



KINGSWOOD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

AGM 2022 MINUTES

Meeting held in the Village Hall, Kingswood

29 March at 8.00pm

Introduction

THE CHAIR, **Valerie Evans** welcomed everyone to the first in-person AGM since 2019 and, with the aid of a slide presentation, went on to introduce the committee to the audience before giving a slide presentation of the running order of events for the evening.

Minutes

THE MINUTES of the previous AGM, held virtually by Zoom on July 13 2021, were approved without amendment.

Chair's report

THE CHAIR gave a brief overview of the KRA's activities over the past two years during the Covid pandemic. These included:

KINGSWOOD SAFETY NET – During March 2020, with the onset of Covid lockdowns, the KRA and the Kingswood Village Community Association (KVCA) jointly set up the Kingswood Safety Net (KSN) with Bob Gunn of the KVCA as Chair. Its aim was to assist residents with delivery of groceries and prescription collections, or just to provide a friendly voice on the phone. This was much appreciated and brought the village together through more than 90 volunteers and local road groups. The Chair paid tribute particularly to the hard work of Bob Gunn in making the scheme such a success. Although the KSN was suspended in mid-2021, the volunteers remain ready should the need arise again.

The Chair said the KRA had completed several projects aimed at enhancing our village and made a special point of emphasising that these projects had only been made possible through the generous contributions from Reigate & Banstead Borough Council (RBBC) via the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). She offered the association's sincere thanks to RBBC for providing funding and to the KRA team for co-ordinating these projects:-

- **Tree planting:** by March this year a total of 26 new trees were due to have been planted in Waterhouse Lane, from opposite the Village Hall going towards the A217, to restore the tree-lined approach to the village.
- **Kingswood village gateway signs:** three new 'Welcome to Kingswood' signs had been installed on the village approach along Waterhouse Lane, Outwood Lane, and Bonsor Drive.
- **Kingswood village website upgrade:** with the help of a grant from RBBC and assistance from our local councillors, the KRA had updated the website to accommodate mobile devices, particularly mobile phones.

LITTER PICKERS - the Chair praised the work of the litter pickers and said several KRA committee members were active participants in cleaning up Kingswood. She reported that the local litter pickers had won an award for their work and added that the KRA had contributed £200 towards the purchase of gloves and equipment.

POPPY APPEAL - Through the generosity of residents and businesses, we raised over £3,000 for the Royal British Legion during the KRA's poppy appeals in 2020 and 2021.

The Chair moved on to highlight news around two major proposed development projects in the village:

STATION SITE DEVELOPMENT - In March 2021 a planning application for 28 flats and a Co-op store was submitted to RBBC. A specially-convened KRA working group held meetings with the developer and Co-op to register our concerns. We considered it important that residents' views should also be sought, so a 'flyer' was circulated to every home in Kingswood to provide a link to the planning portal for residents to record their own comments. 245 comments were received (218 objections and 26 in support). In September 2021, the KRA received notification from RBBC that the planning application had been withdrawn in favour of a previously-approved application by another developer for 18 houses, which the KRA had supported.

INSPIRED VILLAGES RETIREMENT VILLAGE - In September 2020, the IV planning application for the redevelopment of the Legal & General site was approved by RBBC. This application was fully supported by the KRA, who had set up a working group which had negotiated, and worked very closely, with IV over 18 months to successfully address the concerns of both residents and the KRA itself. As part of these negotiations, the KRA secured with L&G a legally-binding covenant to prevent in perpetuity any further development of the open-space land. Although no work had yet started, David Floyd, a KRA member of the IV working group had received assurances from the company that IV were fully committed to creating a flagship retirement village on the site and further news was expected in the late Spring.

Treasurer's report

THE TREASURER, **Adrienne Light**, presented the accounts for the year to 31 December 2021. These showed that subscription income was £2,800. The KRA also received Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds from RBBC, which had funded five projects in the past year: the tree planting (undertaken in two separate phases), the gateway signs, a Royal British Legion poppy appeal project and a grant to the litter

pickers. She thanked the councillors of RBBC for their encouragement in pursuing and realising these grants.

