

EASTCOTE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Notes on 92nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on Tuesday 23rd May 2023 at 7.30 p.m.

St Thomas More Church 32 Field End Road Eastcote

Present: ERA Committee (8), Residents (36) and 2 Councillors

Eastcote Ward: Councillors Nick Denys and Becky Haggar.

Welcome to the 92nd AGM of the ERA. As a residents' association we are very fortunate to have the strong support of our local councillors. The recent Ward boundary changes mean that most of our area is now covered by one ward, Eastcote. We are privileged to have with us this evening Councillors Nick Denys and Becky Haggar who have very kindly agreed to answer questions later this evening. I would also like to welcome our President Catherine Dann and to take this opportunity to thank her for her continued support throughout the year.

Apologies for Absence: ERA Committee (6), Residents (1) and Cllr Ian Edwards.

The meeting opened with a presentation by Keith Newstead, the Station Commander of the Ruislip and Hayes Fire Stations. He spoke about the challenges raised by the extreme temperatures in 2022. He particularly focussed on the period from 19-20 July when a record temperature of 40.2C was recorded at Heathrow – during this 24-hour period, the London Fire Brigade received more than 2000 calls, 740 relating to grass alight. Whilst efforts are being made to reduce global temperature rises, even the most optimistic forecasts indicate that global temperatures will continue to increase over the coming decades. Habitat adaptation will be key to managing the impact of wildfires in the future. These principles are well known and widely used in countries and fire and rescue services that have been exposed to the risks presented by extreme heat.

So, what are we [LFB] doing now?

- Identifying potential wildfire sites and producing plans
- Early engagement with partner agencies such as land managers, forestry services and local authorities.
- Training of personnel in wildfire operations, including national protocols

What can you do as a community?

- Cutting back and removal of unburnt marshland encroaching on residents' back gardens.
- The removal and disposal of all items deemed unnecessary by residents, following fire safety advice, from their gardens to reduce fire loading.
- The cutting back and removal of overgrown front and back gardens.
- Seek home and garden fire safety advice and arranging HSFVs to be conducted by the local station.
- Do not use BBQ's on or near grassland.
- Be extremely careful of how you dispose of smoking materials.
- Community litter picks to remove items that may cause or exacerbate a fire.
- Engage with other residents and local fire stations about what else you can do.

After a fascinating talk, Keith then accepted questions from the audience; there were no shortage of questions but the key messages from Keith's responses were to visit the LFB website (www.london-fire.gov.uk) for further advice and, if concerned, consider requesting a fire inspection which can be booked online. An article based on the above will appear in the Autumn ERA News.

Questions to Councillors

See below at point 11.

Meeting Notes for 91st AGM, held on the 25th May 2022, - no amendments – **accepted by unanimous show of hands.**

Matters Arising - Unaudited accounts were unanimously accepted at the 2022 AGM. These have now been audited and signed off without any further amendment.

Committee Reports, including Treasurers Report and accounts.

Post pandemic ERA has resumed many of its previous activities, albeit in a slightly different way, and continues to engage with other organisations on your behalf. Even with the return to in person meetings the use of online conferencing facilities will undoubtedly carry on as it often allows more people to participate.

In brief, we continue to attend meetings, either virtually: Hillingdon Alliance Residents' Associations (HARA), Residents' Planning Forum (LBH), HS2 Community Engagement, Hillingdon Community Traffic Working Group (HS2/LBH), Eastcote Flood Action Group (EFlag), or in person: Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) Ward Panel, Federation of Metropolitan Users Committee (FoMLUC), RAF Northolt, Friends of Eastcote House Gardens (FEHG). Others hold hybrid meetings: London Green Belt Council, Ruislip Woods Management Advisory Group (RWMAG), or remain in touch via email: Eastcote Conservation Panel (ECP).

Whilst H4All has been very interesting and was very informative as it was also attended by local health professionals, it is not going to continue this regular on-going engagement with community representatives. It will however be producing a Hillingdon Community Voice Newsletter.

This year a survey report about Cavendish/Pine Gardens/Bessingby Recreation Grounds accessibility was carried out and has been submitted to our ward councillors. The idea is that whilst individual improvements are expensive it may be possible to include such improvements whilst other works are in progress.

