



# KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2022



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## CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW

Dear Members

The year so far has been a time of contrasts. Minus 6°C recorded on 20 January was succeeded by scorching summer heat that reached 40.1°C in St James's Park on 19 July. The steadfastness of the Monarchy, exemplified magnificently by the June Jubilee celebrations, stood in contrast to transience in our political realm. The spectacle of a brutal war in Ukraine contrasts uncomfortably with daily life in London and other western European cities. Rising COVID infection rates coexist paradoxically with increasing social contact. But, resurging personal freedoms have met with paralysis at our ports and railways while lockdowns of a year ago become a fading memory.



*Princes Court Road street party*

One threat, however, remains constant: the progressive erosion of residential amenity for Knightsbridge residents by developers and commercial interests. Knightsbridge feels this acutely as we approach the Appeal Hearing for Nammos at 13–17 Montpelier Street on



*Jubilee beacon in Wiltshire; one of the many thousands across the UK and the Commonwealth*

20 September, some two years after proposals were first broached. The pressure is on Knightsbridge residents like never before. Out of the blue in July 2022, McDonald's in Brompton Road submitted Temporary Event Notices (TENS) that could well presage late night/early morning or even 24-hour trading if left to run their course unchecked.

Only Police and Environmental Health officers can object to TENS applications: neither Ward Councillors, KA or individual residents can do so. Such applications are usually submitted to occur over concurrent weekends and in the absence of evidence from residents of noise, anti-social behaviour and litter coinciding with TENS events, the longer-term trading objectives of such applications may well be realised. In 2017, KA spent three days in Court opposing a McDonald's application for a loosening of conditions at this same site. Fortunately, our concerns were upheld but judging by the latest application, we could well be lining up for another campaign. Please be vigilant: you have been warned!

We are fortunate that the Brompton Road business improvement district - renamed the Knightsbridge Partnership (KP) and funded by freeholders and tenants – is now in full force and effect. KP's role is to elevate the Partnership's defined area – principally the Brompton Road - to reflect and enhance its status as an International Centre in face of national and international competition. The broad principle behind KP's strategic vision is that it combines high end luxury alongside quality facilities for residents and employees. The boroughs of Kensington / Chelsea and Westminster host the Partnership. KP's board, chaired by Michael Ward, Harrods' Managing Director, draws its board members from prominent Knightsbridge freeholders and tenants. The KA attends board meetings to

represent residents' interests. Further comment from Steve Medway, KP's Chief Executive, can be found on page 16.

One of KP's first moves was to submit, after consultation with KA and other interested parties, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) applications for the following three areas: CCTV and security improvement measures; air quality monitoring; and public realm improvements, with new trees and greening. We await the outcome of these applications in September.

I have focussed my report on the existential issues facing Knightsbridge residents but, as you will find in the following pages, there are many other pressing matters that affect residents' quiet enjoyment of their homes; and to which much time and effort is dedicated by Association members seeking remedy or alleviation. These include the continuing presence of scaffolding at Princes Court opposite Harrods;



dilapidation at 31–32 Rutland Gate; traffic chaos in Knightsbridge; waste fly tipping by tenants occupying short let properties; and the ubiquitous dog owners who do not clear up their dog's mess!

As we head into the summer holidays, I can attest that KA's committees have never been busier and that this trend is likely to accelerate as we tackle the known and unknown challenges ahead of us this Autumn. I would like to thank members of the Association and other residents who have taken time and trouble to convey their concerns and fears to the Planning Inspectorate regarding the Appeal at 13–17 Montpelier Street; and, in particular, to thank our three Ward Councillors for their fulsome support for residents.

*Melville Haggard  
Chairman August 2022*



# PLANNING AND CONSERVATION REPORT

*Edited by Carol Seymour-Newton*

## SOUTH KENSINGTON STATION

The long running saga over the future of South Kensington Station has taken a new turn. The developers, Native Land and TfL, have appealed RBKC's Planning Committee's unanimous decision made last November to refuse Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent so there will now be a public inquiry. This will open on 1 November.

Despite RBKC officers recommending the scheme for approval, local groups which have campaigned tirelessly for the heritage of South Kensington Station to be respected and treated sympathetically, have been assured by Amanda Reid, RBKC's Director of Planning and Place, that Council officers will now defend the Planning Committee's decision robustly.

Possibly wowed by big name architects, Rogers Stirk Harbour, the original officers' report failed to give adequate weight to heritage policy. This was perhaps not surprising as, from documents obtained detailing discussions with the developers at the pre-application stage, it was clear that the Council's conservation team attended few if any of the meetings - despite the station being listed and the entire site being at the heart of the Conservation Area.



