



ETON COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
Minutes of the Eton Community Association Meeting
Wednesday 4th March 2026
The Hop House, The George Inn, Eton

Attendees:

Ros Rivaz, Leonie Bryant, Mark Wilson (RBWM Councillor), Christine Barber, Chris Spence, Sandrine Spence, Sylvia Ellis, Margaret Hayes-Powell, Maggie Waller (Eton Porny School), Bryn Lee, Dawn Lee, Teresa Read, Ian Read, Deb Martin, David Palmieri, Dawn Palmieri, Ed Waddleton, Peter Eaton, Anthony Cove, Barbara France, Bridget Bartlett, Theresa Winstanley, Gaye Kane, Phil Kane, Stephen Gosnell, Shirley Young, Elizabeth McMahon, Hardip Virdee, Pernilla Kemp (Eton Information Centre), Gayle Cole, Wendy Hermon (Swan Support).

Apologies:

Monaliza Cadwallader, Stuart Rogers, Katherine Rogers, Amanda Snell, Julia Gosnell, Mike Blightman, Katherine Blightman, Thames Valley Police representatives.

1. Minutes and Matters Arising

- i. The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting. Apologies received in advance of the meeting were noted.
- ii. The Chair explained that a short audio recording is taken during meetings solely to ensure accuracy when preparing the minutes. These recordings are deleted once the minutes have been completed.
- iii. The minutes of the previous meeting were acknowledged and the Chair reviewed progress on several matters arising.
- iv. An action from the previous meeting regarding litter bin provision had progressed. A bin previously located in Meadow Lane car park close to the South Meadow entrance has now been repositioned to a more practical location where access for emptying vehicles is easier, this should improve reliability of collection.
- v. Damage to grassed areas and turf on the Brocas believed to have been caused by metal detecting activity, had previously been raised with Eton College. The matter remains under discussion and further dialogue with the College is planned.
- vi. The Chair reported that she continues to seek a further meeting with the newly appointed Bursar at Eton College in order to discuss several community matters affecting the town.
- vii. Work relating to the Christmas lights scheme continues to be undertaken collaboratively with Eton Town Council. The Council owns the lighting infrastructure and assets, while the ECA leads the organisation, fundraising and installation activity.

- viii. Other actions from the previous meeting, including matters relating to Crown Farm, signage, parking, and traffic management, were scheduled to be addressed in the RBWM Councillor update later in the agenda.

2. RBWM Councillor Matters

Cllr Mark Wilson provided an extensive update on borough issues affecting Eton.

Highways and Infrastructure

- i. Councillor Wilson confirmed that the height restriction barriers at the entrance to Meadow Lane car park have been repainted. These works had been requested previously due to the barriers becoming difficult to see and deteriorating in condition and appearance.
- ii. Approval has also been secured for repairs and improvements to SML car park fencing. These works are expected to be carried out in due course.
- iii. Councillor Wilson informed the meeting that he has recently taken on a new cabinet portfolio within RBWM covering Neighbourhoods, Leisure and Performance. This portfolio includes responsibility for public realm services such as bins, grass cutting, parks maintenance and playgrounds. As a result, he will be taking a close interest in issues relating to public spaces within Eton.
- iv. A previously discussed request relating to 20mph highway signage near the College junction remains under review. Implementation may be delayed until the borough's new highways contractor formally begins work.

Highways Contractor Change

- v. RBWM has recently changed highways contractors. The previous contractor, Volker, has been replaced by Marlborough Highways, a regional contractor with experience working for several local authorities. The new contractor is expected to begin operating from April 2026.

Potholes and Road Maintenance

- vi. Councillor Wilson reported that the winter period has been particularly difficult for road conditions and potholes across the borough. Residents were encouraged to continue reporting potholes via the RBWM online reporting system to ensure they are logged and prioritised. Please include the dimensions of the potholes.
- vii. Approximately 700 potholes were filled across the borough during January alone. Temporary repairs are often carried out first, with more permanent resurfacing undertaken when conditions allow.

Public Space Protection Order – Catapults

- viii. Councillor Wilson provided an update on the consultation regarding a proposed Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) relating to the possession of catapults in areas along the River Thames.
- ix. The consultation received approximately 1,500 responses with a very high proportion of respondents supporting the proposed restriction.

- x. A report will be presented to the RBWM Cabinet in April seeking approval to implement the PSPO. If approved, the order will enable police officers to confiscate catapults from individuals carrying them in designated areas.

Crown Farm Planning Enforcement

- xi. Councillor Wilson reported that Crown Farm continues to be monitored by RBWM planning enforcement officers due to ongoing concerns about activity on the site.
- xii. Planning permission relating to two areas used for vehicle storage had been refused and the refusal was subsequently upheld by the Planning Inspectorate. As a result, enforcement powers now allow the council to require the removal of the unauthorised storage use within a specified timeframe, expected to be approximately three months.
- xiii. A planning application is anticipated relating to the construction of a replacement barn following the destruction of the previous structure by fire. Because the proposed replacement is larger than the original building, the application will require full planning assessment.

