

**Minutes of the Kennington Community Forum Open Meeting  
held on Tuesday, 31 January 2017 at 7.30pm at  
St. Mary's Community Centre, Rylands Road, Kennington, TN24 9LL**

**Present:** Core Group members: Chris Morley (CM, Chair), Chris Woolgar (Treasurer) – part time, Sandra Dunn (Secretary), Ian Milbery, Lee Robinson.

Summer Fayre Committee: Erika Reynolds, Blessing Enakimio

Councillors: Cllr Andrew Buchanan, Cllr Jim Wedgbury

Members of the community: Ray Berry, Helen Brown (Home Start), Bill Clark, Christine Jackson, Jennie Lichfield, Cyril Marsh, Mike Paddy, John and Madeleine Perriss, Graham Skinner, Mirelle Smith, Matt Taylor.

Guest Speakers: James Laidlaw, Grounds Maintenance Operations Manager ABC Aspire; Amanda Scott, Play and Open Spaces Project Officer, ABC.

1. Chris Morley (CM) welcomed everyone to the meeting and especially Leila who is helping out at the meeting as part of her Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme programme.
2. **Apologies:** Cllr Winston Michael, Tony Bartlett, Carole Cole, Paul Graham, Geoff Stanborough.
3. **Police Neighbourhood Panel meeting:** We have not received an update from the PCSO. There have been reorganisations and now there is no dedicated officer for the Kennington area. If you raise any issues with us we will pass them on.
4. **Presentation: James Laidlaw, Grounds Maintenance Operations Manager, ABC Aspire**
  - 4.1. Grounds maintenance was taken in-house in October 2016 after being outsourced for 25 years. The new service will cover the day-to-day work of mowing, pruning, planting, clearing and litter picking on various spaces owned by the council including open green space, parks, floral beds, cemeteries, areas around housing sites, hedges, sports pitches and associated footpaths.
  - 4.2. The new arrangement is an opportunity to improve flexibility, quality and control of the service and will reduce costs. The aim is to enhance the presentation of the borough and enhance the quality of the gateway into the town.
  - 4.3. When it was taken over there was a lack of clear leadership, commitment and machinery. Aspire is now investing in the depot and new machinery and are consulting with the workforce with the aim of increasing pride and ownership. They have been doing a lot of training over the winter in the use of machinery and horticultural knowledge. This training will be on-going.
  - 4.4. Staff job descriptions have been reissued and each team of workers has a team leader who is responsible for the activities of the team so that each job will be completed to a good standard.
  - 4.5. They are looking at creating a 'gateway' team to improve the areas leading into the town, also ABC is looking at the systems to make it as easy as possible to report fly tipping, etc.
  - 4.6. Matters of concern can be reported online at [ashford.gov.uk/report](http://ashford.gov.uk/report) or by phoning ABC on 01233 331111. Aspire's email address is [info@aspirelandscapemanagement.co.uk](mailto:info@aspirelandscapemanagement.co.uk).

- 4.7. Mr Laidlaw said the he will look at scheduling grass-cutting and hedge-trimming on the lead-up to the Summer Fayre. **He will also look at the possibility of taking over responsibility for the bench that the summer fair committee was considering putting on the Spearpoint recreation ground. He also said that they will finish the footpath along the nature reserve. Mr Laidlow would report back to the Chair with the outcome of both items.**
5. **Presentation: Amanda Scott, Play and Open Spaces Project Officer, ABC**
- 5.1. Amanda Scott said that she started with ABC in September having had twelve years' experience in play areas. She has started by reviewing the play areas, mapping out areas and looking at the audits and is looking at pockets of under and over provision. She hopes that the document she is producing will be used to help groups raise funding for improvements.
- 5.2. She went on to say how important play areas are. They have links to improving public health and family unity.
- 5.3. She agreed that some play areas are appalling. She is looking at how to focus on particular areas. In Kennington she was particularly concerned about play areas on the Spearpoint, the recreation ground by the Kennington CE Academy and Little Burton Farm. Maintenance and refurbishment is expensive, but small improvements do make a difference. For instance, replacing swing seats and painting the equipment and fencing can make a lot of difference to the feel of a play area, and a good site will be self-policed.
- 5.4. There is no money available for large-scale improvements but she is looking at how S106 contributions can be best spent. As an example of amounts required, new swings would cost about £5000 and a new play area could cost in the region of £80,000 to £100,000.
- 5.5. Cllr Wedgbury suggested spending on play areas would be a good use of Members Grants.
- 5.6. She said that she will consult with the community to find out what is wanted. She will do this by consulting with local schools and nurseries and consulting with children. It was suggested that Home Start should also be included in the consultation. Also an event in the area would help people gain 'ownership' of any scheme being proposed.
- 5.7. There was a question about the Rylands Road play area. S106 money was due from the 'old Phoenix School' development. This will only become available when enough houses have been finished.
- 5.8. CM said he was surprised that there was no involvement with the Clinical Commissioning Group and suggested that she might like to attend the Health and Wellbeing Board.
6. **Minutes** of the Open Meeting held on 29 November 2016 were accepted as a true record of events. Matters arising:
- 6.1. CM reiterated his concerned that 'Dispersal Orders' were not included with the monthly statistics. He raised his concerns with the police and was told that the only way to get these details was to put in a Freedom Of Information request.
- 6.2. Smells from the Bybrook Wastewater Treatment Works: these can be reported by phone or by filling in a form. The form, however, asks for your customer number. This takes away any anonymity and does not allow people to complain who are not on main drainage and therefore not customers. There was concern that the works was probably exceeding the permitted quantity of waste brought in by road.

