

**MINUTES OF THE EASTGATE WARD COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION AGM
HELD THURSDAY 10TH MAY 2012 AT GARLAND STREET BAPTIST CHURCH**

Tim Page opened the AGM thanking everyone for their attendance.

Introductions

Tim Page introduced key people to the room – David Nettleton, Town Councillor; Trevor Beckwith – Moreton Hall / Eastgate Division Councillor; PCSO's Helen and Jaz

Apologies had been received from:-

SueCarling[<mailto:susan@carling3.orangehome.co.uk>],
Patsy Warby,
Brenda and Cliff Hawkes banchawkes@tesco.net,
Caroline Parker [<mailto:carolineparker@yahoo.co.uk>]
Colin Payne.

Guest Speaker

Tim Page welcomed and introduced the Guest Speaker Dr Geoff Brighty – Area Manager- Environmental Agency

Dr Brighty gave a very comprehensive presentation to the Meeting in respect of the Eastgate Weir and the impact proposed building on the Ram Meadow site.

The presentation is available on the EWCA website.

The keypoints pertinent to EWCA being:-

- Dr Brighty wants to deliver on the Eastgate Weir Project, he believes he can make an ecological quality change. The money has been set aside to look at what is causing the problem and to achieve an outcome which sustains life and does not flood property. One of the options available could be to produce a two stage channel
- The fundamental problem with the weir is caused by low river waterflow.
- The feeding of the ducks in the Abbey Gardens causes pollution
- There is a good stock of fish in the river, mainly roach (who are fat from eating all the bread left over by the ducks)
- A survey into Crayfish is to be undertaken as if they are present they can damage the riverbank with their burrowing and bank could collapse. They will not be eradicated but they will be kept at bay and controlled.
- Anglian Water are assessing trial bore holes and the outcome of the trials will have an effect on the solution of the riverflow at the weir.

Dr Brighty took questions from the meeting:-

- Any issues with blocked drains to be addressed through Jane Birch at St Edmundsbury Borough Council as she is the Flood Manager
- Residents reported sewerage being taken from the area near the Weir at the end of January, a second tanker was required due to the quantity of waste. Dr Brighty had not been aware of work being undertaken and advised he would look into this matter.

- Tim Page advised that he would liaise with the Friends of Abbey Gardens about the feasibility of education signage in respect of feeding the ducks.
- Peter Gaskin queried the replenishment of Aquifer's given they are such a huge resource. Dr Brighty advised that quantity is not an issue that bore holes do not reach the natural springs. The use of bore holes is about sustainability not growth. New houses are becoming more water efficient and cause less stress on the water supply.
- Peter Gaskin pointed out that the financial crisis had not been predicted could the same thing happen with water supply. Dr Brighty reassured the meeting that studies are undertaken and unless there is an unprecedented 3rd dry winter water resource planning and drought management will ensure water supply.

The Development at Ram Meadow Car park

Dr Brighty said that the Environment Agency had been made aware of Vision 2031 and had pre planning discussions with developers in 2009 /2010 so was aware of the history. As part of the presentation Dr Brighty identified the likely flood risk to the proposed development area. The proposed residential development is in a low flood risk area. The car park is in Zone 2 and the link road in Zone 3. As part of the planning process there will be a flood assessment and the plans will be scrutinised by engineers and an hydraulic model made.

David Nettleton questioned if the Environment Agency could object to the Local Authority Plan. Dr Brighty advised that it was rare for a Local Authority to go against the advice on flooding. Tim Page queried what would happen if they did go against the advice. Dr Brighty advised that if this was the case the Environment Agency would go back to the Planning Committee and question why the plans were approved advising them it was a bad decisions and the extent of the consequences.

Dr Brighty advised that in respect of the link road extra space for the water to run of the road would need to be managed as the road is being built over a follow plain. The Environment Agency would want to the reassured by detailed plan that the proposals put forward will work.

The Weather

Dr Brighty advised that our area has been in drought for a year and that there has been different weather patterns. Rainfall has been 30%less. The recent rain has helped farmers with their rape and barley crop and help the reservoirs. It has certainly helped the weeds! A wet winter is required so that the aquifers can replenish.