She said three new projects were being proposed for 2022: replacing the yellow litter bins on the parade of shops with black and gold bins, replacing the black hanging village sign on the bank opposite the shops and the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations. Two other suggestions had been made: for a defibrillator (although it was pointed out by two members of the audience that the village already had one at the station) and a children's play area. The Chair added that IV had agreed to provide a children's playground for the use of village residents and their families on the L&G site and suggested that perhaps a joint approach would be useful. If IV had set aside funds for this, perhaps potential grants should be directed to other projects.

The Treasurer showed a slide giving details of the number of times the Kingswood Village website was being accessed. She had been confident of achieving one million 'hits' in 2021 but this had fallen short. However, she hoped the million mark would be achieved and even superseded in 2022.

The accounts had been audited by **David Buckley** who, after a vote, was re-elected as auditor for the following 12 months.

Election of honorary officers and committee

THE CHAIR began by announcing the retirement from the committee of John Lang, one of the KRA's two planning officers. John became a member of the KRA shortly after moving into Kingswood in the late 1970s. He was actively involved in the KRA's planning scrutiny from around the year 2000 and became chair of the planning sub-committee around 2008.

John also represented the KRA as a member of the Banstead Federation of Road Associations, comprising representatives from each of the local residents' associations. The federation was also a great source of knowledge to which John had contributed over the years. Barry Miles would be picking up that role. John Lang could not be present at the AGM because he was currently shielding but a presentation would be made to him in due course. The Chair also announced the retirement of the KRA's other long-standing planning officer, Keith Denyer, singling out his work as part of the L&G working group for special praise.

The Chair assured the meeting that planning scrutiny would remain uninterrupted, with the formation of a four-strong panel comprising herself, Des Camblin, David Floyd and Justus van der Spuy continuing to scrutinise every application.

The idea of a planning panel, she said, also formed part of a strategic review being carried out by a group within the KRA which was charged with considering what the KRA currently does and if its activities could be improved. After initial investigation, the committee had endorsed setting-up a Strategy Working Group (SWG) to analyse its current activities and to make recommendations.

She went on to say that, as she had advised the KRA committee in January, she would be standing down after the AGM. The job had been a hugely-satisfying learning curve in the past three years but, with a full-time job, it was proving to be too much to sustain. She said that David Floyd, a committee member for 12 years and former Honorary Secretary of the KRA, had offered to become her successor and invited him to introduce himself to the audience.

He gave a brief outline of his career and experience first in advertising in the US and UK and latterly in the restoration of historic buildings. His experience of one

particular area in Essex where he owned a property underlined, he said, his belief that a residents' association was a vital part of any community.

The Chair concluded this part of the proceedings by calling for a block vote on the committee and its officers. She showed a slide of those current members and officers, with the addition of any new proposed changes. The vote was customarily taken as a block, so she asked the floor if there were any objections. There were none. She received a proposer and seconder from the floor and, there being no objections, the officers and committee were elected/re-elected.

Your councillors

REIGATE AND BANSTEAD BOROUGH COUNCILLORS:

THE CHAIR introduced the two RBBC councillors **Caroline Neame** and **Simon Parnall**. Cllr. Neame explained she was the council executive for housing, homelessness and refugees, while Cllr. Parnall said he was chair of the RBBC planning committee and a previous chair of the KRA.

He told the audience that if anyone had any planning concerns, it was vital they spoke up since local democracy worked when people actually contributed to the process. It was the same with the grants process for community projects: people should make their voices heard.

The councillors were asked about the apartments development at Kingsbarn on Waterhouse Lane opposite the entrance to Forest Drive. One member of the audience said it appeared the development had been abandoned. Cllr. Neame said she lived next door to the property and shared everyone's frustration. However, work was going on internally and an electricity sub-station had been installed in the grounds. Cllr. Parnall said he understood people's frustration; there were legal restrictions on how quickly building work had to start after planning approval was given but no such time limit on finishing the work.

