

LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY  
AND  
KESTON VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION  
MINUTES

Special Meeting held at 4 Heritage Hill Keston Kent BR2 6AU  
7.30pm on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2013

1. Introductions

KVRA

David Clapham  
Kimball Ormond  
Vivien Haskey

Co-opted

Mike Ormond  
Toby Blythe  
John Algar  
Mike Sinfield

Councillors

Ruth Bennett  
Hilary Ryder  
Alexa Michael  
Stephen Wells – (Portfolio  
Holder for Education)  
Nicholas Bennett – (Chmn  
of Education Policy & Scrutiny Cmtte)

David Clapham welcomed everybody and thanked the Councillors for their time and noted that Cllr Nicholas Bennett attended as an observer in his capacity as Chmn of Education Policy & Scrutiny Cmtte.

Cllr Ruth Bennett declared her interest as a Governor of Princes Plain Primary school which is in the same Educational Area 5 as Keston CofE School. Hilary Ryder is Chair of Governors of Mottingham Primary School.

2. Apologies for absence – Mulinders, Oosthuizen, Terry Boley, Leela Florey, Jim Woolcott and Stephen Carr
3. Background – David stated that the reason for this meeting, suggested by Ctt Stephen Carr and Cllr Ruth Bennett, was to establish the position of KVRA and LBB regarding the existing and proposed expansion of Keston School. He made the point that KVRA were not against the expansion on educational grounds but because of the local traffic problems and disruption of Keston Village.  
Cllr Stephen Wells said that LBB was suffering an increase in childbirth and was looking for an additional 14-15 forms of entry into Primary schools in the next two years. This was caused by an increase in childbirth and the lack of movement out of the Borough. He said the options facing LBB were a) expand local schools, b) ask for more Academies, currently 13 but increasing to a possible 36.

#### 4. Keston CE School - Discussion

Cllr Stephen Wells said that Keston School had requested the current expansion, that the diocese wanted to become an umbrella trust and therefore it was likely that Keston would become an Academy in the near future. In the last intake of 30 children, 26 were siblings and had it not been a bulge year only 4 village children would have been able to be accepted.

Toby Blythe said that this had been an exceptional year and there hadn't been a problem with the number of siblings in the past, if the Council hadn't expanded the catchment area in the past, we wouldn't be facing the sibling problem now.

David said he had repeatedly asked for a scatter diagram of the catchment area for Keston School but hadn't received one. Cllr Wells said he would see if he could obtain one.

Toby Blythe said he couldn't understand why the expansion had to take place within Area 5 when other, nearby schools, in another area could take extra children. He also went on to say that all the parents he spoke to about their reason for choosing Keston School said it was the small, intimate, village atmosphere that was the main reason. None wanted the expansion. No one mentioned that it was because it was a Faith school. He said that some parents aren't speak out against the Headteacher even though they were against the expansion.

Alexa said that if the school expanded it might become less popular. David said the Council should expand where it was more appropriate. There was discussion about expanding Farnborough Primary which has a very similar profile to Keston and had recently finished building a new classroom block however it became clear that the Head and Governors did not want to expand and Cllr Wells said that it was difficult to expand a school without that support. David also asked if cost was driving the increased intake, the Department for Education's own statistics demonstrated that Keston School operated at a £ per pupil higher than the majority of Bromley schools but a level lower than the UK Median.

Cllr Stephen Wells replied that more pupils = more income. A single-form intake school is closer to being non-viable and more susceptible to change.

Alexa said that Keston wasn't unique, there would always be small and large schools.

Cllr Stephen Wells said there were currently 3 applications for Free Schools and one secondary school wants to add a primary school as well. He was looking at a number of options.

Cllr Nicholas Bennett said that all schools would eventually become Academies.

Toby Blythe said that there was no argument that Keston school had space to expand but the issue was the total infrastructure. Not looking at the expansion in total gave a blinkered view.

David said he had attended a number of Planning committee meetings and said that Cllr Simon Fawthrop stated that all planning applications should take account of local knowledge and car parking.

Cllr Stephen Wells said that the Diocese of Rochester was looking to put all the C of E schools into a Trust to become Academies. Any expansion then would be referred to the Secretary of State.

Cllr Ruth Bennett pointed out that it was not uncommon for the Education Committee to recommend an expansion or alteration and the Planning Dept. to refuse it.

Cllr Stephen Wells said that there had been a number of large developments recently. There were currently 300 new homes in the Trinity development and another 380 were in plan. He was looking at increasing Princes Plain and Southborough Primary schools. Some solutions could be quick but others slower.

John Algar suggested that provision of schooling for children from large new developments should have been considered and plans made when the development was initially approved.

Toby Blythe asked what alternatives were there, it was important we were consulted.

Cllr Stephen Wells said they had considered buying a house at the bottom of Greys Park Cl. and pushing a road through to the school. They considered putting in a road across the common from Fishponds Rd. They also considered collecting the children in a breakfast club (or similar) at Ravenswood school and bussing them to Keston.

Mike Sinfield showed a video of the traffic problems around Keston village at school times. It showed how difficult it was for traffic maneuvering along Heathfield Rd, Commonside, Lakes Rd and Keston Ave, children running across the road and no one at any of the bus stops. Cllr Stephen Wells requested a copy.

Cllr Ruth Bennett said there were always traffic problems around schools but Keston seemed worse.

Cllr Nicholas Bennett said that Cllr Stephen Wells would bring a Proposal to the Scrutiny Cmtte which would include alternatives. The meeting would take place on the 19<sup>th</sup> March and an Agenda would be published on the LBB website. If there are no educational reasons to refuse then the Cmtte makes a proposal to the Planning Cmtte.

Alexa said that Biggin Hill Primary are against the Keston expansion as it will take children out of their area.

Viv Haskey said that no one she spoke to believed the LBB Traffic survey and workmen at her and neighbours' houses were constantly getting caught in the school traffic.

David said he was still waiting for details of the costs and scope of the LBB Traffic Survey.

5. Conclusions and actions – Cllr Stephen Wells said he had learned a lot and would take onboard all he had heard. He hoped there could be a compromise.

David thanked him and all the Councillors for their time.