



EDDINGTON
RESIDENTS
ASSOCIATION



Eddington Residents' Association and Portal meeting
Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 14 June 2022 at 4.30pm
Virtual meeting held via MS Teams

Those present

Eddington Residents' Association (ERA)

Pieter Desnerck, Chair

Patrick Sweeney, Support officer

Portal / University of Cambridge

David Attridge, Operations Manager at Eddington, University Estates Division

George Martin, Facilities Manager at Eddington, University Estates Division

Irene Wong, Operations and CS Assistant, University Estates Division

Pauline Haggar, Health and Safety Coordinator, University Estates Division

Apologies

Margreet Vogelzang, Support officer

Marcus Maier, Support officer

1. APOLOGIES & INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed the group. Introductions were made.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed and are on the ERA website.

3. ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Responsibilities Map: There are boundaries to be clarified between Portal and The Podium (Hill)

[ACTION: GM to meet with Hill Facilities to clarify]

Shopping trolley: Portal has identified hotspots. It is handled by Lodge as it is tenancy issue. Support from ERA to remind residents is appreciated.

Future plans for Turing Way and Eddington Avenue: PS raised this with the Travel Team at the University of Cambridge. PD stated that complaints made by permanent residents for the road status plan to Cambridge City Council would be relevant. It would be helpful if the University could voice concerns. DA reminded that these two roads will be adopted by the Council in the future. It is better to consult the Development Team for plans of the roads. PD agreed and suggested residents should be able to join the discussion with the University and the Council.

4. REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

ERA:



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- restarted Open Door, Film Club, Board Game club.
- About 230 people attended the Great Eddington Platinum Jubilee Picnic which was held at the Cricket Pitch. People enjoyed it. ERA thanked Estates Division for sponsoring the cupcakes which ran out in 45 minutes.

5. MATTERS ARISING

- **Water supply disruption incident**

Portal reported that there were problems with the non-potable water pumps on Monday 23 May. While Portal was repairing non-potable water supply, as the concerned water pipes was exposed it led to problems with potable water supply on Friday 27 May. GM and senior staff were on site on Friday evening and water supply was reinstated on Saturday. It took the laboratory some time to confirm results of water quality. There are lessons to be learned from this incident. PD said that most residents are pleased with the compensation, as the University recognised the inconveniences residents faced during the disruption. Residents are dissatisfied with communication at the early stages of the incident. There are concern of the reliability of the system.

DA agreed that there was a need of formalise way of communications with residents. Portal reinstated water supply within 24 hours. Within that time, there were temporary water supply on site, shower facilities provided, alternative water source from Storey's Field Centre provided. This was an amazing emergency response in reality. The statutory compensation would have been £30, but the University paid 4 times the requirement. He hoped that residents recognised this was a gesture of good will. Afterall it was about service provision as well. Portal will improve systemic communication in emergency situation and create a point of contact for residents. He added that the whole team, including the Mears team was there well past midnight, that they were really effective to get the situation turn around. PD agreed that the compensation acknowledges the inconvenience caused upon residents, more than statutory requirement.

- **Estate Service Charge (ESC)**

DA announced the ESC rate is reduced to £7.87 (include VAT), about 20% decrease from previous year. He is working to organise a workshop to explain the budget and ESC. PD queried whether residents were overcharged in previous years, and if services were not optimised.

DA responded that it was based on 3-year cycle calculation. In 2020 there was a surplus about £70,000 that was declared in last financial year. Portal have worked hard to reduce cost, for example consultancy fees, and further square meterage has been built in this new budget cycle that is charged ESC. Increase in ESC may be offset by areas adopted by Portal. Portal ESC is expected to be of a similar level ESC rate next year. Then it will be increasing in



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line with RPI. There will be a time when ESC starts to increase, but Portal are working to keep charges as low as possible.

PD enquired if the £70,000 surplus better to spread over a period of time than a one off.

DA said that it is likely there will be a surplus this year under current forecast. Therefore Portal are balancing the books, by spreading the surplus over 3 year cycles, to level out ups and down.

