

AGM 2009 Minutes

Knoll Residents Association
Minutes of the 35th AGM held at St John's Church, Lynwood Grove
on Tuesday 24 November 2009, starting at 7.45pm

Apologies

John Horam MP, James Cleverly GLA, Pauline Tunncliffe, John Giuane, Julia McCarthy and Brian Wilkin. Sgt Russell Lamb Orpington SNT and remaining Orpington Ward councillors had other engagements but hoped to join proceedings later in the evening if time permitted.

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks

Chris Tait welcomed Councillors Tony Owen & Simon Fawthrop, Cheryl Curr Town Centre Manager, Sgt J Kemp Petts Wood & Knoll Safer Neighbourhood Team and officers, Iain Forbes LBB Head of Transport Strategy and representatives from Crofton and Petts Wood Residents Associations.

2. Minutes of 34th AGM

Approved. (Proposed Mrs C Gray, seconded Mrs K Wilkins)

3. Treasurer's Report

Copies of the audited income & expenditure accounts to 30 September 2009 were presented (Accounts & re-election of T Mangold as auditor were approved, proposed R Healey, seconded R Vaughan). Ian Black added that membership is a little higher than for 2008 although the number of houses has dropped very slightly.

4. Election of the Committee

Paul Savage was introduced as the next Chairman. Dinesh Gupta has resigned from the Committee but member Deepa Gadkary has kindly offered to join bringing the Committee to its quota of 12.

5. Chairman's Report

Chris Tait announced the sad news that Mike Fogden had died on 10 October, aged 73. He described Mike's many achievements since his birth in Worthing in 1936, including his RAF posting in Cyprus during the Suez Crisis, as PS to both Richard Crossman & Keith Joseph, as the first chief executive of the Employment Service and head of the Blood Service (On-line obituaries at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/obituaries/article6885953.ece> & <http://opinion.publicfinance.co.uk/2009/10/obituary-mike-fogden-cb/>). Mike was always happy to push forward ideas from the Committee and members and was willing to 'roll-up' his sleeves & get on with the job such as removing graffiti in the vicinity. His letters reflected his Whitehall experience and were written with a delicious twist of irony. He will be sadly missed in the Knoll and the Committee have sent a donation (on behalf of all the KRA members) to the Alzheimers' Society in his memory.

The chairman thanked all the Committee for their hard work with special reference to Hilary Robson who had taken the brunt of the increased administration work during Mike Fogden's illness. He also thanked the road wardens without whose commitment the Association just 'wouldn't happen'. He went on to summarise 2009:-

- Tesco opening
- Alcohol Exclusion Zone
- Crime concerns (although we are in the top two or three safest Wards in London)
- The recent High St incident
- Speed-hump reduction

and the look forward to 2010 including the Orpington Masterplan and parking review.

Chris reminded the audience that Tree Protection Orders (TPOs) do not automatically exist just because a tree is very old or a particular type e.g. oak. Someone must request a TPO (From the floor a member feels LBB should do a survey and have responsibility for this. Otherwise it is often only after contractors/developers have removed a tree that the issue of a possible TPO is raised. Chris Tait commented that he had raised this with LBB whose officer had commented that they did not have the resources to carry out such a survey) and raise the issue with London Borough of Bromley as necessary. He asked all to be sensitive & considerate about lighting bonfires.

The deadline for the Harris Hospice Open Garden Scheme 2010 is in January and will therefore be passed by the time of the Spring 2010 Newsletter so please contact them direct if interested in taking part.

6. Cheryl Curr addressed the floor

Again this has been a challenging year for the town. The feedback from businesses since the Tesco opening has been mixed. The traffic congestion has not been as bad as expected but the shops at the Priory Gardens end of the High St have experienced a fall in takings.

The demise of Woolworths left that central unit empty for a long time but Ethel Austin has now taken the premises and there have been other newcomers such as the Panacea coffee shop, Decorators' Choice and a new hairdressers plus Paws Claws & Fins move to the High St.

