

KINGSWOOD RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2012

NOTICE is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held in the Village Hall, Waterhouse Lane, Kingswood on TUESDAY 3rd April 2012, commencing at 8.00 p.m.

AGENDA

1. Approval of the Minutes of last AGM
2. Chairman's Report
3. Hon. Treasurer's Report
4. Election of Hon. Auditor
5. Election of Chairman, Officers and Committee for 2012-13
6. Open discussion and questions on matters of local interest and advice from our County and Local Councillors
7. Any other business

All residents are invited to attend the meeting and join in the discussions, but please note we ask that only members of the Association vote on formal Association business. Notice of any resolution to be moved at the AGM shall be given in writing to the Association Chairman not less than seven days beforehand. Subscriptions may be paid to the Hon. Treasurer or Hon. Membership Secretary prior to or at the meeting.

Nominations for any Officers, or a seat on the Committee, must be in the hands of the Association President not less than seven days before the meeting.

COMMITTEE AND OFFICERS AT 27th February 2012

President: Mr. Gary Whitney	830512	Hon. Treasurer: Mrs. Adrienne Light	832133
Assoc. Chair: Vacancy		Hon. Membership Sec: Mr. Dave Saunders	350718
Planning Sub-Cttee Chair: Mr. John Lang	832105	Roads & Transport Sub-Cttee Chair: Vacancy	
Hon. Secretary: Vacancy		Federation representatives: Mr. Gary Whitney	830512
		and Mr. Barry Miles	358189

Committee/ Road Stewards

Birch Grove	Mrs. Amanda	Smith	833630	Waterhouse Lane (E)	Mr. Michael	Sutcliffe	832532
Copt Hill Lane	Vacancy			The Glade	Mrs. Lynne	Sinclair	832762
The Chase	Mr. Stephen	Gale-Batten	831282	Furze Hill	Mr. Guy	Kingsbury	373335
Forest Drive	Mr. Peter	Skelton	832157	Warren Drive	Mr. John	Lang	832105
St. Monica's Road	Vacancy			Waterhouse Lane (W)	Mr. Mike	Gibson	351682
Sandy Lane	Mr. Des	Camblin	833823	Doric Drive	Mr. Barry	Miles	358189
The Warren	Mrs. Adrienne	Light	832133	Lilley Drive	Mr. Richard	Lewis	832984
Warren Lodge Drive	Mr. Gary	Whitney	830512	Alcocks Lane	Mrs. Estelle	Bibby	354829
Beech Drive	Mr. Simon	Parnall	830888	Woodland Way	Mrs. Adrienne	Light	832133
Hamilton Place	Mrs. Ruth	Hirst	830144	Eyhurst Close	Mrs. Christine	Humphreys	831218
Copleigh Drive	Mr. David	Saunders	350718	Heather Close	Mrs. Carole	Morris	832453
Eyhurst Park	Vacancy			Glen Close	Mrs. Carole	Morris	832453

The appropriate road steward also represents the roads that branch off the above "primary" roads.

Vacancies exist for Chairman, Secretary, Chair of Roads and Transport sub-committee and Committee Members. Volunteers are urgently needed and should please contact the Association President so that they can be proposed at the meeting.

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 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.

ISSUED BY THE KINGSWOOD RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Association is to be held at the Village Hall on TUESDAY 3rd April 2012, commencing at 8.00pm. The formal notice is posted on the Village Hall Notice Board and the Annual Report is published in this Newsletter. Resolutions to be proposed at the AGM must be given in writing to the Association President not less than 7 days prior to the meeting. The 2011 audited Accounts will be made available at the meeting.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Kingswood Residents' Association (KRA) is a non-political voluntary organisation whose stated objectives are: "...the promotion of the welfare of the Community through the good government of the district in relation to planning, environment, safety and conservation, so as to preserve and improve the amenities of the village of Kingswood".

We work closely with Reigate and Banstead Borough Council (RBBC) through our local Councillors to consult and influence good planning practices. We also work with our County Councillor on Surrey County Council matters. The support of our local Councillors is invaluable and is key to the work of the Association.

The KRA works for this community as a whole and all Kingswood Residents are welcome to come to our Annual General Meeting and join our discussions. If you aren't already a member then you are still most welcome to attend and we hope that you might consider joining the Association to give us your support.

