

ACER

The Whitegates
Residents Association
Founded in 1967 for the benefit of
the northern Earley community



Your local residents' association – working to
keep **your** part of Earley looking and feeling
good!

Newsletter – June 2017

STOP PRESS: Woodley & N Earley Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) Open Meeting to set local policing priorities
All are welcome: **Wednesday, 21st June, 7.30pm, Woodley Hill House, Eastcourt Avenue, Earley RG6 1HH**

Speeding / Traffic: Thames Valley Police are introducing a Community Speed Watch scheme in which local residents can monitor speed in their street. Please let ACER know if you would be interested in participating in this scheme.

Damaged Grass verges: ACER is working with Earley Town Council (ETC) and Maiden Erlegh residents to identify a solution to the problem of badly damaged verges, including the possible use of protective mesh and the inclusion of more trees and wild flowers. Residents can place stones on their verge to prevent damage from parking but need to fill in a form to apply for permission from WBC. Please contact ACER if you would like a copy of this form.

Rats / Litter: Residents report an increase in the number of rats seen, particularly in Culver Lane. Rats are attracted by unclean material left in recycling boxes so residents are encouraged to wash all cans and plastic bottles before placing in the recycling bin. ACER works with the EASI volunteer litter collectors and Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) to improve 'litter hotspots'. Please contact WBC if you spot overflowing public litter bins or are concerned about the cleanliness of your street at '**Report It**' on www.wokingham.gov.uk and do tell your councillors.

Garden boundaries: If you are using barbed wire please check that it is legal <https://thecrimepreventionwebsite.com>

Street Cleaning: ACER continues to monitor the state of the pavements and roads and send their findings to WBC. ACER organised a working party in May to remove weeds from the channel and back of pavement in Hilltop Road.

Well done M & S at Shepherds' Hill for tidying up the landscaping outside their store!

Parking: ACER is aware of parking concerns in the Whitegates area and we do take this into consideration when reviewing planning applications which may have impact on parking. If you are concerned about inappropriate or dangerous parking please do report it, by phoning 101 or online at: <https://reportonline.thamesvalley.police.uk/>. Please note that Civil Parking Enforcement comes into operation in Wokingham in autumn 2017. Keep up to date on this development at Parking Enforcement on www.wokingham.gov.uk.

Police Matters: Do sign up for information emails from Thames Valley Police Alerts at www.thamesvalleyalert.co.uk. Residents who would like to make their street a **No Cold Calling Zone** should contact ACER for more details.

Planning: ACER continues to monitor all local planning applications. It is important for residents to monitor what is going on near to them as WBC do not have time to check all building operations. If it looks wrong it often is wrong. Do check the WBC Planning Website and contact councillors and ACER if you have concerns that what is being built is not what WBC approved.

Community Provision: ACER has published a list of community activities available to Whitegates residents. This can be viewed on the ACER website (under 'news') or contact the email address below if you would like a copy.

ACER CONTACTS – email: chairman.acer@earleyresidents.org.uk / www.earleyresidents.org.uk/acer

Please contact us if you would like more information about ACER or would like to help

Committee: Eric Ayers, Mary Bather, Helen Hobson, Jenny Lissaman, Tim Marsh, Michelle Stone (chair), Andrew Vowler (Treasurer), Marilyn Vowler, Chris Wigmore, Siôn Williams **Planning Sub-committee:** Tim Marsh, Jenny Lissaman, Les Holder

Local Wokingham Borough Councillors: **Andy Croy** andy.croy@wokingham.gov.uk 07793 767314;

Alison Swaddle alison@swaddle.com 07792 104221; **Shahid Younis** shahid.younis@wokingham.gov.uk 07775 655630

Local Earley Town Councillors: **Munir Ahmed** munir592003@yahoo.co.uk 0118 9266889;

Sheena Matthews sheena.matthews@btinternet.com 07766 424098; **Alison Swaddle** alison@swaddle.com 07792 104221

HAPPY BIRTHDAY ACER – 50 THIS YEAR!

