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Minutes of Community Meeting Wednesday 18 October, 2023 @ 7.45pm

Approval of Minutes, meeting 19 July 2023

Minutes of the July 2023 EWVA community meeting were approved unanimously.

Diary Update – Helen Branscombe-Davies (Secretary)

Helen advised that although no organised community activities have taken place, EWVA has been active in bringing local information and news to the community via social media and village notice boards. EWVA social media post statistics show: -

- 1.6K Facebook users reached in last 90 days, up 1% on previous 90 days
 - 71 Facebook engagements, up 6% on previous period
 - 30% increased Instagram reach
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Thames Valley Police Update - PCSO Liz Davidson

Liz advised that reported crime for Eton Wick had been very low for the previous month.

Leaving car doors unlocked had led to several thefts of loose cash and small items, mainly in the Bunces Close area. One residential burglary, one car driving erratically, and one incidence of criminal damage reported. No reports in the last month of bicycle thefts or drug dealing.

A community member reported drug dealing on the dirt track at the rear of Haywards Mead, near the Scout Hut, and on the benches down by the Thames. Liz stressed the importance of reporting to the police as soon as possible so that CCTV can be focused on the areas to provide evidence to the police on the activity and the individuals involved.

Cllr Mark Wilson advised that he would be visiting the Tinker Lane CCTV monitoring station shortly and would review coverage for Eton Wick.

A community member reported a car or van in the football club car park that had not moved for 2-3 months. Another car with no tax for 4+ years had also appeared and not moved. A further vehicle, with expired tax and MOT, had recently appeared parked by the school. The resident will provide all details to the police.

An item of **Any Other Business** was moved up the agenda to group it with the police update so that PCSO Davidson had the opportunity to respond to any matters raised.

Eton Wick Security Group – John Connor

John explained to the meeting why he had started the EW Security Group. He continued with the message that a strong and alert community was an important deterrent to crime, and he outlined his views on how residents could protect their homes and property giving the example of going out onto the street to deter person(s) acting suspiciously by a neighbour's house. A lengthy discussion then took place. PCSO Davidson stressed the importance of reporting all suspicious and/or criminal activity as soon as possible and providing as much information as possible in the report so that it could be followed up, CCTV checked, etc. Liz advised that no one should put themselves at risk by confronting a perpetrator of crime or other antisocial or criminal behaviour.

One community member asked if the proposal was to form a Neighbourhood Watch, and another asked if there was currently an active Neighbourhood Watch in Eton Wick. The answer to both queries was no. EWVA Secretary, Helen, noted that EWVA would not be supportive of a vigilante type group and of residents being encouraged to put themselves at risk. Several community members also stressed the importance of staying safe and not putting yourself at risk.

Community members are strongly encouraged to report all crime, suspected crime, or suspicious activity to the police as soon as possible, giving as full information as possible. As several attendees asked about Neighbourhood Watch this will be investigated.

RBWM Update – Cllr Mark Wilson and Cllr Julian Tisi

- **Crime** – Following the police/security discussion, Cllr Wilson advised that crime was the top priority topic raised by residents of Eton Wick when he was talking to community members in the run up to the local elections in May 2023. It was therefore a top priority for the Cllrs to help the community improve the situation in Eton Wick. Helen Branscombe-Davies asked if additional CCTV coverage would be possible for Eton Wick and Cllr Wilson advised that he would check on existing camera coverage. Malcolm Leach, Mayor of Eton and Eton Wick, advised that it is possible to apply for additional CCTV installations and that he would supply EWVA with information on how to apply.
- **Flooding and Thames Water** – Cllr Wilson explained that he and his colleague Cllr Devon Davies (not present at the meeting) were actively involved with Eton Wick Waterways Group and working with all the major stakeholders. Cllr Wilson explained that there are many parties involved; three different local authorities, Landowners, Thames Water, Environment Agency, and EWWG who represent and support our riparian landowners and our community as a whole as well as provide vital weed clearance work with local volunteers.
- **Bell Lane Shops** – Cllr Wilson advised that the paving outside Bell Lane shops was due to be completed by end October 2023. He added that there were some utility works planned (gas) for the area. A community member asked if that included the plant/flower beds and Cllr Wilson responded yes, that was his understanding.

