



KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2021

CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW

© TRP



Dear Member

Sounds of summer strike in different ways. This year, it was the shriek of wheeling seagulls that made Knightsbridge feel like a seaside resort. Seeking refuge indoors provided no escape as you picked up the gulls' cries on the signature tune of BBC's Desert Island Discs. We quizzed the janitors of our tallest Knightsbridge buildings to check for signs of nesting in their upper reaches but like Macavity, the Mystery Cat...the gulls were not there!

Other sounds redolent of summer transmit through the cool morning air. Children once again in Hyde Park's playgrounds; the smack of leather on leather from the shadow boxers training under trees in early morning sunlight – all too reminiscent of John Arlott's memorable BBC radio cricket commentaries with their long silences punctuated by the crack of leather on willow followed by a laconic interpretation.

In June and July, we emerged from lockdown bearing umbrellas and masks. The pathways behind

Hyde Park Police Station remained flooded and unpassable such was the ferocity of July's intermittent downpours. The ground is so saturated that even after pumping 41,000 gallons of water, some pathways remained unpassable. As for masks, they may well remain with us for months to come, reflecting public ambivalence towards the sunlight of a post-Covid world.

During the summer, the Association worked on a growing number of reform and transition issues as we adjusted to new circumstances. These include commenting on Article 4 Direction for changes of use from Class E; the proposed PSPO extension for use of acoustic cameras in RBKC; responding to Westminster's review of licensing policy; The Royal Parks' proposals for rescheduling events in Hyde Park in 2022; and preparing objections to the proposed redevelopment of 13–17 Montpelier Street and attendance at the subsequent planning committee hearing. Planning matters are covered in more detail on pages 3–5.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the enormous, well-articulated community response to the proposed Montpeliano restaurant redevelopment that led to Westminster Council rejecting the principal proposal. Thanks go to those who struggled through voluminous documentation to express their views and submit objections to council members and officers. The result showed what communities can achieve when they pull together. The Association also wishes to acknowledge Westminster Council's balanced appraisal of a complicated case and for recognising commitments on residential amenity set out in the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Plan.

Super-car drivers

The Association is a strong supporter of RBKC's acoustic camera trials in selected locations and welcomes extensions of the scheme, including into neighbouring Boroughs where possible. Anecdotal evidence and YouTube footage demonstrates the scourge of antisocial behaviour from super-car drivers. Further scheme rollout can only be achieved with attendant support of a Public Space Protection Order ('PSPO') and members are encouraged to respond to calls for evidence as they arise – see link on page 8.

Licensing Review

The KA supports the need to help the hospitality sector back onto its feet – as long as residents' quiet enjoyment of their homes is respected. Our priority as a Residents Association is to reflect the views of residents and local businesses, many of whom are extremely concerned about the development of the night-time economy and its impact on their homes and surrounding environment. Westminster's Licensing Policy consultation provided a timely opportunity for the KA to submit its views. Further details are set out in the Licensing report on page 6.

Rescheduling Hyde Park events

Not all residents are happy with TRP's plans to concentrate Hyde Park music events in 2022 into one mid-summer cluster rather than staging them more evenly across the year. The intention behind 'clustering' is to create 'free time' in the Autumn before preparing for Winter Wonderland in November. This does seem to be preferable to erecting and de-commissioning events over the course of the year.

Little can be done to change bookings made for 2022 but residents are deeply concerned about a repetition in 2023 and how TRP is having to resort to commercialisation of parks to fund a current deficit of £5m per annum. Dates and further details

for 2022 are set out on page 13. We need a broader evidence base if we are to propose an alternative approach in 2023 and will be working with TRP and other amenity societies to try to achieve this.

Pedicab Bill

Congratulations to Cities of London and Westminster MP Nickie Aiken for re-introducing the Pedicabs (London) Bill. We look forward to following the Bill's passage through Parliament to address a regulatory loophole that enables rogue operators to blemish London's reputation as a centre for international tourism. We have sent recurring evidence of pedicab activity in Knightsbridge to bolster the case for regulation.

Boundary Commission

The Boundary Commission is proposing changes to the parliamentary constituency boundaries. The proposals are opposed by both Felicity Buchan and Nickie Aiken MPs for Kensington and the Twin Cities, respectively. They have drafted an alternative proposal that avoids RBKC, London's smallest borough, being divided between three MPs while retaining Brompton and Hans Town as part of Kensington rather than being swept into Westminster. The KA supports the alternative proposal and has written to the Commission.

Iranian Embassy

Many members still living in Knightsbridge will remember the siege of the Iranian Embassy in Princes gate some forty-one years ago in May 1980, so ably reported on by Kate Adie. One of our members, who grew up in Ennismore Mews approached us recently to recount the frightening events of that day and to point out that there is an Appeal to raise funds for a memorial to the SAS team that abseiled into the embassy to relieve the siege.

We are pleased to report that the Brompton Road Business Improvement District proposals are making good progress with a ballot among interested parties due in the fourth quarter of 2021. We are hopeful for a positive outcome and should be able to report further in the Annual Report.