In response to another question, one resident said he believed an extra apartment had been built in contravention of the original application. Cllr. Neame said this was, in fact, two extra rooms in the loft space which exceeded the original plans but this change had been approved when an appeal by RBBC against planning contraventions went to the Planning Inspectorate in Bristol. Cllr. Parnall said it was a cause of constant frustration that the Planning Inspectorate could overturn locally-agreed democratic decisions.

SURREY COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Councillor Rebecca Paul began by explaining that most of the queries she received were about matters concerning Surrey Highways, even though this was a very small part of the work done by Surrey County Council (SCC), whose main areas of responsibility were adult social care and children's services.

Speaking about local matters she had been involved in, she reported that the drainage problems on Bonsor Drive had been massively improved by the construction of six new gulleys and the rediscovery and reconnection of two existing soakaways. She spent a lot of time in contact with the KRA's Roads and Transport Officer, Mike Gibson. One of the issues he had raised was speeding in Waterhouse Lane. A speed assessment carried out on Waterhouse Lane showed that it was classed as compliant,

but there were also a lot of concerns about speeding on Outwood Lane, where she was liaising with her neighbouring Surrey County councillor.

KRA committee member Andrew Winyard asked about the possibility of making the single-lane traffic control system over the railway bridge permanent. Cllr. Paul replied this was in her view unlikely since the lights were a temporary measure until bridge-strengthening work had been done. It would need a very good business case for the lights to be made permanent. Other members of the audience agreed that it should be made permanent but Cllr. Parnall pointed out that the bridge was actually owned by Network Rail; only the temporary traffic lights were provided by Surrey. However, the Chair said it might be cheaper for Network Rail to pay for an enhanced single-lane traffic control over the bridge than the amount it would cost to strengthen or replace the bridge itself. Cllr. Paul agreed to check on the progress – if any – on work to strengthen the bridge.

The question of flooding on some of the private estate roads and Outwood Lane was also raised, as was the issue of co-ordinating road works to minimise disruption and the need to resurface private roads. Cllr. Paul said co-ordinating road works was a sensible suggestion but very difficult to do in practice.

Another resident raised the question about speed limits on private roads. Cllr. Paul told her that setting the speed limits on public highways was the job of Surrey but that enforcement was the job of Surrey Police. The situation regarding private roads was more complicated since they were, technically, on private land and not subject to the same laws. She agreed she would look into it and the Chair suggested Mike Gibson might raise it at the next KRA committee meeting.

She also agreed to investigate a complaint from another resident that there was no dropped curb on Furze Hill that would allow buggies, wheelchairs or similar to cross the road in safety.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Inspector Alex Maguire, Borough Commander, Surrey Police

INSPECTOR MAGUIRE outlined to the meeting the police team responsible for the North area of the borough that includes Kingswood. He also presented a detailed breakdown of the kind of offences and numbers in our area which, he said, was very low. However, catalytic converter thefts were a major problem in all areas and he advised the meeting of a police-run scheme where car owners could have their cars' catalytic converters marked for free. This service normally cost £55 and there were six garages in the area who would fit the marker kits. Another deterrent to criminals which the police were funding was a scheme where residents could have specific items marked using SelectaDNA. This enabled stolen goods which had been marked to be tracked back to the owners and had proved effective with valuable items such as jewellery. Having visible signs warning that SelectaDNA was being used in a particular area, he said, had been proven to deter criminals from targeting particular areas. Both these services would be available to Kingswood residents. Another deterrent to criminals was wider use of ANPR cameras and his force was making a bid to increase these cameras in the area.

In answer to a question from the audience about the effectiveness of a private security firm in parts of Kingswood, he said this was another very good deterrent. Although the company had no powers of arrest, they regularly reported suspicious behaviour to

police. In his opinion, such companies' activity was a significant factor in reducing crime in those areas where they operated.

The Chair thanked Insp. Maguire and said the KRA would like to take him up on the offer of any signs that might deter the theft of catalytic converters or other crimes in general. Insp. Maguire offered to pass on to the KRA details of all the ways in which crimes could be reported through them – not just with 999 or 101 calls but online and through social media.

