose short-term appointment was extended due to the Covid-19 emergency, which prevented MERA from holding its AGM for two years. The Secretary extended his thanks to him for retaining the role for longer than originally anticipated.

Confirmation was provided that all three resolutions / rules changes were agreed by the AGM.

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

The Chairman reported that a number of street parties had been organised in Maiden Erlegh, and some pictures from some of these events had been reproduced in the summer edition of the MERA Magazine. Given the success of the street parties, it was proposed that consideration be given to holding similar events in the future.

**REPORTS**

**Chairman’s Report**

The Chairman reported on the NAG meeting held on 11 July 2022.

The Committee was advised that there had been no further communications received to date from the Borough Council in relation to MERA’s proposal regarding tree planting on grass verges that was referred to them last year. The last communication from the council on the subject was last January.

**Treasurer’s Report**

The Treasurer was unable to attend the meeting, but he had sent in his report which confirmed that the Association’s finances remained healthy and that advertisers would be invoiced shortly in relation to the summer edition of the magazine. Payment of three invoices from advertisers remained outstanding.

**Editorial Report**

The Editor was unable to attend the meeting and he had nothing to report on this occasion. Area Representatives were asked to distribute the magazines and collect the annual subscriptions as soon as possible.

**CONSULTATIONS**

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

Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment survey – closing date 9 August 2022.

Car Cruising Public Spaces Order Survey – closing date 19 July 2022.

There were a number of petitions on the Borough’s website, including the MERA petition for the roundabout at Rushey Way/Gipsy Lane. There was one other petition that might be of particular interest to members, which proposed the installation of a pedestrian and cyclist crossing on Wokingham Road, opposite Earley Station. The Chairman thought this had some merit, and he urged members to add their signatures to it.

Other petitions included one relating to Winnersh cross roads and another proposing action to save the skylarks at Hollow Lane, Shinfield.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**Member review of Brookside Surgery**

The Secretary reported that a resident had submitted a review he had uploaded onto Google Reviews in respect of the deterioration of services he claimed to have experienced in relation to Brookside Surgery.

The review had been circulated to committee members with the agenda. The main issues he raised related to the booking system for appointments with the e-consult form, the need for patients to be able to access services ‘without encumbrance’ and the increasing trend towards ‘increasing profitability.

The Secretary pointed out that MERA had been working with the Practice in an effort to improve aspects of the service provided, and that it was understood that the e-consult form was a commonly cited bone of contention amongst residents. However, the e-consult form was a centrally designed form which GP practices were obliged to put in place and therefore it was not Brookside’s fault that the form was poorly designed and introduced.

After discussion, it was agreed that the Secretary would draft a letter to Sir John Redwood, MP, to request that this and the growing lack of satisfaction with the efficiency of the NHS be addressed by the government as a matter of urgency.

**AGREED: That the Secretary present a draft letter to Sir John Redwood MP for approval at the next or subsequent meeting.**

**‘The Duck and the World’**

The Secretary reported that the Arborfield and Newlands Parish Clerk had asked MERA how to contact the artist who sculpted ‘The Duck and the World’ that could be viewed from Lakeside. Brian Hackett provided the contact details he possessed, and these had been passed on to the Parish Clerk, but there was uncertainty about whether these details were still correct. Following a response from the Parish Clerk of Earley Town Council, the Park Ranger was contacted to see if he could provide any further information as he was involved with the sculptor at the time.

**NEW ITEMS**

**MERA modernisation programme**

The Secretary referred to the paper he had produced on the MERA modernisation programme. The main focus was on the ‘Membership and Funding’ section, which set out options about the possible expansion of MERA’s catchment area. The Secretary explained that if agreed, extending membership beyond present boundaries would extend the influence of the Association and yield increased funding from subscriptions that would enable MERA to fund socially desirable projects such as park benches, bus shelters, etc.

The committee was informed that there were different ways of increasing membership, including ‘infilling’ similar to the recent decision to include residents of The Crescent, inclusion of the whole of the Maiden Erlegh Ward and strengthening MERA’s relationship with ACER.

It was explained that this was a matter for consultation only at this stage, and the views of others including those of individual committee members, and particularly of the Magazine Editor and the ACER Chairman, would have to be taken into account before any positive recommendations to the AGM in May 2023 were taken.

The report also posed the question of whether there should be more social events organised such as the recent street parties held in celebration of the Jubilee.

**AGREED: That the Secretary**

1. **Considers which additional streets could be considered for inclusion in MERA’s catchment area if it were to be expanded.**
2. **Undertakes consultation on the Membership and Funding proposals with the Magazine Editor, Treasurer and ACER Chairman.**
3. **A further report to be submitted for consideration by the Executive Committee.**

**Membership lists**

The Secretary reported that he had updated all the membership lists, which had been distributed by email to members, and additionally, paper copies were also available which could be used for reference purposes while collecting magazines and subscriptions. He requested that members keep him informed of any cancellations as well as new members, and to ensure that the GDPR forms were signed as appropriate.

A request was made for up-to-date forms and information used for canvassing and new members to be circulated. The Secretary stated that he would ensure that this information was made available before the next meeting.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**The Orchard**

The Chairman stated that there had been a further meeting of Earley Orchard members to carry out some maintenance on the site. It was reported that there had been no further vandalism to the trees, which was welcome news.

**Earley Green Fair**

The Chairman reported that Earley Green Fair would be back in its normal location after the Covid emergency on Saturday 6 August.

**Earley Community Bus**

The committeewas advised that volunteers were needed to drive the Earley Community Bus. Volunteers would need to have DI licences.

**DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

11 August 2022 at Kenton Road Day Centre.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.30pm.