

Kingswood Residents Association Minutes of Annual General Meeting Held at Kingswood Village Hall on 27th March 2009

The meeting was chaired and opened at 8pm by Mr Gary Whitney, KRA President, who introduced our guests Cllr. Joan Spiers, C. Cllr Mike Gosling, Cllr Ros Mill and Cllr Julie Tomlinson. The meeting was advised that as our Councillors had other previous engagements they were being invited to give their report before the main agenda was proceeded with.

1. COUNCILLORS REPORT

C. Cllr Mike Gosling outlined the current financial situation regarding government cuts; they had received a 2% increase when the inflation factor was 5%. Monies had been saved from previous years and that the largest amount of the reserves will be used for school building projects. He also reported on the freezing of £20million which was invested in an Icelandic bank and there are ongoing investigations and efforts for the return of the money. C.Cllr Gosling reported on the increased number of children now on the at risk register which will incur costs of an extra 13 million pounds.

C. Cllr. Gosling reported on the roads within Surrey informing the meeting that Surrey was performing as one of the top 10 Counties for maintaining the roads with an increased rate of pot holes repaired. The bank in outwood lane would be repaired this summer with road closure kept to a minimum of 2-3 days. With reference to the work to Waterhouse Lane C. Cllr Gosling reported that investigations were being carried out and the repair works will now need to be graded as a full reinstatement of this road is required due to the sub-base having been found to be weakened. His ambition is to improve Surrey.

Cllr. Joan Spiers reported that the local budgets can be balanced without impacting core services. The corporate plan had been written which included that all the core basic services will remain the same but with less capital projects. A pavilion is to be built and the capital for this project was set aside from last year's budgets. As of the 31st March the borough is purchasing land from Surrey council in Horley to build a leisure Centre. This is part of the Horley Master Plan and had been promised to the residents of Horley as they had a large number of new homes required to be built in this area. Waitrose had been granted planning permission and are due to reopen in November with an improved store and a reduced carbon footprint. Cllr. Spiers also reported on the freezing of £15 million which had been invested in Iceland which will result in lost interest income. To make the budget balance Cllr. Spiers said there will be a restructuring of the council, with a pay freeze for 2 years or until such time as the recession lifts. There would also be no increase in council allowances and the possible outsourcing some of the services is being looked at. Cllr. Ros Mill had taken on the responsibility of the Citizen Advice Bureaus (CAB's) and will be ensuring new offices will be found for them, as they have been swamped with local residents seeking their advice.

2. APPROVAL OF THE 2008 AGM MINUTES.

Copies of the minutes of last year's AGM were circulated to the meeting, followed by a brief overview by The Chairman. There being no matters arising or proposed amendments, the meeting accepted the minutes unanimously.

3. PRESIDENTS REPORT.

The President explained the work of the Federation which he will continue to work with. The Federation is made up of local residents from the borough which brings together collective representation and pressure on the Local Council and the Government to fight on wider local issues. The Federation has been working recently on the South East plan and for the protection of the green belt and urban open spaces. This borough is in the firing line from pressure for more local housing development. The SE plan also affects the new local development framework which replaces the local plan and sets out policies which the Federation has been busy responding to during the consultation period. The president also reported on the planning application on L & G Land in Banstead (Wellesford Court) which had been rejected with no current sign of any appeal. There has also been proposed on this same land area a Continuing Care in the Community development involving some 22 units and support services situated off of Copt Hill Lane. This potential development was first heard of when the KRA became aware that an Environmental Impact Assessment was asked to be carried out. Responses were given by the KRA and the Federation. A full planning application is expected in the future due to the current activity by the developer on this is important piece green belt agricultural land. A special Federation working group including two former planning officers has been set up to protect this green belt area. An existing planning agreement (Section 52) which restricts change use from Agriculture will be used in the fight to protect this particular area and its environment.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT.

The Acting Chairman referred to his Annual report as reported in Kingswood Matters which had previously been distributed to every household and wished to mention the following significant points he felt were particularly relevant to Kingswood.