*Fig 1: The view of the listed Station, the low scale Edwardian bullnose and the rear of the Victorian Thurloe Street terrace from Old Brompton Road today, and as it will look with outsized development. Note how the station itself is dwarfed and period character lost.*



The developers will no doubt argue hard that their proposed new buildings fit in harmoniously within the existing townscape, and they will also again seek to assert that their scheme will provide much needed step free access. On fitting in, the developers' images of the new buildings

were taken with a wider angled lens than is now recommended by the Landscape Institute for accuracy so the buildings appear lower than they would be in reality and the pale colour palette shown in the images blends the proposed new buildings with the sky. This is not what the eye sees. Local groups therefore commissioned images based on current Landscape Institute guidance to illustrate more accurately what the eye would see (see comparisons above).

The assurances about step free access have always



*Fig 2: The view looking north from Onslow Square before and after. The low scale of the listed station and bullnose give South Kensington its human scale and village heart. Views of the museum towers, a key feature of the current historic townscape, will be obliterated. Both visualisations are accurately depicted to scale by Rendered Image Ltd.*

been misleading. It was never the intention of this development to provide step free access to the Piccadilly Line, and the provision of full step free access to the District and Circle Lines is not possible without the station improvement works being carried out first by TfL. This much needed project to relieve congestion in the booking hall and to provide more platform space has been shelved indefinitely due to TfL's budgetary position in the wake of COVID.

## MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

### THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ESTATE

The first phase of the Knightsbridge Estate's development plans is nearing completion. The aim has been to achieve 'maximum authenticity in the restoration of the 19<sup>th</sup> century period façades that wrap around the development – a defining characteristic of the area'.

Seven flagship stores, a new roof-top restaurant on Basil Street, an office building and thirty-three luxury rental apartments set around a private courtyard will be on offer.

Following the launch of their flagship store on the corner of Sloane Street and Brompton Road last summer, Apple launched their new store at the end of July.



*The new Brompton Road tube entrance alongside the recently opened Apple Store*

An essential part of the scheme has been relocating the Brompton Road entrance to Knightsbridge underground station. Moving it 100 yards to the west on Brompton Road – nearer to Sloane Street – creates a modern more spacious station.

The widening of the pavement at the new Brompton Road entrance will improve access

and safety, especially at peak times. At the same time, much needed step-free access is provided by opening up the old entrance in Hooper's Court.

TfL inform us that the opening of the new entrances has been delayed for several reasons including the knock-on effects of COVID. They are now aiming to have the Brompton Road entrance open 'before the Autumn' and the Hooper's Court step-free entrance some time in 2023. Upgrades to the station and on-platform cooling systems will also be provided.

### 55–91 KNIGHTSBRIDGE



*Showing the residential apartments on Wilton Place*

The residential apartments within this beautifully restored frontage on the south side of Knightsbridge are creating much interest on both the William Street and Wilton Place sides of the development. We understand the developers anticipate shortly signing leases for the majority of the retail units and negotiations are ongoing with potential tenants for the offices.

As reported in the Spring Newsletter, two Key Stages of the environmental improvements for William Street had already been completed. Although submitted to the authorities at the end of March, gaining approval for Key Stage 3 works is proving trickier due to the involvement of no less than three authorities. Meetings with Westminster City Council are ongoing, a contractor is ready to commence works upon approval and the aspiration is to commence in September with completion in three months. Meanwhile, illegal parking is proving a problem.



### THE BERKELEY AND 33–35 KNIGHTSBRIDGE

This extension to The Berkeley will provide extra hotel rooms and a restaurant at ground floor. The basement will include a new gym/pool.

The external envelope of the new building is complete and the internal fit-out is underway.

Over the coming months various crane operations will take place as equipment is installed on the roof. This will necessitate some road closures on Knightsbridge which will be advertised in advance. Completion of the building is anticipated by May 2023.

### THE PENINSULA



The architecture and design of this new hotel aim to reflect the distinctive heritage and grandeur of the wider area and the spectacular views overlooking Hyde Park Corner and the Wellington Arch.

As with many other major projects in London, construction has been delayed due to the knock-on effects of COVID, but the opening is now anticipated for early 2023

### 127–139 KNIGHTSBRIDGE



A planning application has been submitted to convert part of the three floors of the former Burberry store at Scotch House Corner (within Park Mansions/Knightsbridge Green) to hotel use. If approved it would roughly halve the space proposed previously for a 715 seat restaurant. The KA has yet to comment.

### LANCELOT PLACE 3–11



*The site, and looking further up the street towards 15 Lancelot Place and 1 Trevor Walk*

The site has been cleared and the contractors have been carrying out piling works for the foundations for the five new town houses. In the next few months they will be casting the ground floor concrete slab and other concrete slabs. The developers are circulating regular updates to local residents.



