

Knoll News



Message from the KRA Chair

Welcome to the Summer 2021 edition of Knoll News! I hope you are well and, as at time of writing, are looking forward to the lockdown restrictions ending on the 19th July. We thought we would take advantage of our new freedoms to organise a monthly get together for Knoll residents on the last Thursday of every month starting on the 29th July. We will meet at 8pm in The Cricketer's pub and hope to use these events to meet our neighbours and discuss local issues and opportunities in an informal setting.

I would like to say a massive thank you to the volunteer residents who have delivered this newsletter to 1700 households across the Knoll. This includes many 'newbie' volunteers who have come forward to fill a number of vacancies we had. It is heart-warming to see the community coming together to spread the news!

Since our last newsletter, there has been traction with the Walnuts Development and as such we have a comprehensive update, including thoughts from Gareth Bacon provided exclusively to the KRA. Please don't forget to provide feedback to the developers via their e-mail if you did not attend the briefing sessions. (consultation@thewalnutsorpington.co.uk)

Many residents are interested in how they can make their home "more green". I would therefore encourage you to visit the KRA website and check out Ian Chown's excellent article "Zero Carbon House", on how he has made his home in Station Road more Carbon friendly. Visit <http://kra.org.uk> and click on "News / Events".

It is great to see many of our local businesses return to advertise with us and provide another set of exclusive discounts for Knoll residents. I'd encourage you to check out the offers and support where you can.

Lee Kendall, Chairman of Knoll Residents Association

Priory Live makes a comeback and its better than ever! – Steve Sangster

Orpington's biggest music festival returns for its fourth year in Priory Gardens this summer. KRA's Stephen Sangster met the organiser Nick Barclay to get the lo-down.

The festival has been created to celebrate original music from local bands and artists and is headlined by 90s favourites Toploader. A big win for Orpington from a band who has sold 2 million albums which includes the very catchy "Dancing in the Moonlight" number which will no doubt have everyone up on their feet!

But it's not all just about the music, Nick explains there will be a selection of great 'world' food outlets from Caribbean to Pie and Mash! Also, a new idea for 2021 is a 'creative makers' market that will feature artists, designers and creatives who produce their own work. He wants to create a festival that all the family can enjoy.

Nick goes on to say that there will be a main stage where the artists will perform for 10 hours but also a BBC Upload Stage hosting comedy, poetry and music where you get the chance to upload and appear. We look forward to seeing some Knoll residents appear on stage and will share in the next newsletter!

The event runs **12pm to 10pm on Saturday 7th August 2021** in Priory Gardens. Advance tickets are £15 for adults (under 12's free) – there are a limited number of tickets so don't delay and get your festival tickets sorted for this amazing festival on our doorstep. *For more details and tickets, visit priorylive.co.uk or scan the QR code on your phone.*



The Walnuts Development - Anika James

This edition we're shining a spotlight on the development that's got everyone talking. Our Committee members headed down to the consultation event earlier this month to get the latest, and we've been polling our residents on Facebook to find out what you like and what you don't like about the proposals so far.

What's the plan?

A complete overhaul of the entire Walnuts area, retaining the existing cinema and hotel but demolishing and rebuilding the leisure and shopping centre and introducing more housing into the town centre. Plans for the new build include:

- Homes for around 2,000 people (in high rise buildings)
- New leisure centre and Saxon day centre
- Variety of units for shops, restaurants and workplaces
- A civic square, market street and market plaza
- New walk-through layout connecting all four sides, from the high street to Lych Gate Road and Homefield Rise to Dryden Way

If you missed the consultation events you can find out more here: thewalnutSORPINGTON.CO.UK

What the developers told us about their plans



"Street Art" on the Walnuts Building - photo Anika James



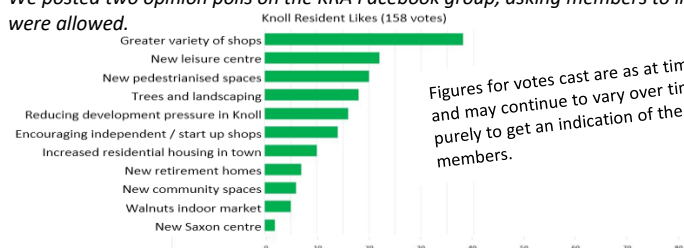
Aerial view of proposed development thewalnutSORPINGTON.CO.UK/vision