PS stated that under the RICS framework, Portal should credit back surplus as the equivalent to any extra cost into that particular year. Passing on and balancing out may not be the best practice. DA explained that there are a number of ways to deal with surplus, one of which is to push it into a sinking fund. The choice of spreading it over a 3-year cycle was tested with legal consultant and is advised to do so. He assured that Portal will get it balanced.

PS agreed that the discussion will be helpful in improving transparency of costs and budget.

He also questioned the allocation of cost: suggesting an internal sq foot of each household vs number of occupant in the property charging model, stating internal area is not relevant to the cost of the communal area upkeep. He suggested calculating by a building as a unit.

DA reminded that this calculation is part of the RICS framework, however legal advice will be consulted. GM added that commercial units are charged using the same methodology.

PS questioned if empty properties are charged to residents. GM said empty properties will be charged to the University or the developer.

DA concluded that this shows the importance of holding an open discussion so residents could raise questions and get answers.

- **Parking review**

Portal: 23 recommendations were made. There is action plan for the short, medium and long term recommendations. Portal is working with Mears to appoint a different enforcement service, who can bring all elements (parking machines, parking charge app, and enforcement) under one single provider.

PS stated that people often find it difficult to obtain the first free hour, as well as operating the parking machine. GM agreed.

DA added that there are different signage at different places. Portal are checking with the planning consent to make sure enforcement at each road are correct. This will take place over the next few months. **[Action: Share project plan with ERA by next meeting]**

- **Rising bollards**

DA confirmed that they are mechanically working. Unfortunately they encountered software issues when updating the software, the approved vehicle list did not work. It was found that the software was not supported anymore. New software was installed however not compatible to existing hardware. Hence new cameras and new hardware were ordered. These will be installed on 23 June. These are to future-proof.



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PS questioned the strategy of having the bollards. With more people living at Eddington, traffic is pushed down to Turing Way. He wondered if it was worthwhile of having operational bollards. DA explained that operational bollards are part of Section 106. Portal is exploring how this could be delivered in another way. He will continue to challenge the Development Team. GM added that signage has been renewed and bigger signs are ordered.

- **2nd Eddington Residents' Forum**

DA: It was positive. Residents were more concern with the cost of living. People noticed the changes and improvement Mears has made.

- **Placemaking**

Events are starting to take place.

- **Jubilee celebration**

Nursery reached out to helped with the Union Jack flag. ERA is pleased to use the Jubilee celebration to establish relationship with the nursery.

PS enquired if there is any proposal to improve the Veteran Oak area.

GM explained that under the tree management plan, it is to be fenced off to keep the soil and roots from being compacted. There are plans to get some signage about the tree.

- **Speed signage**

PS stated that there is a need for repeating signs to remind drivers. The roads are currently on private land, argues that Portal should be able to put up more repeat signs.

Portal explained that due to adoption of the road in the long term, they are expected to adhere to the Highways design manual, however they will review it with the Development Team.

- **Waste collection**

PD mentioned that bin chutes are sometimes blocked. GM explained that current rubbish collection is manual. The bin monitor contract is paused in February due to a subcontractor went out of business. The monitor device is expected to be installed in the next quarter, which will provide more data, and be able to trigger for a blockage and collection. Currently when report of bin chutes blockages on Hill's streets is received, Portal will communicate with Hill's facilities team to unblock the chutes. PD suggested it was somehow a design issue as bin chutes are not always aligned to the bin which causes blockage.



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- **Podium charge**

GM noted that Portal will not be responsible for landscaping for the properties under Podium's responsibility. There will not be duplication of charges for those properties.

- **District heating**

PD queried what renewable sustainable heat strategy is in place.

DA suggested this will be dealt with by Development Team and Sustainability Team. They are looking at funding, what best options they are. With regards to energy bills, because Core buys collectively with the rest of the University and benefiting from hedging, results in lower cost than other suppliers.

6. AOB

- Portal has increased security presence after some incidents. Security budget is increased to reflect the increased security officer patrolling at key times. ERA mentioned that there are more police presence.

7. NEXT MEETING

Next meeting on 13 September 2022; 4.30pm-5.30pm.