

DRAFT
Spring Grove Residents Association
Minutes of the 2019 AGM, 29 May 2019, Parish Hall, Grove Lane

PRESENT

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

Committee members: Gordon Bell, Mark Clutterbuck, Pippa Sparks, Dawn Trigg, Emma Poole

Residents: Approximately 32 (including the above)

Guests: *Beaufort Road resident:* Roger Hayes, *Grove Ward Councillor:* Rebekah Moll, *St John's Church:* Julie Bishop

1. Apologies for Absence: PC Cefai (*Grove Ward Police Team*), Andrew Gill (*Kingston University*), Sean Yeates, Paul Hemmings, Jacqui Hardie (committee members)

2. Minutes of last year's AGM: Approved.

3. Hotel Antoinette Development: Roger Hayes

- The most recent planning application (ref: [15/12107/FUL](#)) is for 89 units on the site. This is 10 more than the planning application inherited from Hotel Antoinette by James Taylor Homes but 10 less than the peak number in the 4 versions of the planning applications that have been submitted by JTH to RBK. However none have yet been heard by the planning committee as JTH keeps revising them.
- Nonetheless work has been underway on the site for many months and the work in progress appears to be according to the application rather than what JTH have permission for.
- Local residents have therefore written to JTH raising concerns about (i) vibrations and tremors caused by the works which are leading to structural damage to neighbouring properties (ii) lack of planning permission for the work currently in progress (iii) specific practices such as HGV vehicles waiting outside the site before 8am each morning and audible works taking place outside agreed hours. A meeting was held with Kingston Council at the end of April and there have been some improvements to timekeeping.
- Recent amendments to the application include (i) the proposal to now build 27 flats in the style of the original houses on Fassett Road rather than the initial JTH plan of 3 blocks containing 36 flats and (ii) removal of the proposed cycle block that would have been hard up against 16 Beaufort Road.
- However many concerns still remain - particularly (i) the proposed 5 storey central block which will be higher than any other residential block in the neighbourhood and higher than St John's Church (the original Hotel Antoinette approved planning application was for 4 storeys) and (ii) the application keeps being resubmitted and thereby delayed but meanwhile works are continuing.
- If residents are concerned they should (i) submit their comments to the Council on the planning application section of the RBK website using the reference number 15/12107/FUL and/or (ii) write to councillors to insist that the application should be heard.
- In the Q&A questions related to the role of the Council, how work can proceed when there is no permission and how the social housing should be allocated. Currently it is all marked for one area of the development but it should be pepper-potted.

4. Councillor Rebekah Moll (RM): Grove Ward Councillor, Royal Borough of Kingston

- Consultation is underway about a new local plan which sets out a vision for the future of the borough to 2041 and guides what development goes where, including homes, schools, infrastructure and transport links. Comments must be made by 31 July. More info [here](#) .
- The Council has also developed a corporate plan for the period 2019 to 2023 (link [here](#)) and it is reviewing the way that petitions will be run. It is considering increasing the number of signatures required for a petition now that the internet makes signing so easy. If residents wish to comment on this they should do so imminently.
- RM expressed many thanks to the army, police and council who worked so well together in the recent bomb incident. One resident noted that a survey had not been done before building work started and

requested that it should now be done before work resumes. RM agreed to investigate the process for this.

- When asked about the Rose Theatre RM noted that no decision has yet been taken. The Council, which is very cash-strapped, is seeking a business plan which will enable it to continue.
- Residents raised issues around security which RM and the SGRA will pursue.