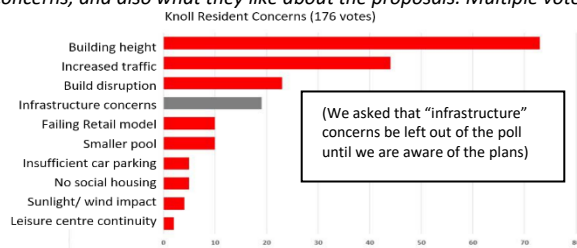
- Area will be fully pedestrianised (only pedestrians and mobility scooters - no bikes). There will be 300 public parking spaces, 350 separate spaces for residents of the new buildings and 1,800 cycle storage spaces.
- Retailers will be incentivised to come to Orpington (and stay here) with a pioneering, flexible rental model based on turnover.
- New leisure centre pool will be 25m long (current pool is 33m). We understand this length would conform to current standards for swimming club competitions although it would significantly reduce overall capacity for general swimming. Local community gym usage and needs are under review, but they expect a set-up and equipment more in line with other gyms in the high street.
- Construction programme phases are yet to be decided (these are subject to planning) but they expect the Saxon day centre to remain open throughout.
- Social housing provision is also yet to be set, but the aim is to provide 'as much as possible'.

What do your fellow Knoll residents think?

We posted two opinion polls on the KRA Facebook group, asking members to indicate their concerns, and also what they like about the proposals. Multiple votes were allowed.



Figures for votes cast are as at time of writing, and may continue to vary over time. They are purely to get an indication of the views of KRA members.



(We asked that "infrastructure" concerns be left out of the poll until we are aware of the plans)

😊 Some of the comments in favour 👍

"I marched down there ready with all my points and concerns. But I came away in agreement. Yes, the "tower" could be less floors but I'm not sure it really changes a huge amount...they are investing £460m and I think that's good for the community." - Jenny

"It looks progressive and could cater to many future needs if we get this right. We have to accept that more people are coming to live here and as much as I love Orpington the way it is, I accept that there will be changes." - Patsy

"Given the huge pressure that Boroughs are under to create new homes given the "London Plan" it is better in my opinion to create town centre homes rather than have to fight the repeated development requests in Knoll Rise." - Eric

"I don't think any would argue that the Walnuts and Leisure Centre needs investment. Some of the ideas such as smaller commercial units with flexible rent and the indoor market should bring new creative ventures and much needed vibrancy into the high street." - Marie

😞 Some of the comments against 👎

"The high-rise block is out of character for the area, out of scale (Orpington is a low-rise town) and will completely alter the existing character of the town, which is largely 1930s and two storeys high. This building would become a precedent to further high-rise buildings in the future." - Chris

"I think it will impact the outside seating area of some of the coffee shops, bars and restaurants on the High Street as I am sure something that size will take away sunlight. Also, there's the impact on traffic, car parking, schools, doctors appointments and our hospital that will definitely impact on us all." - Liz

"Most young people cannot afford the deposits for such flats." - Hillary

"The new pool will be smaller and will take over two years to construct." - Elizabeth

"Families don't want to live in tower blocks. We do desperately need more social housing but I expect these plans will be for private and so called affordable housing" - Linda

Walnuts Development - What does your MP have to say?

GARETH BACON MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR ORPINGTON
HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Stephen Sangster
Orpington
BR6

Reference: GB10608 22nd June 2021

Dear Mr Sangster,

Thank you for your e-mail dated 19th June on behalf of KRA. I likewise hope you and yours are well. You are welcome to use the following quote from me on this matter at this early stage of the process:

"I have sympathy with the idea of regenerating the town centre in principle, particularly as there is considerable potential to bring benefits that boost our local economy and aid our long-term recovery from the still on-going pandemic.

