

## **MINUTES OF THE EMMER GREEN RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION. COMMITTEE MEETING, HELD ON MAY 1<sup>ST</sup> 2014 AT 3 PHILLIMORE ROAD**

Present. Margaret Ormonde (MO) Bill Harper (BH) Barry Prior (BP) Linda Glithro (LG) and Jane Handley (JH)  
Apologies. Liz Lyke (LL) Vera Bodman (VB) and Mark Hutchings (MH)

### **MATTERS ARISING**

Minutes read and approved as a true record.  
Proposed by Bill Harper and Seconded by Linda Glithro

### AGM FEEDBACK

It was felt that the AGM had been a great success, especially as it was our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary meeting. There was a good attendance and the plan to have refreshments first then official business and lastly the talk, seemed to work well. LG had prepared an article for the Caversham Bridge. The free paper published a report with a photo of our event and although not entirely factual, it was good to have EGRA publicised.

### MEMBERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT

Liz had been unwell and Margaret had been liaising with her with regards to membership business. MO said that a lot of time is spent on these issues.

### EGRA FUTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

The committee is now seriously depleted and it was agreed that new blood was needed urgently and particularly representation of the younger people in our community. MO said that she would send an appeal out to all members inviting them to join the committee or to volunteer help in some way. It was agreed that our members should be informed of our difficulties and to seek their support.

**\*\*Margaret's statement will be shown as a footnote to these minutes\*\***

MO told the committee that after a great deal of consideration she wanted it to be known that she had decided that this would be her last year as chairman and would be standing down at the next AGM. She stressed that her commitment to EGRA will not change and she would always do whatever she could to help. She hoped that a prospective chairperson would come forward and she could work in tandem with them until the next AGM. This would enable the handover to be less arduous, given Margaret's vast knowledge and many contacts with regards to EGRA, after many years of service. There was then debate about the future plans and development of EGRA. It was felt that the organisation needed to be brought up to date, given the fast moving technical age we live in. A more streamlined and less formal way of conducting business could be the way forward but a great deal of thought would have to go into the planning for the future. LG suggested the possible use of Facebook and other social media. It was agreed that the core reasons for the existence of EGRA remain, but we need to include all sections of our community.

**\*\*Bill Harper has produced a concise outline of proposals as a footnote to these minutes.\*\***

### ST. BARNABAS FETE

Unfortunately no-one is available to attend the fete this year so we cannot be represented.

### SUMMER NEWSLETTER

The newsletter would be prepared by the end of June for distribution in early July. This year it would include the Tradesmen's List. There have been a lot of new additions this time and it was decided that the list would only contain name/telephone/email/website contacts but full details would be held on file.

### MAINTENANCE OF SEATS

One seat (by Coral's) had been adopted and refurbished by a kind volunteer, Chris Balmont. The committee were grateful to him for coming forward and delighted that he plans to continue to look after the seat.

## CLAYFIELD COPSE

BP reported that the way marks at Clayfield Copse are now in place. The committee were shown an email from Dave Booth (Parks and Open Spaces Development Officer.) They have been fixed securely. The way marks had been fixed to the posts by brackets and glue. It was felt that this was enough as any more would possibly damage the sculptures. The committee were also shown a map of the site.

## WILFED OWEN TRAIL

LG reported that the plans are going well. Several concerts are planned for the anniversary celebrations in memory of Wilfred Owen. A website regarding the celebrations is available. It was felt that it was good for EGRA to show support given his connection with our district and there would be information in our summer newsletter.

## RESCUE

MH was not able to attend the meeting but MO said that most of the information was in the newsletter regarding the March Rescue.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

BH distributed the report to the committee which showed that we continue to have a healthy balance. Reading Neighbourhood Network had reimbursed our annual subscription for insurance meaning we had a nil cost of insurance this year. It is hoped this will continue. Income will now cover our outgoing expenses.

## **FEEDBACK FROM MEETINGS**

### NAG

MO reported on behalf of MH. There was nothing new to report from the last NAG meeting. He had circulated the details to members.

