

Crofton Residents' Association 78th Annual General Meeting.
19.30 Tuesday 8th April 2025 – St Paul's Church Hall, Crofton Road.

Attendance:

Chris Ford (Chair & Secretary)

Don Benjamin (Treasurer)

Other Committee Members:

Ted Fenwick, John Greeves, John Perkins, Steve Skinner, Mike Lawson, Peter Bridges.

Guests:

Cllr Bob Evans, Cllr Christopher Marlow.

PC Julia Smith & PC Ben Cross

Steve Sangster (Knoll Residents' Association),

Michael & Hilary Titheridge

And other Association members as listed on the attendance sheets.

Introduction

Chris Ford welcomed all present and outlined the emergency evacuation procedure to be observed in case of emergency.

Chair's Report

Chris Ford outlined the challenges that have faced our Association in the past year and the work that has been done:

- Issues concerning the cycle-path and a new access ramp that has recently been installed.
- Issues related to film crews operating in our neighbourhood
- Road conditions in general and potholes in particular
- Nature Friendly areas being introduced on an experimental basis
- Aircraft noise and other issues arising from Biggin Hill airport
- The plans being put forward for consultation concerning the re-development of the Walnuts shopping centre area
- Our litter-picking team's work
- The Photography competition
- The Knole Residents Association 'Big Lunch'
- Our contribution to local charities
- The location of a defibrillator
- Our Facebook page – so far 298 people have joined it out of 2,200 potential members
- The possibility of a Crofton Residents' Association website to share information more widely
- Our new Committee

Treasurer's Report

Don Benjamin reported that Residents' subscriptions for 2024 year showed an increase over 2023 and looked forward to a greater willingness to support CRA through subscriptions in the years ahead. Together with increased subscriptions, the amount of donations also increased and for that we are most appreciative. There has been a noticeable increase in the proportion of donations and subscriptions made through on-line methods. Given the closure of Barclays in Orpington High Street that has eased some of the practicalities of life for the Treasurer. The increased amount of interest from our deposit account in 2024 was most welcome but with current trends it seems likely to be a temporary blip.

In contrast, the amount of filming donations has decreased and that seems a trend likely to continue. We have always warned that so far as CRA is concerned income from filming has been a fickle source, but I am sure that other speakers will explore that in more detail later. The overall result is that total receipts for 2024 were significantly less than 2023 but this is not a cause for concern as amounts on the payments side has been contained. The most significant area of containment has been in the cost of newsletters, now we have changed printers. Also, while some donations were made in 2024 some project payments were deferred until 2025, most notably the defibrillator.

The overall effect of these receipts and payments has been a slight increase in the value of the association's total assets. I am aware that some residents wonder why we hold such an amount in assets but with our determination to undertake projects and the likelihood that filming income will decrease our balances seem likely come down, particularly as we are currently keeping the subscription at £1 per household.

In summary, then, we are afloat in choppy seas and seem likely to be able to continue to be afloat for the foreseeable future.

Don then asked if there any questions about the accounts or my report?

In the absence of any questions, he therefore commended adoption of the accounts for 2024.

Proposed by Valerie Dalsien

Seconded by Ron Bell

Approved unanimously.

Independent Financial Examiner

It was agreed unanimously that Martin Moss should be invited to fulfil this role for the 2025 accounts.

Committee Members for 2025 – 26

A list of the new Committee Members was read out and their office was

Proposed by Martin Braithwaite
Seconded by Jaqui Palm and
approved unanimously.
Speakers

John Perkins addressed several issues including:

Roads and traffic management.

He drew attention to the years of under-investment in our road that has led to the proliferation of potholes. He had made numerous representations to our Bromley Council Officers, not always getting a response, and noted that Bromley Council was not very good at sharing information. Although this winter has not been as bad as last there is still a substantial backlog of road repairs to be attended to

Overall, the position is better than last year with major road re-surfacing in Lovibonds Avenue, Starts Hill Road and Crofton Lane, with re-surfacing of Station Road scheduled to begin shortly. Unfortunately, there are no plans to re-surface the stretch of Crofton Road between Ormonde Avenue and Locksbottom, despite significant numbers of patched potholes and an uneven surface. The only work to go ahead is to be the short stretch between Pallant Way and Farnborough Common. Council Officers have been requested to prioritise the complete resurfacing of the entire road between Ormonde Avenue and Locksbottom, and representation has been made to our Ward Councillors, but no action has been promised.

It was noted that during the resurfacing of Lovibonds Avenue the speed humps had been removed. It was also noted that Riney had added a new access ramp to the cycle track from Crofton Road adjacent to the junction with Crofton Lane, and a new cycle crossing on Crofton Lane without prior consultation, and, despite requests for information, we have had no explanation as to why these works were necessary. Council Officers have failed to respond to our requests and a freedom of information request has been duly filed.