Thanks

David Nettleton complimented Dr Brighty and the Environment Agency on how helpful they have been to the Eastgate Ward Community Association. Dr Brighty said that he had wanted to keep EWCA informed and would feedback following the Anglian Water study. David Nettleton advised that regular updates in respect of timelines, progress, constraints, breakthroughs would be appreciated. Dr Brighty said that he wanted to keep the project live and it was a priority for his catchment. He would work with English Heritage to meet their needs.

Dr Brighty advised of the River Care Programme run by Anglian Water which provided money for improvement. Peter Gaskin from the EWCA agreed to be Portfolio Holder for the Eastgate Weir.

Tim Page advised Dr Brighty that there was a standing offer to him to act as guest speaker at either the AGM in May or the Open Meeting in November.

Chairman's Report 2012 AGM

Tim Page read out the Chairman's Report on behalf on Mark Turner who had been unable to attend due to work commitments.

Once again the EWCA have had a very hands on year.

Issues that remain on our agenda are

- Unoccupied house in Northgate Street (owner given till June 30th to complete works) Cllrs Nettleton & Warby continue to monitor and push for a resolution. This is x1 of 123 such houses in Burt St Edmunds.
- Bins - Cllr Nettleton continues to chair the 'Task & Finish Group' which is looking into this subject in total rather than isolation. A compromise has to be found between people's aspirations and St Eds BC's capabilities. As with so many issues raised at our Open Meeting and by concerned residents, finding lasting solutions is more complex than most can envisage. But I remain confident that David will find a compromise to satisfy the majority.
- Mustow Street crossing - A report was prepared by the EWCA following calls for this crossing to be establish. Suffolk CC Trevor Beckwith has had an appeal upheld and we await proposals to be put forward by Suffolk CC. The crossing is mentioned in the Vision 2031 plans for Eastgate Ward, but Trevor is determined to push forward with this project as he states why should we wait another 19 years for a crossing that was identified as needed before the Hopkins Homes development in Cotton Lane was built!

Update on Mustow Street Crossing Trevor Beckwith advised that the crossing is on the Vision 2031 plans which was of concern as it is not possible to get funding for known requirements. A survey is to be undertaken on pedestrian movement. The Survey Team are waiting for a dry period so as to attract visitors and the survey be of more benefit. The wet weather has delayed the survey.

Items resolved/ heading toward conclusion.

- After a site meeting with the EWCA Cllr Beckwith we put forward a proposal to Suffolk CC to solve a disabled parking bay request from a resident in Northgate Street. After much deliberation (or should this be dithering Trevor) Suffolk CC have finally confirmed that this proposal is the best option to resolve the issue, and we wait for work to start.
- National Grid has confirmed that the porous gas main across Ram Meadow that persistently leaks, will be replaced this year. The EWCA our Cllrs and Officers from St Eds BC had a face-2-face meeting with National Grid concerning this subject in 2011.
- Numerous nuisance incidents by modified car enthusiasts resolved by a very pro-active SNT team in Hollow Road.

Highlights of the last year

The EWCA trip to Westminster Palace arranged through MP David Ruffley. A mix of EWCA residents and committee members enjoyed a very eventful day in the Capital and an excellent tour of parliament.

Disappointments

- Hollow Road Bridge and speed concerns relating to the modified road construction and traffic lights. Having worked with Cllr Beckwith on this

campaign with the last 2 years +. We appear to be having little impact (this despite monumental effort from Trevor) to get Suffolk CC to review this area and open up negotiations with Rail Track to instigate talks on the footbridge that was always deemed the ultimate answer.

Railtrack Tim Page summarised the problems in respect of the 3 railway bridge crossings one of which is on the EWCA Ward – Hollow Road. It is hoped that through the forthcoming Transport Consultation that pressure will be able to be applied to Railtrack who are asking for ridiculous amounts of money for building on their land.

- The SNT inactive to resolve traffic related concerns put forward by our Cllrs. This appears to have concluded without any substantial impact being noted by our Cllrs or the EWCA.

New Beginning

After chairing the EWCA for the past 5 years I have decided its time to stand down and let a 'new beginning' evolve, its time for fresh thinking and new ideas to flourish under new leadership.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you, the Eastgate Ward Community, for your support at our AGM & Open Meetings. This platform allows us and your Cllrs to understand your concerns and your interaction is much appreciated. I would also like to thank the numerous people, such as Dr Geoff Brighty tonight, who put themselves forward at these meeting as Guest Speakers.