*Recent works on 3–11 include damping down measures to suppress dust during the heatwave*

### 15 Lancelot Place And 1 Trevor Walk

Of these two new buildings, number 15 will be a single family residence whilst 1 Trevor Walk will comprise two flats. When completed the façades will feature verticle planting.

## OTHER NEWS

### IMPERIAL COLLEGE.



The Antony Gormley sculpture, donated by an alumnus, and yet to be installed, seems to be causing concern amongst some of the students, who fear the squatting human figure may 'hurt the image and reputation of the College'. The

6m high work, called ALERT, will use stacked and cantilevered blocks of weathering steel to evoke the human form. The material naturally forms a stable oxide coating and will take on a rust-like appearance. It will be placed in the newly constructed Dangoor Plaza, an accessible quadrangle around the Queen's Lawn, between Exhibition Road and Queen's Gate.

### THE SERPENTINE GALLERY

#### Summer Pavilion 2022

Originally planned for 2021, but postponed due to COVID, the 21st Summer Pavilion, Black Chapel, designed by Chicago-based artist Theaster



Gates, opened in June and runs to 16 October. The structure references the bottle kilns of Stoke-on-Trent and traditional African structures. Gates's Pavilion is part of The Question of Clay, a multi-institution project which seeks to investigate the making, labour and production of clay, as well as collecting history through exhibitions, performance and live interventions.

## ENFORCEMENT

### 31-32 RUTLAND GATE

The long running saga of these dilapidated buildings seems at last to be moving on. The Association had made repeated complaints to the Council for the past two years about the derelict state of these Grade II Listed buildings and the possible danger from falling masonry.

In October 2021 the Council served a Section 215 notice on the owners, which gave them nine months to carry out certain remedial works. The Notice expired in mid-July. A site visit by WCC's enforcement officer established that external repairs were at last being undertaken. He intends to make a second visit to establish if any internal works are ongoing. Further information will be in the Annual Report.



### AIR CONDITIONING

#### Rutland Mews South

One person's air conditioning heaven is another person's hell. Air conditioning units and screening need planning permission, and in some cases listed building or conservation area permission.

If any is installed, or is proposed in properties adjacent to yours, make sure a) that it has planning permission and b) even if it does, that it adheres to the strictest regulations. It has taken residents of Rutland Mews South, supported by the KA, over two years and mountains of emails to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion with the planners at RBKC.

### FLYPOSTING

#### 2 Brompton Square

The flank wall of the building, which has been under redevelopment for several years, is on the north side of Brompton Road. The hoardings surrounding it have been repeatedly covered with flyposters in spite of RBKC enforcement officers asking for them to be removed. Most recently the hoardings have been covered in wire netting to prevent posters being attached. We shall see!

Flyposters are illegal and unsightly and spoil the combined efforts of the KA and the Knightsbridge Partnership to improve and upgrade the appearance of Brompton Road which has been deteriorating for many years.

### WELLINGTON COURT, KNIGHTSBRIDGE

Flyposting on the hoarding at street level was reported to Westminster enforcement and was swiftly removed, and as of now has not re-appeared, though the hoarding looks decidedly uncared for!



# THE ROYAL PARKS

## EVENTS

### BST CONCERTS

This year saw the return of many popular events in the Parks – the BST concerts in June/ July featured such cosmic stars as Adele, The Rolling Stones, Duran Duran, Elton John and Pearl Jam. As a result of the BBC Proms and Radio 2 Live deciding to leave Hyde Park and take events regionally, the Parks were able to use the licences thus released to extend the BST concerts over three weekends.

Rory Barnes



*The Rolling Stones in Hyde Park*

The Parks have regular meetings during the year with residents' associations and other interested parties, to ensure that any problems that arise can be dealt with. In the early days there were many complaints about the noise, particularly the heavy beat, that reverberated through residential areas. Considerable trouble has been taken to position the stages so that they face in the direction least likely to cause problems. The technical side of sound amplification has also been refined.

### HALF MARATHON

The sponsored race on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> October, is a fundraiser for the Royal Parks Charity and takes place on closed roads linking Hyde Park, Green Park, St. James's Park and Kensington Gardens. For further details of this and other events: [royalparks.org.uk](http://royalparks.org.uk)

### WINTER WONDERLAND – WW



The Royal Parks

*Winter Wonderland (aerial view)*

WW has for many years been the main fundraiser for the Royal Parks, and returned after lockdown in November 2021 as a ticketed event, to allow them to deal with restrictions due to COVID.

A significant reduction in numbers attending led to several benefits to visitors' experience in terms of public transport, crime statistics and anti-social behaviour and they will continue to use a ticketed model this year when the event returns on 18 November running through to 2 January 2023.

