

**Kingston Environment Forum meeting, Nov 9 2016, 10.30am, John Lewis Place to Eat**

**NOTES**

**Present:** Andree Frieze (Green Party, TARAK, MASC); Hilary Gander (RBK Cllr, TTK); John Legate (KCC, Kingston Beekeepers; Marilyn Mason (TTK, KEF Chair); Clive Messenger (SWLEN); Marina Pacheco (KBN); Jean Vidler (KEC)

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| **Agenda item** | **Actions** |
| 1. **Welcome, introductions, and**   **Apologies**: Doodle had deleted meeting poll so no record of apologies! |  |
| 1. **May meeting’s** **notes** agreed as accurate, with **no matters arising** not   dealt with below. |  |
| 1. **Updates/reports from member-groups** on issuesnot covered below   and on **meetings of interest to KEF:** KEC was discussing commissioning for  e g community engagement with Shadia at RBK.  No report on “State of the Borough” meeting (though we could guess the kind of thing) and nothing further on other meetings - see reports in Appendices.  Some discussion about value to KEF of some meetings e g Kingston Voluntary Sector, which was thought by MM and AF to be of interest only to KEF members likely to be commissioned for work by the Council - so the decision was that future invitations should be passed on to those interested (KEC? SWLEN?...) Otherwise no one from KEF would attend. | **KEF members** interested in attending Kingston Voluntary Sector meetings to contact MM |
| 1. **Updates and actions/priorities on KEF/RBK issues** including: |  |
| **Growth and development, planning -** a regular topic for KEF and we have a statement on it - see <http://e-voice.org.uk/kef/kef-issues/sustainable-development> . RBK view is that growth is unavoidable, all that can be done is to shape it; from KEF point of view, to insist on preservation and enhancement of green spaces, useful community spaces, energy efficiency, due attention to impacts on infrastructure incl transport, flood risk… Some of these were easy wins, as developers provided them as normal or legally required, or because they saw an advantage (PR, good relations with Council or community) in doing so.  HG reported that the latest development proposal on the Toby Jug site, Tolworth, was even higher density than the previous one, but was better designed (more varied heights, better public space), though still meeting with a lot of local opposition. | **MM** to reiterate KEF requirements at upcoming KSP meeting on Kingston Plan.  **All -** email any current issues or concerns to MM |
| **Biodiversity, green spaces, trees etc.**  **Kingston Green Spaces Forum:** JV, MP and MM had had discussions with RBK and Preeti Chatwal of Quadron/idverde re setting up a local Friends Forum, to include any green space adopted by local people, share concerns, support each other in protecting green spaces, and liaise with London Friends Network. Progress was slow but it was hoped to include many local groups. MM had set up a web page on Greener Kingston, not yet public, and it was hoped that all KEF members and others would use their media to promote KGSF and its meetings and events.  **Community gardening;** CM reported that **Manorgate Road** residents had informally adopted and replanted the planters in their street with support from RBK officer Rob Waite, and this kind of informal adoption was recommended. MM also had an informal one-year license for **Canbury Community Garden**, obtained via Rob Waite and easier to get than a longer lease via a Council committee, when one could run into obstruction from some councillors. HG reported that regular **BroadOaks** community garden volunteers were keeping it going. Quadron/idverde could also be very helpful - many KEF members have experience of this. **TARAK and CARA** would be planting spring bulbs on their patches - in CARA’s case they expected to get bulbs late in the season via the Metropolitan Parks and Gardens Association.  MM also reported an ongoing issue in **Canbury Gardens with light pollution/overspill** from the Kingston Riverside tennis club[[1]](#endnote-1) - possibly a breach of planning permission, possibly illegal because of disturbance to local bats. It was a controversial issue within CARA, and MM would prefer not to get involved in a quarrel with the immediate neighbours of her community garden, but she urged wildlife/bat experts to visit the Gardens at night, perhaps with a light meter, and to take up the issue with the Council in the first instance, She would also raise this at the next KBN meeting.  **Seething Wells development -** no solid news on this, but we wondered if a concerted effort from KBN and the Seething organisation could be effective in raising funds and/or securing the site for a nature reserve?  MM had walked part of the **Thames-Downs path** in July with Councillors, RBK officers. Eliot from KBN, Surrey Wildlife Trust rep - and was pleased that Kingston and Epsom councils seemed disposed to spend some money on improving access and signage on what was a very pleasant green walk. | **All members with connections to green spaces** - be ready to join KGSF and spread the word  **KBN/bat lovers:** please visit, observe, report take up as appropriate; MM to raise at KBN meeting  **HG?** to try to interest Seething? |
| **Flooding and water quality-** another regular theme - see KEF statement and occasional updates on KEF website - <http://e-voice.org.uk/kef/kef-issues/flood-risk/> .  MP reported that a recent survey of the Hogsmill had found it cleaner and with more fish than expected. |  |
