

# EASTCOTE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

## Notes on 90th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held

Tuesday 1st June 2021, at 7.30 p.m. by Zoom

**Present:** ERA Committee (15links), Residents 11(8links). and 5 Councillors  
Cavendish Ward: Councillors Teji Barnes, Eddie Lavery, and Heena Makwana.  
Eastcote & East Ruislip Ward: Councillors Ian Edwards, and Becky Haggar.

1. **Welcome.** Due to social distancing requirements of the Covid19 pandemic ERA is again conducting it's AGM using Zoom. As a residents' association we are very fortunate to have the strong support of our local councillors. We are privileged to have some of them with us this evening: Cllrs Eddie Lavery, **Teji Barnes**, and Heena Makwana (Cavendish) and Cllrs Ian Edwards, and Becky Haggar (Eastcote & East Ruislip).

ERA thanked President, Catherine Dann for her continued support throughout the year.

2. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr Nick Denys and 7 residents, one of whom sent 'good wishes for the meeting and thanks for your hard work for Eastcote residents'.

3. **Meeting Notes for 89<sup>th</sup> AGM**, which was held in December 2020, - no amendments – **accepted by show of hands.**

### **Committee Reports, including Treasurers Report and accounts.**

Despite the pandemic ERA has managed to continue to engage with other organisations on your behalf. The committee has taken it all in their stride and carried on under very challenging circumstances.

In brief, we continued to attend meetings, many of which are now virtual: HARA (Hillingdon Alliance Residents' Associations), HS2 Community Engagement, Hillingdon Community Traffic Working Group (HS2/LBH), Residents' Planning Forum (LBH), Ruislip Woods Management Advisory Group (RWMAG), SNT Ward Panels and London Green Belt Council

and attended some new ones: Eastcote Flood Action Group and H4ALL, which was very interesting and informative as it was also attended by local health professionals. It is not known if this meeting was set up purely to deal with covid or if it is intended to become a regular on-going engagement with residents, in which case ERA will need a representative.

Others remain in touch via email: Eastcote Conservation Panel, Friends of Eastcote House Gardens,

and some have deferred their meetings until we are able to meet again in person: Federation of Metropolitan Users Committee (FOMLUC) hopes to meet soon and RAF Northolt in October.

UKPN have now finished the power supply works and the repaired road surfaces will be signed off in due course by the council. The Chair thanked the road stewards and residents along the route, who were part of the subcommittee, for their efforts passing on information, and, taking the time when necessary to contact the HS2 Helpdesk with their queries.

HS2 main works have now started and there is a virtual map showing where current works are taking place, so if you are heading through South Ruislip or to the tip for example you may wish to check on current road closures/traffic management, etc. Follow the link: <https://www.hs2.org.uk/in-your-area/map/-12/51.5792/-0.4183/searchLat=51.582139&searchLng=-0.400863&searchRad=8046> to see where work is being done. Click on the relevant hard hat symbol and the side bar will tell you all about it. There are then further links with more information.

Some of the footpaths, including the Celandine Way, are in the process of being temporarily diverted whilst work takes place around Ruislip Golf Course/Harvil Road area. You can find and check the progress of these diversions by using the following link:

<https://hs2inhilligdon.commonplace.is/proposals/construction-traffic-and-changes-to-footpaths>

In case you need to contact HS2 I have included details for the HS2 Helpdesk: Freephone: 08081 434 434 Minicom: 08081 456 472 Email: [hs2enquiries@hs2.org.uk](mailto:hs2enquiries@hs2.org.uk)

On a cheerier note, it was uplifting to see the trees planted by ERA in conjunction with the Faiths Forum for London next to the War Memorial, in Bessingby Park and last year at Newnham School come into leaf and blossom. Unfortunately, 1 in Bessingby Park did not survive this last winter. It has been reported to the council who have added a replacement to the planting list for the coming season.

The Elm Tree funded by ERA to replace the felled, cracked Willow on Forge Green has been planted.

The tree at the corner of Deane Croft Road and Field End Road to mark the end of the Eastcote Town Centre Improvement Scheme, has been delayed, so it is hoped, covid restrictions allowing, that it may be possible to ask the Mayor to plant it as originally planned. The Council recently purchased an extra 30 acres of Copse Wood. This is the triangle of land at the north end of the wood bordering Ducks Hill Road, and it is hoped that it can be incorporated into the existing National Nature Reserve in time for its 25-year anniversary. The Local Councillors have been asked to pursue this.

