

**Kingston Environment Forum meeting, on Fri 24th Nov, 10.00am - 11.30am**

**at John Lewis Place to Eat, quiet end**

**NOTES & ACTIONS**

**Present:** Hilary Gander (KCC, TTK…), Andree Frieze (MASC…), Marilyn Mason (TTK, KEF Co-chair…)
**Apologies** had been received from Marina Pacheco (KBN), Peter Watson (St Pauls, Fairtrade), John Legate (KCC, Kingston Beekeepers), Clive Messenger (SWLEN), Kim Bailey (KEC, TTK, Co-chair)

1. **Review of previous meeting minutes and actions:**

- **Green Zone at Kingston Carnival** hadn’t happened for various reasons, but KEF Co-chair Kim Bailey would be organising it next year (Sunday 2nd September) so please keep the date free and plan for participation **(All)**- **KSP conference and meeting** dates had been changed - see MM’s report of conference in Appendix 3.2.
- Have heard no more from **KB** about training to use **RBK’s Trello system**, adding KEF stuff, and disseminating to the rest of us.
- MM reminded **All**, especially recently joined members, to sign up for **KVA newsletters** (at <http://kva.org.uk/publications-2/copy-of-e-bulletins/>) as they include news of funding training opps, but to avoid duplication she was no longer forwarding them.

 **2. Updates and actions on KEF/Council issues:**

* **London Assembly/Mayor’s consultation on Environmental policies in the new London Plan** (now over) covered most of the issues below. MM had been to a couple of London Sustainability Exchange meetings on environmental issues in the Plan and the LA consultation, which generally looked promising and deserved KEF support, even if some targets were a bit weak/far distant. MM had responded for KEF and as an individual, and hoped other KEF members had too on behalf of their own groups. The Draft Plan would be launched on 1st December and should influence the Kingston Plan in a positive direction.
* **Air quality:** public meeting postponed till either KBN or PEP or the Council contacts MM and AF met earlier (Russell Styles et al) were ready. RBK had revised its plans and was longer going to launch a “strategy”, possibly launching something more definite - Draft Recommendations (?) in 2018 - **MM** would email Russell to get an update (see also *Appendices 1, 2.5*).
MM and AF had also met with a local parent at the Educare school, concerned about the air pollution caused by building work and idling lorries on the CNM development near the school - and it looked though it could get worse as CNM’s latest planning proposal involve either demolishing the school or building around it. HG was looking into it (as were other local councillors, residents, CARA and the North Kingston Forum, all concerned about various aspects of the development).
For the **next consultation - on Heathrow** - increased local road traffic and air pollution, as well as noise pollution were issues worth highlighting. **HG** would send some notes from a TfL presentation on access she had attended; MM had already sent round, on 11/11, Zac Goldsmith MP’s reminder with useful info and links - consultation link is <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/heathrow-expansion-revised-draft-airports-national-policy-statement> - please respond by 17th December **(All)**
* **Energy -** Clive of SWLEN was currently holding Sat morning workshops on energy efficiency at KEC.
* **Biodiversity, green spaces, trees** etc - a new Friends of Latchmere Rec had formed to look after it and lobby for improvements. See also *Appendix 3.2*. Fernhill School on Richmond Road had asked the Council for permission to plant a large hedge to mitigate air pollution from the road - further confirmation that AQ is now a mainstream concern.
* **Active travel and transport incl. cycling:** 2 new GoCycle routes (Kingston High Street and New Malden - Raynes Park) would be the next to be created. HG reported RBK had listened to consultation responses and made improvements to original plans.
AF, MM, John Legate and others from KCC + reps from N K Forum, ward councillors and relevant RBK officers, had participated in a survey of **Tudor Drive potential for a cycle path** - plenty of room on pavement/grass verge, though that would be controversial.
Also controversial, and widely flouted but worthwhile, are **20mph zones** and we should continue to support them on residential roads, as, like other controversial regs and laws, they do eventually change norms and behaviours.
**AF** would be attending a meeting hosted by Caroline Russell, LA member, Green Party, on cycling in the suburbs, and would report back.
* **Development in Kingston** - MM and a working group had produced suggestions for the Kingston Plan - see *Appendices 2.1 and 2.2* - and MM was lead on a North Kingston Forum task group working on environmental sustainability proposals for the North Kingston Plan - using public health as the overarching theme - see *Appendix 3.1.*
* **Waste and recycling** - MM had had an intermittent correspondence with RBK officer Deborah Flintoff about current lack of pedestrian and cycle access to Villiers Rd dump, and progress to zero waste. HG and other councillors were also on the case and hope that access will be reinstated when work on the site is finished. See Item 5 re next meeting.
* **Attendance at other meeting not reported elsewhere**
MM reported on the Th 16th Nov, **Topical Lunch talk at All Saints** on the work of KEF (MM, with help from Clive and Marina). We had a fairly receptive audience of about 30, mostly regulars at these talks, on the older side, and provoked mostly sensible comments and questions, e g on foxes, litter… - there was more time for Qs than for talks, so speakers weren’t in full control of the topics. Clive picked up a few clients for his upcoming energy workshops/home visits. The hardest thing was talking about what KEF has achieved over the years – nothing very tangible perhaps, though maybe just keeping environmental sustainability on the Council agenda is something, though MM also said that that member-groups were doing a lot of practical work on greening Kingston.

