

## **REPORT OF THE AGM OF THE MRA HELD ON THURSDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> MAY IN THE METHODIST CHURCH HALL**

Before the start of the meeting, a minute's silence was held in memory of Cllr John Hills who had died recently.

Cllrs Matt Hartley and Cathy Dowse offered their thoughts about Cllr Hills. They noted that he had served 24 years as a local councillor, having won seven consecutive elections. He served honourably with the armed forces. He was not a 'politician', rather a kind, friendly man who just wanted to serve the local community. He couldn't do enough for people. He was welcoming and encouraging to new councillors and was a committed family man. He will be missed.

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chairman, Gail Hodges, gave the following overview of the local issues the MRA had been, and continues to be involved with.

#### Planning.

The MRA has a role in monitoring all planning applications on both Bromley and Greenwich sides of Mottingham, within the MRA boundary. We have committee members who scan all the applications, highlight any issues, and share with the other members. At last year's AGM we reported on a planning application for a micro pub, now known as the Bat and Ball, a very popular addition to the village. A current area of concern for many residents is around Bridge House, at the corner of Crossmead, with an application for demolition of Bridge House, and in its place the erection of 32 apartments and townhouses, all with no parking. Planning was initially refused, and an appeal is underway. Greenwich councillors are working alongside Crossmead residents.

#### Playground

There had been a recent appeal for donations relating to the playground at Foxes Field by Sian Halcrow-Wilson, Tamsin Wright and Rachel Travers, separate from the MRA. They were dismayed by the dilapidated state of the park equipment, and decided to do something about it. They did a wonderful job garnering community support, and were successful in being awarded £20k from the London Borough of Bromley's Jubilee Parks Fund. Fundraising needs to continue as the cost of play equipment that conforms to health and safety standards is prohibitive, for example a small roundabout costs approximately £10k. A community painting day will be organised for the equipment that is safe but just looks a bit worn. Hopefully, the fundraising will continue.

#### Footpath

Under the same Jubilee fund bidding process, the MRA applied and were approved for £20k to create a footpath along Foxes Field, from the Court Farm Road entrance in the bottom corner, running parallel with The Crossway, across to the main car entrance, towards the playground. The purpose of this is to improve access for those in wheelchairs, and those with prams and buggies, particularly in the winter months. The entrance/exit will be moved a little way along Court Farm Road, as the current siting has poor visibility for crossing the road. The cost of the footpath is £23,088, and the MRA has contributed the excess £3,088.

The Chairman was pleased to report that Sian and Rachel, along with Hilary McVitty, had recently joined the MRA committee as co-opted members, allowing the MRA to support the playground upgrade, albeit the MRA is not a fundraising organisation. Sally Babi, one of our longstanding members, is in discussion with the playground group about involving her students in planting in a particularly eco-friendly way at the playground.

### Planters

The MRA has now received funding from Bromley Council to match the previous Greenwich Council funding for planters in the village. The planning process is in its early stages, and the planters haven't been fully costed as yet, but the type of planter and siting had been agreed, costs allowing. It is hoped that six can be installed on the Bromley side, and the same on Greenwich side. The Councils require them, from a health and safety and security perspective, to be either concrete or heavy metal. The heavy metal ones are particularly prone to be stolen so the choice is for dark grey concrete. Some will be box-shaped; others will be rectangular in the form of a trough. A maintenance plan is required. At this stage, it is unclear whether the compost and first planting will be funded, so discussions have been started with Capel Manor and Mottingham Horticultural Society. Help with watering will be needed from local traders and volunteers. There is a tap at the tyre shop, and another at BP.

### Defibrillators

There are now defibrillators in place outside the library and outside the church hall behind the Catholic Church. The third is at the changing rooms on Foxes Field, but is currently inside the building. The reason for this is that there have been three thefts of our defibrillators, the first from outside the library when the cabinet, as per London Ambulance Service, (LAS) guidelines, was an unlocked one. The subsequent two thefts were from the locked cabinet - the LAS had now changed its guidelines - at Foxes Field. Our insurance company has indicated that if there are any further thefts or incidents with the defibrillators, then they are highly unlikely to be able to insure theft after that. It is felt that that site is particularly vulnerable to theft, given there is no CCTV or security lighting. The building is owned by Bromley Council, and permission is awaited to install security lighting and CCTV, probably funded by the management team. So a difficult decision has been made to remove that defibrillator from public access for now, but for it to remain accessible by the footballers when they play matches at the weekend as they are a particularly vulnerable group. The situation may change.

The Chairman runs CPR and defibrillator sessions at the library on Monday mornings, once a month. If anyone is interested, please register your interest at the library.

