

Eaton Village Residents' Association (EVRA) - Chairman's Report to AGM – October 2019

Fortunately it has been a somewhat quieter year than we have experienced previously. This has enabled the Committee to concentrate on other matters which have also kept us busy.

Local Issues

Eaton 20mph Zone – The 18 month experimental scheme for Eaton Village was implemented in June through the issue of a Speed Restriction Order and installation of 20mph roundels to lampposts. The Committee asked the City Council to install Speed Activated Signs to alert drivers when exceeding the limit but there are only a few of these which are being shared around the City. Many drivers are complying with the 20mph limit but many drivers are not doing so, especially on Church Lane, Greenways and Sunningdale. The consultation on the Eaton experimental Scheme closes on 24th November and Residents can comment on this via the link on the EVRA website. We do not know what stance the City Council will take at the end of the 18 month period and whether they will retain the 20mph Zone, revert to 30mph or implement traffic calming measures to ensure compliance. The EVRA Committee would prefer the 20mph Zone to be retained since this makes our roads safer for all residents but have concerns over the type of traffic calming measures that might be introduced.

We remain keen to set up a speed watch team but we need a minimum of 12 volunteers willing to give up 1 hour a fortnight – the more volunteers the fewer hours everyone needs to do. If you are willing to be part of the team please contact Vic Flute Email vicechair.evra@gmail.com or phone 01603457802. Also please try to persuade your friends and neighbours to join.

One change we would wish to see is a zebra crossing on Church Lane somewhere near the Church Hall that enables residents to cross the road safely and also get to the bus stop. The City Council tell us that this is outside the scope of the 20mph Zone implementation but we have discussed with our Councillors how we might take this forward.

Konect 5B Bus Service – The service was renumbered as 5B and a half-hourly service introduced Monday to Saturday. The more frequent service to the City is welcomed although we have received some comments about the reliability of this and buses being cancelled. We will monitor feedback from residents and seek assurances from Konect should this become a bigger issue.

Barclays Bank – November saw the closure of Barclays Bank in Eaton which inconvenienced residents who now have to travel to the City for many banking services. Fortunately the Post Office at the Cellar House can also be used for banking transactions. EVRA banks with Barclays and experiences the effect of the closure – after our Fun day we had around 5 kilos of coins to deposit at the City branch!

Trading Standards and Scams – Following the presentation by Norfolk Trading Standards at the 2018 AGM a page was set up on our website to post the latest scam reports and also provide a link through to the County Council website. The list of scams grows weekly and residents need to be constantly aware and vigilant when dealing with phone calls, emails and cold callers.

Projects

Eaton Green Playground – We continue our fund raising activities for Eaton Green Playground and during the summer reached our target of £7000 for the purchase of an integrated roundabout. The sum includes a grant offer of £1400 from Pledge Norwich with the remainder raised from events and from additional receipts from subscriptions. We are in discussion with the City Council about installation but current costs for the equipment are coming out at around £8500. We have the funds to pay for this but are also exploring other funding sources to close the gap. The groundworks

needed to install a level and stable base between the existing grass and the roundabout is the main cost driver for this piece of equipment.

Our Playground sub- committee of 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 Lane is looking much better through the efforts of the team and had many bees and beneficial insects collecting pollen during the summer months. Rosemary welcomes new volunteers to assist on Wednesday afternoons in what is a social as well as an active session.

Events

Pumpkin Trail – Our pumpkin trail provides an alternative to Trick or Treating and is very popular with families. This is organised by Carol Plunkett with assistance from me and Vic to place the clues around the trail. The teams walk around the trail collecting the clues which form an anagram they have to solve. All participants get a prize and we raised around £85 after expenses.

Spring and Summer Garden Competitions – Rosemary Benton once again organised our Spring and Summer Garden Competitions. Smith & Pinching sponsored the prizes for both events and we are very grateful for their generous support. Organising two competitions a year in close proximity requires much effort by Rosemary and the judges, so we will look at whether running a single competition in future alternating between Spring and Summer event each year would be easier.

Scarecrow Festival and Competition – For our tenth Scarecrow Festival in July we had 23 entries around the village. The theme of “Highlights of the Decade” resulted in entries covering the environment, political and social events. Notcutts sponsored the Judges prizes and Smith & Pinching sponsored prizes for the Residents favourite scarecrows. Our independent Judges had a tough time picking their favourites but reached a consensus. Residents toured the trail throughout the weekend and voted for their favourites within each of the four categories. We also had 14 garage sales which raised £85 for the Playground Fund and cake sales and other events contributed a further £160.

We continue to be very grateful to our local businesses for their support for our events, which enables us to do so much more, and also our Residents who organise cake and other sales.

Family Fun Day – This was held at the Cellar House on the Sunday of the Scarecrow weekend and was a busy time for the Committee. As well as our popular games and tombola Eaton Vale Activity Centre brought along their climbing wall and Direct Dance displayed their talents. Children’s entertainer, Stevie Spud, amused both children and adults and taught them a few juggling skills. The Cellar House provided a barbecue and the sun shone! It was a busy and enjoyable event with over £500 raised during the weekend from stalls and cake sales. We are grateful for the support of Eaton Vale Activity Centre, Direct Dance, Victoria and Graham and the team at the Cellar House and all residents who came along which made the weekend a great success. Most of all though, I have to thank the Committee and Vic Flute, who organised the Fun Day, for all their tremendous effort setting up, running stalls and clearing up afterwards to ensure the event was successful.

Other Matters

CAMEO (Come and Meet Each Other) - Our group continues to flourish with 38 people registered and a regular attendance of around 24. Aimed at those who are experiencing memory problems and lonely folk from our community, this is a place where you can meet others and join in various activities. We enjoy community singing with our resident musicians, word games, craft activities,

board games and puzzles and people's enjoyment is most evident as we try to meet their very varied needs. The events aim to be dementia friendly and take place every 4th Wednesday of the month in St Andrew's Church Hall 2.30 – 4pm.

High point in the year was the 'Angel Project' which saw our crafts group create a four-foot-high cardboard sculpture with a cut-out face. Children loved being photographed looking through it and this made it the most popular exhibit at Christchurch in the run up to Christmas, for which we won first prize.

Bob, our prolific crocheting member made further gifts of his very fine blankets which have been raffled for the benefit of a number of good causes in the district – and helped to spread our good name.

St Andrew's Church Hall continues to welcome us and we are grateful for storage space being allotted to us, which saves old backs from stresses and strains! It was exciting to be included in the Eaton Summer Programme, that allowed us to meet in August and we welcomed the increased publicity, which brought us some new faces.

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. We also issue a Summer Events Programme to promote our Scarecrow Festival, Garage Sale, Summer Garden Competition and Family Fun Day. 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. As ever, I thank our Vice Chairman, Vic Flute, for his support and organisational skills that ensure things such as the Fun Day are a great success. I also thank Carol Plunkett who has been EVRA Treasurer for the past year but will step down because of increasing workload in her day job and other commitments. Carol wishes to continue on the Committee where her organisational skills and contacts have proved invaluable for fund raising activities for the Playground Project.

As you will see from the above, the Committee has had a busy and active year with full involvement in our events and projects. We are also grateful for the support and involvement of residents helping to deliver Newsletters, working in Donkey Lane and assisting on our Fun Day.

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.

We aim to build a stronger community spirit in Eaton Village and it is evident that this has grown significantly over recent years. We thank you all for your support.

Chris Stebbing

EVRA Chairman 2018/19

October 2019

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