The property agents & landlords are not expecting things to improve next year although occupancy rates & vacancies are on a par with other like towns. Landlords are being asked to contribute to green vinyl signs in empty shop fronts to make the overall look more attractive.

Activities such as the summer fete in Priory Gardens have been held through the year to encourage people to 'take a closer look at Orpington'. A large sign 13ft x 6ft pointing down the High St will be unveiled on 1 December. The annual Xmas lights switch-on is tomorrow and lots of local primary schools will be singing on the Walnuts stage.

Cheryl & Iain Forbes are liaising re the High St parking, crossing etc arrangements and businesses have chosen the option of more disruption at once but over a shorter time-span. The relocation of the library into the Walnuts will be a driver for increased footfall and make the centre livelier with more visitors.

Q& A: The dead walnut tree with hanging rope is not a good advert for the town. Cheryl agrees but the Walnuts are owned by Trillion not LBB. Perhaps the KRA could write to them.

Q& A: Richard Burton was 'locked-in' the Walnuts during the recent High St disturbance by college students. What is the issue? Cheryl said the behaviour of some college

students was unacceptable & a major concern for the shopkeepers. There have been several meetings between them and the college and Sgt Russell Lamb has been called to see the Borough Commander Charlie Griggs. The matter is being taken very seriously. Zero-tolerance and CCTV will be part of the solution. With lots of students being dispersed out at the same time there is insufficient capacity on the buses but from next Monday the students will be directed out via Lych Gate Rd.

Q&A: Where is the library going to be? On the ground floor and majority of the first floor of the former social services building. It is acknowledged that the move is not everyone's choice but there have been favourable views - on one day a survey taken was 64 in favour out of 74 responses. It is not yet decided who will occupy the current library premises. Although some of the current social services department will stay, the paying facility will close and move to Bromley. However, HSBC will accept payments to LBB that used to be paid at the social services' counter. The move should be given the final go-ahead at the full council meeting on 15 February and tenders will then be sought for the work to begin next May with an expected opening in December 2010.

Q& A: There are lots of over-spilling gutters (especially around Clintons) and collapsing cast-iron covers. Can a mandate be put on the landlords to keep their buildings clean & in good order and the pavements kept serviced? Cheryl will take up the LBB matters with the streets inspector and does try to get landlords to act although they are more often parts of land portfolios owned by management companies and thus difficult to trace. Work is underway to improve the alleyway besides Clintons.

7. Iain Forbes addressed the floor

Iain followed-up on the two prevailing themes from last year's AGM i.e. the traffic levels following Tesco opening & the promised review of the temporary parking arrangements. The latter was promised six-months after the store opened and indeed the parking review started yesterday. Leaflets have started to go out to all roads between the by-pass, Perry Hall Rd and Crofton Lane. The leaflets are being delivered on a staggered basis but if any resident does not receive one they can contact the Project Manager on 02083134425. Once the review is complete LBB will write to each street with the specific plans for them.

As Cheryl Curr stated some of the worst fears about traffic congestion have not been realised following Tesco's opening in May. There was a slight problem with queues building where vehicles were turning right into the Tesco car park so the traffic lights have been altered slightly and a sensor installed to change the flow if traffic does begin to build-up. Iain acknowledged that the effect of Christmas shoppers has not yet been experienced but so far things have not been as bad as residents feared.

The works in the High St are subject to final agreement by the council executive but are expected to begin on 11 January with completion by early summer 2010. There was an exhibition of the changes in the Walnuts during the summer for residents to view. The roadway will be narrowed down but wide enough for two buses to pass. There will be bays for loading, bus stops and disabled parking and it will be a 20mph zone and a restricted zone i.e. parking only allowed in signed bays. Parking will not be allowed anywhere else even though there will be no yellow lines. The crossings will be widened and levelled with the pavement for pushchairs etc. All unnecessary signage will go and street furniture will all be new stainless steel items.

