

Kingswood Residents' Association AGM 2018

Minutes

The minutes of the previous year's AGM were approved without amendment.

Chairman's report.

Des Camblin introduced the guest speakers Ian Muir, Head of Recycling at Reigate and Banstead Council, Phil Hutchinson, Strategic Director of Southern Rail and finally David Munro, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey and Inspector Angie Austin who heads up Banstead Police.

Reviewing the previous year, he said that there had been several key features of note. Firstly preliminary discussions about the potential redevelopment of the Legal & General site had begun. The KRA had managed to establish a constructive dialogue with the company and hoped to work together to minimise disruption during any development and also to try and ensure any scheme was sympathetic to the area. The same approach had proved successful with the station site where an acceptable scheme had been approved.

The KRA was still exploring what might be done to alleviate parking problems in the village and the Council was also currently reviewing parking policy in Kingswood and other nearby centres.

The average speed cameras on the A217 were now in operation and had virtually eliminated speeding although the new traffic lights had had some initial problems.

The village clean up organised by the KRA last year had been very successful, removing large amounts of litter, some of which had been there for years. The intention is to repeat this exercise at some suitable point and a request would be going out for volunteers at that time.

Treasurer's Report.

Adrienne Light commented that 2017 had been a major renewal year for the KRA in the four year membership cycle. Subscriptions could now be paid by PayPal and payment by standing order was also available. Three projects had been completed in 2017 – the village clean up, the removal of ivy from the trees in Waterhouse Lane and clearing up the overgrown grass bank opposite 12 Restaurant. All three projects had been funded by Surrey CC. A new bank account was being sought as interest payments were currently very low. She said that the KRA would continue to assist residents with planning issues wherever practical.

Election of Hon Auditor.

Adrienne Light thanked David Buckley the auditor for his assistance during the year and he was re-elected at that point.

Election of Honorary Officers and Committee for 2018 - 2019

The Officers and Committee were duly re-elected.

Councillors

Cllr Jeff Harris said that the financial pressures facing local government had been exacerbated in Surrey by an unfair national funding formula. Whilst this was under review by Government, the outcome was unlikely to be confirmed before 2019 with no guarantee of improvement. In the current financial year, about £104 million of cuts had to be made. The biggest concern financially was Adult Social Care. With people living longer, more adults moving into the County, and a growing number of adults with learning difficulties, this was a major concern particularly as Government funding had woefully failed to keep pace with these extra demands.

One of the ongoing challenges had been works on the A217, and other local road works. Everyone had had experience of the shambolic traffic management that had occurred since last summer, but he has called for a full investigation of the contractors Siemens and SCC to establish what went wrong and would report the outcome to residents. A217 and Outwood Lane works were still incomplete.

He said that the average speed cameras on the A217 were now active and proving most effective in reducing speed.

He had assisted local residents with various issues including the closure of a path at the edge of Legal & General. The path was not a designated right of way, but was clearly much used. The closure was said to be temporary but may be affected by future development of the site.

Potholes remain a major issue and residents could report these directly on the SCC website or by calling 0300 200 1003. Residents could also contact Cllr Harris directly and he would assist.

Cllr Simon Parnall reported that after a great deal of work over two years, the Development Management Plan (DMP) had been published for its Regulation 19 Consultation in January and all residents and residents' associations had been invited to respond. Hundreds of comments had been received during the consultation and these had been taken on board. The documents had also addressed new issues (such as the safeguarding of land for potential future development and the siting of traveller sites). The DMP would now go to the Planning Inspectorate for examination before being adopted.

He reported that Councillors had been considering a draft Enforcement Plan with the aim of further clarifying and strengthening enforcement. Extra enforcement officers had been recruited in order to strengthen the team and make the Council more responsive to breaches of planning control.

Cllr Parnall commented on the recent increase in burglaries in Kingswood and elsewhere in the borough and advised that the new police website www.police.uk was providing monthly and filterable results, showing crime statistics throughout the country, and said that this was a very helpful tool for Kingswood residents. He also reported that the Council was holding the Police and Crime Commissioner to account, and had asked for meetings between the Chief Constable and local Councillors. He urged that Neighbourhood Watch in Kingswood should also be strengthened.

First speaker - Ian Muir on Recycling.

Ian Muir reported that Reigate and Banstead was in the top 10% in recycling rankings in the country. Refuse material was collected in vehicles with separate compartments for each material. Garden waste amounting to 8,000 tons a year was collected and composted. 4,500 tons a year of food waste went to a special plant where it was decomposed to produce methane gas to generate energy and the remaining waste became fertiliser. 6,500 tons of glass is collected and was recycled.

This Borough was therefore doing well on recycling targets and had worked hard to find ways to recycle quite a wide range of waste materials. Unrecyclable plastics remained a problem as these still went to landfill. Manufacturers were being urged to switch to recyclable packing materials. It remained to ensure that households developed a better understanding of how to allocate materials for recycling. Helpfully he had brought with him samples of typical waste packaging material and identified those which could be recycled.

Second speaker - Phil Hutchinson on Southern Rail.

Phil Hutchinson acknowledged that lengthy disruption to rail services had been caused by major reconstruction works which were now nearing completion. Meantime the train timetable had been completely rewritten adding in extra time at stations which was needed to allow additional passengers to board. He said that Southern Rail had also reviewed all the intermediate running times between stations to double check that the timetable was consistently achievable. This meant that some journeys would be timed to take slightly longer, but with improved punctuality.

In late 2017 it had been announced that a project to upgrade Thameslink would be phased in over a two year period. As a result, Southern had not been able to review all the weekend feedback yet, but this would be published by the end of June. He stressed that the May 2018 Sunday timetable was transitional and warned that significant weekend works would continue until May 2019.

The timetable, which was currently undergoing consultation, represented the "end position", but due to phasing, the final timetable would not be introduced until December 2019.

Third speaker - David Munro/Angie Austin on Policing.

David Munro outlined the general structure of the Surrey Police and in particular the Banstead team under the supervision of Inspector Angie Austin. He commented as most people were aware, resources for policing had been cut by central government and that it had been necessary to rethink working practices to improve their effectiveness in light of this.

There was much discussion about the actual numbers of burglaries in the Kingswood area as residents' experience had recorded a significantly higher number than the official police figures. David Munro agreed to ask his team to undertake further work around the number of burglaries which had occurred in recent months to confirm the correct figures.

Residents expressed frustration and concern that the police presence appeared to be so sparse in Kingswood at a time when there had been so much crime in the area. Angie Austin explained that in view of the number of burglaries taking place in the Kingswood area, she had formed a specialist burglary team specifically to target this. She also referred to the SelectaDNA property-marking

system which could assist in identifying the owners of stolen property and referred residents to the police website.

Whilst it was acknowledged that police resources had been limited by central government funding reductions, several residents commented that given the current alarming crime wave, some of which had involved violence, firm action and better feedback was essential.

Any other business.

There being no other business, the meeting was closed.