

Your Autumn 2017 Newsletter from



KNIGHTSBRIDGE
ASSOCIATION





THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2017

Dear Members

If taxes are to rise should this be at the local or national level - or both? This might seem a bold question for an amenity society to raise but the answer could have a direct impact on the delivery of local services in future.

KA has seen its Safer Neighbourhoods police force reduced from forty-two to four over the past five years. Licensing and Planning enforcement teams have been paired back and a "cuts" mentality has sapped morale within local government. What realistic expectation is there that central government will deliver financial relief when our national finances remain in deficit? An increase in Council Tax might be a more direct way of sustaining and improving local services than berating "cuts" and intoning for more central cash.

Amenity societies need to work ever more closely with Councils to help them prioritise local needs and spend scarce resources wisely: to move from criticising and objecting to supporting, encouraging and thanking where thanks is due. On that note, we would like to record our appreciation of RBKC's response to the need for additional street cleaning in Brompton Road following the walk-about with Councillors last year. Hopefully this can be maintained and intensified - in line with the relentless tourist footfall extending now from the museums to the Berkeley Hotel!

DEFRA and the Department for Transport adopted a similar approach by pushing down to Councils with the worst levels of air pollution responsibility for delivering nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) compliance at the roadside.

The Government has pledged to help towns and cities by providing £255 million to implement plans at the local level. We are pleased to see this first step will be followed next year by the publication of a comprehensive Clean Air Strategy. The KA has championed the need for improved air quality and our task in the months ahead is to ensure that the appalling air quality in Brompton Road / Knightsbridge receives the remedial attention - and money - it deserves.

A group of some fifty from the KA enjoyed a guided tour of Hyde Park Barracks hosted by Lt Col James Gaselee and his team at the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment on 19 September.

This newsletter covers a range of issues affecting Knightsbridge including knife assaults in Lowndes Square; success with a number of Licensing and Planning objections; short lets to noisy tenants with small children and disregard for rubbish collection arrangements; water shortages in garden squares; and, finally, a revised timetable for commenting on the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Plan and the ensuing referendum.

This Autumn newsletter comes to you later than usual due to unforeseen factors affecting printing and distribution. Those of you receiving correspondence from the KA by email will have received at least a couple of bulletins since our Spring newsletter and I would like to thank our Webmaster Dr John Pollard for his enthusiastic development of this new medium. We welcome feedback on both the Bulletin and the content and layout of this newsletter in order to keep these publications in line with reader's needs.

Melville Haggard
Chairman

Vice-President: The Lady Grade

Chairman: Melville Haggard

Vice-Chairmen: Edward Davies-Gilbert, Carol Seymour-Newton

Treasurer: Olivia J Cox

www.knightsbridgeassociation.com

PLANNING AND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE REPORT

*Edward Davies-Gilbert and
Carol Seymour-Newton*

The Duchess of Cambridge, patron of the V&A and the Natural History Museum, did the honours when she opened the new Exhibition Road Quarter, the stunning extension to the V&A, on June 30th, and launched the grand re-opening of the Natural History Museum's Hintze Hall and main entrance, on 13th July.

V&A EXHIBITION ROAD QUARTER

It has taken six years to complete the transformation of the former boiler house yard with its grand new entrance through the openings of the newly created colonnade formed from the 1909 Aston Webb Screen. The major new spaces include The Sainsbury Gallery, a flexible 1,100 sqm column free exhibition gallery; The Sackler Courtyard, the world's first porcelain public courtyard; The Blavatnik Hall; a new entrance into the V&A from Exhibition Road.

NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM

Several hundred guests attended a star studded gala evening to celebrate the re-opening of the magnificent entrance hall by the Duchess of Cambridge. Hope, the 25.2 metre long, 3 tonnes blue whale skeleton, suspended from the roof has taken up residence. Meanwhile Dippy, the diplodocus, the former doyen, has gone on a countrywide tour. The Museum is currently in fund raising mode to raise money to pay for their imaginative plans for the Eastern Grounds. Their application for Heritage Lottery funding wasn't successful but they have been advised to reapply next year.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC

In June Professor Lord Robert Winston, Chairman of the RCM Council and Professor Colin Lawson, CBE, Director of the College

marked the start of the College's ambitious redevelopment plans. Architect John Simpson has re-imagined the RCM site with major enhancements to benefit students, staff and visitors. The redevelopment will be funded by a £40m philanthropic campaign, which has already raised 60% of the overall target. Despite the building work, it is 'business as usual' for students and staff and a full programme of events for the Autumn.