As you'll see in the planning report, the rate of planning applications seems to be unaffected by the current economic climate and we continue to press our Council on the distressing fact that parts of Kingswood resemble a building site.

You'll also see that we have worked closely with other residents associations through the Banstead Federation - and in particular we are proud that we leave a Heath with thousands of trees that would otherwise have been felled and not replanted in order to provide a route for the pipeline, and that we will have a new swimming pool at Merland Rise.

The promised Vehicle Activated Speed signs at either end of Waterhouse Lane have now been finally installed, having taken rather longer for the County Council officers to achieve than we ever expected. We will take the opportunity of the AGM to express gratitude to all the organisations and individuals who have made this possible.

The KRA is also taking a leading part in the organisation of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations. Much more will follow about this in the next few weeks, but we are excited about the range of activities planned and opportunities for all to participate and enjoy this very special long weekend.

Our network of road representatives (please see the front page) is there to help you and to distribute information - such as this copy of Kingswood Matters. For those who are online, our website and email distribution system are becoming key tools in our communications strategy, and these also enable us to embrace Facebook and Twitter. If we don't have your email address then please do let us know - we promise to respect your confidentiality.

Finally, we should mention that the KRA committee needs your help. We have vacancies for road representatives and for committee members. If you're even vaguely interested, then please do get in contact and find out more.

Simon Parnall and Gary Whitney

LOCALISM AND NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

A NEW ROLE FOR KINGSWOOD RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Many of you will have seen articles about the Localism Act which is quite long and complicated but is essentially designed to devolve more power to Local Councils from the centre. The Association now has new and important challenges to face with the introduction of this Act. The Act comes into full force in April 2012 and in essence will give Councils more power, flexibility and responsibility for sustainable local communities and developing local planning policies. An important section of the Act also permits local people to have more say and control over issues affecting their own immediate neighbourhoods through Parish or Town Councils or, where these do not exist, through new Neighbourhood Forums.

The KRA has started looking into the possibilities of setting up a Neighbourhood Forum in association with the Banstead & District Federation of Residents Associations. In particular to look into the possibility of joining forces with neighbouring Walton & Tadworth, Burgh Heath and Lower Kingswood RA's. This will give us a stronger Forum covering a larger area but without losing the identity of our local residents associations. If we can form a Neighbourhood Forum it will be possible to be registered with the Council and for the Forum to be able to have a much stronger voice in local planning matters than in the past. It would also have a say in the development of community facilities as well as better protecting the local character and environment where we live. This devolved power to local communities is now very important because the Government have simplified National Planning policies and made the local Councils more directly responsible for their local development plans and the related development management. Because of this changed local emphasis it is critically important that local residents take advantage of the new Localism Act and become more involved in the planning process otherwise this could be a lost opportunity.

The most important task of Neighbourhood Forums will be to develop a "Neighbourhood Plan" which once submitted and approved by the Council will become an official local planning policy document and carry more weight in local planning decisions than the representations RA's have typically made in the past. The downside is that the work of setting up a Neighbourhood Forum and producing a Neighbourhood Plan will need some outside professional support and much more voluntary involvement by local residents than in the past. It is possible that some Residents Associations may not feel able to take on these tasks and will not want to set up a Neighbourhood Forum. The KRA however has adopted as its primary mission the oversight of planning decisions and the related local environment and infrastructure and it has been our KVRA who deal with the social side of Kingswood village life. KRA officers and Committee therefore feel that the Association needs to make every effort to try and establish a strong representative Neighbourhood Forum and go on to develop a Neighbourhood Plan if it is to continue to perform its role more effectively in the future. Walton and Tadworth RA have already confirmed that they share this same view and we hope to be able to confirm shortly that Burgh Heath RA and Lower Kingswood RA are of the same mind.

It's not going to be an easy task to set up the Neighbourhood Forum and we will need to tap into the knowledge, skills and resources of our residents. The KRA however feels that in joining up with neighbouring RA's we will have the local talent and ability to take up this unique opportunity so as to have more say and control over our destiny. I hope that all our Association Members and residents will show their support for KRA to pursue this important opportunity at the forthcoming AGM.