RWMAG are looking into the possibility of creating new ponds within the Ruislip Woods, some of which may be seasonal, to help stop the flow of surface water into surrounding residential areas.

The Eastcote Flood Action Group has started meeting regularly and is achieving some success identifying areas of concern, looking for the causes, encouraging and supporting residents to report incidents, and, looking for solutions. The group now has an email list of 18 Residents representing many different problems.

One thing that has become obvious is the need to report surface water flooding. This is very tedious as it is necessary to fill in the sewer flooding questionnaire from Thames Water to record **every** single event. Questionnaire link:

<https://www.thameswater.co.uk/media-library/home/help/emergencies/flooding/sewer-flooding-questionnaire.pdf> In 2 instances

Thames Water turning up to clear the drains has made a noticeable difference. Both involved fat in varying quantities and an article on fatbergs and how to avoid them, has been written ready for when we return to producing a newsletter.

The meetings have covered diverse topics such as critical drainage, for which there is a Surface water flood risk map on the council website <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/long-term-flood-risk/map> (change drop down list to Flood Risk from Surface Water – Extent of flooding), paving of front and now increasingly rear gardens, loss of mature trees, whether soakaways are appropriate in our local soil to name but a few.

The Chairperson thanked everyone in this group for taking the time to write letters and follow up on issues to the benefit of not only themselves but also their neighbours.

**Please note:** To create a safe space for residents to discuss their issues the information around specific locations given at meetings and in the EFlag meeting notes are treated as confidential, so please encourage any local residents with flooding issues to come forward and join the group.

The Council has followed up its Climate Emergency Declaration early last year by issuing a draft Strategic Climate Change Action Plan and offering it for consultation. The Plan itself, and instructions on how to respond to the consultation, can be found on the Council website at <https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/article/7217/Climate-change-consultation>.

There is an online survey divided into seven Themes: Community Leadership, The Council's Own Operations, Building Better Places, Using Clean and Green Energy, Waste Management, Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation, and Carbon Offsetting. For each one, you are asked to respond yes or no to the questions: 'Is our approach clear?' and 'Have we missed anything?' There is then a suggestions/comments box for each Theme. It becomes a bit difficult if you want to say something that doesn't fit easily into one of those themes, so there is an option to compile your own response and email it in. The Council are clear that the Plan is the first step in a process. Here's a brief quote from the Plan: *"Responding to the climate emergency requires a collaborative effort from everyone. It is therefore important that there is full engagement. It is also important to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to present their ideas and their experiences to ensure that the Council is progressing in the right direction."*

However urgent you think the climate crisis is, it's probably way more urgent than that. So please respond to the consultation by 20 June, so that the Council has a strong mandate for real transformative action.

Questions have been raised about the dry mixed recycling, or what goes into the transparent bags. It seems that what you can recycle is explained pretty well by the Council, but lots of questions remain about what you can't recycle, especially when you think you can. The figures received from Cllr Edwards last year revealed that, of the waste collected as dry mixed recycling, 13.4% was identified as "residual waste", and it's difficult to interpret this as anything other than stuff that was put into recycling bags but shouldn't have been. It is hoped that a further set of questions for our Councillors will provide better information to Eastcote residents.

The Eastcote Conservation Panel meetings, as with most other groups, ended abruptly in March 2020. However, the panel has kept in contact, via email, and have been kept busy with numerous planning matters within the Conservation Areas and Eastcote Shopping Parade.

The Government is bringing in Draconian changes to the Planning System, which are requiring hours of study to understand them all. The whittling away of the Green Belt is also proposed. The Panel will make strong objections to any consultations on matters that will destroy the Green Belt and our town and village. Once these areas have been lost, they can never be reclaimed.

A Litter Pick in Eastcote Town centre that had to be cancelled last year will hopefully, Covid conditions allowing, go ahead on June 19<sup>th</sup> 10am - 12 noon.

The War Memorial Garden caused a sensation in the spring with the fantastic planting displays. Full credit to the Ground Maintenance Team, at Hillingdon Council. Royal British Legion Eastcote Branch, have, as far as conditions allowed, continued to fund raise and hold restricted commemorations at the War Memorial.

