**Minutes of the Maiden Erlegh Residents Association Executive Committee held at 8pm on Thursday 9 January 2020 at the Kenton Road Day Centre, Kenton Road, Earley**

**Present**

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| Colin Mair (Chairman/Area 3) | Peter Woodward (Vice Chairman/Area 1) |
| Pamela Tames (Treasurer) | Steve Feltham (Secretary) |
| Jonathan Brown (Magazine/Editorial Team) | Patricia Brown (Magazine/Editorial Team) |
| Anne Booth (Area 9) | Judy Clark (Area 5) |
| Rosemary Cook (Area 11) | Celia Smith (Area 6) |

**Apologies received**

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| Constantina Ainsworth (Area 7) | James Barr (Area 13) |
| Paul Medlycott (Area 12) | Pamela Roberts (Area 10) |
| Siyu Smith (Area 2) | Tim Smith (Area 2) |
| Barbara Stansfield (Area 8) | Mary Bather (ACER) |
| Caroline Smith (Hillside WBC councillor) |  |

**In the Chair: Colin Mair**

**MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 12 DECEMBER 2019**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2019 were accepted and signed as a correct record.

**MATTERS ARISING**

**Pavement parking**

The Secretary reported that the Property Agents acting for the main property owner of The Parade shops had responded that the footways and road running alongside the telephone box en route to Maiden Erlegh and Aldryngton schools had in fact been adopted by the council, and they provided a plan which clearly showed that this was the case. The council’s officer dealing with the matter, Martin Heath, had also sent the same plan, and therefore it appeared that there was no dispute over its legitimacy. The Secretary had therefore requested that MERA’s request for an extra bollard in front of the telephone box be reconsidered.

**Climate emergency initiatives**

The Secretary confirmed that he had written to the Executive Member for Climate Emergency, Cllr Gregor Murray at Wokingham Borough Council to confirm the additional climate emergency measures that had been put forward by the Executive Committee members since the original correspondence with him. In his response, Cllr Murray advised that the Climate Emergency action plan was ready for launch pending the final stage gate approval processes and proof reading and it was anticipated that it would be released later this month. It included initiatives around tree planting and green rooves.

Cllr Murray agreed with MERA that the number of front gardens being lost to driveways and paving was of concern and he hoped that there would be some relevant local legislation on this in the local plan update and borough design guide when there were launched shortly.

The Secretary also confirmed that he had also completed the consultation document on the council’s website.

**McColls**

The Chairman advised that MERA had been advised by the property agents acting for the owner of the McColls shop that there would be a delay in opening the new FoodBay store due to on-going dilapidation issues. It was confirmed that the new tenant remained eager to move in, but trading was now unlikely to commence before March or April 2020.

**Report for Earley Town Council**

The Secretary reported that January dates were now being canvassed for the first meeting of the Bus Working Party.

**NORA – Relaxation of planning permissions**

The Secretary reported that following representations made to Sir John Redwood MP, a confirmation had been received indicating that he was looking into MERA’s our concerns and he would respond as soon as he received a reply from the relevant minister.

**MERA AGM proposed speaker**

The Chairman reported that he had booked St Nicolas Church to accommodate the expected increased numbers attending the 2020 AGM in May, and the Treasurer agreed to advise the Day Centre that MERA would not require the use of the venue that evening. The saving made would partially offset the cost of hiring the church for the evening.

**Underground electricity cable compensation**

The Secretary reported that he had received a further response from the SSE that answered the questions residents had raised on the matter. Although a reply had not yet been received from Ofgem, the Secretary stated that in his view, MERA’s advice to residents should be to submit a claim directly to the Wayleave Registry and ignore the letter from the Chartered Surveyors. This would enable residents to claim between £150 and £350 without triggering the 20% charge. This was agreed.

**Recycling**

The Secretary confirmed that he had updated the website to include the information received from the Borough Council regarding the need to keep recycled paper and card dry during wet weather. He had also written to the council to suggest that recycling boxes issued to residents were provided with lids in future as a more effective means of keeping the recycling dry. The council responded to confirm that this and other possible solutions were currently being considered.