There is much for us to be alert to as Autumn approaches and restrictions around personal freedom relax. In the meantime, enjoy the rest of the summer.

Melville Haggard
Chairman

PLANNING and CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Carol Seymour-Newton, Melissa Woolford and Caroline Stoclin

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

SOUTH KENSINGTON STATION

The highly controversial planning application for the redevelopment of South Kensington tube station – which has elicited over 2,000 objections – was supposed to have gone to RBKC's Planning Committee on June 3rd. However, to everyone's surprise, the day before this meeting the developers, Native Land, asked for their application to be withdrawn from the Planning Committee's agenda. This was despite the planning officer's report recommending approval.

It appears that Native Land and its architects, Rogers Stirk Harbour, intend to make some more amendments to their scheme with a view to resubmitting revised drawings in the Autumn. RBKC has confirmed that these revised drawings will be fully consulted on again.

That the officer's report recommended approval was hugely disappointing to local Councillors

and all those who have campaigned tirelessly to save the listed station from damaging overdevelopment. Curiously, the officer's report was full of caveats and readily acknowledged that the development would cause harm to the character of the Conservation Area. Officers could easily have come to a different conclusion and had they given the conservation issues the weight they deserve, they would have done.

The illustrations accompanying this piece illustrate the harm at the bullnose end of the site where the listed station building and arcade are completely overwhelmed with new and wholly out of scale development. These images are accurately rendered to show what the pedestrian will see. Similar rendered images have been prepared to show the harm this scheme would cause in Pelham Street and at Thurloe Bridge. It is disappointing that RBKC officers have gone along so willingly with the developer's spin that these new buildings are contextual when it is blatantly obvious they are not.



*Existing: South Kensington
Brompton Association
verified view*



*As proposed: South
Kensington Brompton
Association verified view*

Local groups have since met with RBKC officers and made it clear that cosmetic amendments to the Native Land scheme will not suffice and that the scheme as a whole needs fundamental reassessment in terms of design, architecture, height and massing and that this view needs to be communicated to the applicants. It is not a conservation-led development. It does not respect the height of the listed station and arcade and it is highly damaging to the village heart of South Kensington where the low scale of the existing buildings which adjoin the pedestrianised areas around the station give a unique human scale to South Kensington. This human scale, the sense of light and air that permeates South Kensington, combined with the attractive period architecture, have been characteristic of the site since it was first built as the gateway to Prince Albert's vision for the cultural quarter of Albertopolis. This is the heart of the Conservation Area and it needs protection not massive, inappropriate and out of scale new development.

NAMMOS'S REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS FOR MONTEPELIANO RESTAURANT



Planning applications for the proposed redevelopment of 13–17 Montpelier Street ('Nammos') were brought to Westminster's Planning Committee on 22 June and determined on 20 July. There were six applications in total, three planning applications and three listed building consent applications. Three planning applications and one listed building consent application were refused; and two listed building consent applications were granted but as the corresponding planning applications were refused, no work can proceed without grant of a separate planning approval.

KA worked closely with the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum, Walsingham Planning,

Landmark Chambers and residents to assemble a comprehensive set of written objections. The KA presented oral evidence at the planning committee hearing alongside objections from Cllrs Elizabeth Hitchcock and Tony Devenish. Our efforts would not have been successful but for the lively and generous support of residents to whom great thanks are due.

2–8 RUTLAND GATE



The large refurbishment of the existing building at 2–8 Rutland Gate to allow for its continued use as a single family dwelling was approved by Westminster City Council on 28 July. The KA and KNF both supported the application, in principle, after the applicant had made a number of design and other changes including to the mansard, lighting, roof, façade and railings. The applicant had worked hard to consult the community and comply with the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Plan. The project will take four to five years to complete and there will be ongoing liaison with the community. Council approval for the works received national coverage in the media.

KNIGHTSBRIDGE ESTATE

The current phase of the project is nearing an end and over the next few months the final works to construct the shell and core of the new building will be completed by Skanska.

During August, works to complete the roof and façades will take place, as well as finishing the internal areas of the new offices,

Over the last few months, the new and refurbished façade of the building has gradually been revealed, as the team has completed the façade stone and brickwork in sections and removed the scaffolding. It is a beautiful feature of the original building, which the Knightsbridge

Estate has been proud to maintain and restore as part of the project.

The first retailer, Burberry, opened its doors in July on the corner of Sloane Street and Brompton Road.



The Knightsbridge Estate has also been upgrading the public realm and footpaths around the development. This also includes footway widening around the site and in particular to the new entrance to Knightsbridge tube station on Brompton Road to create a more generous space for pedestrians.

The Hooper's Court passageway is currently undergoing significant public realm improvements and will be re-opened to the public towards the end of the summer. From the autumn the residential fit-out works will commence, together with other tenant fit-out works which will take place from within the development.

TfL confirm that the new Brompton Road entrance to the tube station will open this Winter and the step free access in Hooper's Court will follow in Spring 2022.

