

## ISSUED BY THE KINGSWOOD RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Association is to be held at the Village Hall on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2014 commencing at 8 p.m.

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 Hon. Secretary not less than 7 days prior to the meeting. The 2013 audited Accounts will be made available at the meeting.

### ANNUAL REPORT

The Kingswood Residents Association (KRA) is a non-political voluntary organisation whose formally stated objectives are:

“The Objectives of the Association 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”. The KRA is separate from the Kingswood Village Community Association and the individual Road Frontagers Groups who have their own aims and objectives.

The KRA works closely with Reigate and Banstead Borough Council (RBBC) through its local Councillors to consult and influence good planning practices. The KRA also works with our County Councillor on SCC matters.

The KRA wants to work for the community as a whole so all of our Kingswood Residents are welcome to come to our AGM and join in the discussions. Whilst we hope you will join the Association you do not have to be a paid up member to attend.

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Over the past year, as you will be aware, development activity has continued apace around the village. At the time of writing, Network Rail has yet to announce how it intends to deal with the surplus land adjacent to the station which was marketed some time ago. You may recall that the KRA drew up draft planning criteria for the site, subject to public consultation and worked with the Council to create a Planning Guide which now clearly defines the nature of acceptable future development on that site. I mention this site since it is a good example of how the local community can work with the Council to influence local planning issues.

The KRA is now organising surgeries every few months in the Village Hall, attended by Borough and County Councillors, KRA committee members and sometimes others such as representatives from the police or South West Railways, to meet residents and listen to their comments or concerns. These meetings offer a convenient way in which residents can air their views face to face with the relevant person and I would encourage you to come along to these if you can.

The KRA has during the year, reviewed its own organisation and is proposing changes which are encompassed in a revised constitution, a draft of which is attached for your consideration. This document can also be viewed on our website and I would ask you to consider it since it will be proposed for adoption at the AGM. Primarily the new constitution defines appointments and voting procedure more clearly and does away with the post of Life President. The committee considered that it was unnecessary to have both a President and a Chairman and also felt that lifetime positions were inappropriate in the KRA.

Finally, I would like to thank our local Councillors, particularly Cllr Spiers, Cllr Parnall and County Cllr Gosling who regularly give up their time to attend our meetings. They keep us informed on both local and wider issues where they can and lend their valuable support to our aims.

## **Localism**

This has been a particularly important year for the KRA as regards local planning. Major changes have been unfolding in the planning system throughout the UK as outlined in our Planning Overview and we have been working hard to ensure that as part of this change, local development approval criteria for Kingswood are better defined and enforced.

If you attended the AGM last year, you may recall that there was much discussion then about Localism and the possibility of influencing local planning decisions by forming either a Neighbourhood Forum or a Parish Council. Whilst the objective of more local input into planning decisions was considered desirable, varying views were expressed at that meeting on the practicality of setting up either of these bodies and further investigation was proposed. This soon indicated that whatever their merits, it would take two or three years to create either body by which time it would be too late to contribute to the planning changes now under way.

Cllr Parnall however, suggested a third option and the KRA was duly invited to draw up a draft document (Supplementary Planning Document) setting out the local planning controls thought appropriate for Kingswood. Whilst this would be subject to public consultation and the Council would have the final say as to its content, once approved the document would have official status and would sit beneath the new Core Strategy defining local planning criteria for years to come.

The committee unanimously agreed that this was a much more practical and effective way to address local planning issues during the current window of opportunity and a small sub-committee was formed to undertake the task. It was agreed that professional guidance would be essential and local planning consultant Richard Humphreys was retained to advise. In the event Mr Humphreys' input extended to very many hours more than the original fixed fee assumed and I would like to record our thanks for his excellent advice throughout and for all the extra unpaid time given to complete the project. I would also like to thank Cllr Gosling for his support and assistance in guiding us to secure a grant from the County Council which offset a significant proportion of the cost. The assistance of Cllrs Spiers and Parnall is also appreciated, arranging for the Council to provide map production, printing, copying and other support services.

You will recall that the KRA conducted a public consultation two months ago to ensure that the content of the draft SPD genuinely reflects the widely held views of the community. I would like to thank residents for their response to this which was strong both in terms of the number of questionnaires returned and in the clear views expressed. Discussions have subsequently been taking place with the Council to finalise the document. Whilst it is too early to judge the success of the SPD, we can say that it is still on track, it is at very advanced stage and it continues to have the positive support of all our local Councillors. We remain optimistic that it will be concluded in a form which will significantly improve the management of planning and development in Kingswood. Interestingly other localities within the Borough are now following Kingswood down the same route to define their own planning criteria.