### JOLLY BOATING WEATHER!

During the Summer boating opened up once again on the Serpentine with boats and pedalos for hire. Swimming in the Serpentine also made a welcome return.



# EXHIBITION ROAD CULTURAL GROUP

## THE RETURN OF THE GREAT EXHIBITION ROAD FESTIVAL – 2022

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Over a sunny weekend on 18-19 June, Exhibition Road was transformed into an extraordinary free festival celebrating arts and sciences and the trailblazers whose ideas, people and communities have changed our world.

The Festival returned for the first time since before the pandemic as a large scale, outdoor event. Over 38,000 visitors came to South Kensington to enjoy an exciting programme of free talks, workshops, performances and activities hosted by cultural partners including the Royal Albert Hall, Science Museum, V&A, Natural History Museum, Royal College of Music, the Royal Parks and many more.



Launched at the Festival, 'Kaleidoscopic Minds – Thinking Differently', was a series of colourful artworks on Exhibition Road by local artist, Azarra Amoy. The installation celebrated neurodiverse people and their contribution to the arts and sciences in South Kensington and was on display over the summer.

Plans are already underway for next year's Great Exhibition Road Festival in June 2023. For the latest information [www.greatexhibitionroadfestival.co.uk](http://www.greatexhibitionroadfestival.co.uk)



# NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

## URBAN PROJECT

Work on the Urban Nature Project has begun with a lot of it going on behind the scenes including sourcing the plants and geological rocks and finalising plans for the timeline wall.

Biodiversity monitoring has continued in the gardens ahead of the construction works, and a record number of 191 smooth newts were recorded in April! The pond will be temporarily relocated from the Wildlife Garden offsite.

Construction is due to start in August and will run to August 2023 – a very tight schedule to ensure disruption is kept to a minimum. The full site will be closed and construction will run from August 2022 to August 2023. Hoardings will be erected around the outside of the Museum, and will explain to visitors what is happening, how to

© Trustees of the Natural History Museum



*The proposals for the east garden, with a weatherproof replica of the Museum's much-loved Diplodocus taking centre stage in a 'Jurassic' garden.*

get involved and of course highlighting that the Museum remains open during the work.

The entrance via the corner of the East Gardens on Exhibition Road will be closed. Main access to the Museum will be through the main gates on Cromwell Road or via Exhibition Road only. At



*The Wildlife Garden*

this time, the railings will also be removed and taken away for refurbishment and restoration. Visitors to the Museum will be able to see how the transformation is progressing as they enter the Museum via the carriage ramp.

On 11 July the Museum launched their Public Appeal campaign across all social media channels. This includes donation options to choose from – beginning at £50. Further details are available from their website. For those who sponsor one of the features in the garden, there will be a personalised plaque when the gardens reopen.

## SUSTAINABILITY WORKS

The NHM has committed to reducing its energy intensity by 40% by 2030. In South Kensington over the next few months work will be taking place on the Palaeontology building roof where they will be installing photovoltaic solar panels, helping to reduce significantly the carbon emissions for their London estate.

## EXHIBITIONS

### DIPPY RETURNS

The diplodocus skeleton, fondly known as Dippy, will be on display at the NHM until 31 December.

### WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

The next exhibition opens at the Museum in mid-October. The photographs are quite simply stunning!

For further information: [www.nhm.ac.uk](http://www.nhm.ac.uk)

# LICENSING REPORT

*Paul Meitner*

Another busy period for licensing applications, with several causing concern owing to requests for late night opening and more tables and chairs, all part of an increase in the 'Night time Economy'.

## TEMPORARY EVENT NOTICES (TENS) AT MCDONALD'S

### 177 Brompton Road

Temporary Event Notices (TENS) permit premises such as pubs, restaurants, bars and cafés to hold events that do not comply with the terms set out in the licences granted by their local authority. Usually this means additional opening hours beyond the permitted terminal hour or the placing of additional chairs and tables on the street. From 1 January 2016 the number of times premises can be used for TENS in one year is limited to 15, over a maximum of 21 days. Although they are advertised in the weekly bulletins issued by both RBKC and Westminster members of the public and residents' associations cannot object to them - the only people with the power to do so are the Police and the local authority's Environmental Health team.



As mentioned in our Chairman's Review, McDonald's has made liberal use of TENS in recent years, usually so they can stay open all night during major events in Central London. This is a cause of concern to the KA, as some years ago McDonald's tried to secure permanent 24-hour opening, beginning the process with a series of TENS and then arguing that as these did not result in complaints about noise, anti-social behaviour etc a permanent licence on the same terms should be granted.