There had been no other new reports on meetings attended, though see **Jean V’s KEC updates** at *Appendix 4* and other Appendices for previous reports.
1. **Future planning, KEF roles, membership**

MM raised the issue of **poor attendance at KEF meetings** (3 at this one!), lack of email participation in discussions, and **difficulties in finding reps/deputies** to attend all the meetings we are invited to.

KEF strengths included:
- a seat and voice in Kingston Strategic Partnership, worth hanging on to
- good contacts and relations with some local councillors and Kingston Council officers
- Website and Facebook group via which members of public occasionally contact us (could we do more with this?)
- a good spread of local member-groups, on our email list at least (we now have a rep from local Greenpeace group & Elliot from Environment Trust and KBN, though still no one from Kingston University despite several invitations)
- in theory, at least, a good reach as members all represent groups with many individual members - so please do read these Notes and other KEF comms and pass on events and actions relevant to your members **(All)**- enough members with several different affiliations to enable us, in theory again, to field several people representing different groups but capable of supporting green issues in different discussion groups at big events such as KSP conferences.
However:
- KEF is not very democratic or representative, if active participation is an accurate indicator, and so does seem to be punching above its weight (not sure that this is a virtue);
- we have to turn down as many invitations as we accept for lack of volunteers to attend - and turning up and speaking up for environmental sustainability is important, spreads the word, and can sometimes make allies, create goodwill etc;
- if KEF members do attend other interesting meetings, whether as KEF reps or on behalf of their own green group, they do not always consult or share useful info or feed back to the group;
- it doesn’t look good for the local environmental movement if it’s always the same one or two people who turn up and speak and/or respond to consultations - we begin to look like a v small pool of interested people (maybe we are, but do we want to look it?).

Those present, predictably, were generalists, interested in the full range of local environmental issues, and this, as well as a good understanding of the issues and KEF’s remit, and a willingness to represent the broad KEF network, not just their own organisation, and to report back and share info, were thought to be requisites for KEF co-chairs and deputy reps at some meetings, e g KSP (**All** to consider occasional deputising). It was agreed that this would not suit all members, but that others might be willing to go to events of particular interest to their organisation to represent both their group and KEF, and could report back selectively on anything relevant to the rest of KEF; or would initiate or step up for specialist tasks, as had happened in the past for KEF working groups on AQ, sustainable development, flood risk etc, or (**All** to consider).

**MM** would continue in 2018 as KEF Secretary, responsible for scheduling meetings and sending out Agendas and Notes, once **KB** took over fully as Chair with responsibility for attending KSP, Council and voluntary sector meetings or finding deputies - a new Co-chair would be useful (Volunteers? **All**).

