

Spring Grove Residents' Association
Minutes of the AGM – 20 April 2015, Parish Hall

PRESENT

Chairman: Alan Leeds **Treasurer:** Karol Smal **Secretary:** Jackie Steinitz

Committee members: Phil Chapman, Phil Harvey, Paul Hemmings, Emma Poole, Pippa Sparks, Dawn Trigg, Phil Chapman, Sean Yeates **Residents:** Approximately 10 + the committee

Guests: *Kingston University:* Aranee Manoharan, Student Community Engagement Advisor, *Grove Ward Councillor:* Chrissie Hitchcock

1. Apologies for Absence: Gordon Bell, committee member

2. Kingston University: Aranee Manoharan (AM), Student Community Engagement Advisor

- Kingston University stats: 20,000 students across all 4 campuses in Kingston plus several overseas bases. They are hugely diverse: 20% international, 50%+ from BME communities and significant populations of mature/ disabled students. Around 50% of undergrads commute to the University from within a 2 hour radius – some from even further away.
- The role of the Student Community Engagement Advisor: is to develop & implement a student community engagement plan to enhance student engagement in university and in local communities. This includes managing the University's Police relationships (with 8 Safer Neighbourhood Teams & Police Liaison Officer) plus links with the Council and the Kingston Town Centre Management Team. This year the Community Connectors project has been piloted whereby Community Connectors to work on projects and campaigns that support students living in the community and which positively impact their home towns. There is also a Student Civic Responsibility Programme.
- Student volunteering in the community: for large organisations (e.g. Kingston Hospital) and small, offering regular and one-off help (including the Bloomfields Fete). They have also been involved in river clean-ups and improvements e.g. cleaning the Thames last year and improving the Hogsmill by Knights Park (which was previously heavily engineered and so slabs were placed in the river to increase a natural diversified flow and increase biodiversity of the river. The concrete riverbanks were also softened with a lot of planting). If anyone has any volunteering opportunities for students contact volunteering@kingston.ac.uk
- Estates: The University is very disappointed that the Town House planning application was denied, as a lot of consultation was done and changes made to address issues raised by residents e.g. residents on Grove Crescent. The plans had a lot of support and enthusiasm from locals. The University is currently considering its options. This summer there will be modest refurbishments to the river side of Knights Park campus, (mainly to the façade/ paving).
- Noise: The University is very active in seeking to reduce student noise. The Halls Teams emphasise to students the importance of being aware of their environment at night time. This is reinforced through termly emails. Noisy students have their details taken and are given a warning. If it recurs further steps are taken. KUSU have a new sound system in Knights Park Bar so that it greatly reduces noise pollution into the wider area.
- Complaints: If residents wish to raise issues please email community@kingston.ac.uk where community issues are addressed by the Community Complaints Coordinator. If you feel you students are being anti-social, then please call 101, the non-emergency Police number.

In the Q&A session:

- General view that issues with noise are markedly less than a few years ago both in terms of street noise and noise from the Knights Park bar however noise on Grove Lane can still be a bit of problem.
- All at the meeting appeared disappointed by the refusal of planning permission for Town House. Cllr Hitchcock felt that it had been rejected on design issues partly as there had been a feeling that it went right up to the street.

Actions:

Aranee to email Jackie when KU Community Newsletter is about to be distributed so that SGRA can report back on whether street reps have received their copies.

All: KU need intelligence and information about any noise or other incidents so please email community@kingston.ac.uk if you have anything to report.

Aranee: to feed back to the university the issue raised by Karol that some buses still go to fast.

Jackie: to put Aranee on the mailing list for Springboard. (Please note that previous Springboards can all be found on <http://www.springgrovekingston.co.uk/springboard.php>)

3. Approval of SGRA representatives on Kingston Conservation Area Advisory Council:

Pippa Sparks and Joan McConn were approved as SGRA representatives on Kingston Conservation Area Advisory Council. Cllr Hitchcock requested to them to pass on a message to the CAAC that the planning committees would appreciate more detail about their thinking when they make comments such as “Neutral”, “Approve”, “Disapprove”. **Action: Joan and Pippa** agreed to pass this on.

4. Kingston Council: Cllr Chrissie Hitchcock

CH was unable to speak about the current status on any of the planning applications in connection with the Post Office site/Eden quarter, the Dairy Crest site or the Hotel Antoinette development because of her position on Development Control but she invited residents to feed their views, comments and concerns back to her,

Post Office site: Considerable discussion on this topic. The many people who spoke were all against the proposed height and scale of the development and concerns were expressed about the type of housing proposed and about the assumptions about population increase in Kingston and about the fact that the Council did not seem to be representing the views of the people of Kingston as no-one is aware of anyone who supports the scale of the project. There was anger that the process that objectors were collectively only allowed five minutes in total in which to object and that this was the same for each planning application regardless of whether it is a small change to one residence or a massive development for a whole quarter of Kingston. Cllr Hitchcock spoke about the power of bodies at the planning meetings. Laurie South also took the view that it was important for the Residents Associations to speak out and that it was possibly more effective for each association to speak out separately as well as joining together collectively. A fear was expressed that if a building of this scale were built this would become the new norm and benchmark for Kingston and that the town character would be fundamentally changed. Cllr Hitchcock spoke about the difficulties of getting planning decisions right as developers can appeal and so it is possible to end up with something that is worse than if the original application had been accepted in modified form by RBK. Concerns were expressed that the planning processes are therefore weighted in favour of developers. It was noted that there may be members of the Council who have interests in development or consultancies connected with development.

