



KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2023

CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW

Hugo Burnand



What more fitting than a coronation to mark the arrival of Spring? The anticipation is evident from the intense yellow crescent of dwarf daffodils clustered around the eastern edge of the Household Cavalry's riding ring. If you saw them, they will have left a beautiful impression even if they have departed by the time you read this. Snow drops were out in force but are now over. The occasional bluebell lingers. Otherwise, we have had a succession of cold wet days leaving the Coronation to look forward to.

Up on the parade ground, Talbot are busy re-turfing the area occupied by Winter Wonderland. Weather is all important. Dry ground allows tractors to roll out large spools of turf that help to speed up the process. In wet weather, short strips must be laid by hand and progress is much slower. The political philosopher Montesquieu believed weather defined the nature of



parliaments. In Hyde Park it defines speed and cost. The drought in March / April 2022 may have helped the 'spoolers' but incurred substantial watering costs. No easy wins!

FOOD WASTE COLLECTIONS

Food waste collection receptacles distributed by Councils have met with a mixed reception. The boxes are fiddly. The renewable energy and waste hierarchy policy logic doesn't always win the argument on the doorstep. The missing ingredient is behaviour change from occupants of flats and houses already constrained for space. However, separating food waste from the household waste stream has been a central government policy goal for at least fifteen years. Some boroughs have picked up on it quicker than others. Further commentary on this important initiative can be found on page 12.

AMENITY SOCIETY FUNDING MODELS

The time has come for the KA to undertake a review of its funding model. No longer are we dealing with private individuals or residencies with planning applications involving minor modifications. Increasingly, we are up against well-funded corporates proposing schemes with prominence in the public realm that could also have profound consequences for adjacent residential communities.

Two issues arise: first, time-scales for the resolution of such cases are long - over two and a half years in a recent still unresolved case - and time incurs financial and human costs. Secondly, the financial and human resource input required from an amenity society is so much greater when protecting its residents against both Council interests and those of well-funded developers.

A recent case involving a second Application for a minor variation is a blatant example of how amenity societies can be forced into bearing unnecessary legal costs. Planning and Licensing combined can extend costs and time-scales still further. The resource asymmetry is further magnified by the fact that amenity society membership fees are often little more than £25 per annum.

Some Councils provide amenity societies with free Licensing support through local Citizens Advice Bureaux. The same could be done for Planning. An alternative would be for amenity societies to withdraw support for residents in cases involving corporate developers leaving those residents most directly affected to marshal their own defence team. A third option would be to raise annual membership fees. None of these options

Carlo di Boyl



Spring daffodils in Hyde Park

addresses the resource asymmetry where Councils and developers draw on full-time salaried staff and amenity societies rely on a small cadre of committed volunteers supported by expensive external consultants. In my view, the model is one-sided and needs to change.

COMMERCIAL WASTE COLLECTIONS and THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE PARTNERSHIP

There is a flash of good news in case you were wondering if there is any. After years of badgering by the KA and latterly the Knightsbridge Partnership, piles of smelly, leaking rubbish left by retailers at the bottom of the steps to Brompton Road and by the post box on the corner of Brompton Road and Montpelier Street, have disappeared. This is a huge improvement and thanks go to the above players and both Councils for making this happen. The Knightsbridge Partnership now has its own commercial waste collection vehicle which will operate in partnership with both RBKC and WCC along the shared boundary of Brompton Road. This should prevent the street scene from lapsing back to its

former degenerative state. The key will be the synchronisation of collection methodologies and times with both Councils. This initiative carries the full support of the Knightsbridge Association.

The next few months are going to be very busy concerning the Licensing situation at Nammos and you can expect to hear from us again, shortly.

With best wishes to you and your families for a joyous Coronation as we break free from winter at last!