**AF** suggested inviting some members of the local Green Party (keeping in mind the need for KEF to remain apolitical) and/or interested Kingston residents, who might be able to contribute usefully even if not affiliated to a particular group.

**4. Upcoming KSP meeting, Mon 4th Dec**, **pm,** and will be considering some of the output from the conference on 23/11. MM had also asked that updates on the London Plan and its impacts on the Kingston Plan be added to the KSP agenda (the LA strategies and consultation docs looks to be more ambitious and greener that anything RBK is likely to come up with left to itself).

**5. Date(s) and topic/guest for next KEF meeting**The KSP meeting after the December one is scheduled for March 5th, (MM can’t attend, but hoped that **KB** could, or if not a deputy) so **next KEF meeting** should aim for late February to prepare in advance. Those present + JL would be interested to hear more about Kingston’s waste and recycling initiatives and progress towards “zero waste”, so MM would invite RBK officer Deborah Flintoff, and set up a Doodle poll for Feb.

**APPENDICES** (including reports previously circulated, some with updates)

1. **Update, September 2017 (circulated 20/9/17), MM**
* **Planning:** I have attended one KSP and 3 N Kingston Forum meetings, all concerned with local planning issues and the environment (reported earlier).
* **Waste & recycling:** I have continued email exchanges with RBK waste department about access to Villiers Rd recycling centre, and progress towards zero waste. Deborah Flintoff of RBK waste department is willing to come to one of our meetings to discuss with us - can invite her if you like.
* **Air quality:** I have attended MASC and LSx/FoE meetings on AQ. Jenine of MASC and I are now part of a LSx/FoE AQ network - first take-away ask is for as many as possible to respond to London Assembly consultations (see below) and they will be circulating a lot more advice and requests which I will forward as and when.
I have also continued an email conversation with RBK officers re a public event on AQ, postponed till they launch their AQ Strategy, though KBN may take up the idea, and signage/banners around Kingston, especially schools (forwarding examples of 2 MASC members’ actions - banners designed by schools for their fences, and an approach to JCDecaux about using their roadside advertising space for AQ messages).
* **Transport**: I did a quick response on behalf of KEF to the few answerable questions on London’s consultation on Future Transport, and also on the bigger one on London’s Transport Strategy at <https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/policy/mayors-transport-strategy/?cid=mayors-transport-strategy>. Deadline Oct 2nd - worth putting in a response even if you can’t face all the associated reading, as we can be sure that those less concerned about the environment and pollution (eg, <https://www.fairfueluk.com/>) will have their say. And with Andree and others (incl Cllrs Hugh Scantlebury and Maria Netley, local residents, KCC, and Council officer Leigh Gravenor), did a cycle ride/survey of Tudor Drive with a view to improving cycling provision in the area.
* There’s also a **Draft London Environment Strategy consultation** at <https://www.london.gov.uk/talk-london/environment-consultation>, deadline 17 November, covering: Air quality; Green infrastructure; Climate change mitigation and energy; Waste; Adapting to climate change; Ambient noise. You can respond to some or all of it, but please do respond. The LSx network will be advising.
* **General:** KEF is still due to give a brief talk and answer Qs at an All Saints Topical Lunch on Th 6th Nov - will try to give a brief overview of our concerns and work, along with Marina and Clive on biodiversity and energy issues.
* **Kingston Strategic Partnership** meeting has been postponed to the afternoon of 4th December and the KSP conference is on 23rd November, so suggest **KEF meeting** sometime early in November. Will Doodle nearer the time.
1. **Report circulated 9/9/17, MM**

Have had a busy week or so, mainly discussing **planning issues and environmental sustainability**, as convenor or lead on 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3. My contributions to the work of both groups are closely based on previous KEF work on AQ, flood risk, sustainable development etc, which is proving very useful.