Eastcote Horticultural Society have held two virtual flower shows during lockdown and have managed to keep the trading hut working for the benefit of members.

All volunteers deserve acknowledgement for carrying on and supporting the community throughout a very difficult year.

The Friends of Eastcote House Gardens group are hoping to resume both Book and Plant sales after June 21<sup>st</sup>.

The Walled Garden, Long Meadow, and the rest of the Park, have been entered into London in Bloom again this year.

Arrangements are going ahead for the Classic Car Show and Fayre on September 19<sup>th</sup> as a final event during Hillingdon Heritage Week.

ERA would like to thank The Friends of Eastcote House Gardens who have continued to work albeit with a reduced number of volunteers, socially distanced of course, to keep the gardens looking good, for the benefit of the community.

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

The last year has seen a plethora of government changes and consultations on many areas of the planning regulations and the planning process – Lesley and I have monitored these closely and submitted our views where allowed. The main document was something called Planning for the Future and there have also been other initiatives which are now already in place – further changes to extend permitted development rights & changes to the classes used for retail and other commercial properties to name but 2. These are very time consuming to review and it is clear that we will be continuing to work on them for some time to come and, indeed, on further anticipated planning changes as well.

We have also attended regular on-line resident association meetings on planning issues with the Council and with David Simmonds MP.

The London Green Belt Council took some time to adapt to restrictions imposed by Covid but eventually embraced Zoom and has held two meetings in the past 15 months or so; it is hoped that the next meeting planned for July can be "in person". However, much work has gone on behind the scenes with the active assistance of CPRE, The Countryside Charity (formerly known as the Campaign to Protect Rural England) London and local branches.

Threats to London Metropolitan Green Belt Land continue particularly following the publication of the London Plan but also in the Home Counties. There are no threats current in the ERA area of interest but there are others on our doorstep in Harrow Weald and Northwood Hills where opposition to such schemes need our support.

The Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) Ward Panel aims to meet about every three months. After a hiatus caused by the onset of COVID-19, there were three virtual meetings over the last year (October 2020, February 2021, and May 2021) and one e-mail discussion (June 2020). Despite some questions over the accuracy of some of the crime statistics for the Ward, this remains a relatively low crime area (compared to the Borough and London more generally). Over the last three months there have been increases in the number of burglaries and motor vehicle crimes – please be vigilant and follow the advice that is published in the SNT newsletter which is posted on the ERA website.

Residents have raised concerns over the dangerous use of e-scooters on public thoroughfares – the SNT are aware of this problem but are also having difficulty in deciding on a safe and proportionate response.

Under the new regime for Ward Panels, the Ward has three priority areas for the SNT which can be changed every quarter. One of the priorities is selected by the SNT and the other two by the Ward Panel. The current priorities for our Ward are drug-related crime; burglary; and motor vehicle crime.

If you are not already signed up for the Online Watch Link ([owl.co.uk/met](http://owl.co.uk/met)) please consider doing so – it is a source of much valuable information. If you have your own CCTV, you also have the option of joining CCTV Watch too – see the OWL website.

FOMLUC has not met at all since the first lockdown although a ZOOM meeting for members representatives only is planned for 15 June 2021. Local public transport services are gradually improving, having been severely disrupted by the consequences of Covid over the past 15 months or so. Ridership which dropped to as much as 10% only of pre Covid levels has increased substantially in recent weeks to about 60%. It remains to be seen if demand levels will further increase once restrictions are fully lifted - hopefully after 21 June 2021. All this has of course had a drastic effect on TfL revenue streams and Government Financial support, whilst welcome (and indeed absolutely necessary) has been almost on a hand to mouth basis. As reported in the transport industry press, financial constraints have had a major effect on the timetable for the new Underground signalling system and whilst relatively small sections in central London have received it during the pandemic era, there is now no final completion date announced and the sections west of Barons Court are postponed indefinitely although the outer sections of the Metropolitan Line will eventually be equipped coupled with colour light signalling. The Metropolitan Line service was interrupted for a total of four separate hours over the bank holiday weekend due to a shortage of Control Staff during meal break times.