6.3. There has been no progress on improving the pinch point along the Willesborough/Kennington Road. It was suggested that compulsory purchase was ongoing but work would not be started until Junction 10a was approved.

## **7. Summer Fayre**

- 7.1. Erika Reynolds, who has taken over as Chair of the committee, gave her report.
- 7.2. A meeting was held in January and it was agreed that if sufficient volunteers came forward then the fair could take place.
- 7.3. A working group of six was set up taking over various elements, i.e. pitches, raffle, publicity, legal and financial, logistics and arena events. They have already met and will hold their next meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> March.
- 7.4. More volunteers would be needed nearer the time, especially for the car park. It was suggested that if several people volunteer for this there could be a rota and they would then have time to visit the fair. It was also suggested that they should be supplied with hi-vis jackets. This would be safer for them and also give them authority. This suggestion will be taken back to the committee
- 7.5. The fair will be held from 12 – 4pm on Saturday 24 June.

## **8. Planning Applications**

- 8.1. 16/01845/AS Land fronting Canterbury Road at Ashford Hockey Club. Outline application for the erection of 9 dwellings and a new access along the Canterbury Road.
  1. The club says that it needs to raise £250,000. The application has been put in to enable them to resurface the artificial pitch, carry out necessary maintenance and repay the outstanding mortgage. They said that they might be prepared to fund a Traffic Regulation Order to reduce the speed limit along the Canterbury Road to 30mph.
  2. The application includes access for a bigger scheme and could become the main entrance for the club carpark. This would take more pitches out of use. The application refers to documents that have not been agreed and are not in the public domain.
  3. Half the site is owned by Ashford Town Cricket Club and there are other clubs that use the site such as Kennington Juniors and Pilgrims FC at Great Chart who train there in the winter. The club does not appear to have looked for alternative funding, for instance the Rugby Football Union will fund multi-sports.
  4. KCF has objected and Cllr Sims has called the application in for the Planning Committee to determine.
- 8.2. 16/01798/AS: Culvers, Ball Lane. Change of use of garage to office/reception and erection of cattery building (resubmission of application 16/00764/AS).
- 8.3. 16/01780/AS: 225 Faversham Road (dentist and post office). Ground floor side/rear extensions and first floor extension, additional parking, boundary wall. Three previous applications have been withdrawn. This time the post office is included in the plans.
- 8.4. 16/01851/AS: Coty, Eureka Science Park: Proposed extensions to Eastern and Western areas to create ancillary areas to the Western extension and new warehouse and materials in storage facility to the Eastern extension. A previous application included a screen of trees. This was planted but has not been maintained.

## 9. KCF Reports

### 9.1. Treasurer (Chris Woolgar)

1. The accounts for 1 September 2015 – 31 August 2016 have now been signed off and were available at the meeting. They have also been posted on the website in the minutes section: 'AGM and September meeting 2016'.
2. The balance for all accounts up to the end of December 2016 stood at £6,625.22 (£3,761.33 in the KCF main account and £2863.89 in the summer fayre account). Income for the main account was £423.14 which included £377.50 for newsletter sponsorship, £36 raffle, a £9.50 correction and £0.14 bank interest. Expenditure was £667.50 which included £600 newsletter printing and £67.50 sponsorship refund. There were no transactions in the Summer Fayre account.
3. Public liability insurance has been paid for the Forum but separate cover will be taken out for the summer fayre. We are waiting for this to be finalised with Zurich.
4. Raffle proceeds for the evening were £39.