REPORT FROM THE 2017 AGM held on 31st March at St Peters' Church Hall. At the meeting:

- Michelle Stone was elected Chair and Siôn Williams Vice-Chair. Andrew Vowler continues as Treasurer.
- Eric Ayers, Mary Bather, Helen Hobson, Jenny Lissaman, Tim Marsh, Michelle Stone, Andrew Vowler, Marilyn Vowler, Chris Wigmore, Siôn Williams form the 2017 Executive Committee. Tim Marsh, Jenny Lissaman, Les Holder make up the 2017 Planning Sub-committee.
- A number of proposed changes to the constitution were agreed, including changing the name from 'The Association of Central Earley Residents' to 'ACER: The Whitegates Residents' Association'.
- The Treasurer reported that the current bank balance was £2634.10. No membership fees had been collected during 2016/17 as agreed at the May 2016 meeting. Expenditure during 2016/17 was on printing of newsletters and hall hire for some of the public meetings. Thanks go to St Peter's Church and the Network Vineyard Church for free use of rooms for public meetings.
- Membership fee for 2017/18 was set at £2 per household. This will be collected in June /July 2017.

What has ACER achieved during 2016/17?

Since May 2016 ACER has:

- Published and delivered 4 newsletters, with local issue updates, to all households in the Whitegates area.
- Held 4 public meetings - open to Whitegates residents with concerns about local issues.
- Used the ACER email to send regular updates to all residents who have registered with ACER and to respond to (and pass on to the appropriate body) a range of enquiries from residents.
- Represented the Whitegates area at Maiden Erlegh Residents' Association (MERA), Earley Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) and Earley Town Council Community and Youth Subcommittee meetings.
- Set up a multi-agency group to assess and advertise local community provision, identify gaps and work with local organisations to fill these gaps. The first draft of the provision list is now available on the ACER website.
- Circulated local public safety information from Thames Valley Police and details of how to sign up to Thames Valley Alert and / or set up a Neighbourhood Watch.
- Set up and regularly updated a street database which details concerns regarding litter hot spots, street cleaning, grass cutting, damaged verges etc and worked with local councillors and the Cleaner and Greener team at WBC to resolve these where possible.
- Worked with EASI (Earley Adopt a Street Initiative) to increase the number of voluntary litter pickers in the area and install 'zilch' bins for cigarette ends and worked with WBC to replace litter bins in Town Lane.
- Worked with WBC officers and councillors and Earley Town councillors to resolve a number of issues, including flooding, protection of grass verges, protection of open spaces, parking, speeding, the provision of litter bins, poor quality grass cutting and street cleaning and planning enforcement issues.
- ACER is currently working with Thames Valley Police to set up a N Earley (including Whitegates) & Woodley Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG). First meeting: Wednesday, 21st June, 7.30pm, Woodley Hill House.
- Set up a Planning Subcommittee to keep up to date with local planning issues and to scrutinise local planning applications and comment on all local applications they feel are outside the WBC Guidelines. Since June 2016 ACER has considered 55 applications, including the proposed Aldi /Costa Development on the north side of London Road and the proposed Park and Ride at Thames Valley Park, finding that nearly half did not meet the WBC Guidelines. As a result, ACER had commented on 7 and objected to 23 applications.

ACER hopes that, with your support, it will be able 'protect and enhance the local character, environment and amenities and promote community spirit' within the Whitegates area of Earley for another 50 years!

Membership Fees of £2 for 2017/18 are now due. If you have contacted ACER we will be calling to collect your fees. If you have not been in touch but would like to receive future newsletters and email updates, please contact chairman.acer@earleyresidents.org.uk with details of your name and address so that we can arrange to collect your subscription. If you use internet banking and would like to pay this way please email the chair for further details.

This will be the last ACER newsletter delivered to all households this year. Subsequent newsletters will be delivered to paying members only, who will also receive regular ACER updates by email.