The decision on the planning application – which has not yet been submitted – will be taken by Bromley Council. As per planning policy, there will then be a formal stage for consultation where all residents will be able to make their views known, and I would encourage you to do this.

While MPs do not have any formal powers in the planning process, I have made my concerns about issues such as high-rise developments and a lack of parking spaces very clear directly with the Chief Executive Officer of Areli, and stressed the downside and potential local opposition that could well be aroused by an attempt to mimic central London because the character of Orpington is markedly different.

You may be interested to note that, following the recent public presentation, Areli have published their proposals online and are inviting public views on their regeneration plans.

Areli have said these will be taken into account, so this is your opportunity to help shape the future of Orpington town centre before the formal submission of the planning application to Bromley Council.

The regeneration of the Walnuts Shopping Centre will have a huge impact on our high street - so have your say to ensure we have the right plan for Orpington: <https://thewalnutsonorpington.co.uk/have-your-say/>

This process has a long way to go before final decisions are made and I will be monitoring it very closely."

Yours sincerely,


Gareth Bacon MP
Member of Parliament for Orpington

TEL: 020 7219 8538 EMAIL: GARETH.BACON.MP@PARLIAMENT.UK
@GARETHBACONMP FB.COM/GARETHBACONMP

Conclusions

However residents feel about the proposals, there appears to be a general consensus that the town centre is run down and needs investment.

Bromley Council has a target of 774 new homes every year as part of the London Plan and with concerns about green belt land development and multiple occupancy conversions in our roads, the centre of town may just be the compromise we need for local housing in Orpington.

Your biggest concern, with almost more than twice the votes cast than for any other issue, was the proposed height of the multi-storey residential buildings (current proposals include 19 and 24 storey buildings - for comparison, the College is 12 storeys high).

High rise residential of some sort is the price to pay for the improved facilities, retail and community spaces. What remains to be seen is just how high is too high for local residents and the Council, and whether lower buildings would give a big enough profit margin to make the whole scheme worthwhile for the developers.

What happens next?

We are arranging a KRA Committee briefing with the developers to take place before they apply for planning permission.

We will also be seeking comfort from the Council that, should the development go ahead, they will ensure the developer delivers all the promised community spaces (not just the residential units) as well as provide all the necessary supporting infrastructure.

We will keep you up to date with what we learn on our Facebook page.

Boundary Commission for England – Steve Sangster

The Boundary Commission is proposing to change some of the existing Parliamentary constituency boundaries.

In London they are looking to increase the number from 73 to 75, as far as possible having regard to local ties, geographic factors, local government boundaries and existing constituencies.

It is initially proposed that *Petts Wood & Knoll ward will no longer be in Orpington constituency but moved into a new constituency called Bromley.*

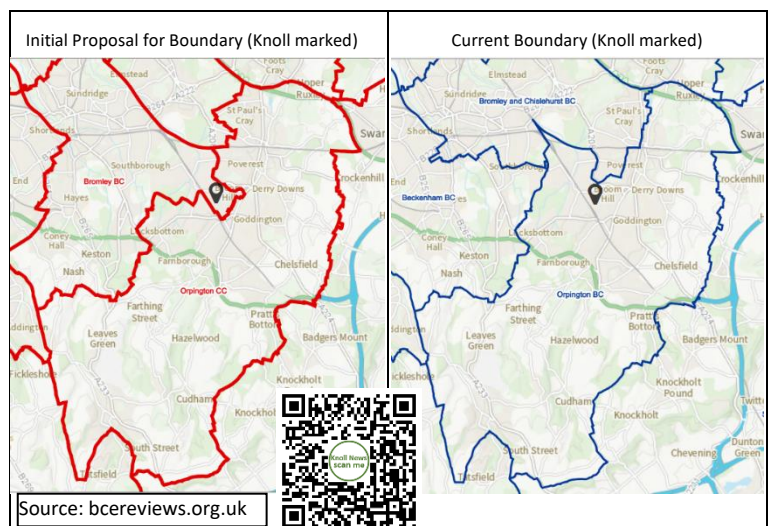
(The Commission has used the unrevised ward boundaries to draw up its plans so in effect it is Petts Wood and part of the Knoll to which it refers. The KRA and local Councillors will draw this to the Commission's attention.)