| **Energy:** CM reported that SWLEN was had funding to offer energy efficiency advice to some Kingston estates and schools - SWLEN activity limited by capacity. |  |
| Active travel and **transport incl. cycling** - current RBK Go Cycle consultations <http://consult.kingston.gov.uk/portal/planning/go/go_cycle_october_2016/> on improvements to local cycling infrastructure: Kingston to Kingston Vale;  Kingston to New Malden; and Kingston to Tolworth. Deadline 17 November.- JL requested everyone to respond to all 3 consultations, even on areas you don’t know well,if only to give general support to the principle and aims of increasing cycling, making it safer - you don’t have to go into details. Drop-in presentations on the schemes could provide more info.[[2]](#endnote-2)  AF reported that TARAK was surveying in its **N Kingston area re 20mph zone** and finding support. | **All** to respond to consultation |
| **Air quality: KEF** AQWG has met several times and has now published its statement at <http://e-voice.org.uk/kef/assets/other/kef-statement-on-local-air-qua> -it had been sent out quite widely, to no response apart from Green Radio, where AF and MM would be talking about AQ the following day.  What more could we do? Which of the recommended actions in KEF’s statement could we promote and how? Car-free Sundays in town centre(s)?  HG reported that the **Council cross-party WG on AQ** had at last met, but without its chair, Cllr Cathy Roberts, and that there were some concerns about funding and actual action as opposed to plans (concerns also expressed in KEF’s statement on AQ).  Newish **local AQ campaign group MASC** now had a Facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/MakeAirSafeClean/> - all welcome to join. AQ very much in the news - news, data, reports frequently added to **KEF and MASC Facebook pages** so please visit for info.  **GLA consultation on London’s AQ -** <https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/environment/air-quality-consultation-phase-2/> - please respond before deadline on 18/12, especially to ask for extension of air pollution measures to outer boroughs such as Kingston. | **AF** to contact Kingstonfirst re possibility of car-free days.  **All**  **All** |
| **Waste and recycling -** recent Restart Party electronics repair workshop in Kingston, hosted by SW London Waste Partnership, perhaps as a result of suggestions from KEF and KEF members?  HG reported that though recycling rates had risen by 5%, food recycling- was decreasing and landfill rising - could RBK inform, nudge or encourage residents more effectively?  There was also a new **Facebook page for Kingston Litter-pickers -**  <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1202711863123403/> . Gemma Gallant at RBK can help with organised litter-picks - providing ranger support and litter-picking tools. | **MM** to commend RBK waste dept for organising this, & hope there would be more. Also to suggest more positive, encouraging communications  e g re food waste |
| 1. **KEF comms and publicity:** see Appendix endnotes for website and   Facebook reports[[3]](#endnote-3), and for additional note about Kingston Carnival[[4]](#endnote-4).  **Local media:** Surrey Comet staff on strike so little of interest currently, not even letters! Local papers are in decline anyway and SC is probably little read. |  |
| 1. **Prep for upcoming meeting KSP meeting, November 16:** no further   discussion - meeting will focus on Kingston Plan, growth, development, issues all covered earlier. | **MM** |
| 1. **Future planning, KEF priorities** etc...   **Funding opportunity for big projects?** JV and MM had both heard that HLF had funds for large community projects such as buildings, and Kingston had not had much of it, so perhaps it was our turn and KEF members could benefit? MM mentioned the derelict building in Canbury Community Garden, which belongs to the Council but has no current use - could a KEF member come up with a good community use and secure funding from HLF?  **Succession planning:** MM had outstayed her 2-year stint as KEF Chair and would welcome a replacement, someone fresh who might benefit from getting to know the workings of the Council, and who would also represent all of KEF’s concerns and consult us and report back. Please consider volunteering. It was agreed that it was difficult communicating with the Council on environmental matters when there was no overall coordinating dept, and KEF issues were split between many depts and councillors, some of which were not very communicative.  **KEF representation:** MM wondered how effective or productive participation in KEF was (was KEF presence used to rubber-stamp decisions already made elsewhere?), and also reminded that KEF would be more representative if more members participated, either by coming to meetings, or by email, or on the Facebook page. | **All**  **All**  **All** |
| 1. **AOB: Kingston conversations on budget priorities** coming up in Nov,   all recommended to go if possible to promote spending on environment. See <https://www.kingston.gov.uk/conversation>.  General request that when there were local **environmental issues or consultations** we all respond individually or write to councillors etc - as those on the opposite side would be doing so, and numbers count.  JL would be attending E**nvironment Agency workshop on flood plans**, and AF would be attending **KVA conference**, both later in November. | **All**  **All**  **JL, AF** |
| 1. **Dates for future meeting(s)** – t b a to fit with KSP quarterly meetings | **MM** to Doodle when she has dates |

