

**Kingswood Residents' Association  
Minutes of Annual General Meeting  
Held at Kingswood Village Hall on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2012**

The meeting was chaired and opened at 8pm by Mr Gary Whitney, KRA President. The President informed the meeting that, strictly in accordance with the KRA's rules, the AGM should have been held by March 31, 2012. In the absence of any objections, the meeting will proceed. No objections were raised to the AGM meeting proceeding.

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Adrienne Light, Des Camblin, Christine Humphreys and Barry Miles. Regret was also expressed as to the absence of Police liaison officers who had been expected to attend the meeting but due to an oversight had not been advised of the meeting date.

**1. APPROVAL OF THE 2011 AGM MINUTES**

Copies of the minutes of last year's AGM were circulated to the meeting, followed by a brief review by the President of each item. Cllr Gosling commented that he was not satisfied with the road and roundabout repairs done by the Water Board following installation of the mains water pipe along the A217 and that these issues were being addressed with them. Approval of the minutes was proposed by Mr Parnall, seconded by Cllr Spiers and approved unanimously.

**2. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The President referred everyone to the Chairman's Report and other reports included with the notice of the meeting, covering the Localism Act, Planning, Banstead and District Federation of Residents' Associations and local and county councillors' reports. The President drew special attention to the successful re-routing of the mains water pipe (avoiding damage to the heath) and the prospect of a new sports centre in Preston. In response to a question from the floor, it was reported that KRA membership had increased over the year and now represented 53% of all households in Kingswood. Cllr Spiers observed that poor attendance at the meeting reflected the view of many people these days who expect others in their community to take care of everything, and that Kingswood was fortunate in having an effective residents' association. The President commented that the Association is coming under pressure to do more work on community affairs and that the KRA needed more volunteers from its membership.

The President invited the KRA's immediate past Chairman Mr. Simon Parnall to comment on the Queen's Jubilee celebrations. Mr Parnall remarked that this provided a great opportunity for the Kingswood community to come together over the 4 day holiday weekend from June 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> to enjoy a flower festival and concert in the St Andrew's Church, open gardens, village street party and tennis tournament, with proceeds benefiting the Children's Trust and the NSPCC. The President expressed everyone's gratitude to Mr Parnall for the valuable work he has done as KRA Chairman over the past several years, and made a presentation to him on behalf of the KRA. Mr Parnall has stepped down as Chairman in order to stand for election as a local councillor in the upcoming local council elections.

**3. ADVICE FROM OUR LOCAL AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS'**

**a) Surrey County Councillor Michael Gosling**

Cllr Gosling began by commenting that road maintenance contracts were now working much better. He then invited attendees to contact him directly with any budget questions. Cllr Gosling then went on to talk about the anticipated further expansion of the county schools programme, and greater financial pressures on adult and social care. He expressed the hope and expectation that Surrey would be able to do better than other counties in relation to the delivery of services under the new Health Services Act. In response to a question from the floor about street lighting, Cllr Gosling commented that the new centrally controlled lights were being installed under a 5 year programme which would enable a more efficient use of electricity when the installation was completed. Cllr Gosling concluded his report with a strong endorsement of the proposal (discussed later in the meeting) for the KRA to be part of a Neighbourhood Forum under the Localism Act.

**b) Reigate & Banstead Councillor Joan Spiers**

Cllr Spiers opened her report with a statement that planning was currently the primary local issue for Kingswood. She remarked that the Council Planning Department was not functioning as it should and that this was now under critical review within the Council in order to bring about improvements. She expected this review to result in changes, both in attitude and staffing. Cllr Spiers reported that more than 2,000 tree preservation orders have been issued in Kingswood which should have a material impact on planning activities. She also commented on several other matters in her report printed in the notice of the AGM, including the return of funds from the Icelandic banks; the new sports centre for Preston; and the Council's Young Workers' Scheme. The Preston Sports Centre will now have a swimming pool provided as part of the facilities.