5. St John's Church: Julie Bishop

- The Church was closed last summer for major and much needed improvements to the heating and lighting. It was wonderful to see so many people at the services for Christmas and Easter.
- The Church continues to run the ever-popular book sales and is open every Saturday for coffee, toasties and bacon sandwiches. There are magazines and children's toys; all are very welcome.
- Vicky Maunder has just left after 12 years as Vicar. She will be greatly missed and all are grateful for the stability, vision, openness and strong leadership she brought to the Church. The process to find a new Vicar will probably take until next Easter and the hope is to find a candidate who can be as cohesive as Vicky. In the meantime there a recently-retired Vicar will be stepping in.
- Phase 2 of the building works are to make the building more accessible. More toilets, ramps and some lower kitchen worksurfaces will be installed. The Church has won some substantial grants – and it extends many thanks to everyone for supporting all the many fund-raising events which together have made the works possible. There may be some further fundraising for new flooring, but after that there will be a break of several years to allow the new Vicar to settle in.
- The Church is starting a lunch club for vulnerable refugees and will seek to help those who have been the most traumatised. The refugee lunch club will close whilst the church is closed for the building works. When it reopens we are hoping to start a refugee day centre. Volunteers from the community will be sought to help.
- The church services will move to the school whilst the church is closed.
- Many groups hold weekly sessions in the Church including a theatre club, choir, Morris dancing group, toddler group, a first Monday club and a meditation group. Banquet Records' first event at the Church (a Richard Horley live acoustic set on 3 June) is completely sold out.
- In short the vision of St John's is to be inclusive and at the heart of the community.

6. Chairman's Report (Alan Leeds): AL outlined the regular activities of the SGRA committee (organising events such as the barn dance, keeping contact with councillors/ MP/ police/ university, delivering Springboard, running the website, twitter & Facebook page, monitoring all planning applications in the SGRA area plus some of the larger applications outside the area). He thanked the committee members for all their support and mentioned particularly the new business committee members, Emma Poole and Jacqui Hardie from local property business [Harper Tweedie](#) who have been very supportive. He also thanked the excellent co-ordinated effort between the police, army and council during the recent bomb incident. AL had invited Martin O'Meara, the landlord of the Spring Grove pub to the meeting, but unfortunately because of the clash with the Europa league final he had been unable to come.

7. Treasurer's Report (Karol Smal): Income in the year ending 31/3/19 totalled £513, arising from advertising receipts from Springboard and the barn dance. Expenses (for Springboard, the website, the AGM, insurance) totalled £446 so the accumulated fund rose to £608. The accounts have been audited. Receipts were higher than in 2017/18 due to the well-attended barn dance and higher advertising receipts. Expenses were higher due to higher printing costs for the winter editions of Springboard. Many thanks to local property business [Harper Tweedie](#) who kindly assisted with printing the May 2019 issue.

8. Grove Ward Safer Neighbourhood Police Team: Report from PC Matt Cefai (delivered by Jackie Steinitz)

- JS reported on a phone meeting with PC Matt Cefai, 1 of the 4 officers responsible for Grove Ward. He has attended the SGRA AGM on many occasions but sent apologies this time and offered to answer any questions arising.

- WWII bomb on the Antoinette site has been the major event recently.
- Grove Ward team is now 4 officers where previously it was 6 - so feeling stretched - difficult to be proactive in doing certain things. Cover a big area including town centre, university and the college, as well as our area. However the team has been helped by the 12 people at the University who have been accredited with certain police powers who have conducted 300+ interventions over the past two years thereby nipping problems in the bud.
- Crime statistics for Grove Ward are broadly stable. Main crimes are shoplifting and violence in the centre of town due to the night-time economy.
- JS asked MC about questions raised last year. No lead thefts have been reported recently and he was not aware of recent reports on speeding on Villiers Road and Portland Road. The meeting agreed that concerns about speeding had been reduced following recent works.
- MC noted that there may be an increase in incidences of ASB and pedal cycle thefts in the summer and recommended residents to watch out for bike marking events in town.
- The best way to follow Grove Ward is through their twitter account @MPSGrove (and account for Kingston is @MPSKingston). The police team also hold various street events – the next one in our area is Alfred Road on Thursday 13 June 1 – 2pm.