**2.1**   **A Kingston Strategic Partnership (KSP) subgroup** on Housing, Growth and Sustainability, which despite the disparate nature of the group (volunteers who expressed an interest in these issues at earlier conferences, I think, including me and Vicky from SWLEN), the vast remit implied by the group’s title, and a lack of direction from the Council, did agree about the main issues and produced a brief report (2.2, below) for the KSP. This was discussed fairly positively at the KSP meeting on 7/9, though there are many remaining questions from the sub-group, about how our aspirations for Kingston fit in with everyone else’s, what happens next, how aspirations turn into actions and results...

**2.2 KSP Working Group on Housing, Growth and Sustainability, Initial report, August 2017**

**Introduction**
As a follow-up to the Kingston Plan conference and debate last year, a working group on Housing, Growth and Sustainability consisting of: Marilyn Mason (Kingston Environment Forum), Peter Mayhew-Smith (Kingston College), Matt Hatton (Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness) and Vicky Phillips (S W London Environment Network), met on 30/8/17, with Council Officer Denise Parry in attendance, and apologies for absence from Pippa Mackie (Citizens’ Advice).

Using the draft Kingston Plan document circulated earlier as its basis, the group made connections between some of the agreed desirable outcomes, and selected from and rationalised the many heterogeneous priorities expressed at the earlier conference and debate. Despite the range of organisations represented in this working group, their disparate remits and objectives, and the challenges of reconciling the need for more housing and jobs in Kingston with the need to protect the environment and local services, there was considerable overlap in our concerns and consensus about what would make Kingston a healthy, sustainable, attractive place in which to work, live and play, and we agreed on the following suggestions and questions.

**Our Suggestions**These start from the premise that health and wellbeing are closely linked to and dependent on environmental sustainability and decent housing for all. Good growth would preserve the things that residents value, and protect and increase opportunities to work locally and reduce traffic.

**Sustainable Health and Wellbeing**Good health is not just about providing health care, though a bigger and aging population will bring a need for more GP surgeries, premises for therapists of various kinds, warden-assisted or sheltered accommodation etc. But much sustainable and preventative public health work can be achieved by creating infrastructure that encourages walking, cycling, and outdoor leisure, reduces the need for stressful travel, promotes community, and helps to improve air quality.

Biodiversity and opportunities to experience nature are important for wellbeing, and for these reasons, new developments should not encroach on existing parks, allotments, green spaces or trees, but wherever feasible should provide additional green public spaces, trees etc.

Residential developments should include public space, communal areas and facilities such as shops, cafes and other meeting places, clinics and workplaces at ground level, facilities which could reduce the need to travel and increase a sense of community and safety.

Developments should be close to improved public transport links and hubs such as stations (including new/improved Crossrail 2 stations, for example at Chessington), and connect to the local network of cycle and pedestrian routes. Planners should take account of unintended negative consequences such as increased traffic (bringing more stress and pollution) and demands for parking (for example if Crossrail 2 stations attracted commuters from beyond the borough).

**Sustainable Housing and Development**There is a clear need for more genuinely affordable housing (80% of market price is not affordable!), to buy or rent, for key workers, single and young people. Ideally, the housing mix would include some social housing. More local provision for key workers could reduce the need for long-distance commuting.

Despite this pressing need, planners should insist on the highest possible environmental standards being adhered to when new buildings are put up (at least equivalent to those that were in place under the Code For Sustainable Homes in 2010-2015).  As well as incorporating best possible levels of energy efficiency e.g. by using high levels of insulation (which can reduce the need for heating and thus air pollution from boilers), local developments should, where practicable, include on site clean energy generation e.g solar PV. Outdoor lighting should be efficient and sensitive to wildlife as well as to local security needs - these can be compatible - and wasteful lighting and light pollution should be reduced.

Development should not be permitted in areas that are subject to flooding, or may be in the future, and it must not be designed in a way that increases local flood risk (for example by increasing the extent of hard surfaces or increasing the pressure on local drains).  Advice on flood risk from the Environment Agency should be adhered to. Green roofs, rain gardens and other SUDS should be standard requirements of all new residential, commercial and public sector development.