THE PENINSULA HOTEL

Construction of this fine addition to the listed buildings fronting Hyde Park Corner is due for completion in 2022. Façade works, including the colonnade are already complete to the roof, and the ground floor is in the process of being closed.

55–91 KNIGHTSBRIDGE and
1–3 WILLIAM STREET

Sir Robert McAlpine – the principal contractor on site – has this Summer come to the end of their time on the project following completion of the base build. Blue Sky Building took over as the principal contractor to complete the apartment fit-out works. The McAlpine team worked closely with residents and the KA throughout their work on the development to keep us well informed and deal with any problems that arose during the course of construction.

Marketing for the retail, office and apartments will begin this Autumn 2021 with anticipated occupancy towards the second quarter of 2022.

William Street public realm improvements works are currently being discussed with Westminster City Council and it is anticipated that these works will be completed by April 2022.

The Knightsbridge façade can now be seen, restored to its full Edwardian elegance and, to the relief of everyone, the pitlane has now been opened up to traffic.

THE BERKELEY

The construction of the steel frame and completion of the concrete floor slabs at 33–39 Knightsbridge, adjoining the hotel, continues and is due to be completed in the Autumn.



The façades are currently being installed and following the completion of the external envelop, work will start on fitting out the interiors next year.

For any questions about the project or daily activity, please contact Alexander Nicholson at alexander.nicholson@jbp.co.uk

LICENSING

Paul Meitner

The last six months has seen a continuation of the return to normal life as we knew it before the pandemic. Restrictions on public assembly, social distancing and the wearing of masks have all been relaxed and it seems that this trend will continue. There have been blips on the way but, fingers crossed, we are over the worst. Travel restrictions remain in place, effectively eliminating London as a destination of choice for overseas visitors, but even they may be removed if the concept of 'travel corridors' becomes a reality.

During Lockdown the KA acknowledged the need to support local businesses at a very difficult time. Therefore we only objected to applications in the most serious of cases. The concern now is that the 'light touch' approach becomes embodied in the licensing policies and approaches adopted by our two local authorities, making it difficult to prevent applications that have a seriously detrimental effect on our quality of life. This concern is shared by many other residents' associations in Central and West London with whom we keep in contact. Consequently, we keep a close eye on pronouncements from both WCC and RBKC.

One of the more concerning of these is RBKC's consultation on a proposed '*Policy to support Al Fresco dining on Streets and Spaces*', launched on 10 July, with an implementation date of no earlier than 15 September 2021. This would '*support the delivery of attractive al fresco hospitality amenities on pedestrianised streets and spaces on an annual basis after 2022 or the termination of the Business and Planning Act*', i.e. well after we have seen the back of the pandemic. In a similar vein we carefully reviewed Westminster City Council's proposed amendments to its Licensing Policy, which was last updated in January 2021. The key concern was to make sure that the 'core hours' for

tables and chairs on pavements were not extended beyond the current 10 p.m. terminal hour, which thankfully is not being proposed. However, other concerns remain, not least of them being a proposed new policy on the Ancillary Delivery of Alcohol and/or Late-Night Refreshment Policy, which could result in substantial increases in the volume of deliveries being made and noise and disturbance outside restaurants, bars and private homes. We have asked that delivery vehicle engines should not be left running while couriers pick up food and drink for home delivery, nor when they drop them off, also that the individuals and businesses that provide courier delivery services should be formally accredited by WCC.

Finally, we expressed our concerns about the increasing use of TENs (Temporary Event Notices), to which only the Police may object. TENs permit any restaurant or bar premises to 'opt out' of core hours constraints up to 28 times per year. Taken in conjunction with the proposed policy changes this is likely to give rise to a substantial increase in noise and anti-social behaviour.



Tables and chairs for eating al fresco in Hans Crescent

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

SHEESH
70 BROMPTON ROAD
(formerly Top Shop)

Sheesh submitted a licensing application covering three floors. The KA has objected on numerous grounds and urged local residents to do likewise as objections

from individual residents are vitally important.

ELAN CAFÉ, HANS CRESCENT

Our last report referred to an application to place tables and chairs at the sister restaurant on the Brompton Road pavement. The refusal by RBKC of an application for the placing of tables and

chairs on the pavement at this location, outside core hours, seems to have been ignored by the licensee, with reports of food still being sold at 11 p.m. (the permitted terminal hour is 10 p.m.) and many complaints about late night noise and nuisance, resulting in action being taken by RBKC's Environmental Health team. Thanks are due to Keith Mehaffy for enforcement action taken by RBKC's Noise and Nuisance team and also to Councillor Sof McVeigh for her support.

144 BROMPTON ROAD

A similar application, this time involving tables and chairs on the public pavement, until 10.30 pm on weekdays, on a busy section of the Brompton Road.

