

Eaton Village Residents' Association - Chairman's Report to 2022 AGM

Following two years of restrictions it has been good to get back to an almost normal lifestyle. Care still needs to be taken to keep safe and healthy and I think that we have all adapted well to this. Your EVRA Committee has remained in place since the 2019 AGM and continued to meet bi-monthly recently moving from Zoom meetings back to indoors. The online meetings impose a discipline on timing to fit within Zoom boundaries but don't provide time for the social chit-chat that face to face meetings allow. Similarly, we have not been able to hold general meetings indoors so it is good to be able to meet up again. The Committee has been busy organising events as well as dealing with other local matters and these have been summarised below.

EVRA Events

We ran our popular Pumpkin Trail in October 2021 as an alternative to Trick and Treat and followed this with an Easter/Spring Trail in April. The trails are a set of clues hidden around the Village which participants have to find and collect the letters. The letters form an anagram which has to be solved to find the answer.

On 7th May as part of our environment day we organised a Dawn Chorus walk led by Eaton resident Phil Atkinson who works at the British Trust for Ornithology. Starting at 6:30am around 20 residents visited Keswick Mill and Marston Marsh while Phil pointed out the birds seen and heard and told us about their habits.

A second event in late afternoon on our environment day was a Swap Shop at St Andrews Church Hall in partnership with New U – A Community Interest Company that encourages reuse of clothing and supporting people into work. Residents donated clothing and books and toys and received vouchers they could exchange for items donated by others. The EVRA events were in support of the Eaton Parish Eco Day.

In June we organised a Big Jubilee Picnic to celebrate our late Queen's Platinum Jubilee. This was going to be held outdoors at Wentworth Gardens but following dire weather forecasts for the Sunday we moved this indoors to the 34th Norwich Scout hut at Eaton Vale. We are grateful to the Scouts for making their venue available at short notice and also thank Eaton resident Kyle for entertaining us and Timo and Max for providing a cake stall.

Our annual Scarecrow Festival ran for a week in July and had 22 entries with the theme of "Highlights of the Queen's Reign". Scarecrows celebrated a mix of royal and topical items from the last 70 years. Our Family Fun Day was held in the Cellar House garden on the first weekend of the Scarecrow Festival with a variety of stalls and games and a display by Direct Dance. Over the second weekend we had several Garage Sales around the Village where residents offered various items for sale. Proceeds from these events contributed to EVRA funds. Cake Sales run by Elaine and Grace and plant sales by Val raised further funds for our projects.

We included a number of sunflower seeds in the subscription envelopes issued with our Spring Newsletter and many residents planted these. We invited residents to tell us about the height of their sunflowers and we measured these. The tallest was 2.9 metres (9ft 6ins) grown by Carol on Greenways with four runners-up producing flowers taller than 2.5 metres (8ft plus). Our winner plus the runners-up will receive prizes sponsored by EVRA.

Local Issues

Speeding around Eaton Village: For the past year the vehicle speeds have been monitored around Eaton Village. EVRA manages the Speed Awareness Monitor (SAM) on behalf of the community and shares the data with our local Councillors, County Hall and the police. The monitor is moved every

month and a summary of the data is published on the EVRA website. More than 60% of drivers are exceeding the 20mph speed limit on Greenways and Church Lane whereas on Sunningdale it is 50%. The highest speeders are on the section of Church Lane between Greenways and Marston Lane where more than 30% of the 700 plus vehicles recorded daily exceed 25mph with 6% exceeding 30mph. Speeds of 40 to 55mph are regularly recorded on the section of road by the Eaton Burial Ground. Our neighbourhood policing team conduct occasional checks in Eaton and remind speeding drivers of the 20mph limit. The sign also provides data on number of vehicle so we know that an average of 5000 vehicles use the section of Church Lane by the Church Hall each day. School traffic accounts for around 800 cars daily during term time using Church Lane and Greenways going to and from the school. Thank you to Robin, Simon and Mike for helping to move the sign.

Eaton Village Sign refurbishment: During the past year we raised £2900 for the refurbishment of the Eaton Village sign. Donations from local businesses and from residents as well as money raised through events enabled EVRA to reach its target within twelve months. The 66 year old sign was in need of a complete overhaul to repair some features and repaint it. The sign is owned by the City Council but EVRA has taken the lead on raising funds to maintain this. The sign is currently at a specialist workshop in Hingham awaiting refurbishment. It was due back in October but the workshop owner is recovering from a recent accident that will delay completion of the work. We are keeping in touch with the workshop and waiting for news on when the work will take place.

Barclays Bank site: Work seems to be progressing well on the development of the old Barclays Bank site. We had concerns about potential delays and road closures as experienced during the nearby Senna Mews development but these have not materialised. We have a local contact within the project to address any issues arising.

McCarthy & Stone on Bluebell Rd: The second phase of construction is underway with phase three starting the planning stage. Eventually some 300 properties will be built on the site bringing more custom to our businesses. Recent press coverage highlighted the “quaint charms” of our Village as a perfect place for those of retirement age! We know that Eaton is much more than that and a great place for people of all ages to live.

EVRA Finances: Subscription income has been steadily increasing with further donations received in addition to the requested £1. Many residents now pay their subscription online but we still have a lot of cash to bank each year. Our healthy bank balance enables the Committee to think about initiating other projects that would benefit our community. The cost of our Newsletter print run has increased from £85 to £120 during the past year and indications are that prices will rise further. The EVRA bank account also holds money for the Eaton Defibrillator managed by Councillor Caroline Ackroyd and the CAMEO drop-in sessions.

EVRA Website and Facebook pages: We use our online feeds to post information between issues of our Newsletters. This includes posts on EVRA and other local events as well as updates on EVRA matters. We have also added some local walks to the website as well as adding to our collection of photos and information about Old Eaton. We know that our online feeds have a wide reach and an immediate impact. On a lighter note, a visit to Eaton by a pair of peafowl in June hit the National press as well as reaching the USA. The pair visited various local gardens for a week or so waking residents early with their screeching.

Finally, thank you to the Committee for continuing in post throughout the past two years and dealing with all kind of things under differing circumstances. Thank you also to Eaton residents who have supported the Association throughout. It has been a challenging time for all community groups

Chris Stebbing – EVRA Chair

October 2022