Recently ERA has introduced a new Agenda subject heading for matters to do with "Walking, Wheeling and Cycling" - wheeling now being the active term to describe the movement of people in wheelchairs and using other personal wheeled mobility aids. The three modes have distinct but overlapping requirements in terms of safety and access. This reporting line will cover areas like footways and dropped kerbs, crossings, paths, alleys and bridges, parks and cycleways, disabled car parking, cycle and buggy parking, accessibility of public amenities and buildings.

We would welcome residents' suggestions of other places where a survey of current conditions would be helpful, and/or any ideas for improving the experience of people walking, wheeling, or cycling in our area. Of course, we hope to be able to feature lots of good news from our council, the NHS and London Assembly about improvement schemes small and large.

We also support The Federation of Metropolitan Line Users Committee (FoMLUC) who liaise with London Underground to improve our local Underground services and minimise the disruptions that regrettably can frequently occur with such a high-density operation and aged infrastructure. TfL has suffered particularly badly financially consequent upon the effects of the pandemic which delayed improvements in infrastructure projects such as upgraded signalling and new rolling stock (on the Piccadilly Line), but these should be in place by about 2025.

HS2 are installing ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) cameras at locations across the borough of Hillingdon to monitor its own lorry movements. These cameras will be configured to only capture data related to HS2 lorries, no other vehicle data will be captured or stored, and the cameras will be clearly marked 'HS2'

In case you need to contact HS2 - details for the HS2 Helpdesk: Freephone: 08081 434 434 Minicom: 08081 456 472
Email: hs2enquiries@hs2.org.uk

The extra 30 acres of Copse Wood purchased by the Council last year was incorporated into the existing National Nature Reserve in time for the announcement to be made on its 25-year anniversary. Whilst this area is not at the present time up to that standard there is an extensive management plan in place to achieve this which is being implemented by RWMAG.

We continue our affiliations with pressure groups that we believe could be useful in preserving and improving the lives of our residents The London Green Belt Council working with CPRE, The Countryside Charity, maintains its vigilance in preventing the erosion of Metropolitan Green Belt land in our communities within our Borough and other local areas with some success.

As always, throughout the year, ERA has continued to review planning applications in our area, to support residents and to submit comments where required. As usual Jackie has worked closely with Lesley Crowcroft, Chair of the Eastcote Conservation Panel, and once again we would like to thank her for all the knowledge and support which she gives.

We never comment on individual residential planning applications as part of this report but, if you would like to discuss something, do come and speak to Jackie Redrup directly today or get in touch with her at any time after the meeting – her contact details are on the ERA website.

There have been no major applications in the ERA area this year – although just outside it, Haydon House is a recent one which has not been determined as yet, and, of interest to the wider community have been applications for the Tudor Lodge Hotel and a nursery on the land at the corner of Fore Street and the High Road Eastcote.

Surface Water Flooding continues to be an issue at the Bridle Road/Field End Road Roundabout. This area is not shown on maps as Critical Drainage so EFlag has not only responded to the Tudor Lodge Planning Application asking that consideration be given to how to deal with the extra surface water so as not to exacerbate the situation but is also asking the council how the map can be updated.

The Eastcote and East Ruislip Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) ceased to exist in May 2022 and was replaced by the Eastcote SNT which merges the Cavendish and part of the Eastcote and East Ruislip SNTs to align with new electoral wards. The Eastcote SNT Ward Panel has met 3 times (about every 4 months). Eastcote remains a low crime area compared to some neighbouring wards and London as a whole, but the priorities for the SNT are drug-related crimes, anti-social behaviour, and motor vehicle crime

This past year has been one of trying to get going again, reconnecting with residents and re-generating membership of ERA. We produced a flyer which, thanks to the efforts of our road stewards, has now been delivered. The aim was to advertise ERA's existence 'Working together on local issues since 1930' to those who may not have known about us and to assure previous members that ERA carries on. It is hoped that 'Your community, your voice. More members, more say.' will encourage more membership, so the flyer also includes a link to our website, and ideally the payment of the annual subscription by direct debit. However, if residents indicate they do not wish to pay by a direct debit, then alternative arrangements can be made: either by requesting our bank details for an electronic transfer or to arrange for someone to receive cash. Over the last few years our team of road stewards has reduced considerably so now we have an even longer list of roads where we simply don't have the people to call on each property to collect subscriptions. Where there is a Steward still operating, many are happy to do as previously and collect door to door, but not all want to, so we do need to encourage alternative means of receiving annual subscriptions. This does not mean ERA doesn't want to have Road Stewards - far from it - we continue to believe that being able to have direct contact with representatives from each road in our area is very important in keeping in touch with what is going on locally and ensuring that 'Working together on local issues' continues. If you would like to become a Road Stewards, please do speak with any Committee member in person or mail or phone using the contact details on our website. We really do want to grow our team. After an absence of two years, we were once again able to hold a lovely afternoon tea for our Stewards on 22nd September in The Stables at Eastcote House Gardens. It was a really pleasant afternoon, and everyone enjoyed being able to meet-up again and discuss how we could "get going again" on generating membership. We intend to have another this Summer.

