

**Kingswood Residents Association
Minutes of Annual General Meeting
held at Kingswood Village Hall on 4th April 2008**

The meeting was chaired and opened at 8.15 pm by Mr Gary Whitney, KRA President and Acting KRA Chair.

Apologies for absence had been received from Mr Crispin Blunt MP, Mr John Lang, Councillor Mrs Ros Mill, Sir Brian and Lady Hill, Mr and Mrs Archie Norman, Mrs June Fulford and PC Kelly Thorne

1. APPROVAL OF 2007 AGM MINUTES.

Copies of the minutes of last year's AGM were circulated to the meeting, followed by a brief overview by The Chair. There being no matters arising or proposed amendments, their acceptance was proposed by Mr Michael Plant and seconded by Mr Alan Eustace. The meeting approved the minutes unanimously.

2. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT.

The Chair referred to his Annual report as issued in Kingswood Matters and distributed previously to every household and wished to mention the following significant subjects he felt were particularly relevant to Kingswood:

- 2007 Questionnaire seeking residents views
Of 1,200 forms issued, only 112 (11.3%) were returned, a too low percentage to use for statistical purposes. Of those replying, only 50% had seen the latest Development Plan to which 95% agreed; support for Rural Retention was 94% and retaining Green Belt status crucial. 90% were against higher density and 95% against more flatted development. 67% felt that the local Planning Authority was not effective, but 85% supported the work of the KRA
- Planning Applications
The Chair explained it was very important that residents who wished to object to planning applications submit them in writing to the Council. Lack of objections for the High Beeches/Broxham plan meant that the KRA were not allowed to speak at the Planning Hearing - minimum numbers required are 25 from individual households or 50 signatures within a petition.
Multiple planning applications cause confusion, but when objecting to an application each objection must be tailored to that application, not just generalisations.
It was suggested that those on email should advise the KRA of their address details to receive such communications. Alternatively, contact your Road Steward for up to date information.

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It was suggested that a template of an objection template letter could be put onto the KRA website www.kingswoodmatters.co.uk to help residents write to the Council.

The Chair informed the meeting that the Planning Process was being speeded up – a government initiative, so all residents would all need to be vigilant to ensure any objection was sent in within the laid down time frame.

- The KRA has joined the National Association of Residents Associations – which represents about 500,000 (5% of English residents).
- To continue its good work, the KRA, who are currently functioning without a full committee, require more volunteers to serve the community. It was suggested that having Job Descriptions of what was required may help encourage volunteers to come forward, but it was explained that one does not need to be qualified to be on the committee. Instead, having the time to undertake required tasks, e.g. reviewing planning applications, roads and transport matters issues etc. were some of the items to be addressed
- He congratulated Mrs Ros Mill on being elected as a Reigate and Banstead Councillor for the Kingswood ward

3. HON. TREASURER'S REPORT

The Hon. Treasurer, Mr John Phipps, reported that the surplus for the year of £33 compared to £198 in 2006. This was mainly due to increased running costs but particular expense had been incurred with Professional Fees re BBC (The Warren) and Printing Windscreen Stickers (£490) for every household when Waterhouse Lane was closed in 2007. He informed the meeting that Clubs and Societies had a potential liability for Corporation Tax (for the KRA – only on the Bank Interest earned).

60% of Kingwood residents are members of the KRA, but the target is to get to 70%. Any non members present who would like to join were invited to contact Mrs Lynne Sinclair, our Membership Secretary, after the meeting.

The proposal to accept the annual accounts was moved by Mr Simon Parnell, seconded by Mr Roy Willcox and accepted by the meeting, unanimously.

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

4. ELECTION OF HON. AUDITOR

Mr Mike Gibson proposed that Mr Wall, who was kindly willing to stand again, be re-elected as Honorary Auditor. This was seconded by Mr George Ferguson and agreed unanimously.

5. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN, OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE FOR 2008-09

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There were no nominations for the office of the KRA Chair, or Chairs of the Planning and Roads and Transport Sub-Committees.

A nomination for Mr Dennis Cox to be Road Steward for Lilley Drive had been received. Mr Cox, along with the existing committee members and officers as set out in the agenda paper were proposed, en bloc, for election by Mr Alan Eustace and seconded by Mr Michael Sutcliffe and unanimously accepted by the meeting.