**Des Camblin**  
**Chairman**

## **REVIEW OF THE YEAR AND PLANNING**

### **Planning Overview.**

Since the publication of the 'Borough Local Plan 2005' which set policies and guidelines on Borough planning, there has been on-going government pressure to update and change standards nationally and locally. The purpose was to meet actual and forecast demand for new dwellings for the years ahead in any area.

Briefly re-capping, the original South East Plan of 2009 has gone, being replaced by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued in March 2012. During this time and still on-going, Reigate & Banstead Borough Council have been drafting and re-drafting parts of the Local Development Framework and its component Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. The key Development Plan Document is the Core Strategy which will set the strategic planning policy throughout the Borough.

The draft Core Strategy document has been out for consultation since 2012 and, after further amendments, went to Public Hearings before the government Planning Inspector in May and December last year. The government Planning Inspector has just, at the beginning of February, issued his report on the Council's Core Strategy, finding it 'sound' and providing an appropriate basis for the planning of the Borough over the next 15 years. Details of all this can be found on the Council website. Despite delays outside their control, the Council deserves congratulations on getting to this stage, apparently in advance of most other local authorities. However, further amendments to the Core Strategy, as indicated by the Inspector, are required before it can be finalised and adopted. At this time, the outcome appears to give the immediate green belt surrounds of Kingswood continuing protection.

### **Local Planning.**

Local planning applications and construction continue unabated despite many houses for sale in Kingswood. The BBC site, now known as Kingswood Warren Park, has been completed and most of the 14 houses and 8 apartments sold. The Shanly development in St. Monica's Road is virtually complete. Development of the old Red House School site off Bonsor Drive is still to start. Nothing further has been heard of the 2008 proposal for a Continuing Care Retirement Home on 11 hectares of land north of Copthill Lane. The Council deemed this required an Environmental Impact Assessment. Being on land classified as 'Area of Great Landscape Value', it is hopefully further protected by the new Core Strategy document. Nothing further has been heard either concerning a further proposal for the development of a Retirement Village on green belt land off Sandy Lane raised early last year. Residents expressed concern that it would be contrary to planning policy to sacrifice green belt land in order to develop such a facility. The proposed sale and development of an acre of Kingswood Station yard appears to have been delayed after the Council produced the Planning Brief.

Following resident complaints at the size and extent of hoarding advertising in Sandy Lane and other roads, even where no construction was taking place, our local Councillors have supported our complaints and we understand the oversize adverts will be removed.

**John Lang**  
**Chair of Planning Sub-Committee**

## **A MESSAGE FROM OUR COUNTY COUNCILLOR MICHAEL GOSLING**

Dear Residents,

I hope by the time you read this that the weather has finally improved. Daily I go out and look around the area and see what the last day has brought. We have damaged roads, new flooding spots and whilst trees have been removed from the road, much of the debris has still to be removed from the road sides. I have made and reported lists of matters for concern, but if you wish to report anything, please do so to me on [michael.gosling@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:michael.gosling@surreycc.gov.uk). The road resurfacing project is beginning to show progress and a number of roads in my division are down for resurfacing this year.

The county finances are in relatively good shape, but next year's hold worries for the future. The increase in council tax will only take this problem further forward into the future. The school building programme continues to be a drain on resources. Counting those already completed, we require 20,000 new school places to cover the expanding population. Most of the money comes from our local taxation.

The next biggest concern is the cost of adult social care and over the next 4 years the cost will rise by at least 33%. Working with the local NHS via the clinical commissioning groups (GP's) will help to offset this problem, but might well create further demand.

That said, I am optimistic for the future as is the case in public life those problems that are resolved are forgotten as new ones appear.

Best Wishes

**Michael Gosling**  
**Surrey County Councillor**  
[michael.gosling@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:michael.gosling@surreycc.gov.uk)

## **MESSAGE FROM COUNCILLORS Mrs. JOAN SPIERS, Mrs ROS MILL and Mr. SIMON PARNALL**

Another municipal year is coming to an end and your councillors have worked really hard to protect Kingswood.

We have made progress on a number of issues. A balanced budget, new projects, including the Preston pool which starts this spring. The Core strategy agreed by the Inspector and now awaiting going through the council for ratification. We are one of the first in Surrey to get agreement, and are delighted that the green belt around and in Kingswood is untouched and will be for many years to come.

We have not been the most severely flooded, although Outwood Lane did have a lake at the bottom of the Glade. Compared with other areas we have not suffered too much. Trees came down, but as soon as I was informed I got our officers out to clear the roads. The refuse collectors kept to their schedule and then went on to flood areas in Horley. Croydon has been seriously flooded and they have had to evacuate many families. The TV has been constantly showing other areas which have been severely hit.