Last summer at FEHG Summer Picnic ERA had a stand and many people came up to see us and say how nice it was to us again. We are going again this year and if any road stewards would like to be on the stand and talk to residents, they would be very welcome. Road Stewards were also invited to join committee members on two tours of HS2 sites. One to the SCS West Ruislip Portal site where we were allowed on site and to see the layout from the top of the Office building and one to the Align South Portal and Colne Valley Viaduct site where we were taken by minibus to view the Chiltern Tunnel and see the Viaduct under construction. The annual subscription currently remains at a nominal £2 per household. For ERA to be able to continue to act on behalf of the community we do need to have the backing of a large membership. So, thank you to each ERA member for paying your subscription and thank you to our Road Stewards - your support is very much appreciated.

ERA is still searching for someone to produce our newsletter and also someone to help improve the look of our website – I am told this is not overly technical you just need to be able to use word and presumably have some idea of layout.

Finally, we would like to thank the Friends of Eastcote House Gardens for all they do to maintain these beautiful gardens for us the local community to enjoy. Changes within the Council and cutbacks has resulted in them having to take on more, for example: liaison with contractors clearing blocked sewers and the internal cleaning of the Dovecote by a cleaning company. The programme of Dovecote openings and Plant and Book Sales for the summer is on the Eastcote House Gardens website as well as Heritage Day, which is being held on the 10th of September, as part of Hillingdon Heritage week, and will include a Classic Car Show which is currently being organised.

The Mayor of Hillingdon will be in attending this year's Summer Picnic in Eastcote House Gardens which will be held on the 10th of June. Preparations are going according to plan and all pitches have now been booked by stall holders. Please go along, hopefully it will be a sunny day, so take a picnic, enjoy your surroundings and support FEHG.

Treasurer's Report – 22/23 Accounts Audited

Whilst we collected slightly more this year, an extra £300, we also spent more as we resumed some face-to-face meetings including £200 Hall Hire for both last year's AGM and Afternoon Tea, and photocopying costs of £100 for this year and those not included the previous year. There were also additional costs from producing the flyer of £400 and £200 to buy bunting and an ERA logo flag to advertise our pitch at events.

We would like to thank St Thomas More Church for allowing us to use the hire fee from the Open Forum meeting which had to be cancelled last minute for tonight's AGM meeting and Gawain Cox for hosting our website free of charge for last year. Overall, we ended up £1000 in deficit. Fortunately, the cash position remains very healthy, and ERA has now opened a community account at NatWest.

Now that we all have a better idea of how to protect ourselves from covid etc it is hoped that we will be able to return to pre pandemic mode and that the collection of more subscriptions will mean we can resume making small donations to local groups. For the forthcoming year we have already taken advantage of the Big Give which matches donations and given £50 to Colne Valley Regional Park and in appreciation of tonight's guest speaker £50 to The London Fire Brigade Welfare Fund.

Questions about reports

1. Treasurers Report and accounts – none

Treasurers Report and accounts – unanimously accepted.

2. Committee reports - none

Committee Reports - unanimously accepted.

President Dann gave a short appreciation of the outgoing chair's contributions during her 7 years as Chair. This was followed by the presentation of a gift from the Committee.

Committee Nominations were circulated ahead of meeting (copy on request from chair@eastcotera.co.uk).

1. Auditor re-elected - unanimously accepted.

2. In addition to the Chair, 1 other member has resigned, and we thank them for their time on the committee.

The rest of the Officers and the current Committee members have all very kindly agreed to stand for re-election to their present roles - unanimously accepted.

Thank you to those responsible for the catering, for keeping our noticeboards looking smart and up to date and to the Road Stewards.

President Dann gave a short statement about the future of ERA and emphasised the current vacancies in the Committee (Chair, Secretary and Newsletter Editor). She made a stirring plea for residents to come forward and find out what they could do to help the Committee and ensure the future viability of ERA.

