

EGVNF Committee Meeting, 15 February 2024 at 6.30 p.m.

The Village Centre, Victoria Street, Englefield Green

Minutes

In Attendance: Alan Sloan (Deputy Chair), Terry Barnett, Fred West, Melanie Frobisher, Debi Hallet, Albert Jamieson.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Mike Kelly, Erik Juul-Mortensen.
2. **Minutes of previous meeting:** The minutes of the previous meeting (No 39) held on 11 January were approved.
3. **Declaration of personal interest in topics to be discussed:** None
4. **Financial Report:** FW presented the accounts showing a balance of £295. It was noted that any balance remaining on 31 March 2024 is required to be returned to GroundworkUK and could not be used for printing copies of the adopted Neighbourhood Plan for Committee members.
5. **Setting up of Englefield Green Community Trust** – FW reported that the initial application having been rejected he had taken advice from an organisation called Voluntary Support and a revised application would be submitted following his return from an imminent holiday. AJ raised the question of the life of the Neighbourhood Forum which “has a defined life of 5 years”.
6. **Meeting with the Crown Estate** – AS reported on a meeting with Nick Day (ND), Head of Engagement and Events held on 25 January together with Amanda Willis, Chair of EGVRA and Mike Kelly. The highlights were:

a) Windsor Illuminated

The light trail had enjoyed a successful 3rd year spread over 47 nights producing a £250k profit to the TCE which had been fed back into the garden primarily employing more gardeners.

Traffic management remains a major concern. There is a traffic management plan in place which 87% of motorists adhere to but unfortunately 13% do not. Discussions had taken place with Marisa Heath about further improvements as well as the resurfacing of Wick Lane, in particular the stretch between the Savill Garden and the Sun Inn.

Following discussion about the traffic impact upon Englefield Green and in particular the Christmas Tree event ND had agreed to provide up to six traffic marshalls to assist at future events.

The question of using Virginia Water car park was raised. ND said that consideration was being given to split car parking between Virginia Water and Savill Garden for the 2025 event. The challenge was identifying a suitable location for the event and managing visitors from two separate car parks.

b) Crown Estate land along the A30 just before ACS

ND said that this stretch of woodland, known as Queenwood, had been neglected for some 40 years. This year all dead trees would be removed, the area fenced off and when completed would be used as grazing land for Longhorns and British Whites.

c) Englefield Green Community Shop

ND agreed to discuss with Athena Morse (Head of Visitor Development TCE) the possibility of the Englefield Green Community Shop having a small amount of space in the Savill building shop to sell goods made by local artisans. This may be at certain times of the year e.g. Easter, Christmas etc.

d) Summer event for EG residents

ND said that, in terms of improving engagement with EG residents he would arrange an event for around 100 in the summer for a cup of tea and a sandwich and an area for quiet contemplation.

The next meeting has been scheduled for 11 July.

7. Projects arising from the Neighbourhood Plan

(a+b) School tree planting inc Excess trees - Debi + Terry

DH reported that 60 trees are being delivered by the Woodland Trust to St Cuthbert's School during the period 28 February to 6 March. It was agreed that planting the trees on 7 March would appear to be ideal subject to confirmation from the school. Committee members to be invited to attend if available. The question of preparing the site(s) for where the trees are to be planted was raised. This will require discussion with the school. DH said that the school would plant 40 trees and that the excess of 20 would go to Cllr Berardi and the Forest Estate gardening project. Details of precisely where on the Forest Estate the trees were to be planted was not known at this time.

(c) Parking and Speed Limits – Albert + Mel

AJ presented his previously circulated papers on Parking and Speed Limits.

Parking

The proposal is for a Parking Pilot Project (PPP) in the area bounded by St Jude's Road, South Road, Harvest Road and Victoria Street including Alexandra Road, Armstrong Road and Albert Road.

Following discussion approval was given to proceed to Phase 1 of the Parking Pilot Project (PPP) as set out in the paper i.e.

“Define the problem fully and describe it within its possible and situational contributors. Test hypotheses around this with formal data collection and observation that is fit for purpose to hone the Problem and Situational Definition. Define what a solution might look and feel like and the meaning of success for the PPP. All data and information driven, no “the solution is this” bias going into the exercise. Canvas resident options within this framework”.