Dairy Crest site: The SGRA committee had invited Bellenden, the PR company acting for the Dairy Crest site, to speak at the AGM. They were unable to attend but spoke on the phone to Jackie who reported to the meeting on the conversation. Bellenden have offered to meet a local group in the week of 27th April if there is interest. All the relevant documents about the application (number 15/16246/FUL) are on the RBK website- it is best to look at the 3 Design and Access statements as these have pictures. The proposal is now for 5 blocks, 83 units, 2 retail units. The current design has taken into account feedback from earlier consultation. The look and brick colour has been changed to match the Duke of Buckingham pub and local housing and the number of units has been reduced. The closing date for comments is 7th May. The Surbiton Town Committee meeting is on 20th May – and the main committee meeting is likely to be in June – possibly 10 June. **Action All:** There was clear interest in having a meeting with Bellenden. Please contact Jackie asap if that is the case either using the contact form on the SGRA website <http://www.springgrovekingston.co.uk/contact2.php> or by emailing jackie@springgrovekingston.co.uk

5. Minutes of the 2014 AGM : Approved.

6. Chairman's Report: It has been an active year locally with many community events. The committee continued with all its regular activities (organising events such as the barn dance, keeping contact with councillors/ MP/ police/ university, monitoring all planning applications in the area, delivering Springboard, running the website, Facebook page etc.).

7. Treasurer's Report: Income totalled £338 from net profits from the barn dance (£208) and advertising receipts from Springboard (£130). Expenditure totalled £494. The two largest items were Springboard costs + admin (£224) and annual public liability insurance (£190). On 31 March 2015 the SGRA had a healthy accumulated fund of £845, down £156 on the previous year. The accounts have been audited.

8. Election of the Committee/ All the previous year's committee members were willing to stand for re-election and Peter Czaja agreed to represent Blamoral Rd on the committee. Beyond Peter there were no further volunteers to join the committee despite publishing the positions in Springboard and asking for volunteers at the meeting. The committee for 2015/16 is thus: **Chairman:** Alan Leeds **Treasurer:** Karol Smal **Secretary:** Jackie Steinitz **Committee Members;** Gordon Bell, Phil Chapman, Peter Czaja, Phil Harvey, Paul Hemmings, Emma Poole, Pippa Sparks, Dawn Trigg, Sean Yeates. Joan McConn was approved as the SGRA representative for Kingston First Management Forum

9. AOB

- Phil Harvey asked that the issue of speeding by Post Office vans along Villiers Rd should be revisited by the police. (The police have now been told about this).
- Jackie Steinitz said that the Grove Ward Safer Neighbourhood Team had been invited to present at the meeting but unfortunately were unable to attend. However PCSO Shawkat Al Hakem had kindly visited her that morning to provide an update. The Grove Ward SNT now comprises 1 Sgt, 1 PC and 1 PCSO. There are 4 Neighbourhood Watch schemes in the area: in Geneva, Alfred, Balmoral & Horace Roads. He handed over crime statistics for the area and spoke about the key crime issues in the borough.
- Phil Chapman raised the issue of whether the SGRA should, as currently, merely provide information on issues of local interest to residents or whether it should be more proactive in seeking the views of residents on key issues and then reporting that stance to the relevant authorities (taking into account the weight of the comments made). There was discussion about how views of residents could be sought. These included setting up an email list in each street, using street reps to contact everyone, using online/the website/social media approaches etc. All at the meeting agreed that the SGRA should take a position when this was felt necessary provided that it had taken appropriate steps to seek the views of residents. **Action Committee:** Discuss this key issue at the next meeting
- Phil Chapman spoke about the Bloomfields Village Fete/Street Party on Saturday 16 May from 12noon – 5.30pm and urged residents to attend, volunteer to help, enter the many competitions on offer (including the Great Bloomfields Bake Off and hanging baskets. For more details see the SGRA website: www.springgrovekingston.co.uk
- A resident spoke about the new extraction venting and air conditioning units erected during the recent Spring Grove pub refurbishment (against the council approved plans and without planning consent). The noise of the air conditioning unit on the side of the pub is audible in Bloomfield Road and surrounding gardens and the large stainless steel kitchen extract ducting is highly visible from surrounding properties and not in keeping with the conservation area. The issue has been raised this with the council and Youngs have retrospectively applied for permission for this extraction. Apparently local residents will have a chance to comment on this matter in the next week or two. It was suggested that someone should ensure that all residents who may be affected are aware of the issue as sometimes letters are only sent to the houses in the very immediate vicinity.