

EVRA Chairman's Report to AGM – October 2018 – Chris Stebbing

Local Issues

Eaton Street Road Works - During the past year the work of the EVRA Committee has been dominated by matters regarding the roadworks on Eaton Street. Getting useful information from Transport for Norwich (TfN) about the works was a long drawn-out process. The continuity of bus services and closure period of the slip road were the most pressing matters. The bus services were maintained but with diversions for the inward services along Bluebell Road to avoid the slip road. TfN eventually announced that the slip road would be closed for 5 weeks which EVRA and Councillors thought was excessive. A petition against the works, and in particular the slip road closure, was signed by over 800 people and presented to NHAC but was rejected. The works started on 2nd July with the slip road closed from 25th July.

There was much chaos during the first few days because of the temporary traffic lights at the junction causing long tail-backs on all routes. This settled down somewhat after changes to the timings but continued to cause problems for residents and business throughout the nine weeks of the works. Subsequent closure of the slip road added to the problems affecting residents and businesses.

Throughout the works EVRA had regular contact with TfN to raise concerns about various matters. Of particular concern was the apparent lack of activity with nothing happening at all on many days. It was also evident that minimal resources had been allocated to the slip road works and that management and oversight of TfN's contractors was very poor.

The works were finished by the due date of 29th August but we believe could have been completed much sooner. There remain some residual issues such as drivers being confused by the repeater lights for the slip road when turning left into Eaton Street. Councillors and TfN have discussed the issues and we will continue to monitor these.

Eaton 20mph Zone - The City Council initiated a low key consultation on the 20mph Zone for Eaton in August and EVRA and Councillors quickly ensured that residents were aware of this through our website and Facebook pages. A Special EVRA Committee meeting with Councillors agreed our position on the proposals and at a meeting with Officers from City Hall we explained our main concerns which were:

- Traffic calming measures proposed would not really be effective and would be unsightly
- Changes to priority at Greenways/Church Lane junction would be unsafe for all users.
- A zebra crossing would be preferable to pedestrian refuges on Church Lane

We did, however, give our support for the implementation of the 20mph Zone for Eaton.

More than 200 Eaton residents responded to the consultation with a significant majority of these objecting to the proposals. Council Officers listened to our concerns and the scheme presented to the NHAC did not include the physical traffic calming features. This was approved and it is expected that the implementation of a 20mph Zone will go ahead in the Spring. Vic has commented in more detail in his report below.

Projects

Eaton Green Playground - The updating of play equipment at Eaton Green Playground has been a main project for EVRA for the past few years. Our fundraising continues and we are well on our way to achieve our target for our next piece of equipment – a roundabout at a cost of £7000. Our following target will be to extend the climbing tower at a cost of around £5000. The playground is now a more family friendly place and is well used by residents.

Our Fun Day and other events such as the Easter Egg Hunt, garage and cake sales and Halloween Pumpkin trail have raised funds for the playground. We recently received £526 from the Waitrose green token scheme and a Quiz and Puddings evening run by St Andrew's Church raised £338.

EVRA is not eligible for many grants for our playground project because the site is a City Council owned playground. So we have to seek alternative source of funds or raise these through our own events. Our Playground sub- committee led by Sharon Atkinson, Carol Plunkett and Vic Flute have done a great job keeping the momentum going and we thank them for all their efforts.

Donkey Lane – Rosemary Benton and her team continue to maintain the verges along Donkey Lane throughout the year. They meet most Wednesdays planting and weeding and sweeping-up to keep the area looking tidy. The hot summer has presented challenges and it remains to be seen how well the young trees have survived. Rosemary welcomes new volunteers to assist on Wednesday afternoons in what is a social as well as an active session.

Events

Spring and Summer Garden Competitions – Rosemary also organises our garden competitions and these have encouraged more people to participate. Before we re-launched the competitions it was mainly the same winners for each competition but now the baton changes regularly with new entrants achieving success. It is good to see such interest in gardening which enhances the character of Eaton Village. RJI IFA sponsored the prizes for our garden Competitions and the Cellar House hosted the presentation evenings and we thank them for their generous support.

Scarecrow Festival and Competition - Our ninth Scarecrow Festival in July was again successful with 28 entries around the village. The theme of Famous Teddies linked into St Andrew's Church Teddy Bears Picnic held over the same weekend. We also had 18 garage sales which raised £100 for the Playground Fund. Cake sales and other events contributed a further £140 towards the fund. Waitrose sponsored the Judges prizes and RJI IFA sponsored prizes for the Residents favourite scarecrows. Next year will be the tenth anniversary of our scarecrow Festival and we will be looking to celebrate this milestone with a special theme.

We are very grateful to our local businesses for their continued support for our events which enables us to do so much more.

Other Matters

GDPR – In March we had to prepare for the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) which came into force in May. We reviewed our processes and sought permission from residents to hold name and address details for our records along with subscription renewals. We had limited information about how the GDPR would apply to Residents Associations but received assistance from an Eaton resident who pointed us in the right direction. In accordance with our Constitution we record minimal information about residents but such information requires EVRA to comply with the regulations. For next year we will modify our subscription envelopes so that the permission is incorporated into the renewal process.

