

MALDEN & COOMBE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION LIMITED

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

held via Zoom videoconferencing

on **Thursday 26th November 2020**

Committee members present: Mr R Cox (Chairman), Dr J Kane, Mr R Fletcher,
Mr P Greenhalgh, Mr J Barr, Mr J Greaves
Apologies: Mr M Ashby, Mr P Coia

The meeting commenced at 19:00.

Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed all residents present and Coombe Hill councillors, Rowena Bass, Ed Fram and Ian George.

The Chairman introduced Amy Castle as our new MCRA secretary (replacing Mick Taviner) who would act as Zoom host and explained the process, including waiting room, chat and mute functionalities.

Ordinary Resolutions

1. To approve the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 4th November 2019.

The Chairman asked for any comments. There were none.

The Minutes were approved.

2. To receive the Accounts for the year ending 30th June 2019.

The Chairman asked for any comments. There were none.

3. To receive the Report of the Directors.

The Chairman asked for any comments. There were none.

4. To note the retirement from office of the following Directors:

Mr J Barr
Mr J Greaves

The retirement of the above named Directors was duly noted.

5a. To re-elect those above named wishing to stand again.

Mr J Barr was duly proposed by Dr S Kane and seconded by Mr P Greenhalgh.
Mr J Greaves was duly proposed by Mr J Barr and seconded by Mr R Cox.
Both the above were elected to office by the meeting with 19 proxy votes each in their favour.

6. To elect Mr P Coia as a Director.

Mr P Coia (Ballard Close) was proposed by Mr R Cox and seconded by Dr J Kane and elected with 18 proxy votes.

The Chairman paid tribute to John Tarrant who stood down from the Committee after 20 years, nine of which were as MCRA Chairman. The Chairman said Mr Tarrant had been a stalwart of MCRA and thanked him greatly for his hard work during a tumultuous period.

Other comments

The Chairman mentioned that the long-awaited CCTV cameras have been installed at the three main entrances to the Estate. He said these still require fine tuning with positioning and signage as well as the ability for the police to promptly access footage.

The Chairman also thanked Mick Taviner for his 20-year service to MCRA as secretary. He said Mr Taviner had been a tower of strength behind the scenes and that we owe him an enormous amount of thanks for his work.

The Chairman invited Cllr. Rowena Bass to address the meeting. Ms Bass said the councillors had worked hard with the Chairman, Dr Kane and Mr Fletcher on all matters relating to the council including case work and planning, and helping residents through the maze of that process. She said she had written to the Royal Parks to oppose parking plans in Richmond Park and will be meeting with the council officers to talk about parking implications and how these can be rectified. Ms Bass mentioned the councillors would be meeting with the new owners of Warren House once lockdown is over. She said the communication links established with the relevant council members a year ago, were now broken as those officers have since left their posts. She said she would be scheduling a meeting with the new officers with MCRA co-Chairs and the secretary soon.

The Chairman confirmed a number of residents, Helen Hinton, John Coghlan and Sudhir Shah, had written to MCRA in advance of the AGM to raise questions regarding parking. The Chairman outlined that during the lockdown period when gatekeepers were furloughed, unauthorised parking on the Estate was rife. He added residents are also concerned with the proposed parking charges in Richmond Park which would cause greater traffic and parking on the Estate. The Chairman said the Committee had some safety concerns at the Kingston Hill end of Warren Road and would explore with RBK double yellow lines at the junction, the length to be determined with RBK traffic teams. The Chairman said that rearranging gatekeeper rotas to allow more presence at that end, using the manual barrier, walking patrols and even additional staff are all being considered if the problem becomes more acute. The Chairman said an additional gateman could raise the Coombe Rate by approximately £10 per household per year.

The Chairman also mentioned an issue with school permits with parents abusing permit conditions and confirmed the Committee is working with the three schools to rectify this. The Chairman said MCRA would like to enforce some sort of compliance on parking but this is a difficult area. He said in George Road where there are signs displaying time restrictions, there are daily infractions and, despite continued encouragement, RBK is yet to dispatch moped-based parking enforcement teams. The Chairman said one resident has asked why we couldn't clamp unauthorised vehicles and explained that this procedure was outlawed on private land in 2012. He also stated MCRA had written to Sarah Olney, the local MP, and Royal Parks to object to the Richmond Park charging proposals.