This year McDonald's have resumed their use of TENS beginning with the first two weekends in August, with late night opening till 5 a.m. It is likely that further TENS will follow, reinforcing a culture of late-night fast food in Brompton Road. The MacDonald's site at 177 Brompton Road lies next to a densely populated residential area, Beaufort Gardens, where passing traffic parks to gain access to McDonald's, causing noise and disturbance throughout the night. As we cannot object to TENS at the time of application it is important that residents record any nuisances arising, such as noise, loutish behaviour and littering and report them to RBKC's Licensing team [licensing@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@rbkc.gov.uk)

Separately we can report that McDonald's have placed a large A board on the pavement outside their store, which does not have permission. We are following this up with our local ward councillors and will report the outcome in due course.

## JEREMY ALLEN AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE LICENCING FIELD

Together with several other Residents' Associations (RA) in Westminster the KA has nominated Richard Brown at Westminster City Council's Citizen's Advice Bureau for his unstinting support on a range of licensing matters over many years. Richard's support has been possible as a result of the setting up of the Licensing Advice project at Westminster's Citizen's Advice Bureau (<https://www.licensingadvice.org/>). He has helped us draft representations (including where necessary, objections) to what we consider to be inappropriate applications. Often at very short notice Richard has reviewed and commented on these and made comprehensive and well-argued cases that we have taken forward, either in our written submissions or in face-to-face appearances at licensing hearings. He has also worked effectively with interested parties, applicants and local authorities to modify applications and ensure that suitable conditions are included in cases where the applications have been approved. He has often spoken on our behalf at hearings, having provided us with a thorough analysis of the application, the relevant legislation and policy considerations.



As well as supporting residents and RA's Richard has worked with Westminster City Council to review their Licensing Policies and procedures and provided useful input at a national level. He appeared at the House of Lords Committee reviewing the Licensing Act 2003. In 2020 he assisted groups representing local residents in securing amendments to the Off-Licence easement contained in the Business & Planning Act 2020, thus protecting residents' quality of life across the borough.

Here is a brief update on the main licensing applications since the last newsletter.

### **SHEESH 70 BROMPTON ROAD** (Formerly Top Shop)

You may recall from the Spring Newsletter that in December 2021 Westminster City Council rejected this application for a restaurant, with private dining rooms, bar and diners' lounge and restaurant. There has been no indication that the applicant will appeal against the refusal and it appears that the site is being fitted out for another use.

### **CHAIWALA,** 241 Brompton Road

This originally involved 24 hour opening. Following our representations this was scaled back to a terminal hour of Midnight, except during Ramadan and Eid, when it would have been 1am. The application was taken to a full hearing of the RBKC Licensing Committee on 14 April 2022, at which the revised hours were agreed, although

the 1am closing time will not apply on Sunday evenings.

### **ELAN CAFÉ, 42 Hans Crescent**

This involved an application to increase the current number of tables (12) and chairs (24) outside Elan Café by 50%, representing a significant intensification of use in an already crowded part of this pedestrianised street. We objected on the grounds that the application would 1) be unfair on other commercial premises 2) result in excess noise and obstruction of the pedestrian precinct 3) set a bad precedent for applications from other outlets and 4) lead to overcrowding and degradation of the whole Crescent.

### **ISIBANI, 9 Knightsbridge Green**

We supported a lengthy and detailed objection lodged by the management company representing an apartment block close to the premises. Our principal concerns were the proposed terminal hours (2 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays), well outside 'core hours' as defined in Westminster City Council's Licensing Policy, the capacity of the venue to safely cater for the number of anticipated patrons and potential noise and anti-social behaviour. We are pleased to report that in light of these objections, and following concerns expressed by the Metropolitan Police and WCC's Environmental Health Service, substantial changes were made to the application, including bringing the terminal hour back to Midnight. As our concerns had been fully addressed by these changes, we withdrew our objection.

## **LAW AND ORDER REPORT**

*Frances Blois and Anne Wright*

### **CRIME REPORT**

With the lifting of the majority of restrictions and greater business, retail and tourist activity in the Knightsbridge area there has been a consequent increase in crime. Almost 90% of robberies are mobile 'phone thefts although the cycle enabled robberies are still a problem in the quieter residential squares. Car thefts and car robberies are unfortunately still very much prevalent in and around "the Trevor's". Even cars fitted with a steering wheel lock are being stolen. There has been a sharp increase in burglaries in Eaton Square, Eaton Place and Ebury Street. In Knightsbridge itself, and particularly

along the Brompton Road, most burglaries are from businesses and outside cafés although the deployment of "local bobbies" has resulted in a noticeable reduction of crime and organised begging.