Now begins the clearing up which will take time, and more importantly the cause of the flooding in this Borough. Many theories have been suggested, but we are not happy until these are proven and corrected. I am meeting the Environment Agency at the beginning of March. We are not top of their list I am sure, but R&B will continue to do all it can to prevent another flooding. We are working with Surrey County Council who are working flat out to relieve residents in Surrey. We are helping all we can both with staff and our sandbagging machine which we purchased for

just such a disaster. We have supplied sand bags to every resident that has requested them, and delivered them. Other Boroughs very close to us have not done that.

Kingswood has been plagued with developers all year again. Some have been turned down and others allowed on appeal. Unfortunately our current planning laws are not sympathetic to residents, and neither are the Inspectors. We have put in place more stringent planning policies and now that our Core Strategy is agreed, we look forward to more control in this ward. The combination of the new Core Strategy accompanied for the first time by local controls and guidance in a Supplementary Planning Document, should narrow the scope of independent Inspectors to make rogue decisions on appeal.

We wish you all well in the coming year, and hope for sunshine, which makes us all feel better.

**Cllr Joan Spiers (Leader of the Council) and Cllr Ros Mill  
Representing Kingswood, Lower Kingswood and Burgh Heath**

Dear Resident,

I am now completing my second year as Borough Councillor for Kingswood with Burgh Heath. Amongst the normal tasks for a Councillor, my roles on the Planning Committee and the Northern Forum bring my attention to development right across the Borough, and particularly to each and every application and appeal relating to Kingswood.

You might be interested in some statistics. In the last year there were 242 planning applications for this ward (which includes Burgh Heath and Lower Kingswood), a staggering 177 of these relating to Kingswood alone. My job is to be across each and every one of these applications - to consult, to listen, to influence and where appropriate to elect to bring specific cases to the attention of the full Planning Committee. However, as you might know, when a refusal is given it is the legal right of an applicant to appeal to the Planning Inspectorate, and some do. Last year, 18 appeals were determined in respect of Kingswood. Of these, 11 were dismissed by the inspector and 7 were granted. The inspectorate is, on the whole, largely backing up the decisions that we are making - but there are surprises and shocks, and a key goal has been to make sure that future planning policy, which will constrain inspectors' decisions too, is appropriate for this area.

In the last few weeks the Council's Core Strategy, its planning policy for the next 15 years, has been approved by the Inspectorate. Importantly, the Council has chosen to incorporate so-called 'spatial' policies in these plans - meaning that development policies for housing in each and every part of the Borough can be subtly and usefully different. We are inviting Residents' Associations and other groups to work with us in this process - and I have been pleased to work with the KRA as it has been at the vanguard, working hard to produce a high quality input document for Kingswood. This work will help to ensure that the Council has the necessary legal tools to ensure that Kingswood develops, as it must, in the right way - with housing that works harmoniously with the natural environment that ultimately defines where we live.

If I can help you in any way, or if you have questions or comments relating to planning, please do feel free to contact me either by email ([simon.parnall@me.com](mailto:simon.parnall@me.com)) or by telephone at any reasonable time (01737 830888), and I will be only too happy to talk with you. Or perhaps you might like to drop in to one of the Village Hall 'surgeries' that are held periodically, where we can talk about matters that concern you over a cup of coffee.

With very best regards,

**Simon Parnall**

**You can e-mail your local councillors: [joanspiers@aol.com](mailto:joanspiers@aol.com), [rmilluk@aol.com](mailto:rmilluk@aol.com) and [simon.parnall@me.com](mailto:simon.parnall@me.com)**

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Being a member of any organisation means you are interested in what that organisation does. In particular, the KRA helps to protect our collective interests by working with the Borough Council and County Council to monitor, and – where appropriate - comment on planning applications, press for our needs and concerns in respect of roads and public transport and, in every way that we can, ensure that Kingswood remains a unique and special place to live.

To be meaningfully acknowledged and listened to, we need strength in representative numbers. At the end of January this year the KRA membership was 56% of residencies in Kingswood. We need to increase that 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 £20 for 4 years – for the whole household. This money mainly goes to pay for the professional advice and those legal and administrative services we need to use to protect all our interests.

Becoming a member is very easy. Also, if your membership is due for renewal in the coming year, you will get a renewal notice from me, and I respectfully ask that you renew as soon as possible. Below are the options for joining or renewing, and how to pay your membership fee.

You can either e-mail your interest and the details listed below, to our Membership Secretary, Dave Saunders - [davesaun@btinternet.com](mailto:davesaun@btinternet.com). I will then return your membership details plus our bank details so you can electronically transfer your £20 subscription fee.

or

Complete this 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.*

**Dave Saunders**  
**Membership Secretary – KRA**  
**01737 350718 or [davesaun@btinternet.com](mailto:davesaun@btinternet.com)**