We lodged an objection, on the grounds of public safety (obstruction to pedestrian flow, risking people walking into a busy main road) and public nuisance (late night noise from patrons)

ORIENTAL CANTEEN

2A EXHIBITION ROAD

This application, for the placing of 11 tables, 22 chairs and three planters on the pavement, each day of the week, did not include any dimensions on the plans submitted to RBKC and could have resulted in the whole footway being blocked by tables and chairs, blocking the flow of pedestrians on one of the busiest pavements in the area. We lodged an objection in support of our two neighbouring RA's, on the grounds of public safety and nuisance.

LAW AND ORDER

Madeline Elsdon

THE TEAMS

Safer Neighbourhoods is about local policing, police and partners working with you, to identify and tackle issues of concern in your neighbourhood. They all adjust their response to trends they identify including reports from the local community.

PARTY TIME

This summer quite a few unlicensed events were held in private houses and flats around Knightsbridge. Usually AirBnB type short lets, they were publicised on social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and Snapchat, to name a few. The police definition of an unlicensed music event is 20 or more people, with amplified music, causing distress and disruption to the local community for a sustained amount of time. Specific to our area is that the organisers promoted the ideology of a glamorous/millionaire lifestyle to would-be attendees. It was known in some cases for party goers to have hired high-performance cars, bringing the party out on to the street to congregate around the cars, drinking and causing further issues.

Should residents suspect an unlicensed event is taking place they should contact 999 if they think a crime is being committed or is likely to be carried out immediately. Residents can call 101 for non-emergency situations.

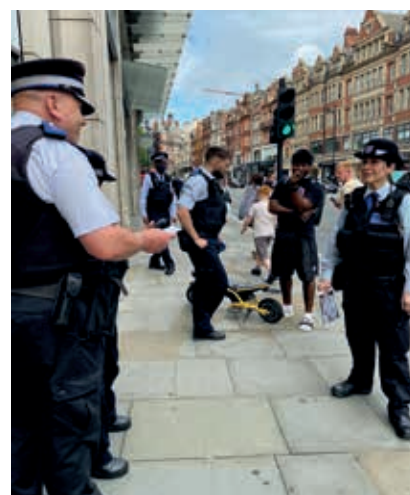
Should the party be **ONLY CAUSING A NOISE NUISANCE** that would be a matter for your council and their 24/7 noise teams.

Westminster 020 7641 2000 (environmental action line) Option 3

RBKC 020 7361 3002 Noise and Nuisance Team or e-mail environmentalhealth@rbkc.gov.uk

E-BIKES AND E-SCOOTERS

Unfortunately for us, these electric vehicles, fun as they may be for some, are lethal weapons in the hands of others. Criminals love them as they can push someone over and grab a handbag or break into a parked car and be off at the speed of light. E-scooters are illegal unless used on private property. The only exception are rental e-scooters involved in Government trials. If you use an electric scooter, you may be committing a serious offence without knowing. Many riders are unaware that they are only allowed to ride on private land. They are not allowed on pavements or on the road. The riders must also have a driving license (or provisional) and insurance. Trials are taking place in our area providing e-scooters for rent. A rental e-scooter can be ridden on the road and in cycle lanes but not on pavements and they do not need separate insurance.



NUISANCE FROM VEHICLES PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER 2021

Responding to residents, WCC are seeking the views from local residents, businesses and other key stakeholders and would like your feedback. The consultation will be open until 29th September 2021. The KA has responded but it is also important for everyone who is concerned about these issues to take a few minutes and TICK THE BOXES as a PSPO helps to deal with persistent anti-social behaviour in a local area so that everyone can use and enjoy the public space. This will address the excessive level of noise, nuisance, annoyance, danger of risk or harm or injury caused by motor vehicles to members of the public in St. James's and Knightsbridge and Belgravia wards. The consultation is open until September but please fill it in now as it is important.

Please see the link:
WCC Public Space Protection Order 2021

POLICE ENCOUNTER PANELS

Central West BCU are recruiting members for Police Encounter Panels. PEPs will provide oversight and scrutiny of policing encounters, and will comprise community members, senior police officers and appropriate officer associations. PEPs will review material, such as police Body Worn Video and incident reports, and consider how the policing encounter was conducted.

You can follow this link for more information: www.met.police.uk/police-forces/metropolitan-police/areas/about-us PEPs will focus on incidents that have caused or may cause community tension. If you are interested in joining, please email AWMailbox-.PESPs@met.police.uk

BEWARE COVID SCAMS – A MESSAGE FROM WESTMINSTER POLICE

Criminals are still taking advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic using it as a reason or 'hook' to scam and defraud victims. Read our *Little Booklet of Covid Scams* to help stay safe and #cyberprotect yourself from fraud. You can find details on Met.police.uk/littlemedia

TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

Chris Barrass and Simon Birkett

ACOUSTIC CAMERAS

'Acoustic cameras' have been used successfully by RBKC to send warning letters and fines to owners of noisy cars and supercars. They are different to speed cameras (which trigger fines and penalty points) and vehicle activated speed signs (VASs) (which flash a speed limit image if it is breached). Acoustic cameras are triggered by loud noises but need to be in a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) zone if the council is to issue fines. Westminster is due to install an acoustic camera in Exhibition Road and several VASs in Kensington Road and Princes Gardens. It is consulting until 29 September 2021 on a borough-wide PSPO.