**Sustainable Growth and the Local Economy**Good growth can support both economic sustainability and environmental sustainability, and growth in local businesses and jobs should be accompanied by the provision of more and affordable homes, which could help to reduce the need for commuting with its knock-on effects on traffic congestion, air pollution and pressure on parking space.

Good growth would promote a more diverse economy than the current one and help to keep young and skilled people in the borough. Development itself should create more local jobs and apprenticeships, and more spaces with opportunities for apprenticeships and entry-level jobs should be provided as routes into employment. This could be achieved via firmer targets on apprenticeships and a scheme to promote apprenticeships and work experience for employers to sign up to. New developments should also provide much needed quality office space as well as low-rent spaces to incubate new businesses, including ones in the creative arts. The creative industries, as well as providing local leisure opportunities and improving quality of life, are big employers, and growth in this sector would help to diversify the local economy.

Development should also protect local heritage such as ancient street plans, distinguished older buildings that give the borough some of its character, pubs and other meeting spaces, and should increase and enhance spaces for culture and the arts.

More retail space is probably not an economically sustainable way forward, given the growth of on-line shopping and the shift away from buying stuff to buying experiences.

**Our Questions**

* How do the priorities of this working group sit alongside the priorities of other KSP working groups, the Council, the Kingston Futures group and other interested parties, and fit into the Local Plan? How are these going to be aligned? Some clarification needed on the relationships between the Kingston Plan, the Local Plan and the London Plan…
* How are the various suggestions from this and other working groups to be turned into actions?
* How much flexibility and control does the Council have in implementing its Plan(s)?
* How can the Kingston Plan be future-proofed? How might Brexit, increasing automation, climate change, self-driving/electric cars, the departure of young people to more affordable locations, an aging population… impact on demand and the Plan? Could this be a theme for a KSP conference?

**2.3** **A North Kingston Forum (NKF) task group** on local environmental issues. The NKF was recently officially designated as a neighbourhood forum (the first in the borough) by RBK and is now moving forward with the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan, in which the environment will feature, though it will have to fit in with the priorities of other task groups, the Kingston Plan etc.

1. **KSP meeting**, Th 7/9

Both Kim and I were there at a slightly better attended and more informative meeting than some have been recently. The report from the subgroup on Housing, Growth and Sustainability was discussed, as well as the restructuring (yet again?) of Council directorates and responsibilities into: Adults; Communities (incl health and wellbeing, KSP etc); Growth, Investment and Planning etc; Corporate and Commercial, incl governance, finance etc. Not always clear where the things we are most interested in will fit, but we were reassured that the directorates would be working together. We shall see… and whether any environmental concerns slip between the cracks. We were also given a presentation and sent very lengthy documents about Kingston’s Economic Growth and Development Strategy - if anyone wants these, please let me know and I will forward them.

**2.5 Public event in Kingston on air pollution**, as requested by our friends in MASC - I have the offer of a lecture room at the Uni, thanks to Jean of KEC who put me in touch with Sivi at KU, and I initially suggested an early evening in November. However our contacts at the Council think this is too soon as they are busy turning the RBK AQAP into a strategy and would prefer to hold an event when that is ready, maybe in the run-up to next year’s Clean Air Day (June?). In some ways that sounds reasonable, and I don’t want to proceed without input and updates from the Council (I was envisaging a 3-way dialogue between the Council, local environmentalists and the wider public, from which we could all learn something), but I do think local elections could get in the way and perhaps make the issue more political than it should be. It’s a pity that the GreenZone at Carnival didn’t happen, as that would have been an opportunity to engage with the public on the issue in a less formal way. I don’t really want to get bounced into an event just because our neighbours in Kew/Richmond and Hounslow have been very active, and pollution is unlikely to go away before 2018, but on the other hand don’t want to lose momentum or to look as though we’ve lost interest… our thoughts and practical help welcome - there’s a MASC meeting early next week and if someone else wants to organise a different kind of AQ event do please let me know so that I can report some progress to MASC.