The aim, subject to the availability of resources, would be to include proposals in the 2024 Parking Review.

AJ reported that both Ward Councillors for Englefield Green East Ward support the PPP and are willing to provide quotes to any circulars. At the recent Councillors' Surgery meeting Cllr Gates said that a new Working Group had been set up at RHUL, of which he is a member, to consider specific issues and that Parking is on the agenda for the first meeting on 4 March. MK has been invited to attend the meeting. Also, at the Councillors' Surgery meeting Marisa Heath said that she was also supportive of the PPP and that we may approach Project Centre for a preliminary draft quote for measurement work.

Speeding

Approval was given to make a short/high-level/general submission to SCC Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy that lays the foundation for further for further more detailed submissions to Surrey Highways:-

1. Priest Hill - reducing the national speed limit section
2. Prune Hill - reducing the national speed limit section including the level crossing area
3. A30 Wick Road to Egham Hill roundabout – possibly an ambitious multifaceted “flagship” project.
4. St Jude's Road - traffic calming measures

It was noted that the deadline for submissions is 24 March

(d) Central Area remodelling and sign posts – Mike + Alan

MK is to submit an application for funding by the March deadline

(e) Forest Estate gardening project

No further information available. Possibly connected with the excess trees above.

Other potential projects

Refurbishment of pathway between Bagshot Road and Blays Lane

AS said this would be large project requiring a reasonable level of funding. To be considered as a potential application in a future funding round.

Pathway from Bond Street to Savill Gardens – any pathway would potentially go through land (Meadow Cottage Farm and Parkwood) owned by the Arora Group and therefore no further action until outcome of Fairmont related planning applications are known.

Establish cycle routes with road markings + minor improvements – there was discussion about a potential route stretching from the junction of the A30 with Wick Road down to the Egham roundabout. AJ said he would be keen to take this project forward once the Parking and Speed Limits project was at an advanced stage.

8. Planning Applications

Fairmont

The proposed e-mail to be sent to members as a result of recent posts on Facebook was not approved primarily because the post had been aimed at EGVRA and not the Forum and also because out of some 6000 followers there were currently only 5 likes and only 2 comments.

The proposed e-mail to RBC Planning Committee members was also discussed and concerns expressed about content. AS agreed to revise and circulate. The urgency for submitting a letter may reduce if the Fairmont Planning Application is delayed until March or even May as was reported at the recent Councillors' Surgery meeting.

Birchlands

The Forum have submitted a letter of representation (LoR) to Surrey County Council. AS reported that at the recent Councillor's Surgery meeting two residents had spoken about existing and potentially increased parking pressures in Barley Mow Road and the adjoining road particularly Bulkeley Close. They also raised concerns about the entrance to the former Care Home being moved further down the road which would reduce by about a third the size of an existing layby.

Barbara Clark House

AS reported that efforts via Cllrs to meet up with PA Housing to discuss the 2018 approved design had proved abortive and the advice from RBC was for the Forum to make contact with PA Housing direct. AS said that he had attended PA Housing's Head Office in Walton on Thames that morning, obtained the e-mail address and mobile phone number of Robert Greene, Director of Building & Construction, and had subsequently sent him a request for a meeting with MK and AS.

Former Prezzo restaurant, Egham Hill

Another planning application had been submitted believed by Cllrs to be from a major fast food company although not declared in the documentation. Although there is a proliferation of restaurant/take aways in the area following discussion the view taken was that something is better than nothing and therefore the Forum should not submit a letter of objection on this occasion.

Web site update

MK is to action on return from holiday

AOB

Kingswood, Coopers Hill Lane

The Kingswood property owned by RHUL appears to be empty and questions were raised about the future of the site given that the proposed development at Rusham Park has been paused. It was observed that making use of Kingswood would potentially ease pressure on the demand for HMO's in Englefield Green. AS said that he would raise with Cllrs at the next Surgery meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.45p.m.

Date of next meeting: to be confirmed (a number of members are not available on 14 March 2024).