**APPENDIX: Meetings since last KEF meeting**

**KSP conference, Thursday 3/11:** the usual mix of worries about reduced funding and the need to integrate and share council services and departments, to do more with less… with positive messages about growth and attracting businesses into Kingston. Participants included council officers, a few councillors, KSP members and some others from the wider community. Presentations from Kevin Davis and Charlie Adan were received with silence, others from Kingston Coordinated Care team and Collaborate at least had some new things to say and met with a slightly warmer reception, though none of the opening plenary presentations allowed for questions or discussion. I am beginning to feel very jaded after too many of these conferences and too many exposures to Council promotion of growth and development. Workshop sessions on the Sustainability table (which included Cllr Terry Paton, Vicky Phillips from SWLEN, Shadia from the Council, Saffron from KVA, Love Kingston)…) were slightly more interesting and at least everyone on the table was agreed on what the word implied, with some talk about trees, AQ, cycling and a lot about the need to communicate better to more people, and consult more effectively and widely (not just the same old people and/or the people with axes to grind). The outcomes will be circulated to participants and fed into the work on the Kingston Plan.

**Brief report on Voluntary Community Sector Strategy 1/6/16, *MM***Current concerns of the VCSS group:

* Funding streams, competitive bidding for commissions
* Unequal “partnership” with RBK, role of VS in the KSP, general lack of recognition of value of VS
* Priority given to “Kingston Conversations” and consulting the public directly about, e g, where they would seek advice
* “Destination Kingston 2016-20” – not available to read before or at the meeting but downloadable from <https://www.kingston.gov.uk/downloads/file/1612/destination_kingston_2016-2020>
* Poor or difficult to establish relationships with Councillors, made more difficult by reshuffles

**Meeting with RBK officer i/c KSP Grace Abel, 2/6/16, *MM***Mainly Grace finding out more about us and our relations with Kingston Council, and also exploring how the KSP could work better (part of her on-going conversations with KSP members).

**Brief notes on meeting with Cllr Terry Paton (formerly lead on environmental issues, now Deputy Leader), 3/6/16, *MM***Cllr Paton retains an interest in the Go Cycle/mini-Holland scheme and has a general interest in environmental issues and support for e g trees, clean air etc, but, given the split nature of RBK environmental responsibilities, was not fully briefed on all our issues, so we should also talk to other councillors and Council officers: Cllr Cathy Roberts (air quality), Cllr Andrea Craig (green spaces), Cllr Phil Doyle (waste and recycling)… (who on KEC, I wonder, or on flood risk?) + relevant officers. I suggest that to progress our work **on air quality** we invite Cllr Roberts and/or David Kingstone to our next meeting.

On our Q about the Council view on **Heathrow expansion**, Cllr Paton opposed it, but did not know what the official Council or Leader’s view was, if any.

On **Go Cycle/mini-Holland** scheme, Cllr Paton seems as keen to see joining up as we are and doesn’t want “cycle paths that go nowhere”. Riverside boardwalk scheme likely to go out for consultation in Nov, nothing decided or designed yet, but will probably be v different from original ideas. No money for e g pedestrian and cycle bridges over busy roads such as by Kingston Station, despite awareness of air quality issues associated with congestion and idling, though there is a possibility of 20 mph limit in this area? He’s also looking into a longer-distance foot and cycle Thames – Downs path, working with Epsom and Ewell council and members of KBN. An exploratory walk coming up on 12/7.

On **new recycling scheme,** though figures not official yet, recycling rates have risen. RBK is looking into roll-out to flats.

**Brief notes on KSP meeting, Th 9/6/16, Guildhall, *MM***Meeting was poorly attended, so not too much competition for Qs and comments. Agenda was mainly presentations from Council officers about growth /vision and strategy / “Destination Kingston” and Kingston conversations and budget – so plenty to question! Including:

* The basic premise, the inevitability of London’s growth when other cities are crying out for it and have space and affordable homes. As this is beyond Kingston’s control and I’ve heard the answer many times now, I was not too surprised to hear that this is just a fact of life but that shaping growth is possible.
* Would benefits of growth be cancelled out by rising population and why does a rising population lead to decreasing budget? No entirely satisfactory answers.
* Effects on air quality of increased population, traffic etc?
* Development along the Hogsmill because of flood risk and need for flood plains, which was accepted and, I was told, would be built into any planning guidance/decisions.
* How affordable “affordable homes” are in fact, and how much of a cross-section those who turn up at Kingston Conversations and Council meetings are.

**ENDNOTES**

1. **Riverside light pollution:** A concern about the Royal Canoe Club’s floodlights has just been received via the Reach coordination. Although these are in another borough on the other side of the river, they are very bright and probably affect our bats - so suggest our wildlife experts take a look at those too. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. **Go Cycle Exhibition roadshow coming up:**

   Joint exhibition for Kingston to New Malden and Kingston to Kingston Vale: Tiffin School (The Judge Lecture Theatre, Dempsey Centre), Saturday 12 November, 11.00am – 3.00pm [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. **KEF** **Website:** 23 unique visitors in Nov up to 9/11, 156 in October. **Facebook page** has 35 members. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. **Kingston Carnival post-mortem meeting:** Several groups that participated in the Green Zone were represented at a KREC review meeting and raised concerns about noise from bands, and access and visibility of the Zone. Was it worth it as publicity or outreach, info and advice-giving, or fund-raising, or recruitment of volunteers or members? We should discuss this with our organisations before committing to participation next year, if offered. NB, we have not (yet) been invoiced for the KEF groups stalls, and I don’t think TTK, which would manage the payment, has received many contributions of £20 towards the cost either. ***MM*** [↑](#endnote-ref-4)