1. **Updates circulated by MM, 23/11**

**3.1 North Kingston Neighbourhood Plan**I’ve been convening the environment task group of the newly designated North Kingston Forum, which has been busy compiling and consolidating a series of policy proposals to feed into its Neighbourhood Plan, under the title “A healthy environment” as we believe the links between environmental sustainability and health and wellbeing are strong, and convincing for a general audience. The interrelated areas we have formulated proposals on are: air quality; energy efficiency and energy generation; light pollution; sustainable and active transport; flood risk; and green infrastructure and biodiversity. We have accumulated a lot of supporting data and academic evidence, some of which is specific to North Kingston, and have found some of the work done by KEF earlier (on flood risk, light pollution, sustainable development…) and the contacts and meetings that have come my way via KEF very useful. The draft still has to go through various processes and approvals: the leads of the other NKF task groups (on design and heritage, community facilities and local businesses); the planning consultant employed by the NKF; and eventually a local referendum - so how much of our wish list will survive is anyone’s guess, though we think it is well argued and in line with the best of the current local and regional environmental strategies.

**3.2 Kingston Strategic Partnership conference, Thurs 23 Nov, am**I sent round the agenda a few days ago with the comment that there didn’t seem to be much there of relevance to KEF. I provided a brief paragraph about the work Vicky and I were involved in earlier this year on Housing, Growth and Sustainability for the opening remarks by RBK’s Chief Executive, though they didn’t on the day appear in her talk - but neither did other contributions from KSP working groups according to Denise Parry, officer i/c of the KSP, so it was not a specific snub. Robin Hutchinson, one of the keynote speakers, was promoting creativity as a Kingston USP and has also been lobbying for Kingston as centre of culture, though IMO Kingston is more green than it is cultured and could do better promoting itself as a green borough (they’re not mutually exclusive of course, though if energies and funds are limited, I know which I’d go for!)
 As usual it was probably the informal networking elements of the morning that were the most useful, including reassurances from Marie Claire Edwards that the Council never chops down mature trees unless strictly necessary and that Kingston Hospital does in fact recover heat/energy from its incinerator. There was also someone from Groundwork on my table reminding us that there is funding, e g from Tesco, for community projects. She was also v interested in the flier I produced about community gardening for good health, which could now do with updating and recirculating. I was in 2 workshops, one that focused on overcoming the silo problem and communications in all directions, and a second that focused on community spaces, where there were opportunities to promote affordability, accessibility and mixed use to make them more appealing, as well as 100s of other points on both tables which will eventually emerge from the conference post-it notes and spidergrams. Vicky and Kim were on different tables and may want to add their perspectives to this summary.

**4. Updates from Jean at KEC, 23/11/17**

1. I am nearing the end of the Community Engagement for Health Course which has been wonderful for extra insight as RBK responsibility for Public Health. Would heartily recommend.

2. KEC has been given a small Healthwatch grant towards event "New Year New You" 13th Jan

3. SWLEN are offering free energy advice at KEC Sat 25th Nov and Sat 2 December.

4. KEC are organising a Eco Craft Fair "Fair Fayre" on Friday 1st Dec. WE have room for anyone wanting to take a table if they want to get in touch.

5. We have been partnering with Kingston University School of Sustainable design. One new project has been about stimulating volunteering. Another is roviding a community map of New Malden including significant trees.

6. We have secured funding for the period 1 Dec to 31 March to enable us to become commissioning-ready. We will be refreshing our business plan.

7. As a result of our (failed) attempt at crowdfunding we have started discussing a Sensory Garden with Fionnuala Ryan RBK Learning Disability Resource Co-ordinator, but based at the Hogsmill.

8. We are also getting involved as stakeholders for the Cambridge Rd regeneration. Possibly only observing and commenting. Would be interested to know if anybody else on KEF is involved with this.