SCIENCE MUSEUM

Residents had misgivings about some of the proposals for converting the 4th and 5th floors, vacated earlier in the year by the medicine galleries. These have now been tweaked to address some of the points raised and a planning application was submitted to RBKC in August. This will be reviewed by the KA committee. The Museum has also submitted plans to RBKC, shown to local residents earlier in the year, for change of use of the former Post Office sorting office block from 'Sui Generis' Use to D1 Use (museum including exhibitions, meetings, lectures, performance and corporate events hiring) together with demolition of the existing service building and re-provision of linking space and external alterations.

IMPERIAL COLLEGE

Works are proceeding well on conversion of the old Post Office building in Exhibition Road and should be completed by Christmas with the Dyson School of Design Engineering taking occupation from January next year.

THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ESTATE - K1

Demolition works have begun; two tower cranes have been established on site; piling works were carried out earlier in the summer and the Brompton Road crossing outside Burberry has been closed for the duration of the construction timeline.

Preparation has also begun on the site's Façade Retention System (FRS) on Hooper's

Court. Starting in September, the FRS will be put up around almost the entirety of the site to support the existing building façades while the internal building structure is demolished and reconstructed as part of the development. The FRS will be completed in early November. The northern footpath of Basil Street will continue to be closed until mid-September. During the coming months scaffolding will be erected outside the FRS; stripping out and demolition of the site will continue; all retained façades will be underpinned and a new main vehicle entrance will be established in Brompton Road.

55-91 KNIGHTSBRIDGE

The two tower cranes have moved offsite. Only the façade remains, supported fore and aft by substantial scaffolding. Contractors Skanska will be leaving the site in September; Bluesky will manage the site pending the appointment of new contractors. Pedestrians are now able to use the pavement and the traffic lane, until recently used by pedestrians, will be retained for construction traffic.

THE BERKELEY and 33-39 KNIGHTSBRIDGE

Demolition of nos. 33-39 is complete, and work has begun on the basement, excavation and piling. Revised drawings for the redevelopment were submitted to WCC in August and these are now being considered by the KA committee.

THE MANDARIN ORIENTAL

Scaffolding and hoarding have now been removed from the Knightsbridge frontage; the ballroom entrance has been boarded up and the ballroom is closed. Work on the second phase of development on the Park side of the hotel will start shortly.

LANCELOT PLACE

Developments at both no. 15 and nos. 3-11 appear to be at a standstill for the present. At our request the owner of nos. 3-11 has cleaned and tidied up the front of the site, which had become derelict and full of litter.

HYDE PARK BARRACKS

Things seem to have gone rather quiet on the Barracks front.

SOUTH KENSINGTON ESTATE.

The proposal to create art galleries with storage facilities and offices at 1-5 Cromwell Place was granted permission at the end of March. It included alterations to 35-36 Thurloe Place and four of the houses in Thurloe Place Mews. The scheme wasn't universally popular as it included digging out part of the basement area. The KA was, on balance, supportive of the plan and relieved it didn't include more food and beverage outlets in an area that is already saturated with cafes

SOUTH KENSINGTON STATION.

A public exhibition of the final draft of the station upgrade will be on Tuesday, 19th September between 3.30pm and 7.30pm in the Games Room at the Ampersand Hotel, Harrington Road, South Kensington. Following the consultation it will be submitted to RBKC for approval. At this stage the scheme includes step-free access to the District and Circle lines, refurbishing 20-34 Thurloe Street, Pelham Street and other round station developments. Refurbishment of the northern platform has already begun. In the meantime TfL is seeking a property partner to work with to develop the project.

SLOANE STREET PROJECT

The proposal to widen the pavements by narrowing the highway to one lane in each direction - with additional trees and planters - consulted on by RBKC in 2016, did not find favour with the KA or the bulk of public opinion. Further consultation was promised early in 2017, but so far has not happened. With major developments at the Knightsbridge end of Sloane Street, 55-91 Knightsbridge and the Berkeley Hotel bringing significant construction traffic to the area for the next three or four years, it hardly seems a good time to complicate matters by messing about with Sloane Street. To date no application has been submitted to RBKC for consideration.

THE ROYAL PARKS

The Super Nursery Project referred to in the 2016 Annual Report is nearing completion. The old dilapidated nursery in Hyde Park has now been demolished to make way for a state-of-the-art nursery that will serve the 5,000-acre Royal Parks estate. Covering the size of a football pitch, the new greenhouse will replace the previous 1960s nursery.

SHEEP RETURN TO THE ROYAL PARKS!

For a week in August, sheep grazed in the Royal Parks for the first time since the 1930s. A group of six rare breed sheep with their personal shepherd and dog, could be seen in Green Park chomping away at the tougher tufts of grass. The idea is that this natural conservation method will tame the non-picturesque dominant plants within one of the park's two wildflower meadows, allowing flowers to flourish and a rich diversity of invertebrates to grow. If successful there are plans to introduce flocks to other Royal Parks including Hyde Park. The initiative is part of a project to revive Britain's wildflower meadows supported by the Prince of Wales.