The Chairman said Ian Armfield had emailed MCRA in advance to ask about the finances, at which point he passed the meeting across to Mr Fletcher (MCRA Treasurer).

Mr Fletcher referred to Mr Armfield's first question which was to do with security barrier costs. Mr Armfield had noticed that the RBK reimbursement revenue had declined from £41k to £33k and asked whether this was due to the job retention scheme set up by the government in March. Mr Fletcher confirmed this was correct and that MCRA had furloughed four gatekeepers and £8k was reimbursed by the government.

Mr Fletcher then addressed Mr Armfield's second question. Mr Armfield observed in the Directors Report that several thousand pounds had been inappropriately taken out of both the RBK managed Coombe Estate accounts and asked if Mr Fletcher could advise how much had been taken out over the period and what assurance had been sought from RBK that checks and balances had been put in place to ensure this would not happen again. Mr Fletcher stated that one solution established was the receipt of a quarterly expenditure statement from RBK which enables MCRA to query transactions and to monitor spend against budget which improves transparency. In this respects Q2 and Q3 had worked well, however Q4 had not been so positive. He said RBK had posted £53k (over 50% of the total expenditure) to the end of March and during the review it was noted that there were a few incorrect items (including £800 for work carried out on roads outside of the Estate, a misposting for £6k and an incorrect revenue posting relating to a deposit that had been refunded to a resident on the Estate). Mr Fletcher had requested RBK to reverse these mispostings which subsequently occurred in the Q1 20/21 accounts with the exception of the £2.5k deposit misposting between the capital and revenue account, which is still under discussion. Mr Fletcher said the quarterly reviews will continue and he will persevere to convince the council to process the RBK transactions on a monthly basis. He said he had also requested that the opening and closing balances on the Reserve Account and related transactions are disclosed in the annual Coombe Rate statement to improve transparency.

William de Segundo (Watergardens, Warren Road) asked the validity of encouraging RBK to send parking enforcers to the estate if we are not allowed to clamp. The Chairman responded that this is allowed as the Estate roads are scheduled roads. He added RBK can send parking enforcers and fine drivers where there is signage and yellow lines restricting parking. Ms Bass asked the co-Chairs and secretary to add this issue to the list of discussion items when they meet with her and RBK personnel. Ms Bass confirmed she is scheduling a meeting with the Communities & Engagement Assistant Director, as with the recent changes of personnel at

RBK, it is important to reiterate that these are not private roads like others in the borough so there needs to be a re-education process at the meeting.

John Giles (Paget Place) commented on the white signs on the entrances and was concerned these are ignored. He asked if the orange stickers could be reintroduced. The Chairman said he still has stickers available and would be pleased to distribute them to those residents who would like to use them. Mr Giles added that the exit from Paget Place onto Warren Road is a dangerous junction, with residents unable to pull out of Paget Place due to parked cars either side and opposite the entrance of the road. The Chairman said this was an item that had been added to the list of issues for RBK.

Sudhir Shah (Coombe Wells) asked if it's possible to put gravel on George Road on the opposite side of the schools. He said this would make it easier to walk, especially in light of the social distancing measures that will be with us for some time. The Chairman said cost and maintenance might be a problem but the point would be taken to the Committee to discuss.

Carol Meakes (Warren Road) expressed her concern about the dangerous parking by parents attending the Coombe Hill School. She said she is unable to exit out of both her drives and requested that yellow lines be added to this end of Warren Road. The Chair said the secretary had contacted the Coombe Hill School and, following communication from the headteacher to parents, there had been an improvement, however he said the Committee would review this if the situation worsens. Dr Kane added that an immediate response would be to increase the hours of the gatekeepers or employ a new gatekeeper to prevent this by policing parking at school pick up times in particular.

Ross Compton (George Road, near Marymount School) said George Road is an all-day car park and staff cars with blacked out windows often park so close to his driveway that he has to exit blindly. He requested yellow lines to be added up to driveways on George Road. The Chairman confirmed there is a similar issue at Coombe Neville and MCRA hopes to add road markings there and the Committee will suggest the same for this area of George Road. Mr Compton also asked if the introduction of parking charges might reduce the number of staff parking. The Chairman said that Rokeby School staff do not have much onsite parking and are therefore the main culprits for staff parking in this area and the Committee will discuss and address this.