A proposal has been put forward for an additional Pedestrian Crossing near the junction of Park Avenue (The entrance to the Farnborough Park Estate) and Crofton Road), adjacent to the footpath from Starts Hill Road, to cater for people crossing the road from the Summercroft Surgery to bus stop HN on the north side of Crofton Road. A road safety audit is in progress, and this should be installed later this year.

Nature-friendly verges

This scheme is being extended to cover grassed areas along Crofton Road between Newstead Avenue and Crofton Avenue in a bid to increase biodiversity and the proliferation of pollinating insects. Alas there was no consultation with local residents and the Residents' Association Committee did not believe it was an appropriate development. It was their view

that it would give an impression of untidiness, making the dumping of litter more likely, could impede lines of sight in the vicinity of the roundabout at the junction of Crofton Road and Crofton Lane. The Committee had invited opinions from Members and most of the opinions expressed were negative. Our Ward Councillors declined to support our opposition to the scheme, as it was only a trial scheme, that could be terminated if serious problems emerge or if there is significant opposition, and there will be limited maintenance work done if necessary.

Members present were invited to vote by show of hands. Two members supported the scheme, with over 90% of those present voting against. Our Councillors were invited to take note of this display of opposition and reminded that there is already a nature-friendly meadow area at the Oregon Square Open Space, bounded by Andover Road, Allington Road and Carlton Parade.

Other issues

It was reported that Riney operatives were regularly starting work on major roads, such as Crofton Road, well before 09.00 – in one case at 08.30 – with extensive use of temporary traffic lights, causing traffic chaos. It was not clear if Riney would be penalised for this breach of the ‘no work in rush hour’ rule or if the matter would be ignored.

Chris Ford reported on issues arising from the biggin Hill Airport.

He reminded members that he serves on the Biggin Hill Consultative Committee and is part of the noise action programme, which monitors aircraft movements, and shows a substantial recent increase.

2015 – 50,000

2016 – 52,970

2020 – 30,000

2022 – 46,633

By 2024 a substantial proportion of flights were by large executive jets.

The CRA Committee are liaising with the Keston Village Residents’ Association to monitor incursions into designated noise-sensitive areas. In the past year 413 violations had been noted, some of which had been recorded by the Airport’s instruments. Some of the violations had been by pilots acting on instructions from the Air Traffic Controllers.

In 2020 Bombardier set up a major repair and maintenance facility at the airport with an initial growth potential taking the workforce from 1,900 to 2,700 and an increased budget from £142 million to £199 million. Since then these figures have increased to a projected workforce of 3,240 and a budget of £420 million.

It was noted that the large executive jets cost an average of £74 million and are chartered at £5,000 per flight hour. This is, therefore, a lucrative business. In addition, helicopter business is being attracted.

Proposals have been put forward for a revised flight path approaching the airport from the South (RD3) that should cut flights over our area by 35%. This proposal had previously been rejected by the Civil Aviation Authority but there are hopes that it might be approved this year. On the other hand, if there is going to be an extra runway at Heathrow and a second runway brought into regular use at Gatwick, then the whole Civil Aviation landscape could be changed.

It was noted that Civil Aviation is a very complex issue and that Bromley Council relies on external expert opinion in forming its policies.

Chris also addressed the issues of film crews operating in our neighbourhood.

A dispute had arisen over two people in Poplar Avenue allowing film makers access to their property for fees paid to the householders.

The Crofton Residents' Association Committee has asked film making companies to communicate with us and with local residents concerning their plans and to file their plans with Film Fixing. Alas this request has not always been complied with, and it was emphasised that Crofton Residents' Association does not endorse all of the filming that takes place. We have not authorized any filming since November 2024. Even where intrusive filming takes place the Council has limited powers to act as it is a private matter affecting those concerned. The Crofton Residents' Association Committee will see what they can do, going forward, and requested residents to contact them by 'e-mail' of any issues of concern, using the 'e-mail' address on the newsletter.

Trevor Barham reported that, on 7/4/25 he had encountered representative of Baby Cow Productions canvassing properties to film for the Alan Carr series 'Changing Ends'. They had already filmed five sessions, using the St Paul's Church Car Park for their vehicles. They had promised to liaise with the Crofton Residents' Association and Bromley Council over further filming.

Our Councillors then addressed the meeting.

Cllr Bob Evans said that the activities of film crews had been causing concern for over 20 years. The Council can try to persuade them to be considerate towards local residents, but it can't force them to. Force can only be used if there is an obstruction to a right of way.