LICENSING

Paul Meitner

THE MAGAZINE, SERPENTINE GALLERY, KENSINGTON GARDENS

This application involved an extension of the closing time for the sale of alcohol and regulated entertainment till 1.00 a.m. each day of the week. As such it represented a significant extension of "Core Hours" and would have required a delay to the closure of the park gates (currently Midnight), to allow patrons time to leave. If granted the application would have turned an oasis of peace into a "Stress Area", with residential apartments in adjoining roads subject to late night disturbance up to and beyond 1a.m. Many objections (including ours) were lodged and we are pleased to report that the application was withdrawn on 22 August.

TYROS 2 MONTPELIER STREET

This mixed-use food restaurant and take away operation, with tables and chairs on the pavement, lost its appeal against an enforcement notice served on them by WCC. They now have until mid-October in which to comply with the order. Failing full compliance during that time, the Council will have the option of prosecution.

L'OPERA 232-236 BROMPTON ROAD

One of several cafes operating in the middle of a very congested section of pavement on the south side of Brompton Road, just before the Fulham Road. Although RBKC approved an application to extend closing times to 11.00 pm daily Councillors did note the noise and disruption caused and instructed the Licensing team at RBKC to pay attention to street crowding and the impact of 'super cars'. They also requested L'Opera to take steps to minimise the impact on residents. We hope this will be a useful precedent when future objections are lodged to similar applications involving the placing of tables and chairs on pavements and extensions to closing times.

CAFÉ TABOO SHISHA LOUNGE

As reported in the Summer Newsletter, we made representations to both WCC and RBKC on grounds of noise and public nuisance. Following our objections enforcement action was taken by RBKC, who served a Noise Abatement notice on the premises and recorded a breach of the Health Act 2006. Shisha related apparatus was seized by the Metropolitan Police. Since then Cafe Taboo has been replaced, firstly by La Mont and a few days later by Al Hamidiah.

LAW AND ORDER REPORT

Maddie Elsdon

SUPERCARS

In the grand scale of world events the issues we face in Knightsbridge are miniscule, however when our members bring concerns to our attention we do our best to raise awareness with the right people and obtain improvements where possible. RBKC introduced the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO), you may have seen the street signs in the Brompton Road, and the police have been providing operations on a regular basis. We have received fewer complaints about cars this year and so perhaps the message has finally got through to drivers that anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated in Knightsbridge. Hopefully journalists will also get the message that supercars are old news and refrain from writing articles implying that living in Knightsbridge is hell on earth due to the roaring of engines all night.

WHEN WILL IT END

Unfortunately, even though we have resisted the closure of fire and police stations these closures have still taken place, the reasons given being "the cuts". Budgets continue to be reduced by hundreds of millions and we have lost thousands of police in the process.

THINNING BLUE LINE

Police retire after thirty years and the result is that if they joined the force at 20 they leave us at 50 taking with them a wealth of experience which cannot be replaced by youngsters who are highly qualified degree-wise but lack experience. Perhaps a revision of police retirement age is required as these were set in different times when schemes were pegged to life expectancy. We are pleased to see that Scotland Yard has sent a letter to all retired former detectives asking them to return to work as unprecedented recent events such as terrorist attacks and the Grenfell Tower fire have left the force lacking skilled investigators.

MOPED AND ACID ATTACKS

These horrific attacks are happening more and more frequently and gangs, usually on stolen mopeds have fuelled a large increase in recorded crime. Knightsbridge has not been immune. This is a terrifying London trend and residents were extremely concerned when hearing of an attack carried out near Harrods by two suspects on mopeds wearing black leathers and black helmets. Fortunately the liquid used did not have lasting effects but the attack must have been very traumatic. Do have your wits about you at all times.

TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT REPORT

Marc Winer

The major achievement in this period has been the establishment of a "Keep Clear" zone at the bottom of Lancelot Place in the east-bound traffic lanes of Brompton Road. This measure will ensure that residents and local businesses have easy access into and out of this eastern section of Knightsbridge and perhaps more importantly it guarantees freedom of passage to emergency vehicles of the police, fire and medical services.

The committee has expressed its sincere thanks to Transport for London for carrying

out this work and to WCC for its support of our initiative and help in coordinating with TfL.