DRAINS AND FLOODING

West London had a month's rain in an hour on Monday 12 July (with another month of rain falling in north east London over a longer period on Sunday 25 July). Many properties in

Westminster and RBKC were badly flooded with great distress caused. The councils have provided shelter and help to many of those affected. Westminster arranged an online conference call, attended by about 200 people, where Thames Water denied responsibility for the flooding, saying that their dirty water drains (i.e. sewers) had been overwhelmed by stormwater that had first overwhelmed stormwater drains (which are managed by councils). Some such drains are shared. Sadly, such events are becoming more frequent and severe with global warming. In the very short term, one of the best things you can do to protect your property is to report any blocked stormwater drains (i.e. kerbside) or street flooding to www.fixmystreet.com/ after a heavy downpour. The FixMyStreet app makes it easy to include a photo and please, always, provide a nearby street number. FM Conway, Westminster's contactors, continue to identify problem drains and get

them cleaned, surveyed, maintained, repaired or replaced. In the longer term, we need changes to the planning system, considerable investment in greenery and fixed infrastructure from the council and others and measures by householders to protect their properties (within their boundaries and not to worsen problems in the street). Some parts of Knightsbridge are considered at High Risk of flooding from surface water.

CLEANER AIR

Brompton Road complied for the first time with the World Health Organisation's (WHO's) air quality guideline for annual mean concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), a toxic gas, in calendar 2020 i.e. 32 micrograms per cubic metre (ug/m³) compared to the guideline of 40 ug/m³. This was due to a combination of factors including: the COVID-19 lockdowns for much of the year; the Cadent gas works reducing the volume of traffic entering Knightsbridge; the increase in electric vehicles including taxis; and Transport for London reducing harmful exhaust emissions from the bus fleet. The WHO is expected to publish new guidelines in September 2021 that will, almost certainly, be lower than current guidelines.

CADENT GAS WORKS

The completion of the Cadent gas works along Brompton Road and Knightsbridge in July 2021 has meant the re-opening of all traffic lanes except one westbound lane that is still used, in places, for construction works. The large yellow signs that warned drivers to avoid Scotch House Corner have therefore been removed. Together, these changes mean that the volume of traffic entering Knightsbridge is likely to increase as drivers get used to open lanes and Transport for London uses this new road capacity, by managing traffic light phasing, to alleviate traffic problems elsewhere e.g. in Belgravia now that Cadent is in full swing there.

EMISSIONS BASED ROAD CHARGING

London uses Congestion Charging and the Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) to tackle congestion and emissions respectively in the Congestion Charging Zone (CCZ).

The Mayor is consulting until 6 October 2021 on proposals to amend the congestion charging arrangements, introduced as part of the Government's COVID-19 Financing Agreement for TfL (which applies until 11 December 2021), by reducing the hours of operation from 7am to 10pm

each day to 7am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 12noon to 6pm on weekends and Bank Holidays.

The Ultra Low Emission Zone expansion to the North/South Circular, announced in June 2018 and covered in the KA annual reports in 2019 and 2020, is happening on 25 October 2021 after reportedly nearly halving nitrogen dioxide in the CCZ. It will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week (except Christmas Day) and charge pre-Euro 4 petrol cars (roughly those registered before 2005) and pre-Euro 6 diesel cars (roughly those registered before September 2015) £12.50 per day. Newer vehicles will *not* need to pay the ULEZ charge because it is a pollution not congestion measure. Please check details at www.tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/.

E-SCOOTERS



e-Scooter parking bay in Rutland Gate

RBKC and Westminster have joined the Mayor of London's trial of e-scooters which runs to 6 November 2022. These rental scooters are the only way to legally ride an e-scooter on or in public places in London. Riding e-scooters on pavements will continue to be banned but they will generally be able to use the same space as bicycles. You can report illegal use of scooters to the Met Police at www.met.police.uk/ro/report/. The KA has objected to the location of the two e-scooter bays in Rutland Gate and Exhibition Road because they are adjacent to a large new construction project and blocking a carriageway respectively. More at <https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/electric-scooter-rental-trial>.

In other news, the KA will be following up on the need for a solution to the continued seven day a week closure of South and North Carriage Drives and need for proper segregated pedestrian and cycling space on the Broad Walk. Last, but not least, most of the public realm improvements in front of the Royal Albert Hall should be completed in August.

FIBRE BROADBAND

G-network has continued to lay its fibre broadband cable through local streets. This should lead to long-term benefits but has caused some considerable disruption and the occasional lapses in warning those affected e.g. recently around Raphael Street. We've complained about the latter.



EXHIBITION ROAD CULTURAL GROUP (ERCG)

Melissa Woolford and Caroline Stoclin

EXHIBITION ROAD FESTIVAL OF ARCHITECTURE AND THE GREENTRAIL

The South Kensington Green Trail launched in July. There are three pop-up architectural installations planted to attract wild-pollinators and presenting inspiring ideas for a greener future.



