

**MINUTES OF THE AUTUMN GENERAL MEETING OF THE KENLEY AND DISTRICT
RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION HELD ON 25TH OCTOBER 2022 AT KENLEY MEMORIAL HALL,
GODSTONE ROAD, KENLEY**

Present: 52 members, Mayor – Jason Perry, 2 Councillors, Chairman, Christine Heal and 5 Committee Members

Apologies: John Davenport, Geoff James, Mike Street, Conor Campion

1. Chairman, Christine Heal, welcomed the Mayor, Councillors and members and said she was very impressed to see so many and hoped they would enjoy the meeting as she outlined proceedings.
2. **Report from Police Officer – PC Karolina Aamir** started her talk by saying that there had been a change to policing the area, there will now be 1 sergeant for 2 Wards and 2 PCSOs. Kenley is a low area for crime with anti-social behaviour, burglary and vehicle theft the main issues compared to other Croydon areas. The Police Commissioner wants to see more community policing, the Police and Community have got together to hold minors meeting to try and find out why youngsters get involved in crime. Q & A from the members ranged from asking how crime was recorded, stabbing in Purley which was not fatal, to litter by fly tippers and the fines which is more a Council issue. One member who had been burgled a while ago was impressed by the speed his call was answered. PC said that their Ward Panel meetings were held every 3 months.

3. **The Chairman Introduced – Jason Perry , Democratically Elected Mayor**

The Mayor started by saying it was a great privilege to be Croydon's first elected Mayor and expressed his gratitude to KENDRA, and the other residents' associations, who campaigned so hard for a referendum. He said the widespread support for the DEMOC campaign surprised everybody, on both sides of the argument. He described his new job as 'challenging, frustrating, disappointing' but at the same time 'hugely rewarding'. Since his election in May he said his main focus has been listening to residents, learning what issues concern them most, and delving into the complexities of the Council's finances.

One huge frustration for the Mayor is the cost of servicing the £1.5 billion debt run up by the previous administration. At around £50 million annually, he said this has to be paid before providing any services. And selling off the Council's assets to cover the cost was not a long term solution. The legacy of mismanagement is still being felt. He gave two examples; the winding up of Brick By Brick, which is likely to end in a £50 million loss, and the revelation that Croydon Council is paying several million pounds in housing benefit to recipients who are not entitled to it. Many of those responsible for the financial chaos are no longer with the Council. However an ongoing investigation into the Council's past financial dealings may still result in prosecutions i.e. Fairfield Halls. He said the lack of proper governance was astonishing, but it was now being restored. He opposes the extension of the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) to the outer London Boroughs, claiming it did little for air quality, but hit hardest those who could least afford it. Some Councils have refused to let their infrastructure, such as cameras, to be used for the monitoring of the ULEZ zone.

On the positive side, he had been able to reverse some of the worst aspects of Croydon Council's planning policy, particularly the scrapping of SPD2 and trying to stop family homes being pulled down and replaced by flats. He recognised that much of the momentum behind DEMOC was driven by residents' anger toward the Council's planning policy across the Borough. He has reinstated the Graffiti Removal Team as part of an effort to clean-up Croydon and restore pride in the town. If the local area looks like nobody cares, then bad people will take advantage. He referred to it as a 'broken windows' policy; we repair the windows and clean the streets, it shows people are watching what's going on and taking care of their neighbourhood. Plans to kick-start the regeneration of Croydon are underway, but hampered by the lack of funds, something he has been discussing with Central Government. The Mayor said the Westfield plans were not dead and talks were still going on. A small step to bring football back to the town centre are plans to open the ground floor of the Alders building as a music venue, hopefully this would happen well before Christmas.

The Mayor took questions from the floor

From: Mike McConnell "During the hustings meetings convened by DEMOC, Jason had advised there would be full consultation directly with RAs and feedback to residents. Mike paid thanks to Gerry Meredith-Smith in his management of 20k signatures and subsequent arranging of the hustings. Following the election it had been difficult to agree a RA co-ordinated liaison with the new Mayor. Jason Perry replied that he always welcomed consultation with RAs and reiterated that his first 6 months in office had been identifying major issues facing the Council and agreeing where immediate actions were needed. Jason said that it would now be possible to have routine RA

meetings at 6 monthly intervals and monitor subsequent frequency, he also stated that if KENDRA committee considered there were some Kenley specific issues, these could be addressed directly with KENDRA. This answered Jane Highfield's question "often there are unique issues impacting on Kenley i.e. road widths, parking sloping terrain etc. would it then be possible to have direct meetings with the Mayor".