Council Budget

- xiv. The RBWM budget for the financial year 2026–2027 has now been approved by Full Council.
- xv. Council tax will increase by 7.5% excluding parish or town council precepts. Councillor Wilson noted that despite this increase, RBWM continues to have the lowest council tax levels in Berkshire.
- xvi. The borough faces significant financial challenges over the coming years due to reductions in central government funding. Current projections indicate that government grant funding could reduce dramatically over the next three years.

Car Parking Policy

- xvii. Charges at Meadow Lane and Alexandra Gardens car parks will remain unchanged during the coming year.
- xviii. A 25% discount scheme introduced for stays between two and five hours during quieter months has been performing well. Early results suggest that the scheme encourages longer visitor stays and increased usage.

Parking Concerns Raised by Residents

- xix. Residents raised concerns that sections of local car parks are often under-utilised at certain times of day, while residents experience difficulty finding parking spaces. It was suggested that the borough should consider whether some spaces could be reallocated for resident parking permits.
- xx. Members also raised concerns that parking charges in Eton High Street may be discouraging visitors when compared with nearby locations such as St Leonard's Road in Windsor.

Action:

Mark Wilson – Review utilisation data and consider possible adjustments to resident parking allocation and pricing comparisons.

3. Chair's Report

The Chair provided a comprehensive update on several local issues affecting the Eton community.

Emergency Siren Communication

- i. Residents were reminded that Eton College operates an emergency siren system for certain incidents. To help residents avoid unnecessary alarm, a local WhatsApp group has been established which provides advance notification when siren tests are expected to take place. Residents wishing to receive notifications may request to be added to the group. The College do not announce tests in advance because this would defeat their purpose.

High Street Business Updates

- ii. The Chair provided updates on several commercial premises along Eton High Street.
- iii. Willow is expected to reopen under a new temporary arrangement. A local resident has taken on the premises with the intention of operating a café business initially on a short-term basis.
- iv. A planning application has been submitted relating to the Premier Stores building on the High Street. The proposal seeks to restore the building's historic two-shop frontage rather than the current combined frontage.
- v. The estate agency, Barker Stone, is preparing to occupy premises previously used by Beaubelle. Works to the interior have been delayed due to damp issues which required investigation.
- vi. Progress relating to the proposed Cappadocia restaurant continues, although delays have occurred due to the complexity of planning processes.
- vii. Gilbeys - no news.
- viii. The Anytime Café has been taken over by new operators who already run other cafés locally. Members expressed optimism that the business will continue successfully under the new management.

Development Sites

- ix. The Chair provided an update on development activity at the Cockpit site where groundwork has been observed and foundations laid for residential units. Progress appears to be continuing, although the overall timetable for the development remains uncertain.

Planning Application – Windsor Brides

- x. A new planning application has been submitted for the Windsor Brides property following the refusal of an earlier proposal. Resident reports that this is identical to a previously refused application. Concerns previously raised by RBWM included the loss of commercial floor space and the creation of residential accommodation on the ground floor in a flood-risk area.
- xi. Residents also expressed concerns regarding insufficient parking provision associated with the proposal.

Action:

Mark Wilson – Review the application and determine whether it should be called in for committee review.

- xii. Work on the dentist (at the old Eton Stationers) has started.
- xiii. O.H. Parsons now occupy half of what was the Intersystems Building.
- xiv. Box Sash Windows at number 90 will return now that work has completed.

Action:

Chair – Contact Box Sash Window Company for an update.

4. Community Initiatives

Trunks Across the Thames

- i. The Chair provided an update on the Thames Hospice community art project "Trunks Across the Thames". The initiative will install decorative elephant sculptures across Windsor, Eton, Eton Wick and Slough to raise awareness and funds for Thames Hospice.
- ii. Through contributions from the Poor's Estate, Eton College matched funding and with Baldwin Bridge Trust, sufficient funds have been raised to sponsor two large elephant sculptures located in Eton and Eton Wick. Additional fundraising by Rotary has supported a smaller sculpture located in the Eton Information Centre. Funding still wanted to fully fund the small elephants in each of the two schools.
- iii. Eton College pupils, Eton Wick School and Eton Pony School will all participate in painting sculptures as part of an associated education programme.

5. Community Presentations

Well-being Activities

- i. Gayle Cole introduced wellbeing Reiki sessions including sound baths and therapeutic workshops aimed at supporting carers and community members.
- ii. Events will be held at the Baldwin Institute including a Mother's Day themed session and workshops on self-care for carers.