### **CAR MEETS**

Car meets have become more popular amongst "enthusiasts" and cameras have now been installed in the area around Exhibition Road following the Police launch of an operation to crack down on these illegal car meets and cruises – with warnings that those found to be driving dangerously will be prosecuted.

## PEDICABS



Also known as ‘rickshaws’, these have been prevalent in and round the Brompton Road and Harrods for some time and have caused concern as to the size of fares they charge, in particular to tourists, and the playing of loud music at night. The Police and Westminster City Council have targeted “nuisance” drivers which has led to prosecutions but generally their powers are limited. The former Transport Secretary announced new legislation in May in the form of the Pedicabs (London) Bill the second reading of which is due to be heard in November. Under the Bill drivers of pedal powered vehicles would need a licence from Transport for London to operate with TfL being given the power to regulate prices and safety standards.

## SHORT TERM LETTINGS

The use of properties for short-term letting continues to come under scrutiny and challenge in the courts as creating a material change in the character of and use of property as a Class C3 dwelling and therefore subject to potentially a planning enforcement notice.

At the end of June, the government launched a review into the effect of short-term holiday lets, seeking to improve the holiday letting market for those living in popular tourism destinations such as Knightsbridge. The scheme, proposed in this new government review could involve physical checks of premises to ensure regulations in areas including health and safety, noise and anti-social behaviour are obeyed.

Further measures the government is considering include a registration ‘kitemark’ scheme with spot checks for compliance with rules on issues such as gas safety, a self-certification scheme for hosts to register with before they can operate, and better information or a single source of guidance setting out the legal requirements for providers.

The Bill came just weeks after Nickie Aiken, Member of Parliament for the Cities of London & Westminster, led the short-term letting debate in Parliament and called on the government to launch its review.

## LOCAL SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAMS

### WESTMINSTER RESIDENTS

**KNIGHTSBRIDGE and BELGRAVIA WARD**  
(under Belgravia on the police websites)

Email: [knightsbridge.belgravia.SNT@met.police.uk](mailto:knightsbridge.belgravia.SNT@met.police.uk)  
Tel: 020 7321 9292  
Mobile: 07769 164 785 (not 24 hrs)

### RBKC RESIDENTS

**BROMPTON and HANS TOWN CLUSTER**  
(under Knightsbridge on the police websites)

Email: [Brompton.SNT@met.police.uk](mailto:Brompton.SNT@met.police.uk)  
Tel: 020 7161 8982  
Mobile: 07768 178 122

### Other useful links to note are:

**Police websites** [www.met.police.uk](http://www.met.police.uk) and [www.police.uk](http://www.police.uk)

**Action Fraud** [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk)

**Call 101 if you require non-emergency police assistance**

**Contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 if you wish to supply anonymous information.**

**IN AN EMERGENCY ALWAYS CALL 999**



# TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT REPORT

*Chris Barrass and Simon Birkett*

## NEW TRAFFIC PATTERNS

COVID-lockdowns have changed the long-term pattern of traffic in Brompton Road and Knightsbridge with many people continuing to work from home, if possible, on Mondays and Fridays. However, it seems that traffic levels have returned to pre-lockdown levels or increased on other days. This means that Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and weekends are now the busiest days on the main roads.

Scotch House Corner (SHC) remains the main bottleneck for traffic in our area. It is a complex junction, at the end of the M4 motorway (for want of oversimplification) where many roads and public transport links converge. The Red Route along Brompton Road and Knightsbridge (east of SHC) is usually likely to be the fastest route through the junction because it is managed and prioritised by Transport for London (TfL) using sophisticated technology which varies traffic light times on approaching roads. However, the 'chips' in the traffic lights need to be updated regularly. SHC operates so close

to capacity that TfL (and others) have found it impossible, over more than 20 years, to add even a pedestrian crossing at the north-end of Sloane Street.



The closure of South Carriage Drive removes some local route options but does not worsen overall traffic in Knightsbridge per se because TfL manages the volume of traffic entering into Inner and Central London through concentric rings. In essence, traffic lights at major junctions on those rings operate as valves to control the amount of traffic entering Inner London (and avoid gridlock).

An easy way to judge the extent of congestion in Knightsbridge is to see how far traffic is queuing eastbound (or westbound) from the SHC junction. There is usually a problem if traffic in Knightsbridge is queuing back to Trevor Place or in Brompton Road back to Montpelier Street. If traffic is queuing to the Hyde Park Barracks and Knightsbridge Green or Lancelot Place respectively, traffic is running pretty smoothly. Beware a separate problem in Brompton Road turning from eastbound into Hans Road (which TfL and others are aware of) where traffic queues can block the otherwise open eastbound carriageway.



In general, average daily vehicle flows on Brompton Road are lower than they were 15 years ago when we started complaining about illegal levels of air pollution there.

## PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS



Wherever possible, we seek to avoid or mitigate problems by identifying major planned works in advance – such as the Cadent pipeline, G-Network fibre broadband or major construction works – and working with those responsible to minimise disruption and maximise their local communications e.g. letter drops or email updates. Of course, we also seek to notify KA members in advance of long-term issues and update you e.g. through these newsletters and the annual report.

However, it seems that every few months, there is a new problem which causes traffic chaos in Knightsbridge. For a long time, including most of COVID-lockdowns, the large new Cadent gas pipe dominated traffic movements in our area. In late 2021, it was roadworks on the A40 Westway and in June/July 2022 works at Knightsbridge tube station reportedly caused one or more gas leaks. The latter caused chaos when Cadent had to close most of SHC. On the first day, Brompton Road eastbound had a solid line of buses and coaches queuing for hundreds of metres which were all being forced to turn right down Sloane Street, one or two at a time.

As soon as the KA sees or hears of these major problems, we take action. This usually involves: trying to understand the problem (e.g. gas leak or something outside our area); contacting TfL and Westminster City Council; requesting action to divert traffic from Knightsbridge (e.g. further west along the A4 and elsewhere) or buses at Cromwell Road or South Kensington (as with the recent gas leak); yellow traffic signs warning drivers to avoid SHC; requests for updates and progress reports on works to fix the problem; briefing the KA leadership team and others; patience; and learning lessons. During the recent gas leak problems, for example, we drove west towards Heathrow and returned to Knightsbridge. We found the delays and congestion much worse further west than in Knightsbridge, despite the serious problems in Knightsbridge, because traffic was being diverted from Knightsbridge i.e. action was being taken to share our problems with others (and we do for them at other times).

Some potential solutions are not available. For example, the Royal Parks does not allow commercial vehicles in their parks and they will not re-open South Carriage Drive at the moment because they say it's unsafe for traffic to enter and leave Park Lane (with the cycle lane there). The Royal Parks has also refused to countenance our proposal for better walking and cycling along the Broad Walk that could allow the cycle lane to be moved from Park Lane. We will be responding to TfL's consultation on the Park Lane cycle lane which is expected in Autumn 2022.

We try to respond always to questions from KA members. However, we have found it impractical over the years to issue reliable general updates or send broadcast emails to KA members about specific or major short-term traffic problems. There are many reasons for this. The first is that you need to be in Knightsbridge and have time to walk around the local roads and talk to people to understand the problems that day – because everything may have changed since yesterday. You then need to get a progress update on the problems and works (which can take one to two days to receive by the time those involved have had meetings or updated their plans). By the time we've got answers, things may have changed completely on the ground e.g. works have been completed early or there are new problems such as central London road closures for events. We do not want to post or send out misleading or out of date messages about traffic which can change by the hour.



For those travelling around London (on any 'mode') or concerned about specific problems, we therefore recommend checking TfL's travel tools for status updates (<https://tfl.gov.uk/status-updates/travel-tools>) or using apps to estimate journey times and choose optimal routes such as Apple Maps, Google Maps or Waze. You can sign up to alerts from the former which can be useful. We are also exploring whether the new Knightsbridge Partnership BID might be able to manage and update local businesses and residents about major traffic issues i.e. because they have full-time resources including 'boots on the ground' nearby. If you're totally fed up, please write to TfL, the Royal Parks, Cadent or someone else, as we do, and tell us what you find.

Importantly, we continue to urge better enforcement of the Highway Code and other rules applying to cyclists and drivers to reduce road traffic and other collisions in London.

## CENTRAL LONDON BUS REVIEW

The KA's response to the consultation on possible changes to the bus routes emphasised two serious consequences for passengers wanting direct access to/from Brompton Road. First, the loss of Route 74 northbound direct to Baker Street via Oxford Street and Gloucester Place (which currently allows a short walk to the medical area of Wigmore Street, Harley Street, Wimpole Street with all their medical facilities). Passengers would need to change to/from Route 2 or 13 between Hyde Park Corner and Marble Arch. Second, the loss of the entire Route 74 westbound network e.g. direct to the Sainsburys superstore in Cromwell Road, Cromwell Hospital, Lillie Road and Fulham Palace Road. Route 430 starts from the V&A Museum so offers no replacement for Route 74 westbound.

## LONGER-TERM FUNDING ISSUES

The most important strategic issue that has been facing travel in London in recent years has been an ongoing row between the Department for Transport (DfT) and TfL about TfL funding (generally and in particular after the dramatic loss of revenue during COVID-lockdowns).