### Eddie Green

Some residents attend Eddie's Wednesday lunches, which provide tasty nutritious meals at very low cost, but high on community spirit and combating loneliness. Very deservedly, Eddie's contribution to the Mottingham community has been recognised with a Bromley Mayor's Award. Indeed the Mayor and team attended last week's lunch. Congratulations and grateful thanks were extended to Eddie and his team.

### Library

Another huge community asset is our library. Chris and her team, Clare and Esther, go above and beyond their library duties, hosting book groups, talks about London history, toddler groups, school groups, teenage groups, Lego club, junk modeling and more, as well as being a nominated safe warm space in colder months. Chris has also been recognised with an award for her services to the Mottingham community.

Chris has requested donations of junk for their junk modelling groups - boxes, jars, wool etc

### Zebra crossing

Finally, on a more negative note, the Chairman wished to raise her personal concern about the zebra crossing just outside the Church Hall. Drivers seem to see the open road ahead of them and overlook the crossing. She had been almost knocked down so many times, and feels it's getting worse. The Chair has spoken with Councillor Cartwright about this and feels that something has to change before someone is killed. She would like to hear from anyone who has had a negative experience on the crossing, as she is considering organising a petition requesting a pelican crossing there, as a resident, not necessarily under the umbrella of the MRA.

### **MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Before he began his report, Richard Mainwaring-Burton wished to put on record the Committee's thanks to Gail Hodges, our Chairman, for all her hard work over the past two years. These thanks were endorsed by all present.

He then reported the following:

Membership of the MRA is recorded by household or residence rather than by individuals. This has led to debate when considering voting at meetings and particularly at the AGM when residents frequently attend together whoever has paid the annual subscription for their residence. In no way would we wish to discourage this. However, this might be seen to doubly disenfranchise some residents who are unable to attend the AGM. Were the situation to arise where there was particularly closely divided opinion, even between co-habiting couples, a compromise would need to be achieved either within or outside the meeting or in the rather tense comfort of our own homes.

In the same way, matters of constitutional change, as currently on the agenda, and which require a quorum of 'members' raise issues of representation. The Association is proposing to remedy this by taking the rare, if not unique step of offering a proxy voting system to our residents. All households in our area have received a form since all residents are welcome at the AGM whether or not a subscription has been paid.

The Membership Secretary extended his sincere thanks for the efforts and loyalty of the Road Representatives and Section Leaders who are essential to the functioning of the Association. The Committee is very welcoming to people willing to take on a road or two, which involves usually only two or three distributions, although extra diligent collectors may visit more than once in order to enhance their step-count.

### Statistics:

1993 Residences (some uncollectable)  
80 Road Sheets (average 26 residences)  
27 Road Reps

### Restricted Access

"Everest Expedition Blocks" (Homes)  
Bourdillon Court - Mottingham Road (12)  
Evans Court - Portland Road (6)  
Everest Court - Mottingham Road (18)  
Hilary Court - Beaconsfield Road (9)  
John Hunt Court - Clarence Road (26)

Tenzing Court - Portland Road (12)  
Pickwick Court – West Park (48)  
Total (131)

Data from returned Road sheets 2024

Cash payments:	505
Bank transfer promised and/received	92
QR code promised	<u>112</u>
TOTAL	709

There are 684 email addresses on file (All manually entered from script).  
20 emails have been withheld,  
17 are not used. Approximately 50 emails have 'bounced back'.

## 1. TREASURER'S REPORT.

Laurie Bell provided the following report.

Audited Accounts for the years 2022/23 and 2023/2024 ending 31st March have been produced, audited and signed. Subscription income for the last year was down £131 on previous year at £1,889. This indicates a paying membership of approximately 630. Donations were also marginally down at £290 from £319 previous year. It is not always possible to distinguish from Road Sheets, Bank Credits or SumUp which is a donation, but any amount of an individual payment in excess of £3 is treated as a donation.

Total income for the year amounts to £3,320 but that includes a £300 insurance claim and the return of £745 unused monies from the Porcupine Development Committee.

Whilst expenditure was substantially down, this really reflects the ongoing costs relating to defibrillators. Last year we spent £1,639 on a new defibrillator to replace a stolen one and the repair of a cabinet. Otherwise general costs were in line with previous years.

Funds now in the current account at Barclays Bank, at 31st March, are £27,130.10, of which £10,400 from the Royal Borough of Greenwich is being held towards the planned village planters. The London Borough of Bromley has now confirmed a £10,000 grant towards additional planters on the Bromley side.

The Treasurer recommended that:

- 1) The Annual Subscription remain at £3, and
- 2) We continue to support the Festive Lights Committee to the sum of £500.