Jason Perry stayed until the end of the meeting, which was appreciated by all attendees. He committed to having regular contact with the residents' associations, and said he wants to make Croydon somewhere we are proud to live in. The Chairman thanked Jason for his interesting speech and for answering questions from the floor.

4. **Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 26th April 2022**

The minutes having been circulated were agreed and signed as correct. There were no matters arising.

5. **Review of Current Local Issues**

(a) Membership, Road Stewards and Committee – Chairman said that we are a small committee and would be grateful if anyone would like to join us to enable us to do more. We need more Road Stewards to help deliver magazines and collect subs. We have designed a leaflet which is going out to 4,000 homes in Kenley over next two weeks in a hope that we can increase our membership.

(b) Recent Travellers Incursion into Higher Drive – Councillor Gayle Gander said that there were four caravans involved. Council were on to it quickly and gave them 24 hours to move but it took 8 days before they left as one of the travellers was in hospital. They left an enormous amount of rubbish stacked up along Higher Drive and Cullesden Road. A few members said that it was too dangerous to let dogs off leads until rubbish cleared and also dangerous for any children playing at the Recreation Ground. Council are looking at the security to stop it happening again.

(c) Geoff James' Report on Planning Issues – In the absence of Geoff the Chairman read his report and to summarise his report as follows:- The Council has changed since May when Jason Perry came in power. The Council are now far less "Pro" developers and Planning Officers are refusing applications and resisting appeals. A recent refusal is 2 & 4 Kenley Lane, this proposed a 6 storey building opposite the station that would provide a new GP surgery. We supported the need for new surgery but could see no reason for 5 storeys of flats above it. It has now gone to appeal.

In the House Building Sector the profits of developers will be squeezed because of (a) Cost of Living Crisis with fewer first time buyers (b) Increase of Interest Rates means people unable to borrow so much for mortgages (c) Building codes are being updated – this means houses more expensive to build because of greater amounts of insulation which is mandatory.

The new Croydon administration have dispensed with Croydon Design Guide. We sincerely thank Jason Perry for this. The removal of the Design Guide leads us to the Croydon Plan. This was written in 2018 and is now out of date because the London plan has been revised and removal of the design guide has left some loop holes. To rewrite/revise the plan is not a quick processes. So far there has been no indication when this will be commenced. Developers are beginning to leverage the fact that the Croydon plan is out of date.

6. **Q & A Panel Session with Local Councillors, Ola Kolade & Gayle Gander**

Ola Kolade introduced himself having taken over from Steve O'Connell when he when he was voted in last year. Gayle was voted in this year. Gayle said that Planning comprises 80% of their work, 26% was declined in the first 8 months of this year.

Flooding – there should be an update and a date to start work coming out within the next week.

Road Safety – Neil Garrett for Transport is highlighting hotspots in Kenley including Godstone Road. He has agreed to attend the AGM in April. Also looking at bus service up Higher Drive.

Gayle said that her and Ola hold regular monthly surgeries on a Saturday in KMH to enable residents to talk about their grievances.

Purley Swimming Pool – Jason Perry interjected to say that it is in a bad state of repair and is having talks with Alaska Developers in trying to decide what best to do with the site, i.e. incorporating a gym and leisure centre. The equipment is in a bad state of repair.

A member asked about affordable housing for key workers – Gayle said the Council have been pro-active in trying to find suitable accommodation. Jason Perry said there was not an easy answer.

A member asked about the application of a 30ft phone mast on Higher Drive. Ola said he is working on it, the application was refused then Telecommunication have been asked what they want to do with it.

Trains – Gayle said a great many residents have complained about the train services from Caterham which have worsened since COVID and timetable change. Chairman stated she had

attended meeting with Charlie King of EST and hoped that if we can get Neil Garrett on board hopefully we can put pressure on to improve the service.

7. Any Other Business

The Chairman said that before we close the meeting she wanted to remind people of the Remembrance Service to be held at the RAF Memorial on Sunday 13th November at 1.30 p.m. Also on Saturday 19th November 7th Purley Scouts are holding a Jumble Sale at KMH 1.30 – 3p.m.

The Chairman thanked the Mayor, Councillors and Members for attending the meeting and wished them safe journey home.

Meeting concluded at 9.30 pm

Chairman..... Date.....