

Notes of the Kennington Community Forum meeting held on Tuesday 25 May 2010 at St Mary's Church Hall, Kennington

Present: Pat Boorman (Chair), Robin Britcher (Newsletter editor), Chris Morley, Bill Clark, David Chandler, Cllr Michael Cloughton, Cllr Andrew Wickham, Kelly-Marie Blundell, Derek and Norma Smyth, Jill Britcher, M Morrison, Graham Skinner, A Boulter, J and M Perriss, Andrea Taberham, Nigel Adams, E and J Cooper, Geoff and Jane Stanborough, Peter Lewis, Carole Cole, Peter Newson.

Apologies: Sandra Dunn, Chris Woolgar, Michelle Byrne (Ashford BC), Cllr Elizabeth Tweed, Linda and John Williams, Phil Sims, John Kemp.

1. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising:

- 1.1 The minutes of the March meeting were agreed.
- 1.2 The youth shelter on the Ridge, which belonged to the Forum, has been taken down by Bethersden Parish Council. The legs were cut flush with the hard standing and the four small holes have been filled in by ABC. Geoff Stanborough thanked the Forum on behalf of the residents who asked for it to be removed following complaints of late-night noise, litter and vandalism.
- 1.3 Village green status has been given to the grassed area between Grasmere Road and Beecholme Drive. Pat Boorman was congratulated on leading the successful campaign.
- 1.4 Outline application for 11 houses on land at 80 The Street including the demolition of Little Acre: although the council has called for a fuller ecological survey there have been no developments.
- 1.5 The problem of coaches trying to access Kingswood Activity Centre from Bockhanger Lane via Hurst Road appears to have been resolved following talks with the Centre. Coaches reversing in the road damaged manhole covers which have now been repaired.
- 1.6 Highworth School has appealed to the Secretary of State following the council's refusal to allow it to build 13 homes.
- 1.7 A second hearing into Dobbie's application to build a garden centre at Eureka Leisure Park was going before the planning committee on 26 May. Cllr Cloughton said public feeling against the proposal was very high. There were now new members on the committee who may take a different view on whether the application should be granted.
(The application was approved unanimously by the planning committee)
- 1.8 Towers School: Outline application for residential development south of the school has been granted.

2 Kennington Circle North Development

- 2.1 The Forum's Chair and Secretary, along with the Kennington North Action Group, attended a meeting on 12 May with Simon Cole and Ian Grundy from Ashford BC's Forward Planning team who explained the process for the Urban Sites Development Plan consultation. They were waiting for the report that would show if a link road between the A28 and A251 is necessary. They will then be in a position to publish the Urban Sites Development Plan Document and a formal consultation of six weeks will begin. If it is found that significant amendments are required to the document they will amend it and there will be a further six-week consultation. Once they are happy with the document it will be submitted to the Secretary of State, along with all the correspondence that has been submitted. There will then be a public inquiry to determine if the document is "sound".
- 2.2 On 15 May, Kennington North Action Group held a well-attended public meeting. KCC councillors Elizabeth Tweed and Andrew Wickham and CPRE Protect Kent's Senior Planner Brian Lloyd all spoke against the proposed road and housing development.

2.3

Cllr Tweed sent a report to the Forum about a meeting she and Cllrs Andrew Wickham and Richard King attended on 25 May with Cllr Paul Bartlett, who is the new leader of Ashford BC. They told Cllr Bartlett mitigating measures could be put in place to deal with heavy lorries rat-running from Kempes Corner to Boughton Aluph. In the light of Government plans to allow spatial planning to return to local authorities Cllr Bartlett made a commitment to talk to the Coalition to see if the number of houses proposed for Ashford could be reduced. It was hoped to have regular meetings between Cllr Bartlett, our MP Damian Green and Ashford county councillors to encourage the MP to lobby on our behalf.

2.4

Cllr Claughton told the Forum that Cllr Bartlett was planning a “root and branch” review of local construction. He said the Kennington North Area was first identified in 2005 but had “slipped under the radar”. It was regrettable the debate didn’t happen then. At present nothing had been decided and ABC was very aware of the public depth of concern. Cllr Claughton said there was no justification for a link road and if it was needed it may have to be funded by other sources rather than housing. Cllr Wickham urged residents to continue sending protests to the council. Peter Newson said the Action Group was delivering more leaflets to homes in the area.

3 Tritton Field buses

Nigel Adams said double-decker buses were causing serious problems in Tritton Fields. They were often unable to get by parked cars. There was a danger of a serious accident happening. The matter would be taken up by the Forum.