Questions to Councillors

1. Question – re Allotments on Field End Road

Last year, the Council took over responsibility for letting vacant plots on this and other allotments from volunteer plot holders. Since then, many plots on Field End remain vacant. Would it be possible to reinstate the former arrangement of having plots let by volunteer plot holders, which ensured that plots were relet as soon as they became vacant?

Answer: Big change in recent council organisation: Volunteer system not always working well.

There is also a serious water leak on the site which exploratory works have failed to resolve. Cllr BH will ask about the water leak issue.

2. Question - Filter 'green arrow' at right turn between FER & Elm Avenue

I'd like to take the opportunity to ask the councillors about the traffic lights at the crossroads near the station. I'd like to see a filter or 'green arrow' giving traffic turning right from Field End Road into Elm Avenue more time to make the turn safely. At present it's hazardous.

Answer: This has come up before. Cllr BH will follow up - post meeting response - previously done survey and found that it would cause more of a tailback than current system.

3. Question - Removal of Glass Bottle Banks

There has been correspondence between a resident and Cllr Denis copied to an ERA committee member (Jackie Redrup). The outcome seems to be that Bottle Banks will be removed throughout the Borough – please can we let those present at the AGM know – when is this to be enacted and when will all borough residents be notified?

Answer: Cost of servicing has increased, and they are not being used as much as they were. Council will speak to businesses about how to deal with their waste. Also, problems with getting the company responsible to empty the bottle banks.

Resident suggested different uses of bottles from bottle banks versus household recycling. Cllr ND will look into this.

Answer: "When the recycling bags are collected, they are taken to Harefield tip, and then transferred to a Material Recovery Facility (MRF) which is owned by Biffa. They use high-tech automated systems which separate all the different materials, to ensure they are all recycled correctly. This was the same process for our bottle banks. (Other councils also use this site.)"

Recycling bags available from Library – problem with deliveries from Council. **Answer:** Cllr BH post meeting response - supply back to normal.

4. Question - Lime Grove – speeding scooters/mopeds

The only point we would like to make is: Since the lighter evenings are here, we have seen a sharp increase in speeding scooters/mopeds through Lime Grove into the Pembroke Estate

Answer: Police will not chase scooters because of risk but can impound scooters or use ASB approach. If attached to particular shop can have implications for licensing. Pointed out that Halfords are selling them even though it is illegal to use them – Cllr ND suggests writing to local MP.

Raised with David Simmonds MP at Open Forum.

Safety concerns over Deliveroo drivers.

Action: Cllr ND will speak to ASB team and local police to raise this issue (preventative measures).

5. Question - Trees in Dean Croft Road

Why have two large trees had all their branches cut off recently. This is the worst possible time to do this – the habitat for countless wildlife has gone for the coming year and the cooling effect of leaf cover and evaporation in foreseeable extreme heatwaves will not be provided by the remaining foliage.

Answer: Cllr ND post meeting response - The Lime trees outside 74/76 Deane Croft Road were pollarded as part of tree management relating to a proven insurance claim for damage. Tree officers told me that pollarding a Lime is an appropriate management technique which the tree will quickly recover from with no negative effects.

6. Questions outstanding from 2022 AGM

Questions 3,4 & 5 – Re wilding/wildflower areas – details of specific areas were to be provided – what is being planted this year?

Question 12 – Large tree outside house in Lime Grove pushing over wall.

Further clarification from Cllr ND after the meeting: “The Lime tree was pollarded as part of tree management programme on 23/2/2023.”

Question 13 - Problems over availability of allotments – some answers given in 2022 but has been recent detailed update from council officer, Head of Green Spaces – **see Question 1.**

AOB

Cllr BH announced two open consultations that the Council are conducting. Details are at

<https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/article/11002/Family-hub-and-early-years-nurseries-consultation> and

<https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/youth-offer-strategy>.

There was a question about planning applications for Tudor Lodge. JR reported that two small applications had been approved but the more contentious application for a large outside dining facility (142 covers) had been declined.

Dates for future meetings are on our notice boards and website. Our next committee meeting in Thomas More Hall is on 28th June at 7.30.

Chair reminded attendees about the Eastcote House Gardens picnic on 10th June which as always will be a fun day for all and ERA will have a stall in the stables so do come and say hello and encourage your neighbours to do the same.

Chair thanked all the committee members for their part in making this evening run smoothly and most importantly the residents for coming out, for being involved and showing their support.