He reminded us that Crofton Road, the A232, is the responsibility of Transport for London and that Bromley Council can only undertake the work that they are prepared to fund. Basically, TfL are not paying for the work that needs to be done.

He informed us that the Portfolio Holder concerned had consulted residents in Lovibonds Avenue about the possible replacement of speed humps during the resurfacing work. Of the 190 replies received the majority did not want them, but there are 20mph signs in situ with warning lights for over-speeding vehicles.

He reminded us that Riney's contract is up for renewal shortly and he assured us that they are being penalised for sub-standard work.

Turning to planning issues, Cllr Evans informed us that the Olde Store on Farnborough Common (A21) is likely to be open before Christmas. He explained that the Company responsible for the construction of Social Housing unites on York Rise had gone out of business and a new contractor had been charged with the completion of the work, with a target completion date in June this year. He accepted that the decision to provide only two parking spaces for 35 families could present problems. There appeared to be an assumption that folk living close to public transport facilities would never own cars.

Cllr Evans informed us that the Roma Villa on Crofton Road was in need of major refurbishment work, and reminded us that although the original design for the Walnuts Centre re-development had been rejected, new, scaled down, proposals were being put forward and would be subject to a new Town Planning Application

Turning to issues of health care, he informed us that the new endoscopy unit at the Princess Royal University Hospital, managed by King's Healthcare, would come online in September this year. He reported that excessive waiting times in A&E at the hospital were being reduced. Compliance with the 4-hour-rule had increased from 55% to 74%, and waiting lists for routine treatment were coming down too, although 'corridor treatment' of patients remains an issue.

He reported that Darrick Woods School is now part of the Impact Trust

Cllr Evans concluded his report by explaining that the reason for delays in signing off the Council's audited accounts was not due to financial irregularities but was due to multiple vexatious complaints by one person.

Cllr Christopher Marlow reported on the financial difficulties facing Bromley Council. There is a budget of approximately £300 million, but there is a shortfall between revenue raised and actual expenditure of approximately £55 million, largely due to increasing demand for statutory services, such as care of vulnerable adults and special needs children (where Bromley faces the 2nd highest level of demand in London), and Housing, where costs have gone up by 40% since last year, due to an increase in homelessness and a shortage of

available properties to accommodate them. At present Bromley Council are acquiring more existing properties and are having more new homes built, so that the use of hotels for temporary accommodation is being reduced.

For the coming year, Cllr Marlowe informed us, Bromley Council anticipates a budget deficit of £25 million. Alas the Borough receives the 2nd lowest Government funding in London and the new formula for the allocation of funds leaves Bromley worse off than the formula that it replaced.

He assured residents that where Biggin Hill is concerned the Council will always defend their rights. The Airport is operating under a 125 year lease from Bromley Council that was agreed in 1994 ie until 2119. Alas Biggin Hill Airport only pays less than £1 million a year to Bromley Council.

Cllr Marlowe reported on plans for a pedestrian crossing on Lovibonds Avenue, and reminded the meeting that the Nature Friendly verges scheme was only a trial and that in other areas 2/3 of residents had been in favour of similar schemes. In response to a question he reminded us that the cycle lane on Crofton Road was funded by Transport for London.

Policing Matters

Our Police Officers, PC Ben Cross and PC Julia Smith reported that the main issues they faced were:

Shoplifting – 13 prolific offenders were responsible for 80% of thefts, netting approximately £7,500 per week. Last year 120 people had been charged in connection with shoplifting

Auto-crime – was being tackled by plain-clothes patrols as well as uniformed officers and Members were urged to report any criminal or suspicious behaviour

They reported that Green Park House and the Princess Royal University Hospital accounted for the largest numbers of reported crimes

The representative from the Crofton and Sparrow Woods drew attention to the nuisance caused by motor-cycle riders, and Members were urged to video offenders and send their footage to the Police. Offenders are being traced and issued with warnings. If they persist the Police have powers to seize their machines.

Attention was drawn by Members to the problems of stolen cars where police give chase and of builders' vehicles blocking pavements and forcing folk to walk in the roadway. Another issue was burglary – there are an average of six reports per month in our area, a slight increase since the end of the Covid-19 pandemic, but not as high as pre-pandemic levels.

Concluding Remarks & Social Gathering

Chris Ford (Chair) concluded the formal business by expressing thanks to our Road Stewards, referring Members to the CRA 'e-mail' address, and making a presentation to Michael and Hilary Titheridge in recognition of 20 years' service to the Association.

At 19.15, following the end of formal proceedings, Members were invited to take part in an informal social gathering with a chance to chat with the Members of the Committee and other participants in the meeting.

Michael Lawson
CRA Secretary