Following announcements made today: Driverless trains planned for Piccadilly and, Waterloo and City lines. Retail Price Index related fares increase from 1 January 2022

The pandemic has meant that our much-valued band of Road Stewards have been unable to collect ERA subscriptions at the door. ERA cannot operate without receiving members' subscriptions, so the experience of the past year has demonstrated how vital it is for to "move with the times" and look at receiving our annual subscription by direct banking.

So, we want to ask our members, where they can, to sign up to direct debit payments to get some funds coming in and, also to remove as much as possible the need for Stewards to collect cash. We are preparing a flyer which in the next few months will be delivered by a third party to all Eastcote households to ask members to pay in this way and encourage signing up to weekly news emails. The flyer will try to recruit further membership interest in ERA as well as reinstate our previous members.

We are pulling together lists of cash paying members from 2019 (i.e. latest), those who currently pay by direct debit and those who have signed up to receive weekly news emails. Not all our members are on the weekly emails list which has made communicating directly with them very difficult especially as the printing of Newsletters was halted as we were unable to do doorstep deliveries. Many appreciative thanks go to all our Stewards who are "waiting in the wings" for the time when a printed newsletter will be available and doorstep communication with our members can be resumed. Our best wishes to all of you.

Looking forward ERA will probably hold a variety of meetings, maybe Zoom during the winter months, Hall meetings during the warmer months, when opening the windows for increased ventilation won't require coats, and Hybrid meetings where residents can attend either in person or by zoom for the AGM and Open Forum.

#### 4.2 Treasurer's Report - 20/21 Accounts (unaudited)

For obvious reasons door – to door collections ceased in March 2020 and this has severely impacted the income for this last year. Correspondingly certain of ERAs expenses naturally fell and we consciously reduced others.

The accounts show a deficit of £599 which actually compares favourably to 19/20 where we reported a deficit of £964, which was due to the timing of the first lockdown. ERA was badly impacted by loss of subscription income yet had already incurred all its expenses for that year. Thank you to both St Thomas More and St Lawrence church for readily refunding the prepaid hall rent. This amounted to almost £300.

Fortunately, the ERA has a healthy cash position and therefore able to continue its activities in the foreseeable future.

Treasurers Report including unaudited accounts

#### 5. Questions about reports

1. Treasurers Report - none

2. Treasurers Report - **accepted by a show of hands.**

3. Unaudited accounts - **accepted by a show of hands.**

4. Committee reports

Q1. Is Ruislip Golf Club Green Belt? – strictly speaking this is outside ERA area. There is a map on The London Green Belt Council Website HS2 will reinstate the Golf course and add biodiverse landscaping along trainline when works completed. Cllr EL: Golf course planning application to be made shortly.

Q2. Why lack of staffing on TFL – again out of our area but assume due to illness.

Committee Reports - **accepted by a show of hands.**

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

1. Chairperson to continue - **accepted by a show of hands**

2. The current committee members very kindly offered their services until such time as it is possible to reconvene a public meeting - **accepted by a show of hands**

The Chairperson thanked, on behalf of the local residents, all of the dedicated committee members who have continued to fulfil their roles, undaunted by the new need to embrace technology, and have continued to put in a lot of time and effort looking after the interests of, and, supporting Eastcote Residents'. A lot of this is behind the scenes, answering a diverse range of queries and pointing people in the right direction. Thank you.

#### 7. New Resident issues.

1. Can anything be done about the flooding, which occurs whenever there is heavy rain, at the Southern entrance to the **(Cavendish)** facilities? Whilst vehicles can drive through the water, pedestrian struggle to keep their feet dry.

Response: Invited to join the next EFlag meeting 29<sup>th</sup> June.

2. Concern was raised about the footpath to the South side of Cavendish along which there are many overgrown bushes, trees, and undergrowth.

Response: Cllr TB will visit to inspect the tree. And pursue this matter

#### 8. Chairperson congratulated Councillor Ian Edwards, on becoming the new leader of the council, Councillor Becky Haggar who was recently appointed Deputy Mayor for the coming year and Councillor Eddie Lavery, who has been appointed Cabinet member for Environment, Housing and Regeneration. - none

**Dates for future meetings** which will continue by zoom are Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> July, Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> August, Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> September and will be put on the Events Calendar.

Chairman thanked everyone for their continued support and for attending the meeting.