Gary Whitney – President

PLANNING

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council seeks observations from the Residents' Association on all new local planning applications in Kingswood - about 12 per month. This is carried out by a Sub-Committee of three, supported by Road Stewards and with input from residents where appropriate. Details are compared with the standards set by the Borough Local Plan (2005) and, where appropriate, comments are made with copy to our Local Councillors. However, views and opinions are not black or white and can differ with adverse precedents being set which then become the norm. This is most apparent with larger houses being approved on ever smaller plots of land.

The Localism Act and National Planning Policy Framework will influence the Local Development Framework (LDF) currently being drafted by Reigate and Banstead Borough Council. In the next year or two, the LDF will replace the Borough Local Plan but may incorporate sections from it. Thus, potentially

changing standards will make the task of the Sub-Committee more challenging. At the same time the Sub-Committee will be liaising with the proposed Neighbourhood Forum.

John Lang (01737 832105), Barry Miles and Keith Denyer

THE BANSTEAD AND DISTRICT FEDERATION OF RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS

The Membership of the Banstead and District Federation of Residents' Associations is comprised of nominated representatives from sixteen individual local Residents' Associations, representing a total population of some 45,000. The area served by the Federation is the Borough of Reigate and Banstead to the North of the M25. By pooling resources and expertise in this way the Federation is well placed to address major issues that impact right across the North of the Borough. During the past year a wide range of issues has been addressed and some of these are mentioned below.

1. Water Pipeline & Disruption on the A217

The Federation was able to consider this issue and work closely with the Banstead Commons Conservators to respond to proposals by Sutton & East Surrey Water to lay a water pipeline across Walton Heath. While the proposed route possibly represented a cheaper option for the Water Company it would have had a permanent and detrimental impact on the Heath due to the need to remove trees and maintain future vehicular access. In addition such a route would have had a long-term impact on the water table which would have adversely affected surrounding trees and other habitat. In conclusion while the alternative pipeline route using the A217 was disruptive it has preserved the Common for future generations as well as not impacting directly on Kingswood as was originally proposed.

2. Banstead Sports Centre & Preston Redevelopment

The existing Sports Centre at Merland Rise is scheduled for closure and in conjunction with others the Federation has taken an active role in the campaign to ensure that the proposed replacement facilities include a new swimming complex. In addition the Federation has also responded to the Preston Redevelopment Proposals being made by RBBC. The Federation recognises budgetary constraints and is broadly supportive of the overall objectives. However, there are concerns over infrastructure issues plus the proposed loss of Urban Open Land together with the proposed density of new residential development. In addition while the focus is on regeneration the Federation has expressed concern over the apparent lack of proposals to improve the existing housing stock.

3. Planning

The Government proposals in respect of planning contained in the National Planning Framework are extremely controversial. Presumption in favour of development and the associated threat to the Green Belt are a cause for real concern. Both the Federation and the KRA have responded to these Government proposals in some detail. Likewise, formal responses have also been made to the RBBC LDF Core Strategy proposals, while the associated issue of Localism and Neighbourhood Forums is discussed elsewhere in this document.

4. Other Issues

Other issues that have recently been considered are the future of Epsom Hospital and the structure of local health provision, plans for dealing with bad weather and snow clearance, and opposition to proposals to introduce on-street parking charges in Banstead Village. At the regular Federation meetings it is the norm to invite guest speakers to talk on issues of current interest and the opportunity to hear the view of people like Mr John Jury (Chief Executive Officer RBBC), Cllr Mrs Joan Spiers (leader of the Council) and Kathy O'Leary (Head of Planning RBBC) is particularly helpful and much appreciated given the nature of all that is currently taking place in the Borough.

Gary Whitney and Barry Miles

Joint KRA representatives to the Banstead and District Federation of Residents Associations

A MESSAGE FROM COUNCILLOR Mrs. JOAN SPIERS

KINGSWOOD MATTERSWhat a lovely name for a publication, because Kingswood really does matter to us all.

Ros Mill, Michael Gosling and I care very much about this patch of England. You all matter.

We, Ros and I, have spent a great deal of time dealing with planning issues. I am so concerned when I drive around each day to see such the enormous amount of development taking place. Although we have fought alongside the KRA in opposing most applications the developers have been relentless, and ever more demanding. We have won some, modified some, and with reluctance accepted some. The developers have spoiled many grass verges and caused much anxiety for many of you. We are now I feel, reaching the end of this wave of developments.