Bromley & Chislehurst constituency will disappear to be replaced by *Bromley* constituency and *Eltham & Chislehurst* constituency.

We polled KRA residents on this issue via Facebook and at the time of writing, 87 residents had responded. 91% said they would like to stay in Orpington constituency. 4% said they would like to move into Bromley constituency. 5% were undecided.

The closing date for comments via the Boundary Commission website, www.bcereviews.org.uk is 2nd August 2021.

There will be two further rounds of consultation in 2022.



We encourage residents to provide feedback on the above link. The KRA will also be making representations based on the resident feedback received.

KRA Facebook update – Steve Sangster

The online community continues to build (430 at time of writing) and is becoming a valuable destination for local news, crime prevention, planning as well as supporting each other and developing new friendships.



KRA Community Team Up – Carol Bisley



One thing about the last year that we can all be grateful for, is how the community has drawn together and we have been able to meet people I am sure we would not otherwise have. Over on the *KRA Facebook Group*, individuals have reached out to others to walk together, with residents pairing up for some wonderful local walks and sharing in pictures as they enjoy the various seasons' offerings. Shirley Sinclair has shared her photos for us to enjoy; and has even created a walk aptly named "A Walk in the Countryside" which both starts and ends at Priory Gardens. Here are some images to entice you over to the Facebook page where we will upload the walk along with the images shared to guide you through. We would love to start up a walking group, or several walking groups ... and perhaps you could even manage some litter picking whilst you are taking in the local scenery!



(photos – Shirley Sinclair)

And that brings me onto the other very necessary local initiative – to clean up our area. And who better to inspire us than our own children. My son started off requesting we purchase a "grabber" and we had to drag it to the school drop off and pick up along with some plastic bags to fill up as he had noticed just how much rubbish littered our streets and green spaces. Having shared this on our Facebook page, Priyanka suggested we all teamed up with our young ones to clean up some more areas. Sadly, this cannot be a one-time event and we would love to encourage more of these community events.



If you would like to volunteer your time, please do get in touch with me over on Facebook or via email at knollnews@gmail.com

(Photo – Carol Bisley)

To join our Facebook group, search on Facebook for: **Knoll Residents Association** or enter the web address: facebook.com/groups/knollresidentsassociation

Scan the QR code

Petts Wood and Knoll Safer Neighbourhood Team – Colin Bisset PCSO 7101SN, Petts Wood & Knoll SNT



Crimes for May/June for Petts Wood & Knoll from 15/05/21 – 10/06/21.

Possession of Cannabis	0
Criminal Damage	1
Burglary	0
Attempted Burglary	2
Theft from MV	0
Theft of MV	2
Common Assault	4
Vehicle Interference	0
Violence Against the Person	0
Criminal Damage	1
Shoplifting	2
ABH	2
Theft of Cycle	1
Public Order	1

As you can see, and to compare them with previous months, the *Reported Crimes for May/June* are pretty low and the highest figures (Common Assault) may be down to licensed Premises having re-opened. Without wanting to curse these stats, in my 10 years plus on Petts Wood & Knoll I've never known the figured to be as low, so this pretty good!!!

Now that we are coming out of lock down and with the potential of *Travel* just around the corner, properties are more likely to be left unattended, so we ask residents to look at ensuring that when properties are left they ensure that *Alarms* are set and windows and doors secured. Lock the rear garden gate. Remove any cycles from the garden, ensure that you secure the Garage/Garden Shed/Summer House and remove any garden tools that may have been left out and could potentially be used to break into your property. Try to ensure that items cannot be seen from outside of the buildings. If they can be seen and are of any value then the criminal only has to break into the building which is more likely to be easier to do so than your main building. (Possibly use *Window Netting*)

If you are going away in your vehicle this may possibly be leaving your front drive, where you usually leave your vehicle, empty. Why not speak with a neighbour who you are happy with and ask them if they want to park one of their vehicles on your drive! Think about setting up Light Timer switches; one downstairs and one upstairs.

