

Knoll Residents Association



Minutes of 47th AGM held via Zoom on Tuesday 16 November 2021, at 7:45pm

Speakers and Guests

Sharon Baldwin - Orpington 1st

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

Rev Jennifer Millington - St John's URC

John Epton - Orpington Video and Film Makers Society

Apologies received from: Gareth Bacon MP, Cllr Kim Botting, Cllr Pauline Tunnicliffe, PS Alice Hammick-Smith

1. Welcome from Treasurer Ian Black and Jennifer Millington

Ian welcomed residents and guest speakers. He said that he would be standing down as Treasurer and after his report would hand over to Steve Sangster, Chairman elect.

Jennifer Millington welcomed residents on behalf of St John's URC and informed us that church services have resumed and the hall is now in use for various events. She gave us the dates of Christmas services including carol singing on Christmas Eve.

2. Minutes of 46th AGM

Agreed¹

3. Election of Committee

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

Chairman: Stephen Sangster, Secretary: Miriam Harries, Treasurer: Carol Bisley, Nick Baker, Brian Bates, Malcolm Stoodley, Tim Webb and Kay Wilkins

4. Treasurer's Report

The accounts for the year ended 30th September 2021, independently examined by Brian Pow, were approved.³

The main expenditure this year has been printing Knoll News and this cost has mainly been covered by advertising revenue. The balance is healthy even though no subscriptions have been collected. Carol Bisley is taking over as Treasurer.

5. Election of Honorary Auditor

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

6. KRA vision for 2022 and beyond

Steve Sangster, KRA Chairman, began by thanking Ian Black for his 22 years of service to Knoll Residents Association as committee member, Chairman and Treasurer.

He outlined a vision for KRA going forward:

- A collective voice for the Knoll - advice and support, protecting the unique Knoll environment and amenities, planning representation, crime prevention, transport, business
- Building a closer community - more regular face to face meetings to build community and discussion, continue growing our online discussions and engagement including a new website, organising events, sharing advice, time and wares
- Effective and efficient KRA - greater transparency on issues and opportunities, greater level of feedback gathering and democracy, more effective and regular dialogue with key stakeholders, self-funding without collecting subscriptions

A draft amendment to the KRA Constitution was presented which stated that any resident of the area is automatically a member of the Residents Association with the option of opting out. It also outlined moving away

from a subscription model to modes of financing being determined by the Committee such as advertising and donations by residents.

Some feedback has been received:

- it must be easy to opt out of membership
- the Committee should document the methods by which it might raise funds
- concern about possible conflict of interest for example with advertisers. KRA does not endorse advertisers or their products and if there is an issue alternative advertisers can be found.

Q. Some areas of the Knoll do not receive Knoll News such as Sandycroft Estate.

A. Efforts to include residents of Sandycroft have been made in the past to no avail. There are other roads adjacent to the area such as Cambray Road and Sandy Lane where residents have expressed an interest in joining KRA.

7. Sharon Baldwin - Orpington 1st

The focus this year has been on supporting businesses through Covid19. There have been more shop openings than closures and in fact Orpington has survived quite well in comparison with other areas. Footfall is 75-80% compared to pre-Covid levels. Vacancy rates are at about 8% although negotiations between tenants and landlords are taking longer than previously.

Events this year have included a visit from the Prime Minister in February to Orpington Well-being Centre, and a Literary Festival in May. Planters were brought in to create an area where various activities could take place: such as entertainment and art classes. Orpington won a gold participating in London in Bloom. Priory Live took place in August and a Food Festival happened in September which enlivened the hospitality sector and also highlighted the Food Bank. Poppies were on display for Remembrance Sunday. Christmas lights switch on is scheduled for Thursday 18 November. There will be an ice rink in town from 4th December. Santa Dash will take place as usual. Planning has already begun for the Jubilee celebrations next year.

8. History of the Knoll

John Epton from Orpington Video and Film Makers Club introduced an excerpt from a film made about the history of the Knoll. The entire film can be viewed on the OVFM Club's website.

9. Questions from residents

Crime Questions

Q. How are police responding to the rising levels of vehicle crime and burglaries in the Knoll?

A. Taking proactive action with targeted patrols. They visit victims to give advice and support. Crime levels in the Knoll are relatively low compared with London as a whole.

Cllr Tony Owen - best way to deal with vehicle crime is prevention with visible deterrents such as steering locks.

Cllr Simon Fawthrop - trackers are also very effective in locating stolen vehicles.

Q. Has Orpington received any extra police following Government manifesto pledge?

A. No extra police allocated to Orpington although Bromley has been given additional officers but this does mean that Orpington officers are not extracted.

Sharon Baldwin - Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panels are being re-invigorated so that they reflect local issues.

Q. Are there any plans to put CCTV in the High Street?

A. Sharon Baldwin - Orpington businesses have extensive CCTV which is shared with police - if crime is observed phone 999.

Q. What is being done to combat apparent drug dealing in the vicinity of the White Hart Pub?

A. Cllr Tony Owen - look at council Licensing Committee minutes from 14 January 2020 for papers relating to the White Hart. There is also a way to report complaints against licensed premise.

Sharon Baldwin - the White Hart has CCTV which extends beyond their boundary which has been shared with police. They have a zero tolerance policy towards drugs and have issued lifetime bans and are part of Pub Watch Scheme.

Planning questions

Q. What do our ward councillors make of the revised Walnuts Development? How can we ensure that any infrastructure levy from the development is sufficient and will be spent solely on Orpington? What is the latest with the London Plan and how it may impact on areas like the Knoll?

A. Cllr Simon Fawthrop - no formal planning application has yet been made. Council has stipulated that the Walnuts Leisure Centre should be included in the development. Infrastructure levy will depend on what is approved. It usually goes into a central pot, but schools and healthcare etc. will be required with an increase in residential capacity.

Cllr William Huntington-Thresher - we can be fairly certain that infrastructure levy will be spent where it is needed and this will be supported by LBB. Planning application is expected around the beginning of the New Year.

Sharon Baldwin - proposed length of the swimming pool is to bring it in line with current guideline and enable events to take place. Orpington Town Centre is based on hospitality and leisure.

Environmental Questions

Q. What can be done to combat nuisance bonfires?

A. Can report nuisance bonfires on the council website. KRA is advising on other ways of disposing of garden rubbish and giving information about air quality.

Cllr William Huntington-Thresher - will forward a link to Defra leaflet on this issue,

Q. Is there an opportunity for the residents who have one of the lime trees in their garden to consider a joint application to the council to reduce their height? How could we go about this?

A. Cllr William Huntington-Thresher - would be a good idea to consult a tree surgeon in the first instance.

Q. Could we have seating installed on Broomhill and Broxbourne Commons?

A. Cllr William Huntington-Thresher - will forward information about memorial benches.

KRA will canvass opinion from residents.

Transport Question

Q. Are the police able to conduct more speed checks in and around the Knoll Area? What is the council and police view on E-scooters? Was the Crofton cycle lane a good use of funds?

A. KRA will collate responses and disseminate via Facebook and Knoll News

¹ Proposed M Stoodley, seconded S Sangster

³ Proposed S Sangster, seconded C Bisley

² Proposed R Humby, seconded W Swan

⁴ Proposed M Harries, seconded N Baker