In February 2022, the Government's funding support through to 24 June (extended to 28 July) required the Mayor to demonstrate options to achieve up to £400m of additional revenue or cost savings in 2022/23 in addition to delivering previously agreed cost savings for the 2021/22



financial year. This requirement has led to some dramatic proposals from the Mayor including: reducing tube services by 9% and buses by 20% (including the scrapping of the 14 and 74 bus routes and their partial replacement by changes to the 19 and 14); and scrapping support for cycle training and plans for new cycle lanes and safer junctions. We have also seen strikes and delays to TfL-led projects such as the e-scooter scheme. In general, these issues worsen traffic congestion and are separate to possible changes to congestion charging, loss of free travel for over 60s and others and the delay or cancelling of planned or much needed schemes e.g. countdown pedestrian crossings.

On 22 July 2022, the DfT put a long-term funding settlement on the table to support services and enable £3.6bn of capital projects to take place by 2024. At the time of writing, the Mayor was analysing the proposal.

## OUR VISION

In general, the KA's long-term transport vision for Knightsbridge, is less traffic and congestion, less pollution and fewer road traffic collisions and more public transport and active travel i.e. walking and cycling. We also need to balance the ability and convenience to move around locally with the need to get into the area in the first place. In our experience, these changes can require consistency and persistence of approach over many years and require constructive pressure on relevant public bodies.

# THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE PARTNERSHIP

Steve Medway CEO

## WORKING FOR A CLEANER, SAFER KNIGHTSBRIDGE

Knightsbridge is one of only two International Centres in London, but the quality of some of the public realm and the levels of cleanliness don't give the feel of an International Centre. That's why the BID is committed to working with the councils and other partners to raise standards for the benefit of residents, employees and visitors alike.

We have already seen how the BID's Street Teams have made Knightsbridge a safer and more welcoming district. We now want to look at how we can make it a cleaner district.

In particular, commercial waste left on the street, especially on the north side the Brompton Road,

is unsightly and leaves unpleasant stains on the pavements.

Knightsbridge Partnerships' new full time Head of Place Rebecca Handley, who starts in September, will provide a dedicated presence on the street, responsible for dealing with both councils on waste, cleaning and other street services. Bringing businesses and the councils together to agree a better commercial waste management system will be an early priority for her.

Knightsbridge Partnership is committed to working with local residents as a new resource to help tackle these issues that affect the quality of life for us all. Together we can create an even better Knightsbridge.

## COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Westminster City Council turned Labour for the first time in its history. We were happy to retain all three of our local ward councillors, Rachael Robathan, Elizabeth Hitchcock and Tony Devenish who have all served us well over many years. Boundary changes extended our Ward down to the Thames. We look forward to working constructively with the new team which includes councillors Adam Hug as Leader, Paul

Dimoldenberg and Geoff Barraclough. The new Lord Mayor is Cllr. Hamza Taouzzale.

RBKC stayed with the Conservatives. Again, we were pleased that our local ward councillors, Mary Weale, Sof McVeigh and Walaa Idris were returned who have looked after us well. Cllr. Elizabeth Campbell remains Leader and the new Mayor is Cllr. David Lindsay.

## KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

We are delighted to announce that in anticipation that all remains well our Annual General Meeting will be returning to the Ballroom of the Mandarin Oriental on Monday 16 January 2023 and will

include the much postponed celebration of our 60th, by then 62nd Anniversary. The invitation and all the papers will be sent out to members nearer the time.

### USEFUL NUMBERS

Noise: WCC **0207641 2000**

RBKC **0207361 3002**

The Parks: **0300 061 2222**

### USEFUL CONTACTS

WCC Knightsbridge/Belgravia  
Ward Councillors

**Cllr. Tony Devenish** [tony.devenish@london.gov.uk](mailto:tony.devenish@london.gov.uk)  
(Tony is also our GLA/TfL member)

**Cllr. Rachael Robathan** [rrobathan@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:rrobathan@westminster.gov.uk)

**Cllr. Elizabeth Hitchcock** [ehitchcock@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:ehitchcock@westminster.gov.uk)

### REPORT A FAULT

To report faults re lighting, pavements, potholes, blocked gulleys etc. go to:

[www.westminster.gov.uk/report-it](http://www.westminster.gov.uk/report-it)

[www.rbkc.gov.uk/report-it](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/report-it)

RBKC Brompton and Hans Town  
Ward Councillors

**Cllr. Mary Weale** [Cllr.mary.weale@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.mary.weale@rbkc.gov.uk)

**Cllr. Walaa Idris** [Cllr.walaa.idris@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.walaa.idris@rbkc.gov.uk)

**Cllr. Sof McVeigh** [Cllr.sof.mcveigh@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.sof.mcveigh@rbkc.gov.uk)

All information correct at the time of going to press.