Now we have to look forward. The work will be finished, new neighbours will join us, the grass verges will recover and we shall know peace once more. Where there is mud and mess, soon there will be family homes, and we know Kingswood itself will survive and flourish after this onslaught. The regeneration of an area like Kingswood is never easy, nor does it happen without the will of some members of this village wishing to sell their property. I see it as a bit like weeding, most of us hate it, but soon the flowers grow again.

We are blessed in that we live in the most beautiful part of the Borough, surrounded by Green Belt, which for me is sacrosanct and must be preserved at all costs.

Our Borough finances are in good order. The Icelandic Banks are going to give us back the money they "borrowed!!" All of our promises including the Leisure Centre and Pool at Preston is accounted for, and being planned right now.

This last year at the Town Hall has been difficult but rewarding. Several of our projects have been completed on time and within budget: Horley Leisure Centre, The Harlequin Theatre, The Lady Neville Park in Banstead, and many smaller projects throughout the Borough

We have set up a YOUNG Workers scheme, the only one in Surrey. 43 young people have and are benefiting from it. It gives me such great pleasure to see them all around the Borough. They are getting a chance to work instead of looking at a lifetime on benefits. With youth unemployment being a big topic in the UK, we are keen for other large employers and local businesses to experience the benefits of employing a young person and join us with similar schemes and opportunities. Two major employers have already done so, and we hope that more will follow.

Next year (starting May 2012) we have much work to do. Now that many of the big projects are finished we shall start again on a big tidy up of the Borough. A good Spring clean, refreshing our parks and open spaces and clamping down on fly tippers as usual. We shall make sure we win gold again for the Priory Park, a joy for all the residents of Reigate & Banstead.

We have The Olympic Games and, even sooner, The Queen's Diamond Jubilee to look forward to. The Borough is assisting with the planning and permissions for street parties. The celebrations will be just wonderful. And both Ros and I look forward to joining you at the Diamond Jubilee street party in our Village on the 4th June.

Joan Spiers and Ros Mill

Cllr. Mrs Joan Spiers is one of our members for Kingswood with Burgh Heath and Leader of the Council. She may be contacted by e-mail at cllr.spiers@reigate-bansted.gov.uk or Joanspiers@aol.com
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A MESSAGE FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR MICHAEL GOSLING

Dear Resident

It does not seem like a year since I last wrote to you through the Residents AGM newsletter. For the County Council it has been an interesting and difficult year, yet one with many quite positive messages.

You will have noticed at a local level, I hope, that many of the issues concerning the street scene are showing a rapid improvement.

The new roads' contract has led to a dramatic increase in the quantity and quality of the road repairs. Pot holes still exist but they are treated more quickly and to better effect. In the division many roads have been resurfaced - Outwood Lane, part of the A217 to the south of Lower Kingswood, Tadworth Street by Chinthurst School and The Avenue in Tadworth plus many surface dressings. More importantly to the residents affected a number of cul-de-sacs have been attended to, to the great satisfaction of all concerned.

Having said this I still drive around making mental lists of works we would all like to see carried out and 'normality' should be when all is right.

Most of the street lights have been replaced, the street signs have been cleaned with the exception of some on the middle carriageway of the A217 and the odd one or two that were missed. The white lines on the 'A' roads are being renewed/refreshed then the 'B' roads and then everything else.

The winter plan for road gritting showed to be fit for purpose although it has yet to be tested by a longer cold spell.

My portfolio this year has given me not only the responsibility for Adult Social Care but also for the transfer of public health and the formation of the Health & Wellbeing Board. I am fully aware of the controversy surrounding the Health & Social Care Bill but I am sure that we will have in place in Surrey the necessary structure to fulfill the County's responsibilities within the time frame. This is a subject of great concern and please contact me if you have any points that you would like to discuss.

The budget continues to be a great cause of concern with the current state of public finances.

As you may be aware Surrey County Council has decided not to accept the Government's offer of a one-year grant of 2.5% of the value of Council Tax to those councils in England who do not seek to increase the Council Tax for local residents.

At Surrey County Council we understand the Government's intention at this time and agree with this as a national policy. For those councils who are, in the main, funded via central Government grant, the offer is appealing and right in the circumstances. Some councils receive over 70% of their funding from central Government and raise only the balance from their residents. In our case only 21% of our funding comes in this manner. This is just a statement of fact.