Home Away from Hive – in partnership with the Science Museum, designed by Mizzi Studio

The installations can be seen on Exhibition Road until October. A beautiful trail map connects art, displays and green spaces across the cultural district encouraging visitors to explore further and stay longer. The South Ken Green Trail website also has activities to try at home and links to all the programming on climate change that nearby venues will hold in run up to COP26. Included

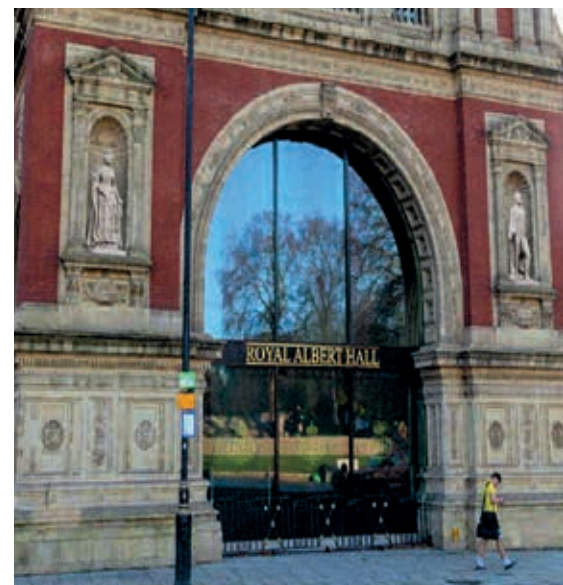
are a Bee-Inspired Activity Day for local families and groups in August with NHM, Royal Parks, Goethe-Institute, K+C Festival and Westminster City Council and there is a programme of talks and workshops for the Great Exhibition Road Festival which will run from 9–15 October.

The installations, which were commissioned in collaboration with V&A. Science Museum. Goethe Institute London and the London Festival of Architecture will be removed in October and re-homed in local schools and cultural venues.

ROYAL ALBERT HALL

This year marked the 150th* Anniversary of the Hall's opening by Queen Victoria. As part of the celebrations, four new statues have been commissioned for the empty external niches of the Royal Albert Hall.

A planning application has been submitted and if granted, the new statues will be installed in the twin niches to the North and South Porches. To the North Porch stone statues of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert will face Kensington Gore and the Albert Memorial within Hyde Park, while



to the south bronze statues of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip will face the Queen Elizabeth II Steps leading down to Prince Consort Road.

The objective of the project is to complete the original architectural intention of the Hall by installing the statues of Victoria and Albert and also to recognise the Hall's current patron with the statues to the South Porch.

The Royal Albert Hall reopened at full capacity on 19th July 2021 and has a stunning program of events. Attending an event is a great way to support the Hall further to the pandemic.

*There will be a six page feature article in the Annual Report celebrating 150 years of the RAH.

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM



View of the Urban Nature Project

The ambitious Urban Nature Project (UNP) has been successful in securing a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant of £3,231,900.

A foundational project of the Museum's new strategy, the UNP aims to inspire people across the UK to get involved in understanding and protecting the nature in the towns and cities where they live. With their partners in London and across the regions, they aim to inspire children and adults of all ages and backgrounds to become advocates for the nature on their doorsteps. The UNP will help secure a better future for urban nature through increased understanding of the impact of people on the plants and creatures that help make our communities healthier places to live and work.

They are very grateful for the support of the National Lottery and lottery players, and all of their generous funders to date. Now with over 60% of the project costs funded, the UNP has

real momentum and they are on track to be able to roll out the national schools programme later this year.

The ice rink will be going ahead on the east garden for the last time this winter and will open in October.

V&A

The V&A has revealed its upcoming plans for 2022–23 in one of its most international and varied programmes to date.

Africa Fashion and Hallyu! The Korean Wave will spotlight the dynamism and vitality of the fashion scenes and creative outputs across the African continent and South Korea, tracing their global impact. *Africa Fashion* will celebrate

the irresistible creativity and ingenuity of contemporary African fashion creatives from the continent's independence and liberation years to the present

SCIENCE MUSEUM

The Science Museum reopened and now has on permanent display empty vials of the first Pfizer/BioNTech and Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines ever administered.

THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC

The new Royal College Museum will be London's newest museum and will open to the public in October 2021 after 4 years of redevelopment.

National grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund as well as many other patrons supported this transformational development.



KENSINGTON PALACE



To mark the unveiling of the statue of Princess Diana, Princess of Wales in July 2021 a new planting scheme was created in the Sunken Garden. A simple and beautiful space was created to celebrate the life of the princess in a spot she herself enjoyed.

SERPENTINE GALLERIES

SERPENTINE NORTH GALLERY



Sister holding Brother, Accra, 1979

The Gallery is featuring the work of photographer James Barnor whose career as a studio portraitist, photojournalist and Black lifestyle photographer spans six decades, recording major social and political changes in London and Accra. His Serpentine exhibition focuses on the period 1950–1980, selecting from more than 40,000 available images, all distinguished by Barnor's unmistakable eye and indelible connection to his sitters. The exhibition runs to 24 October.