### 9.2. Newsletter (Chris Morley)

1. Thank you to all contributors; many articles are coming in. Suggested size for articles is 150 words. The deadline for the next edition is 8<sup>th</sup> February for the March edition.
2. Thank you also to Geoff Stanborough who organised the distribution. More distributors will be welcome. Please let us know if you can help.

### 9.3. Chair's report (Chris Morley)

#### 1. Bybrook Nature Reserve:

The Friends of Bybrook Nature Reserve committee met yesterday to review progress. Good work is being done by volunteer groups, including a winter scrub control day on 25 January led by Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership. There will be another scrub control day on Saturday 11 February from 10:00 to 13:00 to open up new areas for wild flowers – volunteers welcome.

A birdwatch was conducted on 29 January as part of the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch. There will be more themed days over the year.

The FoBNR AGM will be on Wednesday 26 April at Bockhanger Community Centre starting at 7pm. There will be an opportunity to tour the reserve before the meeting from 6 to 7pm.

#### 2. Parish Room:

This is in Upper Vicarage Road and is in need of restoration. The Trustees are to hold a working party, possibly on 1st April. At present it is used by Step-by-Step nursery.

### 3. KCC Consultations

Kent County Council regularly sends out policy documents for consultation, and residents are encouraged to take a few minutes to review and respond. Two current consultations are as follows:

- Freight Action Plan for Kent (to 12 Mar 2017)
- Draft Kent Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2017 – 2022 (19 Feb 2017)

These are available on the KCC website under the Consultations tag.

### 4. NHS Consultations

The NHS is proposing significant changes to health care delivery, based around more services being delivered through primary care (e.g. GP surgeries) and better integration with social care. Full consultation is expected to start in June or July this year, but there are some preliminary events which residents are encouraged to attend. The first of these in Ashford is a "Listening Event" at Julie Rose Stadium on Friday 17 February from 1.00 - 4.00pm.

This will outline some of the current proposals and provide an opportunity for discussion with NHS managers which will help to ensure the plans are robust and will work for each and every community.

### 5. Kennington Community Council

While we are still awaiting a high-level plan to outline the steps to establish Kennington Community Council in 2019, we're pleased to note that work is actually progressing with some of the detailed items which need to be resolved first.

KCC's Electoral and Boundary Review Committee met on 24<sup>th</sup> November to review and agree ABC's proposal to make "minor alterations to the county electoral divisions in Ashford in advance of 2017 County Council election". For Kennington, this adjusts the County electoral division boundary which runs along the middle of Sandyhurst Lane so that houses on the east side become part of Ashford Rural West instead of Ashford Central. This will apply from the 2017 County elections.

The borough wards in Ashford are also being reviewed and we made submissions last year for four wards aligned to the proposed Kennington Community Council boundary. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is due to publish draft proposals on 7 February, and residents are urged to review and comment.

Once the revised borough ward boundaries have been agreed, ABC will be able to draft a Reorganisation Order, which is the legal document required to create or change a parish or community council.

## 10. **Updates from ABC and KCC Members:**

### 10.1. Cllr Jim Wedgbury

5. KCC's budget is to be agreed on 9 February and will be 'in the best interests of Kent'. It will be set at a level that won't require a referendum, with money being taken out of reserves to make up the shortfall. He said that unaccompanied asylum seekers under the age of 25 are costing the council £6million. He went on to say that the responsibility needs to be spread around the country.
6. After a review of library services there has only been one library closure.

7. Cllr Wedgbury has complained about the mess caused by contractors in Nine Acres.
8. An East Kent super-council is under discussion. ABC considered this but decided not to join. Joining would have resulted in a 10% increase in council tax.
9. The Park and Ride is not now going ahead so it is expected that the land will be sold. KCC were anticipating that the sale would bring in £1million, but it is now hoped that up to £4million could be raised by the sale.

10.2. Cllr Andrew Buchanan

1. Bockhanger square is to be tidied up; rundown areas attract further problems. The concrete balls will be removed, paving will be redone and trees planted. He also thought that raised flower beds could be put in but it was pointed out to him that these would need a high level of maintenance.
2. He was still looking at ways to improve the community centre.
3. Traffic wardens with electric mopeds will be coming soon.
4. ABC will be opening 'One You' in Park Mall in the town centre on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> February. The new health shop is part of Public Health England's national campaign which encourages people to quit smoking, lose weight and be more active.

**11. Updates from ABC and KCC Liaison Officers: none received**

**12. Any other business**

None

- 13. Next meeting.** The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 28 March 2017 at St Mary's Community Centre, Rylands Road.