- **A Threatened Community**

Kingswood is, in planning terms a threatened community from both without and within. The threats from without are clear –The Government policy through the South East Plan is openly requiring Councils throughout the South-East of England to make available land for excessively large number of new houses and to increase the density. All this with inadequate investment in the infrastructure. The Government is also changing the local planning policy by forcing Councils to conditionally release Green belt land and weakening the power of local Council to be the arbiter for planning applications. Kingswood is only separated from the edge of Greater London by a narrow strip of Green Belt Land, which is listed as agricultural land and designated as an Area of Outstanding Landscape Value located to the North of Kingswood; land which is held by offshore developers who are already pressing for the opportunity to start development. The initial proposals are subtle: A large development of houses and support facilities for a “care in the community” scheme and an eco–

town. The KRA has joined residents in Banstead, Tadworth and Burgh Heath to form a local group which, with guidance is seeking to do all in its power to legitimately challenge these plans to build on Green Belt.

Threats from within are more insidious because we all play a part. Flatted developments; people selling their houses for plot splits; felling trees before applying for planning permission; or extending their homes right to the edge of their boundaries. Many of us are sensitive to the so-called 'Arcadian' character of the neighbourhood – where houses subtly blend into a tree dominated area and where houses are characterised by being different to those around; but others, sadly are not.

Ever so slowly – house by house, tree by tree – the character and distinctiveness of Kingswood is gradually changing from within. The KRA has continued to work to comment on planning applications and to do our very best to keep development in line with the local character and the Village Plan.

- **KRA Membership**

Almost 50% of Kingswood residents are KRA members, but we would like to encourage more people to join. We need more than your money and moral support; we also need people to give relatively small amounts of time, to join us on the committee and to give active support in our work. You don't need to be an expert in planning, accountancy or IT to be the person who helps to bring a KRA presence on your street; we need people who simply care about this community. If you have a desire to be further involved then we also need people who are willing to give some of their time to learn a little, and help to comment on planning applications or to help out with some of the Association's administrative tasks. A handout about the KRA website was issued giving the website address. To improve communication, we would like more people to be involved, you are the eyes, ears and mouth of the road we live in. By giving practical and moral support you help us – through our own work and through the work of the Banstead and District Federation of Residents Associations – we continue to work to keep Kingswood a special place to live.

- **BBC SITE**

The Acting Chairman reported that the BBC site had been sold to Octagon and that the BBC will vacate the site March 2010. He explained how a group of representatives from the KRA and Frontages had been set up to meet with Octagon, to ensure that the character of Kingswood was maintained in the development throughout.

The Acting Chairman gave thanks to those committee members who were not standing for re-election they are: Mr Colin East, The Chase who has been on the committee for 11 years, And Mr John Phipps who has been Treasurer for the past 10 years. Mr Phipps will remain on the committee. Sincere thanks to them for all their commitment and hard work for their service. Mr Gary Whitney who has retired as Chairman, this position he has held for the past 10 years, remains as President working on our behalf with the Federation.

5. HON. TREASURER'S REPORT

The Hon. Treasurer, Mr John Phipps, presented the accounts and reported that shown on the Income and Expenditure there is a grant of £400 this is for Warren Drive. The surplus for the year is £612. He reported on the Balance sheet that cash on deposit has increased from last year by £4000 this is due to subscriptions for the next 4 year period had been received. The accumulated reserves are £7800. The Treasurer also reported that the subscription for a 4 year period is a modest figure of £20 – that is £5 per year per household.

The proposal to accept the audited accounts for 2008 was proposed by Mr Peter Hawkins, seconded by Mr Tony Bennett and accepted by the meeting, unanimously.

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

6. ELECTION OF HON. AUDITOR

Thanks were given to Mr Derek Wall for his contribution over the past 6 years, for audited the accounts for us he does not wish to stand for re-election.

7. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN, OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE FOR 2009–10

The President announced that nominations for the following officer positions had been received:

- Mr Simon Parnall – Chairman
- Mrs Adrienne Light – Treasurer
- Mr John Lang – Chair of Planning Sub Committee
- Mr Dave Saunders – Road Steward Copleigh and Oakdene
- Mrs Sue Pollock – Road Steward Share of Woodland Way
- Mr Gary Whitney – KRA Rep for 2009 on Federation of Resident Associations
- Mr Barry Miles – KRA Rep for 2009 on Federation of Resident Associations

All of the above named together with all existing committee members and officers as set out in the agenda paper who have agreed to stand for re-election were formally proposed for election and unanimously accepted by the meeting.

8. AOB

There being no other business of an urgent nature the AGM was declared formally closed.