Also of note is the addition of Caroline Burke to the Committee. Caroline has jumped in energetically and among other things has ensured that faulty and blocked street lights in Ennismore Gardens and Montpelier Walk have been repaired promptly. Another item worth mentioning is the apparent slowing down of the two residential redevelopment projects in Lancelot Place. These were of major concern to both residents in the eastern half of Knightsbridge as they would have created problems of dirt, dust, noise, and traffic disruption. For the moment both projects are quiet. A blocked drain in Trevor Place has been cleared. A small sinkhole on the corner of Relton Mews/Cheval Place has been railed off and we wait to hear from WCC when it will be dealt with. The suggestion of closing Rotten Row to bicycles has been made, as pedestrian use has been negatively impacted.

The current irrational ardour for electric vehicles is in our view a path to environmental and logistical disaster. The cost of production of the vehicles, the carbon footprint involved in production, the primitive state of battery technology and the resulting short distance that can be travelled on one charge, the vast requirement for networks of charging stations and the creation and delivery of electric power to that network – these are all as yet totally unsolved and at the moment actually unresolvable using currently available technology. Possibilities for the improvement of current petrol and gas technologies is far from exhausted. Rationality, neutrality, and patience are required.

Any suggestions or complaints about traffic, parking, single or double yellow lines, holes in streets or pavements, blocked drains, rubbish collection, etc., should be reported on the websites of Westminster City Council and/or The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea on their “Report It” pages and also informed to this committee for follow-up on the following email address:

transportandenvironment@theknightsbridgeassociation.com

for those not on internet, note the following phone numbers:

**Westminster Environment Action Line:
020-7641-2000**

**Kensington & Chelsea Switchboard:
020-7361-3002**

KNIGHTSBRIDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

Simon Birkett

WCC has been understandably busy in dealing with the consequences of the Grenfell Tower disaster. One (small in the scheme of things) consequence has been that it took them 10 weeks to comment on a draft of the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum's plan (the Plan). As a result, the Forum is now finalising its neighbourhood plan and starting to go through formal legal processes prior to the submission of the Plan to WCC in the Autumn. The KA and the Forum will keep you updated as we'll need to show our support for the plan. More at knightsbridgeforum.org. Looking further ahead, the Forum hopes to achieve much for Knightsbridge after a referendum of residents next year. Key planning policies and an action plan for neighbourhood management aim to: protect and enhance the use of the Hyde Park Barracks land; reduce air pollution and congestion; make the most of our trees; enforce 'clean, safe and quiet' to the full extent of the law; and direct developer funding contributions towards valuable local improvements. This package should ensure that Knightsbridge remains a lovely place to live, work, bring up kids and enjoy life. In the medium and longer term, the Knightsbridge Association will work to 'enforce' the 'rules' that the Forum is establishing for our community's benefit.

KA EVENTS

Monday 27 November GLADWELL & PATTERSON Fine Arts- 5 Beauchamp Place:

Join us for a pre-Christmas Champagne Reception and Private view of their Christmas Exhibition. See flyer for details.

Monday 15 January THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING In the Flett Theatre of THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

OTHER EVENTS

EATON SQUARE CONCERTS

The Autumn season of evening concerts at St Peter's Eaton Square begins on Thursday 5th October. Full details at www.eatonsquareconcerts.org.uk

SALVETE

Welcome to Sue Liberman of the Motcomb Street Traders Association who has agreed to take on the sometimes challenging responsibility of bringing in advertising. Her local knowledge is invaluable.

The Annual Report

We shall shortly be starting work on the Annual Report, collecting items of interest and articles on a variety of different topics as well as reporting on the past year and things to come. If you have any suggestions as to what might be included, please let us know.

Melville Haggard,
Chairman
(The Knightsbridge Association)





**KNIGHTSBRIDGE
ASSOCIATION**

PRIVATE VIEW AND CHRISTMAS RECEPTION

at

GLADWELL & PATTERSON

FINE ARTS

5 Beauchamp Place, London SW3 1NG

MONDAY 27TH NOVEMBER

6.30-8.30pm

**Pre-Christmas private view of Gladwell & Patterson's
2017 Christmas Exhibition**

Champagne & canapés

Gladwell & Patterson - internationally renowned Fine Art experts since 1752, focusing on oil paintings, water colours and sculpture from 19th and 20th centuries and on leading contemporary artists.

Please complete and return the following form to Events, Knightsbridge Association, 6, Montpelier Street, London SW7 1EZ

Member(s) name(s)

Address

Guest Name

Telephone number

Email

No. of tickets (£18 each or £32 for two)..... Payment total

**Please enclose a cheque made payable to The Knightsbridge Association;
or make a bank transfer to our HSBC Bank account number: 31595180
with sort code 40-04-10**

**Please give your last name and 20th November as payment
references for bank transfers
And let us know by 30th October**

Email enquiries: events@knightsbridgeassociation.com