- **Parking** – Cllr Wilson advised that parking issues on Bell Lane, Stockdales, Colenorton, and by the shops on Eton Wick Road were still recognised as hot spots requiring improvement, however the budget is very restricted at this time.
- **EV Charging** – A community member asked if there are plans to install electric vehicle charging points in the village. An Eton Town Councillor responded that ETC had tried to install EV charging points a few years ago but RBWM had refused permission due to an inability to run electricity to the identified area. A representative from the Village Hall Committee added that they had looked into this also. During the discussion it was noted that lots of EW residents do not have off street parking and that an absence of public charging points in the village is a barrier to driving an electric vehicle.
- **Pedestrian Crossing** – A community member raised the issue of the traffic light controlled pedestrian crossing in the village centre, that it keeps failing, and that it is not used correctly which is a significant safety hazard. During the lengthy discussion that followed there was unanimous agreement from attendees that it was safer to return to a standard zebra crossing than to have the current traffic light controlled crossing. The white lines are showing through and cars often stop to allow people to cross without waiting for a red light (when they are working) and people often just cross without pushing the button. Cllr Wilson advised that he would speak to highways.
- **RBWM Financial Situation** – Cllr Tisi reassured the attendees that the council was not bankrupt, and was working to resolve the current financial challenges. Some issues were countrywide and related to all councils, eg interest rates, but some are specific to RBWM and date back many years. Tightening of belts has been in place since 2020 and now, post Covid grants, the debt needs to be serviced.
- **Bus Service** – Cllr Wilson advised that the No.15 bus has been kept operational as it is recognised as an important service for EW residents, linking EW, Eton, and Slough.
- **Secure Cycle Parking** – Cllr Wilson informed that a new secure cycle parking facility is now in place by Windsor Leisure Centre and The Windsor Boy's School. A community member commented that it was now much safer for boys cycling the school.
- **Crown Farm** – Cllr Wilson advised he had spoken to Planning Enforcement the week before the meeting regarding the barn and the site advertised to rent for a service they do not have any planning permission for. No further news as yet.
- **Eton Wick Library** – Cllr Wilson informed that RBWM are working to secure a lease covering the Library. Liabilities of each party are being reviewed and agreement is not yet in place. In response to a resident query regarding the possibility of a mobile library in the interim, Cllr Wilson responded that unfortunately the mobile library service no longer exists.

Eton Town Council Update (incl. Planning) – Linda Tarbox, Eton Town Council

Linda advised some breaking news that the planning application to convert the Methodist Chapel on Alma Road might be refused, adding that ETC will investigate objections to this application so that these could possibly be challenged.

Linda informed that ETC are still trying to get visibility of the contract between RBWM and Tivolo regarding grounds maintenance. Cllr Wilson advised that the contract was for 10.5 years, with 3.5 years

remaining. New information from sight of the contract at RBWM, but not yet by ETC, appears to show that the verges are cut when they reach a specified length and not X number times a year as previously thought. Excuses for the terrible service and failure to cut the grass when needed are received, for example the grass was too long, too wet, or too dry! RBWM are still working to improve the service provided by Tivoli.

Community members were reminded that using the Report-It tool on the RBWM website is the most effective way to get things resolved and there are many categories in which you can report issues including potholes, overgrown hedges, street lighting, traffic lights, blocked drains etc.

Malcolm Leach, Mayor of Eton and Eton Wick, informed that ETC were hoping to get the plant borders alongside the parade of shops from the Jade Garden to the charity shop tidied up before Remembrance Day and the placing of wreaths on the village war memorial. ETC were intending to take over maintenance of these plant beds from RBWM with the aim of keeping them tidy and attractive.

Community members were advised that regular use of the Sports Hall by the archery clubs was now possible again, thanks to an agreement with the Eton Wick Football & Social Club for the archers to use the toilet facilities at the club due to the facilities on the ground floor of the village hall being locked and not available.

Other news shared was that the ETC office on Eton High Street will be redecorated and offered for hire as a meeting space to generate funds to be put back into the community. Lindsay Pardoe, Village Hall Committee, said that they would signpost people who wanted meeting space to ETC.

Audit of EW parks had been undertaken earlier on the day of the community meeting, with all equipment checked for safety. Repainting had recently taken place and the parks were now looking much better.

Members of the Village Hall Committee advised that the Knit & Natter group could use the small hall in the Village Hall (upstairs) if wished.

Eton Wick First School – Karen Waller, Head Teacher

Karen advised that there was an Open Day for the 2024 intake taking place on 14 November 2023, and that if anyone wished to book an appointment to be shown around the school to contact the school office to organise.