Whilst you're away, see if you can arrange for a family relative or trusting neighbour to come in every few days to remove any mail that may have been delivered and on display, or hanging out of letter boxes. Also maybe ask them to enter your property to adjust your blinds/curtains to make it look as if there is someone at home.

Pettswood&KnollSNT@met.police.uk
 @MPSPettswood (020) 8721 2609

Your Team
 A/PS 2316SN Richard Phillips PC 1544SN Matt Gill
 PC 1561SN Taj Mahil PCSO 7101SN Colin Bisset

Mayfield Avenue Speeding: you said, we did... – Steve Sangster



Following concerns raised to the KRA about vehicle speeding in Mayfield Avenue we were pleased to see a few police speed checks being set up in recent months.

Residents have provided further feedback about the best positioning of the speed checks which has been fed to our Safer Neighbourhood Team, along with suggestions of other hotspots such as Tower Road.

At the time of writing, the 'Community Speedwatch' idea is still on hold until we are fully out of lockdown.



CONTACT



The contact details for specific KRA officers & committee members are:

Chair Lee Kendall 811735 kra.chair@gmail.com

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Secretary Miriam Harries 07539 069756 kra.secretary@gmail.com

Membership Anne Dungan 820987 knollra.membership@gmail.com

Planning Anika James kra.planning@gmail.com

Thank you to Brian Wilkin for his service as **Tree Warden for The Knoll**. He has now retired from his role.

We have 3 role vacancies – please contact us if you would like to learn more or volunteer:

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Knoll News Editor Lee Kendall, Steve Sangster, Brian Bates

Knoll News Advertising Malcolm Stoodley

KRA Website kra.org.uk

KRA Facebook Group

facebook.com/groups/knollresidentsassociation

Admins: Stephen Sangster and Carol Bisley

Community



The KRA facebook group lets you keep up with current events and allows you to get to know the friendly people who make up our community, come join us on Facebook!
Scan the QR code today, and then follow the link!



Our newsletter is delivered to over 1,500 members in the area.

If you would like to advertise or have any articles or news snippets that you would like to share, or details of any forthcoming courses, events or talks that you would like publicised in the next edition, please email knollnews@gmail.com

Leadership Crises - Jon Henderson, 8th Orpington Scout Group

This is a plea from an ageing Scouter about real crises of leadership for St Johns Scouts (the famous 8th Orpington) and Guides (4th Crofton).

I am unashamedly playing the sympathy card here because unless we find two leaders for our Guides, two for our Explorers and a minimum of one for our Cubs all three of these sections are likely to cease to exist at the end of the summer term.

Having been a part of the 8th for almost 40 years now it breaks my heart to see us reach such a state of play. We can all play the too busy, working all hours or simply can't see myself doing this card but if you have been a member (or a parent or relative) of either our Scout or Guide family at St Johns in any sort of capacity could you ever forgive yourself if we had to deny our young people the experiences and adventure that you enjoyed?

We have a legacy of providing high quality Scouting and Guiding in the Knoll area since the 1950s but I have now reached the age where, whilst I still feel young at heart, I am afraid the body and some would argue the mind is not really up to continuing in active section leadership. And the Guides are not desperate enough to accept me anyway.

So are you just going to sit there and let our fantastic Guides and Scouts die off or will you give it your best shot or perhaps know somebody who might? And don't worry if you have no experience: we have leaders like myself who will help out in the short term and guide you through the process as well as being always there for backup.

If you would like to give it a go why not drop us a message through our website at www.stjohnsurc.org.uk or contact me directly at hendersonj501@sky.com

Who knows - it might be the best thing you ever did.



Please note

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The KRA is not responsible for these items or activities, nor is it responsible for any advertised product or service and their inclusion does not constitute an endorsement of the information, service or product offered.

Thank you



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