Subscriptions have not increased for some time. This will be discussed by the Executive Committee during the months ahead to decide if we bring forward to next year's AGM a motion to increase subscriptions and whether any part of any increase be used as 'fundraising' for any projects that might be identified.

In this current year we have agreed to contribute £3,088 towards the installation of another part of footway around Foxes Field. The London Borough of Bromley is providing £20,000 from the Jubilee Parks Fund.

Laurie Bell expressed his thanks to all the Section Leaders and Road Stewards for their continued support in delivering newsletters and notices and hopefully for collecting subscriptions this year. He reminded those present that new Road Stewards are desperately needed to fill a number of gaps. Residents were asked to please step forward, and speak to the Treasurer or the Membership Secretary.

Finally, thanks were extended to Bernie Hawes who audited the accounts very promptly to ensure availability for the AGM.

## **ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND OFFICERS;**

### **COMMITTEE**

The current Committee is made up of the following individuals:

Laurie Bell, Sally Babi, Robert Blanks, Carol Borhani, Jane Cornish, Gail Hodges, Richard Mainwaring-Burton, Bob Lawrie, James Martin, Graham Soars and Lesley Robins.

Juan Trellez had stood down from the Committee. Thanks were extended to him for all his hard work and unstinting support of the MRA.

The Committee was joined three new co-opted members, Sian Halcrow-Wilson, Hilary McVitty and Rachel Travers were formally elected to the Committee.

Gail Hodges reminded residents that if anyone is interested in joining the Executive Committee, they are welcome to put their names forward but we recommend that they attend one or two meetings first to observe how it operates and what the commitment might involve. The next meeting is scheduled to be held in the Methodist Church Hall at 7.00 pm on Thursday 27th June. Residents can of course just turn up but if anyone is interested and could pass your details to the Secretary, we will make sure you receive notice of, and any papers that may be relevant to, the meeting.

### **CHAIRMAN**

Gail Hodges was re-elected as Chairman until the conclusion of the next AGM.

### **DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

Richard Mainwaring-Burton was re-elected as Deputy Chairman until the conclusion of the next AGM.

### **SECRETARY**

Lesley Robins was re-elected as Honorary Secretary until the conclusion of the next AGM.

### **HONORARY TREASURER**

Lawrie Bell was re-elected as Honorary Treasurer until the conclusion of the next AGM.

### **MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY**

Richard Mainwaring-Burton was re-elected as Membership Secretary Treasurer until the conclusion of the next AGM.

### **AUDITOR**

Bernie Hawes was re-elected as Auditor Treasurer until the conclusion of the next AGM.

## **CONSTITUTION/RULE CHANGES**

The Chairman outlined the rationale underpinning the proposed Constitution/Rule changes and summarised the four key changes.

*The motion that the four principal changes outlined in the AGM notice, namely:*

- 1. That subscriptions once approved will continue at that rate by the Members in General meeting (Rule 4).*

2. *That the Executive Committee can 'meet' other than in person provided all attending can hear and actively participate in the meeting (Rule 11).*
3. *Formally setting out the right for Members to appoint and vote by proxy on any changes in the Rules (Rule 24).*
4. *The introduction of Emergency Procedures should another situation such as the Pandemic arise affecting the operation of the Association (Rule 25)*

The motion was carried with 61 for the motion, none against and no abstentions.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Musty from the Bat and Ball shared that he was hoping to organise a hoe-down, possibly along the Parade.

## **Q and A session**

1. Significant concerns about the horrendous traffic situation in West Hallows were raised. Residents had been fighting for change for four years now. All sorts of evidence had been submitted. The next step will be to approach the local MP. Support for another petition is needed.  
The Chairman noted that this is regularly discussed at Executive Committee meetings and that local councillors are 'on the case'. Sat Navs cannot be re-directed.
2. The question of Lidl still not making contributions to the St Edwards was raised. Cllr Cartwright reported that he had pursued this with Lidl. He is now taking contributions to St Edwards each week. The Chairman had also pursued the matter. It was noted that the Co-op still makes contributions.
3. A resident questioned the use of insecticide on verges in Beaconsfield Road. Cllr Rowlands reported that most of these are now environmentally friendly.
4. In response to questions about various sites in the area, it was noted that:
  - the Dorset Road School site is being marketed. Planning permission for any subsequent development will be required. Monies will go to Elmstead Road School
  - There is no news about The Royal or The Harley Davidson site.
  - The Scout Hall is up for sale. It is in very poor condition and will need to be razed to the ground and rebuilt. As this is Metropolitan land, there are limits to how it can be used.