**REPORTS**

**Chairman’s Report**

There was nothing to report on this occasion.

**Treasurer’s report**

The Treasurer reported that only one further area was outstanding in terms of subscription monies, and only one advertiser had so far failed to pay for the cost of an advertisement placed on their behalf. There was a brief discussion on the need to ensure that subscriptions were collected and passed to the Treasurer earlier in the year to avoid cashflow issues from arising.

**Editorial Team report**

The Newsletter Editor advised that the deadline for articles for the next magazine was 20 February 2020.

**CONSULTATIONS**

The Chairman advised the committee that there were no current consultations taking place to report.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**NORA**

The Secretary reported that three emails had been received from NORA, drawing attention to issues with Airbnb, how planning permission could be obtained to build a house on the green belt and updates on forthcoming legislation. He promised to distribute the information provided to all members with the minutes.

**Reading University**

The Secretary informed the committee that a communication had been received from Sarah Gardner of Reading University regarding the following matters:

1. A new Neighbourhood Complaints Officer had been appointed and would be available between 8.30am and 12.30pm to proactively manage local issues and to deal with complaints more quickly.
2. An information event would be held regarding the proposed 3G all-weather playing pitch on 16 January between 3 and 8pm at the Reading University Sports Park.
3. A safety review had been carried out on the Whiteknights Campus lake and a number of ugrades had been made as a result.
4. A University Community Alcohol Partnership with Reading Borough Council to reduce alcohol harm by students on campus and in the local community had been formed.
5. A Community Leaders’ Forum would be established to bring together community leaders in the area to better understand the university’s impact in local neighbourhoods and improve the way they communicate with community groups.

**NEW ITEMS**

**Smallmead waste disposal facility**

It was reported that Judy Clark had raised her concerns that the Smallmead waste disposal facility would not be recognising the orange permits from January 2020 and that instead, those using the site would have to provide a form of identification to prove where they lived, such as a council tax bill. The concern was that residents had not been advised of this change.

The Secretary advised that he had raised the matter with the council, and they had responded that from February 2020, proof of address would be required to gain access to the facility. They pointed out that this had been the case for the last two years, although the recycling centre had honoured the permits until now. The committee was informed that MERA members would be alerted through the website.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Community Policing Awards 2020**

The Chairman reported that Thames Valley Police was asking for nominations for the 2020 Community Policing Awards, now in its 19th year. These awards provided an opportunity to recognise and nominate the work of officers, staff and volunteers who had made the greatest contribution to their community over the past year. Further details were available from the Secretary on request. The closing date for nominations was 24 February 2020.

**Annual Community Litter Pick**

The Committee was advised that the Localities Team at Wokingham Borough Council was planning its annual Community Litter Pick on the weekend of 27 and 28 March. It was expected that EASI would be co-ordinating this for the Earley area.

Anne Booth thought that the Park Ranger would probably ensure that the Earley litter pick would be arranged to be held on these dates.

**Local Plan Update**

An update on the Local Plan was to be discussed at an Extraordinary Executive meeting of Wokingham Borough Council on 15 January 2020 which, if approved, would be launched for public consultation in February. The council stated that the update would put protection of the countryside and the environment at the heart of its strategic vision for the future. It also took account of the council’s declaration of a climate emergency and the overwhelming public opposition to the government-imposed housing target.

**Application to fell oak tree – planning application 192854**

Anne Booth drew attention to an application that had been made by the owners of a property at Measham Way to remove an oak tree subject to a Tree Preservation Order due to a reported subsidence problem affecting their house. Although not located within Maiden Erlegh, this old tree would be known to residents of the area and would be a loss to the community if the application was successful. It was thought that felling might not be the only option available and that if anyone wished to object to the application, it should be noted that the matter would be discussed at Earley Town Council’s Planning Committee on 14 January 2019. Although responses to the planning application were required by 6 January, it was still possible to send objections at this late stage.

**DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

13 February 2020.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8.50pm.