

Knoll Residents Association



Minutes of 46th AGM held via Zoom on Tuesday 17 November 2020, at 7:45pm

Speakers and Guests

Gareth Bacon MP

Sharon Baldwin - Orpington 1st

Councillors: Tony Owen, Simon Fawthrop, Keith Onslow, Kim Botting, William Huntingdon-Thresher

PS Alex Farmer

Rev Jennifer Millington - St John's URC

1. Welcome from Chairman Lee Kendall

New Chairman, Lee Kendall welcomed residents and guest speakers to the AGM, held for the first time online using Zoom. He outlined changes that have happened this year. The newsletter is now being printed in colour and is delivered by a distribution company. He thanked Road Wardens for the work they have done in the past, but explained that they were not currently delivering Knoll News or collecting subscriptions due to the Covid19 pandemic. Another innovation was the KRA Facebook Group which now has over 200 members and is used to help disseminate useful information to residents. He concluded by thanking key workers: NHS staff, Police, Post Office and supermarket workers for all they are doing during lockdown.

2. Minutes of 45th AGM

Agreed¹

3. Election of Committee

Nominations have been received for nine committee members and they were duly elected.²

Lee Kendall, Ian Black, Miriam Harries, Anika James, Stephen Sangster, Carol Bisley, Malcolm Stoodley, Brian Wilkin, Kay Wilkins

4. Treasurer's Report

The accounts for the year ended 30th September 2020, independently examined by Brian Pow, were approved.³ The main expenditure this year has been printing and distributing Knoll News and although no subscriptions have been collected this year there is still a healthy balance which should cover 1 to 2 years with current spending.

5. Election of Honorary Auditor

Brian Pow has kindly agreed to continue as independent examiner and was reappointed for a further year.⁴

6. Message from Reverend Jennifer Millington

St John's URC is currently closed due to lockdown restrictions although the pre-school is still operating. They hope to be able to re-open after lockdown, but Christmas services, a Nativity Play and Holy Communion will be accessible on the Church website. She reminded us all that Midwinter Festivals are a time of hope in the darkest part of the year.

7. Presentation by Gareth Bacon MP

Since the London Plan came out the Secretary of State has written to the Mayor of London and there have been two White Papers: The Housing Algorithm and Planning for the Future. Gareth gave an overview of these and explained the implications for planning in Bromley and how he was responding to concerns these papers raise.

The London Plan removes the density matrix, protection of back gardens, parking allowances for new development and does not permit net loss of strategic industrial land, making it very difficult for LBB to resist inappropriate development. The letter from the Secretary of State outlined 12 areas of criticism, especially that not enough houses are being built. The Mayor of London has not responded effectively to these concerns.

The Housing Algorithm White Paper sets housing targets for different areas. Bromley has been expected to build 641 new units per year, and is currently building c 700 units. New targets have been set for a 15 year period of 2487 units to be built in Bromley each year, an increase of 288%. Such targets are unrealistic and do not take account of local conditions, for example considering that two-thirds of Orpington is green land.

The Planning for the Future White Paper outlines different areas: growth areas in which planning permission is

presumed, renewal areas in which local authorities will have a say over planning and protected areas such as conservation areas. Planning for the Future is influenced by numbers set by the Housing Algorithm but does not ensure that current permitted development actually takes place. Nationally there are 1.1 million granted applications which have not yet been built. Also, the White Paper does not detail the role of metropolitan mayors, but it is very likely that the Mayor of London will make decisions about which areas should be designated for growth, renewal or protection. This would effectively remove power from local authorities and be a danger to the Green Belt.

Consultation on the White Papers has closed but concerns have been raised by many MPs and Gareth has been very active in this.

Q. How might the Planning for the Future White Paper affect the Knoll?

A. ASRCs are particularly local and only relevant to Bromley. Effects on the Knoll are likely to be influenced by who decides on growth, renewal and protected areas.

Q. Can Gareth guarantee that his position on planning White Papers will not change despite the current political pressure on the Prime Minister and that he will continue to be vocal in resisting inappropriate development?

A. He has had discussions with the Chief Whip saying that he is likely to vote against the White Papers unless there is significant change. Many MPs also have concerns.

Q. Is Gareth supporting the retention of the Downe Scout Camp site?

A. He would very much like to see this site retained for use by the community and will seek ways to ensure that this happens initially talking to the Scouts Association about their intentions.

Q. Should temperature checks be made mandatory for all communal inside spaces to help prevent spread of Covid?

A. He is not opposed to that, although it is not an absolute guarantee it would still be reassuring. The imminent roll-out of rapid testing alongside a vaccine will be a game changer.