Swan Support Update

- iii. Wendy Hermon provided an update regarding swan welfare following recent cases of avian influenza affecting local bird populations. Over 80 swans have been reported as dying as a result.
- iv. A number of deceased birds had been collected and safely disposed of during the peak of the outbreak. RBWM have been “fantastic” with their help.
- v. Protective procedures including designated vehicles, personal protective equipment and quarantine arrangements have been implemented to prevent the spread of infection.
- vi. The situation now appears to be stabilising with no new cases reported locally for approximately two weeks.
- vii. Members expressed thanks to Wendy and volunteers for their extensive work supporting wildlife during the outbreak.

6. Treasurer’s Report

The Treasurer’s report was presented on behalf of Stewart Rogers.

- i. The ECA financial year ended in February 2026.
- ii. Opening funds for the year were approximately £13,400.
- iii. Closing funds were approximately £12,296.
- iv. The modest reduction largely reflects increased costs associated with the Christmas lights programme, which remains the Association’s largest annual expenditure.
- v. Income from advertising, donations and interest helped offset operational costs including insurance, website hosting and AGM expenses.
- vi. The Association remains financially stable with sufficient reserves entering the new financial year.
- vii. Securing sponsorship and funding for the Christmas lights installation remains the principal financial priority for the coming year.

Action:

Financial report at the coming AGM – Resident asked for more details. Plan is to include these as part of AGM.

7. Eton Information Centre

Spring Ball

- i. The annual fundraising Spring Ball will take place on Saturday, 21 March. The theme for the event will be ‘A Night at the Opera’.
- ii. Ticket sales are progressing well and several auction items have been donated including a holiday prize to Kenya.
- iii. The event is a major fundraising activity supporting the Eton Information Centre which receives no direct funding from RBWM or Eton Town Council.

Arts Week

- iv. Eton Arts Week will take place from Saturday, 23 to Sunday, 31 May 2026.
- v. Activities include an art trail, workshops, talks, children's events and exhibitions.
- vi. Local artists and businesses participate in the programme and additional volunteers are being sought to assist with event organisation.
- vii. Looking for someone to host a crochet workshop, also request for workshops to include crafts that used to have businesses in the High Street.

Action:

Community Members – Volunteer support requested for Arts Week activities.

EIC shop

EIC supports tourism, local businesses and local residents. The shop has two comfy chairs in which all are welcome to sit in and to chat.

8. Events Update

Community Litter Pick

- i. A community litter pick took place on Sunday, 1 March with sixteen volunteers participating, wearing smart new hi-vis jackets with Eton Community Association printed on the back.
- ii. They collected large quantities of waste including approximately 250 empty drinks cans in parts of South Meadow Lane.
- iii. Volunteers noted continued issues with littering and possible fly-tipping in several locations.
- iv. There is a large pile of black bin bags near Baldwin's Shore which RBWM say is a College responsibility.

Action:

Chair – Contact College about the black bin bags.

College Exhibition

- v. Eton College will host a community viewing of the exhibition "Elemental" exploring cultural relationships with air, fire, water and earth.
- vi. The event will take place on Tuesday 24 March. It comprises an exhibition viewing followed by a curator talk.

Community Pub Quiz

- vii. Following the success of previous events, additional community pub quizzes are being planned, likely to take place later in the spring.

9. Eton Town Council Update

Pavilion Opening and May Day Event

- i. The refurbished pavilion in the recreation ground will be opened to the community.
- ii. A May Day celebration is planned for Sunday, 4 May beginning at 10:00am. This is for 'The Glorious Majority' which celebrates the enclosure of the Lammas lands 200 years ago.
- iii. Planned activities include Punch and Judy performances, a dog show and appearances by the town crier.

CCTV Installation

- iv. Installation of new CCTV cameras in the area is expected shortly following successful fundraising led by Margaret Hayes-Powell.
- v. Additional funding applications are being prepared to extend coverage further along Meadow Lane.

10. Eton Pony School Update

- i. Maggie Waller reported that the school continues to perform strongly academically and remains oversubscribed at the application stage.
- ii. Early years assessment results exceeded both national and RBWM averages.
- iii. The school achieved a Good Level of Development score of approximately 82% compared with a national average of 68%.
- iv. Phonics results were also strong with approximately 92% of pupils meeting the expected standard.
- v. The school is currently seeking donations of books to expand its library collection via an online Amazon wish list.

11. Any Other Business

- i. Residents were reminded of a Patient Participation Group coffee meeting taking place at the church hall on Thursday, 5 March.
- ii. Members noted that repainting work has recommenced at the Waterman's Arms building following weather delays.
- iii. Locations for elephant sculptures associated with the Trunks Across the Thames project will include the Eton Information Centre and several High Street businesses.
- iv. A resident recalls a film of a party in the recreation ground which is no longer around and asks if anyone has a copy. Another resident thinks this was for the 1953 Coronation. It might have been filmed by Tony Cullom.

Next meeting is 18:30 Wednesday, 15th April. The first part of the meeting will be the AGM.

The Chair thanked all attendees for their contributions and closed the meeting.

Please email AOB for the next meeting to secretary@etoncommunity.co.uk