Andrew Marsh. GP Liaison Manager. Private Care. The Royal Marsden NHS Trust

AFTER BRIEFLY outlining the history of the Royal Marsden, Andrew Marsh told the audience that the hospital is Europe's largest comprehensive cancer centre and rated in the top three in the world, the other two being in the US. As a specialist cancer hospital that was all it dealt with and it had 2,500 cancer specialists under one roof. It treated 60,000 patients every year and conducted 42,000 patient-led clinical trials every year. Every patient's case was studied and discussed by a Multi-Disciplinary Group (MDG) which came together every week. As many as 35 staff attended each MDG session. The Royal Marsden's nursing manual on how to be a cancer nurse was used by every healthcare organisation in every country in the world.

He told the audience that the Royal Marsden had the biggest private care unit of any hospital in the UK and he went on to talk about the Royal Marsden's new private cancer care centre at Cavendish Square in Central London. It was, he said, not a hospital like the Marsden's other two institutions in Chelsea and Sutton, but a private diagnostic and treatment centre. Most crucially, every penny that Cavendish Square made, all went back into the Royal Marsden NHS Trust; none was used to fund extra private care or, indeed, spent on inflated salaries but all went back into the Royal Marsden's NHS operations to help pay for research, staff, training, technology and better facilities. He finished his presentation with a short video showing the new Cavendish Square centre.

Lucy Shea. Clerk to the Banstead Commons Conservators (BCC)

LUCY SHEA started by introducing one of the BCC's newly-appointed Conservators, then went on to give a brief history of the BCC and the work it does. Although historically dating from an 1893 Act of Parliament, the land that forms the four Banstead Commons is owned by RBBC but the duty for its protection and enhancement falls under the 1893 Act to the BCC. On taking over ownership in 1955, the then local authority paid the conservators the equivalent of £155,000 a year to continue their legal duties. However, the consequences of tighter local authority spending controls, combined with loss of grant funding because of Brexit, meant the BCC had significant gaps in its funding. This was an on-going problem given the size of the commons (550 hectares – roughly half of all the green spaces in the whole borough) and the BCC's statutory duties to manage the land and enhance its wildlife habitats, including an area dedicated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The Chair thanked all the guest speakers for their presentations.

Proposed resolution

THE MEETING was asked to vote in favour of a proposed resolution from retiring committee member Keith Denyer to accept the following Conflict of Interest Policy:

- a) That the association requires that where a committee member has another interest in a matter, either pecuniary or non-pecuniary, the person or persons concerned should take no part in any proposal, discussion or vote on the matter, but they may be called upon to answer questions in their alternative capacity; and
- b) This would include participation in the work of the KRA committee, sub-committees or any of the KRA's working groups.

In Keith Denyer's absence, the resolution was presented to the AGM by Adrienne Light who had, immediately prior to the start of the meeting, placed on each chair in the hall a printed three-page paper from Keith Denyer explaining why he believed such a policy was necessary and what had prompted him to propose the resolution.

While admitting everyone implicitly abided by a code to deal with any potential conflict of interest, his proposed resolution, he said, merely stated it explicitly. His closing argument was that: 'To vote against [*his resolution*], you would be voting against the principle of ethical decision-making.'

The Chair said that standing aside from any potential conflict of interest was standard practice. Adrienne Light said that she had been on the committee for 17 years and all that the resolution was asking was to have a conflict of interest policy explicitly stated.

The Chair asked KRA committee members Des Camblin, who is involved with Kingswood Heritage Company Ltd. (KHCL), one of the new private road-owning companies, and Justus van der Spuy, who is similarly involved with another of the road-owning companies, Kingswood North Estate Company Ltd. (KNECL), to give their views.

Des Camblin said he had no problem with a conflict of interest policy but he believed that members already were aware that if a potential conflict of interest arose concerning themselves, they would make it clear they couldn't take part in that particular discussion or decision-making. He felt this was very unlikely to happen with KHCL since their interests were largely aligned with those of the KRA.