Eaton War Memorial – EVRA was invited by Historic England to comment on the proposal to List the Eaton War Memorial on Newmarket Road. We engaged the Church and Councillors in this process and submitted comments giving our reasons on why this should be listed. EVRA and a Trustee of the Memorial responded and Historic England confirmed Grade II listing had been granted in January.

Consultation on Ward Boundaries for Norwich – EVRA submitted comments on the consultation supporting the retention of three councillors, keeping the name Eaton Ward and maintaining the existing boundaries. EVRA were one of only four organisations to submit comments – most others coming from councillors. The final report does not recommend any change for the Eaton Ward.

Greater Norwich Local Plan – EVRA contributed to the consultation opposing any further development in the Yare Valley along Bluebell Road. There were no proposals affecting Eaton Village.

Barclays Bank Closure – It is disappointing to hear that Barclays has decided to close the Eaton branch in November. This will affect many residents but we are fortunate that we still have our Post Office where many banking transactions can be carried out.

Newsletters and Website – We continue to issue our newsletter twice a year to all households and keep our website and Facebook pages up to date. Our Facebook page is used to alert residents to issues arising and our website is used for long term and more in-depth information. We thank Helen Flute for all her hard work sorting and distributing newsletters and also thank our team of distributors who deliver these to residents.

Conclusion

Finally I would like to thank the Committee for all their fantastic support during the past year. In particular I thank EVRA Vice Chairman, Vic Flute, for his sterling support and challenge to keep me on my toes and help us work through, what have been, some tricky issues. A special thank you also goes to Sarah Cross who has been EVRA Treasurer for the past five years and has decided not to seek re-election. Sarah has updated our finance processes and records and has had a busy time dealing with all the receipts for the playground fund and having to handle masses of coins from our Fun Days and other events.

Ken Land has fastidiously audited EVRA accounts for almost thirty years but has decided to retire this year. We thank him for his work during this time and wish him well for the future.

As you will see from the above and from Vic's report below the Committee has been involved in many things throughout the year and the workload has been spread amongst us. Members and residents have supported our events through organising and participating by coming along and getting involved. We are fortunate to have a group of City and County Councillors who actively support the community and work closely with EVRA to help us achieve our aims. We thank our City Councillors Caroline, Judith, and James and County Councillor Brian for their strong support to the community.

I think it is evident that Eaton Village has a strong community spirit which has grown significantly over recent years – and long may it continue!

Chris Stebbing

EVRA Chairman 2017/18

October 2018

Vice Chair report

Fun Day - Firstly I would like to thank everyone who helped with the Fun Day. We separated it from the Scarecrow Weekend this year to accommodate the Teddy Bears' Picnic in this year of Celebration for St. Andrew's Church. Attendance was lower than previous years but this may have been as much to the fact that it was a very hot day and there were a number of other local events on the same day as to the fact it was not on Scarecrow Weekend. Once again we are particularly indebted to Victoria MacDonald for the use of the Cellar House garden and the pub's facilities. I could not have run the event without the huge contribution by Carol Plunkett who collected items from the council for us to use and provided tables – transporting all these things by herself.

Cameo is now established and their management committee is largely made up of EVRA committee members so that we are able to support them if, and when necessary. Bernard Godding is the convener and meetings are held on the 4th Wednesday in every month except for December and July so why not Come Along and Meet us.

I was involved with Chris in all the meetings about both sets of Road works deputising for him when he was away, but he will already have covered all the “blood, sweat and tears” (apologies to WC) that we suffered.

We are very fortunate that we have had the support of our city councillors and our county councillor. Caroline attends most of our committee meetings so she can follow up on any concerns we have and keep us informed, in advance, of any council projects and ideas.

Finally, I feel we got the best deal possible over the 20 mph limit – there was no way it was not going to happen as it is City Council policy that this will be City wide, many opposed the physical restraints which we managed to have postponed, some would like those restraints in. The current solution applies for just one year it will then be reviewed and if traffic speeds exceed an average of 25 mph, and money is available the traffic calming will be introduced. Whatever your opinion we need to achieve that target. One way we might do this is by setting up a speed watch team. There is evidence that this intervention is effective in reducing average traffic speeds and it will be able to provide records of how effective this is. This could prevent the introduction of restraints, which those who do not want a 20mph limit should support together with the majority who did not want calming restraints, it should also please those who wanted restraints as they fear a limit on its own will be ineffective. To mount a speed watch we need a minimum of 12 volunteers willing to give up 1 hour a fortnight – the more volunteers the less hours everyone needs to do. If you are willing to be part of the team please contact me email - phone 01603457802. Also please try to persuade your friends and neighbours to join.

Thank you for reading this. I apologise for missing the AGM but I had a prior engagement at Bletchley Park. I'm sure that experience will help me to decode council messages in future.

Vic Flute