9. Kingston University: Report from Andrew Gill, Stakeholder Engagement Advisor (delivered by Jackie Steinitz)

- JS reported on a phone meeting with Andrew Gill who has taken over community engagement responsibilities from Aranee Manoharan. He sent his apologies and offered to answer any questions arising.
- Two major local building projects. Construction of **Town House** on Penrhyn Road should finish by November. The contractors, Willmott Dixon, will then hand over to KU to fit it out. Town House will include the library, flexible event spaces, dance studios and cafés and will be available for community use. The library will be moved over the Christmas holidays to minimise disruption for students and it is hoped to have it open for the start of term on 6th Jan 2020. Most of the work on the **Knights Park Refurbishment** is internal but there will be a face lift for the exterior including new windows, cladding and a new entrance/landscaping at Mill Street end. Parts of the work are already complete and the students are moving back in. Everything should be complete by January 2020.
- The freshers fair will be at Kingston Hill again this year. There have been very few complaints about student behaviour recently. All at the meeting agreed that they had not experienced any issues.
- Residents are invited to a number of forthcoming events at the university including the degree show for the final year arts students in Knights Park (June 2 – 9), the civic reception in the autumn (date tba) and a series of events in connection with the opening of Town House early 2020.
- JS noted that residents are also invited to events in connection with the Kingston University Big Read in which all new students and a number of community groups such as the Joel Homeless Shelter are sent a book prior to joining and then invited to various events in Sept/Oct including a talk by the author. More details will be circulated nearer the time.

10. Listing the Parish Hall as a Community Asset (Joan McConn)

Joan McConn spoke about her research into listing community assets with a view to listing the Parish Hall as a community asset.

- In essence this means that the owner of a community asset cannot dispose of it without first notifying the local community.
- Specifically owners of listed assets cannot dispose of them without first informing the community group/association which registered them and:
 - 1) Waiting until the end of a six week ‘interim moratorium’ period if the local authority does not receive a request from a community interest group to be treated as a potential bidder.
 - 2) Waiting until the end of a six month ‘full moratorium’ period if the local authority does receive a request from a community interest group to be treated as a potential bidder.

- JM reported that a building or land can be listed as an asset of community value if its current primary use, or recent past use, furthers the social well-being or social interests (cultural, recreational or sporting interests) of the local community. Voluntary and community organisations with a connection with the community can nominate an asset to be included on their local authority's register of asset of community value. Individuals cannot nominate community assets. If the nomination is accepted, local groups will be given time to come up with a bid for the asset if it is sold. The right to bid only applies when an asset's owner decides to dispose of it. There is no compulsion on the owner to sell it to the applicant. The scheme does not give first refusal to the community group, unlike the equivalent scheme in Scotland. It is not a community right to buy the asset, just to bid. This means that the local community bid may not be the successful one. The owner cannot object to the listing of a building as a community asset.
- Julie Bishop suggested that she should contact the diocese (who own the Parish Hall) to inform them and establish their reaction and see what restrictions there may be regarding disposal, renovation etc. applicable to church owned buildings.
- A vote was taken in which it was agreed that an application to list the hall should be submitted to RBK but that time would be given for Julie to contact the Diocese.
- More information on how to do this can be found at the following links: [Community website](#), [Kingston Council](#), [Application Form](#)

11. Election of the Committee All the previous year's committee members were willing to stand, and Mark Brooks agreed to stand to represent Lingfield Avenue. The committee for 2019/20 is thus: **Chairman:** Alan Leeds **Treasurer:** Karol Smal **Secretary:** Jackie Steinitz **Committee Members;** Gordon Bell, Pippa Sparks, Mark Clutterbuck, Dawn Trigg, Sean Yeates, Paul Hemmings, Mark Brooks. A suggestion was also made to seek a committee member from Balmoral Road.

12. Approval of SGRA representative on Kingston Conservation Area Advisory Council: Joan McConn was thanked for her service in 2018/19 and approved as SGRA representative on Kingston Conservation Area Advisory Council (CAAC) for 2019/20.

13. AOB : No further issues were raised