

**Kingswood Residents Association**  
**Minutes of Annual General Meeting**  
**Held at the Kingswood Village Hall on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2007**

The meeting was chaired and opened at 8-15pm by Mr Gary Whitney, KRA President and acting KRA Chair.

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Joan Spiers and Gaenor Circus.

**1. APPROVAL OF AGM 2006 MINUTES.**

Secretary for the Meeting, Mr John Lang, read through last years AGM minutes. There being no matters arising or proposed amendments their acceptance was proposed by Mr Peter Hawkins and seconded by Mr Mike Gibson. The meeting unanimously approved the minutes.

**2. POLICING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH.**

The Chair introduced Inspector Clive Davies and PC Alan Hornett. Inspector Davies briefly described the organisation of the Police Response Team, the Crime Recording Bureau at Guildford and the group he is in charge of, Neighbourhood Policing. In this group PC Hornett is one of ten PCs (or beat bobbies) in the Borough each supported by a number of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). Inspector Davies was keen that the Neighbourhood Policing Group were engaging with residents and made reference to the successful Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators meeting in Tadworth in January. He went on to say that if a group of volunteers were interested, it was possible to set up a Community Speed Watch scheme after a minimum of training, as had been set up in the Mole Valley. Crime in Surrey was generally 'down' but nevertheless the perception was that it was increasing. Kingswood was still a low crime area but last year, following a series of burglaries, effort was made on a high visibility presence of police cars, dog units and even a helicopter. PC Hornett drew attention to the vulnerability of neighbouring houses where building work was taking place and recommended that lights should be left on at night when going out. Forms for setting up Neighbourhood Watch schemes were made available.

**3. CHAIR'S REPORT.**

The Chair welcomed Mr Crispin Blunt MP to the meeting

The Chair referred to his Annual Report as issued in Kingswood Matters but wished to mention six significant subjects he felt were particularly relevant to Kingswood, These were: -

- Traffic, roads and parking
- Flatted development
- Increase in plot splitting
- Green Belt
- Tree preservation
- Council representation and local planning policies.

A questionnaire had been circulated with Kingswood Matters covering some of these subjects in order that the KRA Committee team could establish what residents views were and what the KRA should best focus on. The Chair appealed for these to be completed and returned via KRA Road Stewards or Secretary.

The Chair emphasised the impact of the Government policies and the regional bodies drastic increase in housing targets for the South East despite inadequate infrastructure. Green Belt land nationally was believed to no longer be fully protected and could come under threat from SEERA (South East England Regional Assembly) actions. Banstead Village RA had expressed concern at the ambiguity in the new policy guidance and the Campaign to Protect Rural England was identifying areas to be challenged. It was very important that the community should have a proper say in planning issues as the clock cannot be turned back after a precedent is set by approving a poorly thought through or out of character development. Developers have a right of appeal in law but there is no right of appeal for residents against bad planning decisions given by a local planning authority.

Questions invited from the floor following the Chair's Report and resulted in queries with regard to the suitability of flats recently built in St. Monica's Road such as difficulty in selling, kitchens with no windows, scale and height of buildings, overlooking neighbours etc. The Chair responded that he felt the massing of the relatively large buildings were contrary to the distinctive character of the area and suspected that many of the flats of the type being built in Kingswood did not as has been suggested cater for elder residents wanting to downsize.

A question was also raised about two Conservative Councillors now living outside Surrey and in particular the Kingswood Councillor Cllr Mrs. Gaenor Circus, who remains on the Council Planning Committee. Her decision to support development of blocks of flats in St. Monica's Road, despite overwhelming objections by local residents, had resulted in a local petition asking for her removal. The Chair responded that Cllr Circus had every right to be on the Planning Committee but understood she was now standing down in May 2007. Following the May Council elections it was expected that the a new local Conservative candidate if elected would take a seat on the Planning Committee.

One resident commented on the apparent increase of air traffic noise but this di not appear to have been noted by other residents.

#### **4. COUNTY COUNCILLOR MICHAEL GOSLING**

The Chair introduced Surrey County Cllr Michael Gosling who spoke of his shame of having Kingswood residents living with the potholes in the local roads. He advised that regrettably the re-surfacing of Waterhouse Lane had been postponed into the next financial year as the resurfacing required was more extensive than originally thought due to weakening of the road sub-surface.

