

Kingswood Residents Association Minutes of Annual General Meeting Held at Kingswood Village Hall on 5th April 2011

The meeting was chaired and opened at 8pm by Mr Gary Whitney, KRA President, who introduced our guests.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Frieda Fyfer, Carole Morris, Julie Pitkethly, June Falford and Cllr J. Tomlinson.

1. APPROVAL OF THE 2010 AGM MINUTES

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

2. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman welcomed all present. For the benefit of those who are new to the KRA meetings, Simon Parnall explained that the KRA's role in this community is primarily in relation to planning, the environment, highways, safety and conservation, and to generally preserve and improve the amenities of the village of Kingswood.

In this role the KRA works closely with our Ward Councillors and our County Councillor, seeking to influence good planning practise and maintenance of our roads and pathways. The KRA also works with the many Frontagers Associations and the Kingswood Village Community Association and he was delighted to welcome Sir Brian Hill, Chairman of the KVCA to the AGM.

The Chairman also took the opportunity to thank Cllrs Joan Spiers and Ros Mill and C. Cllr Mike Gosling, all present at the AGM, for their continuing support of the KRA. He reminded all present that the KRA is but one of many residents associations in the Borough that call upon their 'free' time and expressed his appreciation of the time given to the KRA.

As last year, the Chairman wanted first and foremost to draw the attention to the report on planning. Government policy changes. These are expected to help the community in the future for instance, gardens are no longer automatically considered to be brownfield sites. However, the KRA has not seen any reduction in planning applications, rather it has seen ever more pressure in terms of building size and plot usage and many planning applications are for properties that many would regard as quite excessive in size. To the KRA Committee these applications are less and less compatible with the character of this area, which is often described as 'ARCADIAN' in character- meaning spacious and tree or landscape dominated. The protection and preservation of this landscape dominated environment remains a key priority for the KRA. The committee is sometimes saddened when departing residents, who have appreciated and enjoyed the area for its natural beauty have carried out substantial felling of trees on their own plots in order to maximise the selling value of their property for incoming developers. The Chairman reminded the meeting that if anyone thinks that there is a threat to trees on a property near to

them to please let the Council Tree Officers, Joan Spiers or the KRA representative know ASAP so that all concerned can work to preserve the threatened trees .

The Chairman continued by providing some specifics of the work carried out by the KRA last year:

The KRA has: –

- carried out a huge amount of work on planning applications at a rate unabated by the recession;
- supported Octagon in its appeal over the original scheme for the BBC site in May last year. This appeal was won, and now a superb low-density development very much in keeping with the KRA's vision for Kingswood is under construction;
- given support and leadership through its representatives to the local Federation of Residents Associations. In particular, during the last year the KRA has given advice to this group in the area of planning policy development and the KRA has worked with the Federation in collective representation on subjects such as the potential closure of the Banstead Pool, parking in Surrey Towns, and more recently, Sutton and East Surrey Water Company's planned pipeline;
- worked closely with our councillors in helping to make contingency plans for the winter;
- obtained quotations for and secured funds towards the VAS speed signs (Vehicle Activated Signs) for Waterhouse Lane. These will hopefully be installed during this year;
- continued to develop its new membership database, which is now working extremely well and all road reps are now improving communications with all members and ensuring that the KRA can as much as possible communicate using members e-mail addresses.

The new KRA website has been developed and is now being brought up to date with new information before a public launch. An announcement will be made in the next few weeks.

The KRA continues to gain new members through our increased activity and through the diligent work of the Membership Secretary and the Road Stewards. The Chairman asked Dave Saunders, the Membership Secretary to stand at this point. The KRA's membership level has continued to rise and is now at around 51%. However, to be able to claim to be really representative the KRA will need a higher number and the Chairman asked everyone present to encourage their friends and neighbours to support the KRA.

The KRA has also worked with our other Kingswood community organisations (KVCA and KADDS) in developing plans for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and The Chairman encouraged everyone to make sure the June 2-5th 2012 date is firmly in their diaries.

The Chairman concluded that plans for the year ahead will see the KRA carry on with all of the above tasks, strengthening their lines of communication and making KRA more relevant and visible in this community.

The Chairman paid a special tribute to a retiring committee member, John Phipps, who has been a long serving Road Representative and Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Roads and Transport Sub-Committee Chair. He wished John and Heather the very best in their retirement and the President and the Chairman presented John with a small gift. He concluded that the organisation only functions because of people like John and he repeated a call for more volunteers.

3. HON. TREASURER'S REPORT

The Hon. Treasurer, Adrienne Light, presented the accounts. There was surplus after expenses for the year 2010 of £1,078. The Balance Sheet shows cash on deposit at £15,518, inclusive of advance subscriptions and a special fund, a slight decrease on last year but still reflecting a healthy level of funds. Accumulated reserves i.e. available funds to be spent, have risen to £9,904. Adrienne also reminded the meeting that the subscription for a 4 year period is just £20 – that is £5 per year per household, which is very kept very reasonable.

The President, Gary Whitney, added that the funds were used only to meet reasonable expenses and were there primarily to pay for legal and professional advice when needed to support residents in fighting or supporting planning applications and is used wholly for the benefit of the community. Peter Allen proposed acceptance of the audited accounts for 2010 and Peter Skelton seconded this. All present were in favour.

