

KSARA AGM Tuesday 10th December 2023

Apologies for absence

Katrina Kerr, Councillor, was invited but could not attend. Numerous apologies for absence were received either in writing or via friends who attended. 22 residents attended.

Minutes from last AGM - The minutes from 2023 AGM were approved.

Matters arising

Action 2023.1: Parking - Issues with residents getting access to permit parking. Action is on-going to improve access to parking for eligible residents. In 2024, KSARA got the council to deny Centurion house residents access to parking permits (thus reducing pressure on existing spaces)

Action 2023.2: AirBNB - not being registered and causing late night noise and possible use of residents parking permits. In 2024 the KSARA committee clarified that known AirBNB properties were not using residents parking permits and repeated previous lobbying of our MP Sam Dixon and the Council CEO to mandate registration of AirBNB properties.

Action 2023.3: Local Council involvement - Getting a speaker from the council at the next AGM. We once again invited Katrina Kerr but she was not able to attend. The committee has on-going productive dialogue with Katrina Kerr to highlight resident issues.

Action 2023.4: ASB/Drug taking - Concerns about drug taking and associated anti-social behaviour in the pocket park and alley way between King Street and King Charles Court. Significant progress made with ASB through a combination of higher frequency of reporting by committee members and residents (increases police attention) and the encouragement of police dispersal orders that remove bad actors from the KSARA area.

Treasurer's report

The treasurer's report as provided in the AGM papers was approved. For future reports we will show more granular detail on the source of funds received and their application.

Committee report

On behalf of the committee, SH and MC presented key achievements; addressing topics that came out the last AGM as well as others that have arisen during the year;

Events: Our main event this year was a get together at Alexanders (Rufus Court) to coincide with a musical event led by one of the committee members. This was our solution to the issues of trying to organise a street party when faced with such variable weather (as has become the norm!). Overall, this was a success with a greater range of residents attending and a much less arduous organisational effort. We hope to build on the lessons learned and improve it in 2025. We also combined the AGM with a carol concert this year which also made it easier organisationally and once again avoided the issues of weather that we faced in 2023.

Planning and the historic environment: The development of Centurion house was the main planning issue this year. The developers (BlueOak) continued to be responsive. The lighting in the passageway leading to Firemans Cottages has been restored; the collapsed paving that was a significant trip/fall risk has been filled in (despite not being their responsibility) and an open day organised to let residents engage. More recently, BlueOak relocated a bin store from outside (eyesore, vermin issue) to out of site and within the basement area. SH was widely praised for her efforts to engage with and lead BlueOak in a firm but collaborative way that had led to solutions that were mutually beneficial.

Communication and Engagement: Whilst we are still trying to find the event that will radically improve engagement between residents, we will build on the work done in 2024 with our successful Alexanders music event and the Carol concert /AGM combination.

Communication continues to be a challenge as only about half the residents are on email and the distribution of paper copies of minutes is rightly viewed as environmentally and cost prohibitive. We will continue to develop our website, which is a comprehensive store of all meeting minutes and historical information as well as links to important local council services.

Funding: The committee view is that reserves and what we are raising via donations and raffles are sufficient to fund the general running of KSARA and events.

ASB: Committee has spent a lot of time on this area. MC is thanked for the work he has done with the local police and the number of issues has now reduced as we are now in the dispersal area. The view from residents was very supportive, with many commenting that ASB in particular from late night revellers had reduced significantly. The message from MC is for residents to continue to report as individual reporting is more effective than from a resident association's representative.

Highways (incl Parking): The big win for 2024 was to get the council to deny rights to residents parking for prospective Centurion House residents; reducing the impact of 28 new apartments on existing residents parking. The committee is also lobbying the council for a change to the parking rules on water tower street and kings buildings; to bring in them both under the 10 minute free stay rule and including Sundays (currently free parking) in parking restrictions to reduce the impact that visitors to the new market is having on parking availability for residents.

Comments from Residents

The floor was opened to meeting attendees in order to gather concerns/topics to be considered by KSARA committee in 2025. Topics raised were:

Northgate street congestion (taxi's picking up students attending Abbey School) –Work has already started and will be accelerated in 2025.

Northgate 2 development – As a committee we are engaged with the key lobby group (CRAG) and will be heavily engaged to make sure that residents are kept informed of any developments that affect them.

Congestion on Hunter Street – There is a need for a yellow box area to stop the queue for the car park preventing entry/exit from the King Building car park.

Kirkton House, 4a Hunter Street development – We will keep on top of developments which are expected early 2025and advise accordingly.

Permit Parking rules – proposed change to rules governing Water Tower Street, Kings Buildings residents parking (10 minutes max stay, 7 days/week enforcement)

Committee membership

Sue Horton resigned and was thanked by the committee and residents alike. Simon Lloyd (Water Tower Street) and David Parish (King Street) elected to the committee.

Fund raising

Our thanks to the generous donations received on the night and subsequently from residents.

"Name the Bear" donations were given to St Peter's Church as thanks for using their facilities for our AGM and Carol. Concert.

AFB 04.02.2025