SERPENTINE SOUTH GALLERY



Since the 1950s, Hervé Télémaque has created an expansive body of work with a unique and playful visual vocabulary. Born in 1937 in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Télémaque left for New York in 1957, eventually settling in Paris in 1961. Through painting, drawing, collage, objects and assemblage, he consistently draws a line between the realms of personal and political experience and the complex relationships between image and language. This survey exhibition, Télémaque's first in the UK, will highlight the enduring themes of the artist's work through his multi-faceted practice. Opens 7 October.

SUMMER PAVILION 2021



The 20th Serpentine Pavilion, designed by Johannesburg-based practice Counterspace, directed by Sumayya Vally. A TIME100 Next List honoree, Vally is the youngest architect to be commissioned for this internationally renowned architectural programme. Counterspace's design references gathering and community spaces around the city, folding London into the Pavilion structure in Kensington Gardens.

THE ROYAL PARKS (TRP)

2021 EVENTS

TRP were delighted that Van Gogh Alive, the World's most visited immersive, multi-sensory experience came to Kensington Gardens in June. Images accompanied by Van Gogh's personal writings exhibited the life and work of the seminal Dutch artist. The classical music chosen helped create an authentic emotional experience. Highly recommended it continues to 26 September.



Committee member Melissa and her young family visited the exhibition and she tells of their experience:

The children rushed into the exhibition and were immediately immersed in colour. The projections on the walls, ceilings and floors enveloped all of us in the space that just came alive. The images were accompanied by Van Gogh's personal writings displayed on various screens leading us through his life story. The mood was raised and lowered by classical music chosen for its sentiment and helped to create an authentic emotional experience. By the end of the narrative, you are left feeling quite sad for Van Gogh in not getting the help he needed for his mental struggles and the recognition he deserved for his work while he was alive. It was incredible, though, to see the work at such a large scale with every brush stroke magnified and all of the vibrant colours surrounding you. A must see if you have not yet visited.



Other events include the popular Royal Parks half Marathon which will take place on 10th October. For the first time ever, the Royal Parks Half Marathon, presented by the Royal Bank of Canada, will begin on one of the most iconic roads in the world – The Mall.

For the first time, it is possible to take a fascinating virtual tour around the Crystal Palace, the grand venue of the 1851 Great Exhibition. Please follow this link: www.royalparks.org.uk/whats-on/the-great-exhibition-virtual-tour

SOME THINGS TO DO

A FAMILY ADVENTURE –
FREE DISCOVERY DAY IN HYDE PARK



A good way to get the young outside and engaged in nature has been to take them on one of their August drop-in Discovery Days to enjoy activities such as pond dipping, bug hunting, painting and sweep netting. Each week had a different theme from Life Underground to Wild

Water and Peter Pan. For the half term weekend 26, 27 and 28 September the Parks are holding Hallowe-en themed Discovery Days. These are free but booking is advised. At the LookOut Discovery Centre in Hyde Park.

GUIDED TOURS OF HYDE PARK AND KENSINGTON GARDENS

There is much to discover from an underground river running beneath Hyde Park to a hidden hollow tree in Kensington Gardens known to be the annual nesting site of tawny owls. The walking tours last from one to two hours and cover 1.5 miles.

Monthly walking tours, year round, can be booked on line via The Royal Parks website. Check for details on their upcoming events page.

2022 – RESCHEDULING HYDE PARK EVENTS

On the 16 July The Royal Parks ('TRP') advised the Association of their proposed schedule of concerts for 2022. It is proposed all nine of their existing licenses will be used making up a total of nine concerts over three consecutive weekends at the end of June early July 2022. Relevant dates are:

Concerts

Friday 24 – Sunday 26 June

Friday 1 – Sunday 3 July

Friday 8 – Sunday 10 July

Build/break dates:

Build – Friday 10 June – Thursday 23 June

Break – Monday 11 July – Monday 18 July

Park Clearance:

Wednesday 20 July

LETTER TO KA MEMBERS FROM THE FRIENDS OF HYDE PARK AND KENSINGTON GARDENS

It's a pleasure to be able to write about the Parks for the Knightsbridge Association. Apologies to those of your members who are also our members, and to those of you who often walk in the Parks, both of whom may feel they are already up to speed. I will focus on Hyde Park as, geographically, this is the area which involves most of your readers.

ROSE GARDENS



Phil Newcombe has been working for the last few years on restoring and replanting the whole area with his team of gardeners. The results are stunning, especially when I visited in the heatwave and Diana the Huntress and her fountain were gently sparkling in the sun which caught the falling drops. A photographer's paradise.

Phil is also very pleased with the Jubilee Bed, with its contrasting colour palette, at Fishermans Keep (known to me as the bed just before you cross over the bridge to the Serpentine Bar and kitchen).

