**Minutes of the Maiden Erlegh Residents’ Association Executive Committee held at 8pm on Thursday 9 December 2021 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) |
| Constantina Ainsworth (Area 7) | Anne Booth (Area 9) |
| Judy Clark (Area 5) | Rosemary Cook (Area 11) |
| Pamela Roberts (Area 10) | John Saunders (Area 13) |
| Siyu Smith (Area 2) | Tim Smith (Area 2) |
| Elaine Spratling (Area 4) | Barbara Stansfield (Area 8) |
| Jennifer Lissaman (ACER) |  |

**In the Chair: Colin Mair**

**Apologies received**

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| Jonathan Brown (Editor) | Patricia Brown (Editorial Team) |
| Celia Smith (Area 6) | Paul Medlycott (Area 12) |
| Caroline Smith (ETC councillor) | Ray Jones (resident) |

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Chairman thanked Siyu Smith for providing the food for the meeting. The Secretary thanked the Chairman for providing the drinks.

**MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**MATTERS ARISING**

**Water leakage at a Lakeside property**

The Secretary reported that Cllr Norman Jorgensen had chased officers for the options that existed to deal with the water leak at Lakeside, but a response was still awaited.

**Bus service improvement plan**

The Secretary updated the committee on correspondence with Robert Williams, the CEO of Reading Buses, who confirmed that there was not a review of Earley services currently being undertaken and that any enhancement to services was now a long-term rather than a short-term goal due to the Covid restrictions, which had seen passenger numbers fall. The Secretary had confirmed to the CEO that the information received regarding the review of Earley services was provided by the company’s Customer Services Department but it was received before the pandemic.

Another piece of information of note was that the routes and timetables for Courtney bus services (now Thames Valley Buses) was determined by Wokingham Borough Council and that any changes to those services would have to be instigated by Wokingham.

**Deferred items**

The Secretary reported that he had written to Martin Heath to convey the committee’s views on the Gypsy Lane/Rushey Way junction, and it was pointed out to him that pedestrians did not need to cross the road at this point as there was a crossing and an underpass at Gypsy Lane.

**Red kites**

The Chairman reported that there had been some negative feedback in social media in relation to our warning that if encouraged to have contact with people, the birds ‘could attack people’. The Secretary advised that this was not the case, because the article stressed that accidental injury could be caused if the birds swooped down to take food from hands. The Ornithological Society backed this up, and there were ample references made to such incidents on the internet. No further action was proposed.

**REPORTS**

**Chairman’s Report**

The Chairman reported that following a report of a child’s bicycle that had been found close to the lake, he had worked with the Secretary to find its rightful owner.

**Treasurer’s Report**

The Treasurer thanked the Area Representatives who had paid in their subscriptions. He stated that both the current and deposit accounts were doing well.

It was reported that a new advertiser, Whiteknights Indoor Bowls Club, had placed a full page advertisement in the MERA Magazine. It was also noted that most advertisers were now taking advantage of electronic invoicing.

**Editorial Report**

The Chairman stated that there was nothing to report in the Editor’s absence.

**CONSULTATIONS**

**Local Plan update**

As promised at the previous meeting, the Secretary attended a public walk-in session at Arborfield Green to look at the proposals in the Local Plan Update. The Secretary advised that the report compiled for the Committee would be discussed later in the agenda. The consultation would run until 17 January 2022.

**[UPDATE]** *The Borough Council’s website now shows an amended closing date of 24 January 2021.*

**Schools admissions**

The Chairman reported that the Borough Council was consulting on its ‘Co-odinated Schemes for Admission to Primary and Secondary Schools’ which incorporated the proposed admission arrangments for 2023/2024. The consultation would close on 17 January 2021.

**Garden forest scheme**

The Chairman advised that the Garden Forest Scheme had been launched by the Borough Council and residents were invited to apply for one or more trees to be planted in their gardens. The public would be able to apply via the Borough Council’s website.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**Overflowing bins**

Following a further complaint by a resident about the overflowing bins at The Parade and at Kenton Road, the Secretary had now written to the Borough Council to report the matter and to request a solution to this problem.

A number of suggestions to alleviate the problem at The Parade were noted, and these would be explored if the Borough Council was not prepared to deal with the issue.

**NEW ITEMS**

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

The Secretary reported that the field to the west of the pavilion had been turned down for designated green space status, fuelling suspicion that the council intended to use this field as a car park.

The Committee was asked for comments on the proposed press release, which was designed to draw attention to the likelihood of a planning application imminently. After considerable discussion during which members expressed considerable concerns over the expected application, it was

**AGREED: That the press release be modified to emphasise the concern expressed by the meeting and sent to the relevant media.**

**Local Plan Update: Proposed MERA consultation response**

The Secretary referred to the paper in which MERA’s response to the consultation was proposed. He clarified that the proposed response was designed to reflect the main concerns that were likely to be expressed by MERA members.

The Committee’s attention was drawn to the fact that Loddon Valley Garden Village was now put forward in place of Grazeley, and that 4,500 new homes would be provided in a large parcel of land covering Sindlesham, Arborfield and Shinfield. This was most likely to increase traffic congestion, pollution and additional pressure on services such as schools and GP surgeries.

The Chairman posed the possibility of an additional access point onto the motorway to take traffic away from local roads. Attention was also drawn to the increased construction lorries that would appear during the long period of time while the developments on this land were being built, increasing pressure on local roads, and the need for shops and services to be opened earlier rather than later as the housing was constructed.

It was suggested that any response should include reference to the planned green spaces being a welcome feature of the new development.

The Secretary suggested that members of the committee also respond to the proposals, outlining their particular objections, which may go further than those contained in MERA’s response.

**AGREED: That the Secretary’s paper be used as a basis for responding to the Borough Council’s local plan update.**

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Noisy dog**

The Secretary reported that a reply to a complaint received from an Area 1 member about a noisy dog had been provided by the Area Representative. The advice given to the resident was that a report should be made to the Borough Council on the report form accessible on the Wokingham website.

**Swallows Meadow**

The Secretary reported that the application to build a supermarket and 43 homes at Swallows Meadow had been considered by the Borough Council on 8 December 2021 and that the application had been refused.

While the decision was welcomed, it was pointed out that the developer had the right of appeal.

**Locksmith**

Barbara Stansfield drew attention to ASAP Locksmiths on Silverdale Road, which was advertised on page 20 of the last MERA Magazine. Barbara stated that having used the locksmiths recently, she found the service to be excellent.

**DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

13 January 2022.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.05pm.