### HEIGHTS SCHOOL

LG reported that the school would be at the Caversham nursery site for two years. Plans seem to be progressing with teachers and pupils being recruited.

## **AOB**

### RENEWAL APPLICATION OF MEMBERSHIP BY MR. L. LEE

This matter was discussed at length and a letter regarding our conclusions will be sent as soon as possible and his cheque for 5 years membership returned.

### TRADESMEN'S LIST

JH was in the process of collating the new list and the deadline is mid-May. She will contact all the new additions recommended by our members. The existing tradesmen will also be called, to check their details have not changed and to confirm that they want to remain on the list.

### ANNUAL YOUTH AWARD

After discussion it was decided to put the annual award scheme on hold for the time being unless a particularly worthy recipient arises.

### EMMER GREEN BOOK

LG asked if there would be a re-print of the popular book about Emmer Green. She had been asked by several people about it. MO explained that it is an expensive publication to produce and would need a good deal of interest to warrant a reprint. At the moment there were only 25 people on the waiting list.

## **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

There is to be an Extraordinary Meeting to discuss the specific issues of the future of EGRA. This is on June 9<sup>th</sup> 2014 at 10, Unity Court, commencing at 7.30pm

The Chairman thanked Linda for her hospitality and the meeting concluded at 9.40pm.

## **STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN, MARGARET ORMONDE**

During a discussion about EGRA's future and the function and resources Margaret Ormonde announced that this was to be her last year in the role of Chairman. An agreement to serve in that office for three years had already turned into eight. During that period EGRA's committee had been pro-active organising a number of events and projects. However, now we were entering a quieter phase and the time seemed right to hand over the reins for fresh blood to regenerate the group.

It is hoped new people will volunteer, but if there is no response we will discuss new arrangements to keep the core function of EGRA going with the minimum of management. Treasurer Bill Harper will summarise the situation.

Margaret said she would hope to continue supporting EGRA in some capacity, either on or off the committee.

## **STATEMENT BY THE TREASURER BILL HARPER**

### **EGRA Functions and Resources**

The Committee has discussed in the past the difficulties that have been experienced in finding new volunteers for the Committee and for the various activities needed to keep EGRA functioning effectively. This situation will be worsened as existing long- serving office holders seek to step down. Whilst efforts will continue to attract new blood, it is now prudent to consider what the future may hold if adequate volunteer resources are not secured.

The core role for EGRA is "to ensure, as far as possible, that the development and amenities of Emmer Green and district are in accordance with the best interests of the residents of the area."

There are seen to be two conditions that need to be fulfilled to enable this aim to be fulfilled:

1. A membership arrangement that demonstrates that the Association has contact with, and can represent, people in the area. (The Constitution embodies this approach.)
2. A capability to be aware of developments affecting the area, to gather and express local views and to communicate with outside interests, primarily local authorities and service providers.

Membership administration is a demanding function. There is an inescapable need for a register of members, but the more time consuming part of the current role is subscription collection. The size of the administrative task would be much reduced if member communication were exclusively electronic, and if the finances were revised to avoid the need to collect subscriptions.

The time and expertise required to deal effectively with 2 above is also considerable, and can be substantial if major issues are under consideration. There are several steps involved:

- i. Monitoring activities likely to affect local amenities e.g. planning proposals and participation in local consultative bodies.
- ii. Reacting to issues brought to the attention of the Association (mostly by members).
- iii. Formulating Association responses – either in the Committee which represents members or by direct consultation with members.
- iv. Communicating with outside interests – where established contacts are valuable.

When the capability exists to fulfil these primary functions, it has also proved possible to organise other activities that have been valued by members – the Tradesmen List, maintaining local assets and organising visits.

If the situation is reached where the volunteer resources are insufficient to properly continue the core functions, it may not be necessary to close the Association. A “caretaker” organisation could maintain a basic member register, have custody of the finance and perhaps continue with some of the ancillary functions where the practical efforts can be shared by several people. This would require a small number to provide much less time than at present. It would have the benefit of preserving the organisation in a semi-dormant state so that if a major development required a response to be mobilised on behalf of the community it could be re-activated – but people would need to come forward to undertake the required work.