Reigate & Banstead has accepted the Council Tax Freeze Grant and again we would support their decision to do so because of the contrasting financial circumstances they have to Surrey County Council; their service provision and Capital requirements differ from those that we face as a county.

The formula grant we receive will fall by £15 million from April this year 2012. The Government grant offer, in our case £14 million, will not become part of our tax base, that is the means by which all future self-funding is calculated. The result is that we would lose £70 million over a five-year period in our Medium-Term Financial Plan, against a grant of £14 million for one year. This one year grant could not be used for mainstream service delivery as one offs should be used only in that year as they are not part of the tax base..

After the last County elections we developed a four-year Financial Plan and by using this and implementing our Public Value Review programme, we have saved £130 million in two years. We have now developed a new five-year strategy which, on present projections, will realise a further £206 million of savings. With this, and if our future income projections are correct, not easy when councils will be funded

in part from central government by a new method next year, then we can maintain services. This also takes into account service pressures within the forecast.

The problem begins to arise with the funding of the necessary investment in capital projects. Ongoing investment in highways, structures, some school maintenance etc. We have to add a large investment in new school places, £244 million. This is the equivalent of 26 new primary schools of two streams each because of the increase in the population. The majority of this capital, a total forecast of £681 million, has to be funded from the Revenue Budget. That Budget which pays for the services. So the choice is protect services, cut investment or cut services and maintain investment. Rely on Surrey funding in Surrey and both can be maintained ie as explained earlier close the £70m funding gap over the next five years.

We need an assured long-term Income Plan to be able to provide the full level of services and the capital investment that the County requires. Short term planning will create a financial black hole which will harm Surrey's economy and residents. I am quite happy to talk to all of you concerning this matter.

The full decision papers for the Council meeting on 07.02.12 can be found on the Surrey website.

At a local level we are working much more closely with the 11 boroughs and districts in Surrey and especially with our own borough, Reigate & Banstead, with whom we have a Public Works Board and, in due course, the improvements that will come in our area will start to become apparent. This will soon come to your attention through the policy documents that will come before both Councils.

Michael Gosling

C. Cllr. Michael Gosling is our member for Banstead South and is the Cabinet Member responsible for Adult Social Care in Surrey. If you have any concerns he may be contacted by e-mail at michael.gosling@surreycc.gov.uk or telephone no. 020 8541 7924.

POLICING AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SCHEME IN KINGSWOOD

The Police will be joining us at the AGM. This is a great opportunity to meet our local police officers/ PCSOs, to get their insight into security and crime in the area and to raise any issues that you might wish to bring up.

KRA COMMUNICATIONS

The KRA uses an emailing system that allows us to send email messages to all members without any possibility of your email address being disclosed to others. We do not yet have email addresses for all KRA members, and we would ask if you have an email address and have not received messages from us that you write to Dave Saunders, our membership secretary, (dave@ambertrain.com) so that your address may be added to our distribution list.

MEMBERSHIP

There is strength in numbers. For the KRA to be meaningfully acknowledged and listened to, we need to show we represent the majority of residents in Kingswood. Currently the KRA membership is 51% but we need to raise this percentage so our voice is even 'louder' and we can represent our views even stronger.

The good news is that all the work of the KRA is carried out by unpaid volunteers and the cost of membership works out at just £5 a year – for the whole household.

Becoming a member is very easy and costs only £20 for 4 year membership. Below is the form to complete and where to send it or the option to join electronically. I will also be available at the AGM to take and process membership applications at the time.

You can either e-mail your interest and the details listed below, to our Membership Secretary, Dave Saunders - dave@ambertrain.com. Dave will then return your membership details plus our bank details so you can electronically transfer your £20 subscription fee.

or

Complete the form and return with your cheque (for £20 made payable to 'KRA') to
The Membership Secretary,
Mr. Dave Saunders, 3 Oakdene, off Copleigh Drive, Kingswood, KT20 6BN.

Name:.....

Address:.....

Postcode:.....

Tel:.....

Email:.....

Signature:

Information provided in any format will be for the sole use of the KRA and will not be divulged to third parties.

I look forward to seeing you all at the AGM and hope some who are currently not members will join an excellent Association that continues to strongly represent all our views.

Dave Saunders
Membership Secretary - KRA
01737 350718 or dave@ambertrain.com