A problem, not much experienced before the first lockdown, was the unwelcome appearance of graffiti in both parks. Some listed monuments and even trees were spoiled by the criminal damage.

The Bandstand and noticeboards were sprayed with graffiti which appeared following the various demonstrations on the Parade Ground. Crowds of youths gathered in it nightly, playing amplified music and left the whole area covered with smashed glass, rubbish and evidence of various illegal activities.

It was inevitable that it had to be closed off along with Queen Caroline's Temple in Kensington Gardens to allow for cleaning and restoration. Two years ago the Friends funded a series of concerts in August – perhaps next year...back to normal?

MEADOWS AND INTO THE WILD NORTH!

Plenty of regular visitors will have noticed that areas of both parks have now become meadowland with a plethora of wild flowers and grasses, all designed to be insect and bird friendly. The complaint used to be "Oh they're just saving money by not having to mow". Actually, it's taken about seven years of hard work to get



the meadows to the beautiful condition they are now in. Programmes supported by Mission Invertebrate have meant that recording butterflies and moths as well as May, Damsel and Dragon flies has become a popular way of spending time.



Friends' members recently had two "hunts" led by experts from the team. Over drinks afterwards, the evidence and count showed how insect friendly these meadows have become.

And in a separate project close by, funded by TfL, a swale* has been developed to try to use, not waste, runoff water from North Carriage Drive.

The wild plants and trees are thriving and it is surrounded by a split chestnut railing to dissuade dogs from using it as swimming pool. The water spreads out over the parkland which slopes down gently towards the Serpentine.

BEAUTIFUL BEASTIES

Close to the 'swale' and, since we're being adventurous, a short crossing into Kensington Gardens will reveal another generously funded Mission Invertebrate Scheme (thanks to the People's Post Code Lottery).

To North Flower Walk to see a whole collection of 'playful sculptures' created from fallen trees (some from our own parks). This was an area avoided by many people, discouraged by antisocial behaviour. It has been cleared of dense undergrowth; planting has been simplified and

*a shady spot or sunken or marshy spot (illustrated right) to manage water runoff.

added to to make it more visually attractive to visitors and provide screening from the heavy traffic in Bayswater Road, and here of course are the wooden creatures waiting for the children.



COLOUR PALETTES

This popped up at the beginning of my piece when I wrote about the Hyde Park planting schemes. When we were able to have a plant sale in the Hyde Park Nurseries, thanks to the manager Mike Jones, I was super impressed by members' careful choices of plants. Many were buying for their local church gardens and several community run garden squares as well as courtyards in flats and must all be enjoying the result of the sale. As all takings went to Royal Parks charities it was an all round good result.

This is the briefest of round-ups to describe something of what's happening in our "own" green space on our doorstep. It's a treasure for us all to share and I hope your members enjoy it as much as we do.

*Sue Price, Chairman
Friends of Hyde Park & Kensington Gardens*



KNIGHTSBRIDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

Simon Birkett

The Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum (KNF) continues to work well with the KA by focusing on planning policy or strategic issues and enforcement respectively.

The Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Plan (KNP) has really been brought to life over the last six months with all three 'Nammos' planning applications being refused by the Council for not complying with two KNP policies (among other matters) and the large refurbishment at 2-8 Rutland Gate being approved quickly after the applicant had worked hard to comply fully with the KNP.

The KNF has also written in support of the proposed Brompton Road (or Knightsbridge) Business Improvement District to emphasise the need for it to achieve win-win-wins for residents, businesses and cultural institutions.

Meanwhile, the KNF continues to comment selectively on significant planning policies, strategies and applications, particularly where these seem inconsistent with the aims of the KNP. The voice of neighbourhood planning in Westminster gets louder and louder as more plans get 'made' i.e. adopted.

GLA ELECTION

As was expected, Mayor Sadik Khan was re-elected Mayor of London for another four years though with a reduced majority.

Tony Devenish was also re-elected as our GLA member and congratulations go to him

in his new roles as Deputy Chairman of the London Assembly's Environment and Housing Committees. He is also a member of the Police and Crime Committee, as well as being one of the three Knightsbridge/Belgravia Ward councillors.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR THE YEAR 2021

This will take place on Monday 10 January and we are delighted that the Mandarin Oriental have once again kindly agreed to let us hold it in the Ballroom. Our 60th Anniversary celebration

was unable to take place in September as had been anticipated and will now be combined with the AGM.

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
(Tony is also our GLA/TfL member)

Cllr. Rachael Robathan rrobathan@westminster.gov.uk

Cllr. Elizabeth Hitchcock ehitchcock@westminster.gov.uk

REPORT A FAULT

www.fixmystreet.com is an excellent way to report faults re lighting, pavements, potholes, blocked gulleys etc and works for both Councils.

RBKC Brompton and Hans Town
Ward Councillors

Cllr. Mary Weale Cllr.mary.weale@rbkc.gov.uk

Cllr. Walaa Idris Cllr.walaa.idris@rbkc.gov.uk

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All information correct at the time of going to press. Please check websites

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www.knightsbridgeassociation.com