Eton Wick Waterways Group (EWWG) Update – Laura Regazzacci

Laura thanked the RBWM Cllrs for stepping in and helping push things through. Explaining that for many years our village volunteers have carried out most of the weed clearance, however in 2022 Thames Water did everything at their expense as part of a survey. Our volunteers work on behalf of riparian residents, and many homeowners with a river boundary have spent a significant amount of their own money building up their banks over the years to protect their homes from flooding. The

volunteers have cleared the weed from the Boveney along Princes Close, Haywards Mead, Queens Road Cornwall Close, Tilstone Close and Colenorton Crescent twice this year, but not on the upper part of the Roundmoor by wetlands because this is landowners' responsibility (Palmer Estate/Eton College). Our volunteers have noticed a significant build up of silt, and increasing amounts of rubble on the stream bed along Dorney Common where the bank has been washed into the stream, and cattle breaking down the bank to gain access to drink.

Laura advised that the promised pipeline appears delayed, and we have no idea when/if this will go ahead. The Environment Agency must recognise that the north of the village is at risk of flooding in the event of prolonged storm conditions if the flow of the Roundmoor from the treatment works to the Thames is not significantly improved.

ETC is collaborating with Eton College to organise contractors to cut the weeds again this year between the Thames Confluence and Princes Close, as well as cutting reeds back along parts of Tilstone Close. At the time of this meeting this work has still not been contracted, which is of great concern.

info@etonwickwaterwaysgroup.org

Environment Agency hotline – 0800 807060

Thames Water hotline – 0800 316 9800

Eton Wick Youth Club (EWYC) Update – Helen Branscombe-Davies, EWYC Secretary



Helen thanked Karen Waller, EWFS, for the generosity and helpfulness extended in allowing the Youth Club to meet at the school whilst the village hall was not available. Helen advised that the last couple of weeks had been cancelled due to lack of sufficient adult volunteers due to illness. Plus, the youth leader who had helped build the club from relaunch in autumn 2022 had decided to move on. Whilst the search had commenced for a replacement youth leader, EWYC are investigating the option to run the club with only our experienced, DBS checked volunteers. The club hoped to reopen asap following half term.

A Halloween Party was planned for Tuesday 24 October in the Village Hall.

ewyc-committee@outlook.com

Finance Update – Claire Taylor, EWVA Treasurer

Claire advised that the EWVA website subscription had been renewed, and that otherwise there had been no movement since the presentation to the July 2023 community meeting.

Claire informed that at a recent EWVA Committee meeting she had announced her intention to stand down from the role of Treasurer, a role that had grown to cover three village groups - EWVA, EWWG, and EWYC - and which she had undertaken for the past six years. Helen thanked Claire for her great service to the village over many years.

Helen advised that EWVA are asking for a volunteer to take on the role of Treasurer. Local resident Alison Hill advised that she had been Treasurer for the local cub scouts for a number of years and was happy to put herself forward for the role. Alison's nomination was warmly received by the meeting.

Any Other Business

- **Security Group** – This was covered earlier in the meeting, following the Police update.
- **Nominations for Treasurer** – Covered as part of the Treasury update.
- **Change of EWVA meeting frequency and format** – Helen advised that the committee had discussed ways in which to improve the community meetings and it was proposed to hold more frequent, shorter, focused meetings, following the successful format of Eton Community Association who meet every six weeks at The George public house on Eton High Street.

Two locations, chosen to support the two remaining social venues in Eton Wick – Eton Wick Football and Social Club, and the Greyhound. Dates will be chosen to help increase trade for the club/pub on quieter evenings and meetings will focus on a couple of topics each time rather than try to cover off everything in the one session.

The proposal was received positively by the meeting, and it was agreed to make the change. A calendar of new meeting dates will be circulated in due course, following agreement on dates with the venues.

Future Events

The **Christmas Lights** event will be on **Saturday 2 December 2023** and further information will be communicated in due course.

Residents are reminded to follow EWVA on Facebook and social media, visit the website and subscribe to our email mailing list to be kept up to date throughout the year.

Helen Branscombe-Davies
EWVA Secretary

Claire Taylor
EWVA Treasurer

Lucy Ludovici
EWVA Social and Fundraising Event Coordinator

Janice Caldwell
EWVA Christmas Lights and Event Coordinator