4. OPEN DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS ON MATTERS OF LOCAL INTEREST AND ADVICE FROM OUR COUNTY AND LOCAL COUNCILLORS

First Guest speakers: PC Leah Mort and PC Kamran Yaquib gave a short presentation on their service to the local community. They advised that the structure of community policing is currently in a process of change and the Local Officer for Kingswood has not been announced. When questioned they didn't feel able to speak about the changes in terms of numbers, but Michael Gosling interjected to say that Surrey is, in fact, increasing its front line forces by 200 officers for the period 2010–2015.

The Police informed us that most burglaries in the area occur between 09–00 and 14–00 in the day and particularly on Wednesdays and Thursdays. There has been good detection and work on intelligence has been good with cross border police. They reported a drop in car thefts and burglaries in Kingswood and Nork areas and were asked on the effectiveness of CCTV and burglar alarms. They advised that they were good deterrents but recommended a call to the Crime Reduction Officer who can advise further on ways to deter burglaries. The police also encourage residents to report anything suspicious in their area as this information is kept on a database and often helps in prevention and detection of crime.

Guy Kingsbury raised the subject of speeding on the A217 at certain times of the week and PC Yaquib agreed to take this comment back to the office for further investigations. When questioned he confirmed that there is a Neighbourhood Speedwatch scheme, which will require 6 volunteers to use speed guns to record speeds and to allow motorists to be challenged. If anyone is interested, please do get in touch with him.

Mike Gibson commented that Emergency vehicles (police and ambulances) have sometimes been sent to Tadworth by mistake and this means valuable time is lost in turning around and coming to Kingswood. Cllr Gosling reminded residents of the opportunity some time ago to remove Tadworth from postal addresses, and that that might still be possible.

The President thanked the police for taking the time to speak at this AGM, and reminded all present that the Police will be able to help if any group wishes to set up a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.

Second Speaker: Dr John Peacock, Chairman of the Banstead Commons Conservators (BCC). He gave a short history of the BCC and the four separate parts of the Commons that are controlled by the BCC, namely Banstead Heath, Banstead Downs, Park Downs and Burgh Heath. The KRA has been working as part of the Federation with the BCC in opposing the heathland route for the Water Pipeline that was proposed by the Sutton and East Surrey Water Company. The good news is that the Water Company has announced that their proposed route for the water pipeline from Mogador to Burgh Heath will no longer cross either Banstead or Burgh Heaths. BCC are delighted with this decision and thanked the KRA for their support.

Following this address, there ensued discussion on the Water Company's plans to run more of the pipeline along the A217 than before. The dog-leg into Kingswood was also discussed, and it was clear that this would have been the case whichever route had been chosen.

Cllr Gosling advised that the Water Company is a protected monopoly, they have the statutory right to dig up the road but they need to properly engage with the County Council, which they have not yet done. He urged all Kingswood Residents to write directly to the water company to voice objections. A copy of his open letter is available to view in the email newsletter from the KRA dated 3 April 2011.

The President reminded all that the Water Company has confirmed its decision not to go across the Banstead Commons but has not officially made a decision on the final route of the pipeline. The Chairman confirmed that the KRA will disseminate this information as soon as it is made available.

Third Speaker: Sir Brian Hill announced that in 14 months time Kingswood will be celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in the form of a series of events over the long public holiday weekend from Saturday 2nd to Tuesday 5th June 2012. The Village Voice has been running a competition and the KVCA and KRA have worked together to judge entries and to start the process of forming an organising committee. He announced that the main focus of the celebrations would be a street party with additions such as open gardens and a flower festival, and that the joint winners of the competition for proposals are Angie Peters and Jane Hollington. The prize is the use of a fabulous Lexus IS Sports Saloon for a week, which they will now share for equal periods.

Sir Brian urged all to get involved, as this will be a village commitment. The Chairman advised that more information would be made available of the ongoing plans for the celebrations.

5. COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Cllr Joan Spiers gave a brief summary of the recent changes at the Reigate and Banstead Council and that this will be the second year in which the Council has not increased council tax. She confirmed that the KRA is very special in looking after the interests of Kingswood.

Various discussions ensued about local Kingswood planning, e.g. Shrimps Field, Fairlawn, and the ex Mitsubishi garage. Cllr Joan Spiers reiterated that she would always do her utmost to oppose planning that is not in the best interest of Kingswood.

Cllr Gosling advised that he has been given an update on the draft programme of repairs works scheduled for Outwood lane as follows for 2011:

Preliminary Design	complete by the end of this month
Detailed design	2 May to 24 June
Procurement	27 June to 5 August
Mobilisation	8 August to 2 September
Construction	5 September, start, complete November

He advised that the funding for the above works is also in place. He is aware that these works have been the subject of discussions in previous AGMs and sincerely hopes that this will be completed this year.

6. ELECTION OF HON. AUDITOR

The President thanked Mr David Buckley for acting as Honorary Auditor in 2010 and proposed his reappointment for the following year. This was accepted.

7. ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE FOR 2011-12

The President thanked all the officers and committee members who acted in 2010. All the existing committee members and officers as set out in the Meeting Agenda who have agreed to stand for re-election were then formally proposed by Janet Hill seconded by Mr. Will Mayer and approved by the meeting.

The President and Chairman also thanked John Lang specifically on his important work on the Planning sub-committee. This is, by far, the most important of the KRA's activities, and John leads this important work with dedication and enthusiasm.

8. AOB

There being no further business, the AGM was declared formally closed.