I would like to thank the EWCA committee, past and present members, for the support they have given me. I would also like to thank the numerous St Edmundsbury Officers who have given their support to our crusades over the years; Damien Parker & Steve Boor to name but two.

But without wishing to waffle on much longer I would just like to save my final thanks for our Eastgate Ward Councillors, past and present. With total respect for the amount of work these people put into our community, I would like to say a very heart felt thanks to David, Trevor & Patsy for the support they have given me and the EWCA over the years. As hard as the EWCA works and as much as it has achieved over the last 5 years, very little of this would have been possible without the unrelenting support of our Councillors. Whilst we do not always agree on every issue, I stand down a Chairman with nothing but respect for the support they have given me and the EWCA, and their commitment to the Eastgate Ward. Thank you.

Tim Page seconded the thank you to Councillors. **Abbey Gardens Events** Tim Page informed the meeting that the EWCA had consulted with the Borough Council in respect of events being held in the Abbey Gardens following loud noises and masonry cracking after events held last year. Proposals were put forward which including noise restrictions and these were adopted by the Borough Council for future events.

Pauline Byford is also standing down and as a token of appreciation for all of Pauline's hard work over the years she was presented with a plant from the Committee.

TREASURERS REPORT - Keith Fennelow

Bank Balance reduced from £1280.00 to £1172.00

Petty Cash raised to £50.00 from £20.00

Income: £60.00 Adverts and flyers
 £120.00 Council Grant

Annual Meeting costs £260.00

The Council grant has now ceased.

EWCA WEBSITE

Richard Whaelbelly has now set up the EWCA site.

The domain name is **ewca.org.uk**

There is an option to join the mailing list on the site

If you would like any memories of the Eastgate Ward or past successes included on the site email them to webmaster@ewca.org.uk.

If you need to make contact with the Chair of the EWCA please contact chair@ewca.org.uk

EWCA COMMITTEE

The Committee were stood down. It was proposed by Pauline Byford and seconded by Mary Ryan that all Committee members be re-elected with Tim Page elected as Chairman and Linda Seldis as Vice Chair on the strict understanding that she does not have to stand as Chair.

Elected Committee to be:-

Keith Fennelow, Peter Gaskin, Richard Whalebelly, Colin Payne, Lynda Seldis, Julie Webb, Dianne Everitt, Peter Hardman.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Terry Walsh informed the meeting of some actions that he had taken with the assistance of Patsy Warby in respect of pigeon mess under the flyover in Eastgate Street. Responsibility had been passed between Highways and the Council but has finally resulted in Highways taking responsibility. Terry Walsh has proposed that aluminium netting be erected, this can be pulled back and forth and as it is aluminium will not rust. He has been advised that work will be undertaken by the end of the calendar year. Trevor Beckwith advised Terry Walsh that if there was delay he would assist in this matter. David Nettleton advised that mesh had been used to solve the problem in Fornham Road and had worked successfully.

Tim Page encouraged Terry Walsh to consider joining the EWCA Committee as he would be a good representative from Eastgate Street and area that was currently under represented.

Mary Ann White from Pickwick Crescent raised the issue of the dwindling town centre market and wondered if it was due to increasing rents. David Nettleton assured the meeting that initiatives were in place to ensure the continued success of the market and that rent had not increased. Jubilee Events were one of the forthcoming initiatives.

Mary Ryan advised that the Union Jack had recently been stolen from Minden Close, the Police became involved and following a wonderful donation from RAF Honington a replacement flag has been provided.

Keith Fennelow queried if the subsiding paving slabs had been investigated. David Nettleton advised that Mr Boor had not got back to him on this matter so he would follow up to seek a solution.

Tim Page advised that if any neighbours wanted to get together to form a "gorilla gardening" type group that he had information from the Royal Horticultural Society that he was happy to pass on. The scheme had been successful for Well Street residents and had helped tidy up areas at the back of the shopping centre.

MARK TURNER

Trevor Beckwith said that he wanted to say what a brilliant Chairman of the EWCA Mark Turner had proved to be and said that he had not appreciated how much work Mark put into the role. He would not “let go” of an issue until it was resolved. He could bring forward emails on anything when asked. He had had good association with the Councillors, himself, David and Patsy and the EWCA had been lucky to have him. He was sure that Tim Page would be able to fill the boots.

Tim Page commented that he hoped that Mark was not lost to the EWCA forever.