Mr Peter Butler (Coombe Neville) asked if there had been an increase in MCRA contributions this year. He also wanted noted that he thought the gatekeepers do an excellent job - which is often difficult - with a great deal of humour and dedication and would like a communication to go out to them from this meeting. The Chairman agreed and stated he would like the gatekeepers to be more flexible in positioning themselves more frequently at George Road and the top end of Warren Road, to patrol and issue stickers on cars.

The Chairman commented that the MCRA contribution had not changed and stated that the same group of people continue not to pay which is an annual problem. He said the Committee would be increasing publicity and contacting the non-paying residents directly in a communication in January.

John Tarrant (The Watergardens, Warren Road) commented on the issue of yellow lines. He said that when these were originally put in place, it was to clean up the unsightly use of cones along one side of the road. Mr Tarrant said he believes yellow lines only serve to push parked traffic further along into the Estate but it wouldn't solve the problem. He agreed with Dr Kane that more gatekeepers need to be on duty.

Graham Lewis (Paget Place) asked why the Committee doesn't issue permits only after the MCRA contribution is paid arguing that 100% of the money would be paid immediately. The Chairman said the High Court ruling in 2008/9 ruled that this is not legally feasible. Dr Kane confirmed that the word "voluntary" had not been used in last year's communications in the hope that this would increase payees but this has, so far, not been the case. The Chairman added that some residents use a standing order to pay and have not updated this to reflect the increase from £25 to £40. He asked if this applied to any participants at the AGM, could they please amend the total.

Mrs Uhlig said MCRA should send out a thank you letter publicly to those who have paid.

Mr Giles asked a further question about the building works occurring at Warren House and whether the new owners had applied for planning permission and notified MCRA. The Chairman said the meeting that took place with Dr Kane and Mr Tarrant, was to make the new owners aware of the 18 or so restrictions that RBK had imposed on Warren House in the past. Mr Giles said he had contacted the council, particularly about the work which could be a material change to the external structure, and sent a photograph to Mr Knight, an RBK planning representative. The Chairman thanked Mr Giles for alerting MCRA and RBK and said the Committee relies on residents being proactive in this fashion. Dr Kane said she was concerned she has seen construction trucks entering the premises but could see no planning submission on the RBK planning website. Mr Giles agreed saying the last application was April 2018 (which was later withdrawn).

Mr Gotsmam (Brook Gardens) asked if the RBK proposition to develop the New Malden/Kingston area that affected the golf course had been updated. The Chairman replied that there were a number of objections from MCRA, residents and Coombe Wood Golf Club at the time, but there had been no more news. Councillor Ian George added that the potential for building on the golf course had not been RBK's intention, however that wasn't the case in the original plans. He added the councillors are due to receive a new plan and he will update residents when he knows more.

Mr Shah further asked about security and whether it would be possible to add CCTV or speed cameras to help deter those parking on double yellow lines and unauthorised cars accessing the Estate. He stated that there are a number of drivers that speed late at night and it would be helpful if RBK could issue speeding fines. The Chairman said he wasn't sure this was a practical idea as more lines would need to be drawn on the road but added one solution might be to add speed bumps to the area.

Mr Lewis commented that he has almost been knocked over by speeding cyclists several times. He said he is researching the 1933 Act that prohibits vehicles from accessing the Estate if they don't have business on it, to find out whether a bicycle could be defined in the Act as

a vehicle. If so there would be good reason to ban cyclists using the roads, especially those in packs (two or three abreast) that block the road, exceed the speed limit and are dangerous. The Chairman added that Mr Greaves had also raised this issue in the past in respect of Warren Cutting. He said the use of more gatekeepers may help but this wouldn't stop cyclists getting past the barrier. Mr Lewis added that the gate at Warren Cutting should stay closed and act as a deterrent. Mr de Segundo agreed saying he too had to quickly avoid a cyclist who was exceeding the speed limit.

Mr de Segundo further said on behalf of residents he was very grateful to the Committee for all the hard work they do. The Chairman thanked Mr de Segundo for his kind words and provided an example of the work that is completed including the replacement post at the kissing gate, the repaired lighting and road maintenance, the continued scrutiny of planning and the frequent communication with residents.

Before closing the meeting, the Chairman stated that the website would be updated in the next few months.

There being no other business the Chairman thanked everyone for participating. The meeting was closed at 20:34.

MCRA/AC/MINUTES/AGM2020