Iain raised the profile of LBB's Street Friends for residents to report minor matters, keep road looking nice etc.

Q&A: What is the reason for the reduction in the speed-hump heights in Lynwood Grove? Wherever a road is in need of maintenance the speed-tables will also be updated if they

were to the old standard for speed-humps which is no longer acceptable. The more domed shaped ones meet the current standard and are not as 'fierce'.

Q&A: The table at the Mayfield Road/Lynwood Gr junction has only been lowered on one side. Iain will refer this on to the road team.

Q&A: The right-hand turn into the Tesco car park is not necessarily to do with the lights but the fact that people are stopping to wait for spaces as soon as they get into the car park. LBB are aware of this and a member of the transport team has written to Tesco to ask them to review their own internal parking system.

Q&A: Paul Savage asked how the type of 'hump' is arrived at. Iain explained that the variety of humps has changed over the years and are for various uses e.g. to reduce speeding, assist pedestrians in crossing etc. Emergency services are always consulted. Jo Wyton wondered if the new speed-humps in the area were actually meant to slow vehicles down because she has seen Asda lorries and others travelling well above 30mph.

Q&A: There is often stationary traffic in Station Rd. Has there been any attempt to measure the resulting air pollution? None known.

Remark: Chris Tait mentioned that there is a clear plan for pavement repairs/improvements in the area but this will be on a rolling basis. He highlighted the potential danger at Orchard Grove where cars exiting onto Station Rd could mistake indicator signals from cars travelling down Station Road as intention to turn into Orchard Gr not Tescos.

Q&A: The parking in Broxbourne Rd has worsened since Tescos finished where commuter parking has replaced the early builders' vehicles. Is it still the intention to revert back to the pre-Tesco situation? Iain Forbes said that was the promise when the temporary parking arrangements were put in place but that there is no rigidity and all now have the opportunity to comment. The questioner added that there cannot be almost blanket yellow lines everywhere but with one unlined road in the middle. Ray Vaughan added that the same problems exist and always have done in St Kilda Rd.

Q&A: Richard Burton asked if it was LBB's intention to retain some revenue generating controls in place? These will be reviewed but are appropriate in some places.

8. Sgt Kemp addressed the floor

Despite the commonly held view that crime increases in a recession this has not been the case in Petts Wood & Knoll Ward where the statistics show a fall again in the last three/four months. There were 23 burglaries over the last 12 months with 50% being from sheds or garages so please give due consideration to security.

With the exception of the college there has been minimal anti-social behaviour in the last 12 months. The Alcohol Exclusion Zone has been granted for the High St although it does not cover all the places Sgt Kemp would have preferred.

All were reminded not to fall victim to scams and rogue trader activity.

Q&A: Sheila Lilly highlighted the tension between security warnings to lock doors and locate keys at a distance to reduce theft but to leave keys in locks for fire safety. Sgt Kemp said that it is for residents to do a personal risk assessment regarding such matters.

9. Open Forum

Councillor Tony Owen gave a detailed account of the trigger and subsequent outcome of the recent High St incident involving 50 college students. Prior to this incident, over the last 2 or 3 years matters had been okay. A Safer Neighbourhood Team is linked with the college and students understood & obeyed the no knives policy etc. Unfortunately this year's intake is not as well behaved. The college's Ofsted score suffers if exclusions are made but Tony has offered the college management support over this issue.

The Crays' stabbing is believed to be part of an on-going quarrel between two travelling families. The incident started in the Priory Tavern and that PH's licence is up for its 3rd review shortly.

Q&A: A lot of the students seem to come from Woolwich & Lewisham so why should LBB have to provide the buses. Councillor Simon Fawthrop said the buses are TfL and Cheryl Curr added that there are on-going conversations with TfL about the student issue.

Q&A: What will happen when the new college opens? The facilities will be improved but Cheryl Curr understands that there will be not be an increase in student numbers.

Chris Tait brought formal proceedings to a close at 9.27pm and welcomed all to join the Committee & invited guests for refreshments.