8. Sharon Baldwin - Orpington 1st

Covid19 has been an enormous challenge for businesses in Orpington, but there was a good response from them providing meals for staff at PRU and Orpington Hospitals as well as for vulnerable families. In the second lockdown more businesses are engaging with providing take away and delivery service as well as with cashless payments and click and collect. Eat Out to Help Out rejuvenated hospitality outlets in the High Street - 87 000 meals in Orpington! Christmas trading this year will be vital.

Events this year have included a Learning Trail involving artists and musicians. The Photographic Competition has had an excellent response. The High Street was decorated with poppies for Remembrance Sunday. Orpington 1st Calendar will be available from the Orpington 1st office, the Library, and supermarkets. From 3rd December there will be a Christmas Market, a Nativity Trail and Santa's post box.

The Walnuts development will hold public consultation from 9-10 December and on Orpington 1st website. From 14 December there will be a static display in the Atrium of the Walnuts, inviting public comment. The plans include more modern commercial units.

Red and white barriers to allow more space for social distancing have been replaced with planters. Orpington won a silver-gilt medal from the RHS this year. Orpington 1st has provided hand sanitizers in businesses and at crossings. Masks can be purchased from a vending machine in the Walnuts multi-storey car park.

Q. What is happening with Poundland?

A. They are planning 44 flats over commercial spaces. The developers have engaged with KRA and the planning application is imminent. They have purchased land to allow access from Vinson Close.

Q. What is happening at Templegate House?

A. It is literally a shell, and although there has been some interest, the costs of renovation and rent are very high. There are many interested tenants for different properties in the High Street but landlords are unwilling to take the risk of leasing to independent businesses.

Q. Any news on CCTV to protect wildlife at the pond in Priory Gardens?

A. Crowd funding will provide a private camera to monitor and protect the birds. Police have recently arrested youths with catapults.

9. Contributions from Councillors

Cllr Simon Fawthrop

Congratulated KRA Chair and Committee on taking things forward.

Thanked Gareth Bacon for his support for LBB re the response to the Planning White Papers. Councillors will continue to be vigilant in this regard.

Petts Wood are trying to introduce conservation areas as they are a national categorisation and would give protection against unsuitable development. It may be worth considering in the Knoll.

Cllr Tony Owen

Delighted to see KRA reinvigorated, and excellent responses from Anika James, KRA planning representative.

The Boundary Review has decided that in 2022 the Knoll will be reunited and will stay with Petts Wood - thanks to all residents for their letters requesting and supporting this.

Q. What can be done to control speeding in Mayfield Avenue?

A. Councillors are working with the police to address speeding issues. Original traffic calming measures had included a speed table at Eastcote, but it was blocked. Parking bays do help control speed, but current LBB policy is for no vertical traffic controls. Mayfield can be added to the rota for road safety/anti-speeding posters which have an effect for a while after they are displayed.

Q. Are planning notices published in the Newshopper?

A. Bromley website states that neighbours should be notified of relevant planning applications by letter and used to be published in the Newshopper. Cllr Tony Owen will investigate whether this is happening and will also ensure KRA planning representative receives weekly planning notices.

Cllr Kim Botting

Thanked Gareth Bacon MP for all his support, and Sharon Baldwin for all the hard work she does on behalf of Orpington High Street.

Gave reassurance that wreath laying at the War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday was all done within Covid guidelines.

Cllr Keith Onslow

There was an excellent response to Bromley's appeal for volunteers to help vulnerable during lockdown.

Reminded to use FixMyStreet on LBB website to notify of problems on pavements or roads alongside photos.

Remember to keep hedges trimmed to allow social distancing for pedestrians.

Q. What is the reason for trees on pavements being felled?

A. Trees have to be managed as they may become diseased or cause trip hazards. There is an active arboriculture team in the Borough, and wherever possible they try to plant new trees when others are taken down.

Cllr William Huntington-Thresher

Contingency plans for second lockdown are in place to keep council services running.

10. Contribution from PS Alex Farmer (via pre-recorded video)

Bromley is in bottom third of London boroughs for reported crime and Petts Wood and Knoll Ward is fourth safest in Bromley. Police are working to help keep crime low with a current focus on anti-social behaviour, using a tiered approach with warnings and targeting repeat offenders to build a sound evidence base. They are also working with Orpington 1st to address anti-social behaviour and drugs related activities. Covid legislation is being implemented with encouragement, then warning and enforcement when necessary. Speeding across the borough is being addressed with road traffic operations in different locations.

Gave crime prevention advice: lock windows and doors when leaving the house even if only for a short period of time; do not keep house or car keys near the front door; lock garages and sheds securely with tools out of sight.

Johnstone Brown gave a vote of thanks to KRA Committee for all their work this year.

¹ Proposed B Wilkin, seconded K Wilkins

² Proposed C Drake, seconded S Wood

³ Proposed A Dungan, seconded B Wells

⁴ Proposed A James, seconded M Harries