4. Treasurer’s report

The Treasurer was unable to attend and sent a report. The Forum has a bank balance of £5,173.26 most of which is War Memorial funds.

5. Kennington News

5.1 Robin Britcher said the inclusion of advertising had raised £250 towards the £389 cost of printing the quarterly newsletter. It was hoped the next issue, due out in July, would be printed by Headleys.

5.2

Jill Britcher reported that the distribution of 5,000 copies of the spring newsletter had progressed smoothly and she thanked everyone who had been involved.

6 War Memorial Shelter

6.1 Chris Morley said the theft of lead from the roof shortly after restoration work was completed had attracted considerable coverage in the media. English Heritage, who insisted on lead being used, now agreed it was not the right decision and said the Forum could apply for a grant of £350 towards the £700 needed to replace the stolen lead with cedar tiles.

6.2 The next phase of the restoration work, fitting benches and balustrades, would depend on how much money is available. The War Memorials Trust said the Forum could apply for a 50% grant.

6.3 The final phase involves the garden itself. ABC now accepts it has been responsible for the garden since 1950 and arrangements are being made to tidy the site, replace the path, lay another one and restore the Ulley Road boundary.

7. Bullied children

Kelly-Marie Blundell said Gurkha children were being bullied in the vicinity of Towers School. She asked that anyone who witnessed this behaviour, or knew anything about it, should contact her. (*kellymarie.blundell@googlemail.com tel: 01233 662044 mobile: 07706 228630*)

8. Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)

Cllr Cloughton was concerned that the chairman of the Kent Police Federation has suggested PCSOs could be scrapped. Cllr Cloughton said neighbourhood officers played a vital role in the community. Derek Smyth agreed and said they made people feel secure and could be easily contacted.

9. Street pastors

Street pastors will be operating in Ashford later this year. Cllr Cloughton said they would work in conjunction with the police on issues such as anti-social behaviour and drunkenness. They would offer help and friendship and there would be no preaching. Bill Clark said the pastors did a fantastic job.

10 Clean Sweep

The Safety Community Partnership in conjunction with other agencies, including Ashford BC, will be in the area between Bybrook Road and Goteley Mere on 1, 2 and 3 June helping to solve problems in the community.

11. Rubbish at Bybrook maisonettes

There are wire cages round some of the bins as work has not yet been completed. Soil taken out in preparation for the installation of the first subterranean bin outside 98-118 Bybrook Road was found to be contaminated and had to be removed. An alternative position for the bin has now been found. Although residents have been asked to put small sacks in the bins some are leaving large bags of rubbish by the bins which attracts vermin.

12. Kingswood

Youngsters have been seen playing in the grounds of the activity centre at 9pm despite a promise from the Centre that they would be inside by 7.30. Cllr Cloughton agreed to investigate.

13. Drivers' Roundabout

Concern was expressed about the clearing of all the trees and vegetation from the roundabout. It was felt that there were some safety advantages as sight lines are now improved. It was pointed out that Kent Highways was responsible for the roundabout, not ABC.

14. Church signage

Nigel Adams, on behalf of the Parochial Church Council, said signs directing people to St Mary's Church were desperately needed. It was agreed to contact Cllr Elizabeth Tweed who has said she will support the idea. Derek Smyth said Kent Highways is the appropriate group to approach with regard to this kind of signage.

15. Croft Hotel

Permission has been granted for the demolition of existing apartment buildings and the erection of six two-storey dwellings. Conditions have been imposed relating to sight lines and preservation of the trees and wildlife. If a "crossing point" is needed it will have to be cleared with Kent Highways. The Forum objected to the application on traffic grounds.

14. AGM

- 14.1 The annual general meeting will be held on Tuesday 22 June at St Mary's Community Hall, Rylands Road, at 7pm. The speaker will be the council's parking services manager, John Burns.
- 14.2 Nomination forms for election to the core group can be downloaded from the Forum's website kenningtoncf.kentparishes.gov.uk and must be returned to Michelle Byrne at Ashford BC by 11 June.

15. Vision for Ashford

A public exhibition of Sir Terry Farrell's design vision for the town will be held at Ashford International Hotel, on 2 June from 10-4pm.

16. Summer Fayre

The Forum will run a stall to promote its work in the community. It is hoped to have games with donated prizes. The Fayre is on Saturday 26 June at the Recreation Ground, Ulley Road.

17 Next meetings

- 17.1 AGM, Tuesday 22 June at St Mary's Community Hall, Rylands Road, 7pm.
- 17.2 The next Forum meeting will be on 27 July at St Mary's Church Hall, 7pm.