6. OPEN DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS

A. A Planning Forum

The Chair introduced Mrs Trish Canham to the meeting who gave a talk about how, following an initial meeting with Mr Crispin Blunt MP and representatives of other local Resident Associations, it was decided to set up a Planning Forum to be able to protect our locality and surrounding areas from the possibility of future ‘unfettered’ developments as planning guidelines change and housing densities increase in line with government targets. The advantage of a local Forum means that the views of 20/30,000 residents of North Surrey – under the banner of the Federation of Residents Associations – would be represented.

Two subsequent meetings have been held, attended by representatives of ten RAs, three County Councillors, the Leader of the Reigate and Banstead Council, most Ward Councillors and the local MP. Each RA was able to summarise their own local area problems, while Ward Councillors covered the central government issues. Many constructive ideas were aired for consideration and adoption to be presented at Council and Government meetings. Following the meeting, minutes of the discussions were provided to all attendees.

At the very recent second meeting it was apparent that the setting up of the Forum had generated considerable interest and the Council has implemented changes within its Planning Department to begin to address the myriad of concerns expressed by the various RAs. It is early days in the working of this new Planning Forum, but there are very encouraging signs that with sustained consultation local views will be listened to and it will help preserve our locality against poor planning or other developments that would permanently harm our surroundings.

(A full transcript of Mrs Canham’s talk, who was thanked by the Chair, Gary Whitney, the Kingswood representative on this Planning Forum, is on file.)

B. BBC Kingswood.

The Chair introduced Mr Richard Humphreys, Kingswood’s resident Planning advisor, who was asked to outline the current situation regarding the sale of Kingswood Warren and the Council’s stance as to how the property would be developed.

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Representation had been made to the Council that the site should follow established policies, citing statute law. The area is designated as Urban Open Space. The recommendation would be for a similar commercial use, but failing that alternatives could include, e.g. A Leisure complex, Hotel or Old People's Home. Traffic should be restricted to not more than 300 cars to minimize the effect on the local roads, particularly Woodland Way.

A letter from the Council dated 25 March giving the available options

1. Commercial Usage – as above
2. Light Industrial Usage (Class B1) – e.g. Offices, Laboratory, Light Industry (Craft based),
3. Residential Housing (the fall back option) with some affordable Housing included

required residents' responses by 11 April. All were encouraged to reply as a way to influence the planning process. Particular topics mentioned included:

- The KRA's Urgent Announcement letter circulated to all residents
- Land Covenants that could limit development. Although Berkeley Homes were concerned not to proceed, it was felt these would not be a restriction should a planning application be submitted/approved.
- Parking density is 1.5 cars per property – across the board
- If it became a 'battle', would there be funding to fight our corner?
- Collective view was required
- The somewhat awkward access to the site – would bussing be possible to minimize the volume of cars using the local roads?

After discussion the overall message from the meeting was to Preserve the Open Space so we would seek to retain the area as the current ongoing usage. Richard Humphreys would prepare a collective response to the Council, and the key points would be circulated to residents – via the website, email and/or road stewards - so that they could be incorporated in residents' individual letters.

It was also suggested that the Council had already done a deal with Octagon Properties (OP), so events may be out of our hands. OP had asked for a meeting with the KRA to discuss developments, but it was felt the KRA should not agree to a meeting until it was fait accompli that Housing was the only remaining option for the use of the site. In the meantime, there was still one week to reply to the Council's letter for your preferred choice.

C. Other Items

County Councillor Mr Michael Gosling was asked about and commented on local road issues including, re-surfacing, the impact of using of Satellite Navigational Equipment (Sat Navs.), A Traffic Plan for The Warren. He also advised that the Council was undertaking a survey of the main Kingswood Roundabout (A217) under the Surrey Safety Camera Scheme

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Social Care, Waste Disposal and Crime statistics (most offences seem to be committed by out of borough felons) were high on the Council's agenda. However, for the community we live in, Surrey is the lowest funded for most of the services provided, so resources have to be spread thinly.

Mr Gosling advised that anyone wishing to contact him on particular issues, could do so through the Surrey website.

The Chair announced there would be a Territorial Army Parade in Reigate on Saturday 10th May at 12 noon to recognize the contribution they play in supporting the Armed Services and Society in general, and encouraged residents to attend this Public Event.

The committee were thanked for their hard work throughout the last year by Mr Alan Eustace and the meeting closed at 10.25 pm.