#### **4. LOCALISM AND NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING**

The President commented that while the Council was quite good at developing strategic planning policy, the development control function had not served Kingswood well over recent years. Earlier decisions, such as allowing plot splits, established bad precedents which have totally undermined the RASC (residential area of special character) status of a large part of Kingswood. The whole local character and distinctiveness of Kingswood has been materially changed. One recent example of how out of touch the planning authority had become was the case of the former BBC site development by Octagon. After long detailed consultation between residents and the developer the final planning application (which had received the full support of the KRA and our local councillors), was rejected by the Planning Committee on the recommendation of the Planning Department. It was subsequently approved with the support of the KRA on appeal. The President urged the KRA membership to become more active, especially in light of recent changes in government policy towards planning which is likely to have potential dangers as well as opportunities.

The President referred the meeting to his report on the Localism Act and Neighbourhood Forums printed in the notice of the AGM and gave a background commentary on the Act and its implications for Kingswood. The new National Planning Policy Framework reduced 1,000 pages of planning documentation to just 60, resulting in a policy statement capable of wide interpretation by planning authorities which must over the next year prepare their local development Core Strategies. At the same time, the Localism Act provides the opportunity for local residential areas to have a stronger voice in the planning process through Neighbourhood Forums. The President explained that the KRA had a choice of whether to carry on as it is, but with less influence over planning matters, or to establish and be part of a Neighbourhood Forum. The recommendation of the KRA committee is to establish a Neighbourhood Forum jointly with the Tadworth/Walton-on-the-Hill, Burgh Heath and Lower Kingswood residents' associations. The urgent priority for the Neighbourhood Forum would be to develop a Neighbourhood Plan to help establish a fair balance between the interests of residents and developers.

The President then set out the following motion for giving the elected officers and Committee the authority to establish a Neighbourhood Forum under the Localism Act 2011. He added that he would arrange a public meeting to explain more about the Localism Act and Neighbourhood Planning which would be the Neighbourhood Forum's priority task to develop.

#### **MOTION FOR ESTABLISHING A NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM UNDER THE LOCALISM ACT 2011**

That the Association Membership give authority to the 2012-13 elected Officers and Committee to set up and register with the Council, a Neighbourhood Forum for planning purposes under the Localism Act 2011 and take such reasonable actions considered necessary for this purpose including:

1. Establishing the boundaries of the Neighbourhood Forum in collaboration and association with other Residents Associations in the same area.
2. Establishing and agreeing the constitution rules and working arrangements for the running of the Neighbourhood Forum including arrangements with those other Residents Associations which are situated within the designated area of the Forum.

3. Apply to the Borough Council to register the Neighbourhood Forum as a recognised body under the provision of the Neighbourhood Planning (England) Regulations 2012.
4. Making such changes as may become necessary to the Association Rules to enable the KRA to establish the Neighbourhood Forum.
5. Take such actions as are needed to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan under the Localism Act in association with such other Resident Associations who are collective members of the Neighbourhood Forum.
6. To report back to the Association Membership as necessary on the progress and the actions being taken.

The motion was proposed by Mr. Richard Lewis, seconded by Mr. Michael Sutcliffe and carried unanimously.

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

In the absence of the Honorary Treasurer, the President presented the annual accounts, which were approved by the meeting. In response to a question the President explained that the Associations accumulated reserves of £10,793 were after excluding subscriptions paid in advance.

#### **6. ELECTION OF HON. AUDITOR**

The President thanked Mr. David Buckley for acting as Honorary Auditor in 2011 and proposed his reappointment for the following year, which was approved by the meeting.

#### **7. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

The President thanked all the officers and committee members who acted in 2011. He confirmed that all those listed in the notice of the AGM were willing to stand for re-election with the exception of Mr Parnall. Mrs Chantal Cox has offered to service the committee representing St Monica's road and Mr. Keith Denyer has offered to serve on the KRA Committee as a member of the Planning sub-committee. The meeting approved the nominations by show of hands.

The President emphasised the pressing need for additional KRA committee volunteers, in particular to fill the positions of Chairman and Honorary Secretary. He invited anyone who may be interested to give some of their time to support the KRA to contact him.

#### **8. OPEN DISCUSSION & QUESTIONS**

Mr Kingsbury expressed concern about the absence of any effective enforcement of parking restrictions in the village. It was noted that this was a matter which Cllr Spiers had agreed to investigate. It was also suggested by the President that village parking could be a subject to include in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Some concern was expressed from the floor about the lack of visible presence of the police force in Kingswood generally

#### **9. AOB**

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