Justus van der Spuy agreed, adding that KNECL was very clear that it was up to the KRA to deal with planning applications. At this point, the Chair of KNECL, Shirley Clark, asked why this issue was being raised now. She was concerned at some of the statements contained in background information attached to the resolution and questioned the way it had been presented to the AGM with papers hurriedly distributed just before the meeting started, giving the audience no time to read them. Kevin Connolly, secretary of The Glade Road Committee, which operates within the KNECL estate, asked if the resolution had arisen from a specific conflict of interest.

Justus van der Spuy told the meeting that the wording of the resolution had been so badly drafted as to be void for vagueness. The wording of this policy would preclude anyone who had an interest in anything – even simple ownership of a house in Kingswood – from serving on the KRA. The resolution was dangerous in that it would create more conflicts than it resolved. He would not recommend voting for it.

As an example of a potential conflict of interest, Adrienne Light raised the case of a woman who had been trying to build a substantial property development in Kingswood against very strong local opposition and whose husband had applied to be on the KRA committee. This was a clear example of a pecuniary interest.

It was pointed out by at least two members of the audience that the KRA structure had ensured that he wasn't allowed on the KRA committee. Cllr. Parnall explained: 'This is why we have a committee.' However, Adrienne Light countered by using a hypothetical situation where, she said, her husband might apply to be secretary of the committee and could do so with only seven days' notice before the AGM. Under the current constitution 'he would have been voted in *en bloc*'. She concluded by claiming that this was a 'sleep easy' policy with which the KRA already complied.

The Chair said it was essential for any organisation to have a proper governance process. Nobody had a problem with this. The problem was that what Keith Denyer was proposing meant anyone connected with one of the new road companies had no right to be on the KRA. She said the section (b) of the proposed policy particularly worried her.

From the audience, KVCA Chair Bob Gunn said the principle was clearly correct but that the policy as presented could be interpreted far too widely. It appeared the committee wouldn't be able to function since all would have to withdraw from every item. He thought it might be wise for the KRA to go away and look at the wording other organisations similar to the KRA used.

Committee member Andrew Winyard said that under the heading 'Further Background' Keith Denyer said that the resolution was being put forward 'solely in response to printed public statements from, and actions taken by, one of the three new road companies'. He believed it was incorrect to comment about such statements in the resolution paperwork and concluded: 'I'd say you can't put a resolution up without the person proposing it being present. He is not here, so we can't really consider it.'

In response, Adrienne Light claimed that 'half' the committee members could not be present at the AGM because they were shielding over concerns around Covid. It was pointed out to her that considerably more than half the committee was, in fact, present.

To draw the debate to a close, the Chair said she got a sense in the room that people weren't against the idea – it was simply good governance – but that the words needed to be sharpened up considerably. Cllr. Parnall suggested looking at what other residents' associations were doing, in particular the National Organisation of Residents' Associations (NORA). He indicated that, in any vote, he and fellow RBBC councillor, Caroline Neame, would have to abstain. Shirley Clark said she would have to vote against the resolution. She was very concerned about some of the assertions being made in Keith Denyer's paper and the manner in which the papers had been delivered.

Adrienne Light asked if there could be a vote on the adoption of a Conflict of Interest Policy which would be what was 'in line with every other ethical organisation', to which Justus van der Spuy replied that the vote was on this specific resolution tabled to this particular AGM.

The Chair wanted it minuted that the KRA would be looking at this with the aim to come up with potentially some standard form of words which would be raised at the next committee meeting. It would have to be decided how such a policy could be put to the wider membership of the KRA. She believed the resolution should be put on hold while further investigations were made and a new document could be put together.

Justus van der Spuy asked for a vote by show of hands for this course of action. There were two abstentions from the RBBC councillors and one vote against from Adrienne Light. The rest of the hall voted in favour.

The meeting closed with Bob Gunn expressing his thanks to the KRA committee members and the association in general for all the work they do for the village. He particularly wanted to thank those who were stepping down following the AGM.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 10.33pm.