C.Cllr Gosling stated that Surrey County Council was now beginning to act more like a responsible company in getting better value for money despite suffering declining and unfair Central Government grants well below the average for England as a whole. Whilst County Council tax had been raised by 4.4%, more ageing people per year requiring increased social services support and other social needs were placing a increasing financial burden on local authority finances.

C.Cllr Gosling promised to book the Village Hall one Saturday morning soon in order to take individual questions on County Council issues only. This would be confined to matters concerning the County Council but the possibility of Borough Councillors also attending is a possibility.

## **5. HONORARY TREASURER'S REPORT.**

The Hon Treasurer, Mr John Phipps, reported that the surplus for the year of £198 compared to £503 in 2005. This was mainly due to increased running costs, including the website and an exceptional credit in last years figures.

The Balance Sheet shows a substantial reduction in bank balance primarily due to use of funds in opposing the High Beeches appeal. If there is a need to oppose further flat development, additional funds will be needed. One other item of significance is 'Subscriptions in advance' which arises from the receipt of subscriptions in earlier years, mainly in 2005 relating to 20007 and 2008.

Any non-members present who would like to join were invited to contact Lynne Sinclair, our Membership Secretary, after the meeting.

The proposal to accept the annual accounts was moved by Mr Barry Miles and seconded by Mr Simon Parnall and unanimously accepted by the meeting.

Mr Phipps thanked Mr Derek Wall, the Honorary Auditor, on behalf of the KRA.

## **6. ELECTION OF HONORARY AUDITOR.**

Mr Phipps proposed that Mr Wall, who was kindly willing to stand again, be re-elected as Hon. Auditor. This was seconded by Mr Geoff Hearn and unanimously agreed.

## **7. ELECTION OF CHAIR, OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE FOR 2007-08.**

There was no nomination for the office of the KRA Chair.

A nomination for Mrs Chris Humphreys to be Road Steward for Eyhurst Close/ Eyhurst Spur had been received. Mrs Humphreys along with the existing committee members and officers as set out in the agenda paper were proposed by Lady Janet Hill for election and seconded by Mrs Mary Staples and unanimously accepted by the meeting.

Mr Mike Gibson pointed out that although listed as Road Steward for Hill Lane, he also covered Waterhouse Lane from the shops to the A217.

## **8. OPEN DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS.**

- A resident complained that traffic in and out of Legal & General offices did not always conform to the agreed one way “roundabout” system, i.e. incoming traffic up Furze Hill and outgoing down St. Monica’s Road. In response Mr Phipps advised that complaints could be made to L & G but previously the Human Resources Manager had confirmed that staff were requested to follow this route but legally L & G had no employer rights over staff on leaving the gate.
- The Chair, in responding to a suggestion that the KRA should have a permanent fighting fund, said that experience has shown it better that funds were specific rather than general. If we value the Arcadian and other characteristics of Kingswood the KRA do need to fight some of the major planning applications that will need resources. The Chair then quoted from a resident’s letter to Ms Anna Cronin (RBBC Director of Policy and Environment) with reference to the character of The Warren set in a Historic Parks and Gardens area – having been gradually destroyed.
- This raised an additional question as to whether the KRA had ever tried to get Kingswood classified as a Conservation Area. The Chair undertook to try to look into this.
- Mr Crispin Blunt contributed at this stage saying Green Belt had provided major protection from development in the past. It was still possible to get success in some cases and quoted recent events concerning Redhill Airport. He asked to be alerted if Green Belt issues were raised locally. He went on to say development is happening in the South East anyway and overloading the infrastructure, even without the Barker report etc.
- In response to a query about the law and Cllr Mrs Circus’s position, Mr Blunt confirmed he understood this Councillor met the legal residential requirements and her Council attendance obligations but would have to stand down when due for re-election.
- On planning protection of the area Mr Blunt thought there was possibly a case as a Conservation Area. With regard to pre-emptive tree felling before a planning application was submitted, a tree preservation order (TPO) on every tree was a n idea but beyond the Councils resources.

Mr Blunt left the meeting because of other commitments and was thanked for his kind attendance by the Chair.

The discussion on TPOs continued with the recommendation it was best for individuals to raise TPOs where possible. It was pointed out that TPOs were not to be confused with Development Orders on trees, the latter usually being time limited.

## **9. AOB.**

Lady Hill proposed a vote of thanks to the committee and there being no other business the Chair thanked the residents and officers for attending and closed the meeting.