Melville Haggard
Chairman April 2023

THE CORONATION and THE ROYAL PARKS



The processional route goes from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Abbey, taking in key areas of the parks along the way, including the Queen Victoria Memorial, The Mall and Admiralty Arch. The procession will see more than 5,000 parading soldiers, a thousand street liners, horses and musicians come together in what is certain to be a spectacular display of British pomp and ceremony. There will be nationwide gun salutes that coincide with the crowning of the King, including a '6-gun salvo' of simultaneous artillery fire on Horse Guards Parade Ground.

The Royal Parks will host live screening sites on 6th May in St James's Park, The Green Park and in three areas of Hyde Park - on the Old Football Pitches, at the Cockpit and on Boathouse Lawn. The screening areas will also house temporary welfare facilities. The Royal Parks has issued guidance on its website for those visiting the parks over the Coronation weekend.

The Royal Parks staff and contractors have been preparing the parks for months to host the Coronation by cleaning and clearing a number of statues, re-gilding and repainting ceremonial gates, removing selected street furniture,

re-seeding grass areas and carrying out additional tree inspections.

It isn't just Royal Parks staff who'll be involved in helping deliver the Coronation – a number of Royal Parks Volunteer Rangers will be assisting the public with wayfinding and providing information at the screening sites. On Monday 8th May, as part of the nationwide Big Help Out initiative, The Royal Parks will be hosting a drop-in session in The Green Park where volunteers can plant blue flowers to map out the River Tyburn which used to run through the park and under Buckingham Palace.

Compared to 1953, the 2023 Coronation is expected to be less ostentatious, with sustainability, one of His Majesty's passions, at its core. In 1953, the principal decorations for the processional route were four twin-spanned arches of tubular steel on The Mall that were illuminated at night. Linking the arches down the route were the long lines of standards mounted with golden crowns and each hung with four scarlet banners bearing the Royal Monogram. This year, The Mall will be adorned with the traditional British flags, with crown-topped flag poles.

PLANNING AND CONSERVATION REPORT

Carol Seymour-Newton

Of the two Planning Appeals referred to in the Annual Report, which took up so much of our time last year, the decision on the former Montpeliano premises on Montpelier Street disappointingly went against the Association and our residents and the one on South Kensington is still ongoing as we go to press.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ESTATE

Chelsfield



The redevelopment of the 3.5 acre site forming the northern end of The Knightsbridge Estate is reaching its conclusion. UGG, makers of the ubiquitous sheepskin footwear, will soon be joining major retailers Burberry and Apple along Brompton Road; four of the six floors of offices at Hooper's Court are now let; the 33 apartments were finished in March and will shortly go on the rental market leaving just the top floor restaurant awaiting a tenant. Hooper's Court, the pedestrian passage between Brompton Road and Basil Street will re-open to the public imminently and London Underground anticipate the much delayed opening of the stepfree entrance to Knightsbridge station towards the end of the year.

THE BERKELEY HOTEL and 33-39 KNIGHTSBRIDGE

The Berkeley Hotel's redevelopment of 33-39 Knightsbridge, designed by the late Richard Rogers RHSP architectural practice, and originally intended as an extension of the Berkeley with additional rooms and residential apartments, is



The crane-like structures overhanging the new hotel

now morphing into The Emory, an entirely new hotel, but which will still be part of the Maybourne group. The entrance will be tucked away in Old Barrack Yard.

THE PENINSULA Grosvenor Place



Designed by Hopkins Architects, with spectacular views overlooking Hyde Park Corner and the Wellington Arch, the Peninsula London anticipates opening in the first half of this year.

The hotel centres around an extensive, off-street courtyard in the style of a classic English garden accessed from Grosvenor Crescent.

In addition to the 190 guest rooms and 25 private residences, the hotel will feature several restaurants, a Spa and Wellness Centre, indoor swimming pool and retail arcade facing on to Grosvenor Place.



The grand entrance to the Peninsula Hotel

55-91 KNIGHTSBRIDGE



The elegant shopfronts of this recently restored stretch of Knightsbridge, between William Street and Wilton Place, are still awaiting occupants.

PAVILION ROAD CARPARK



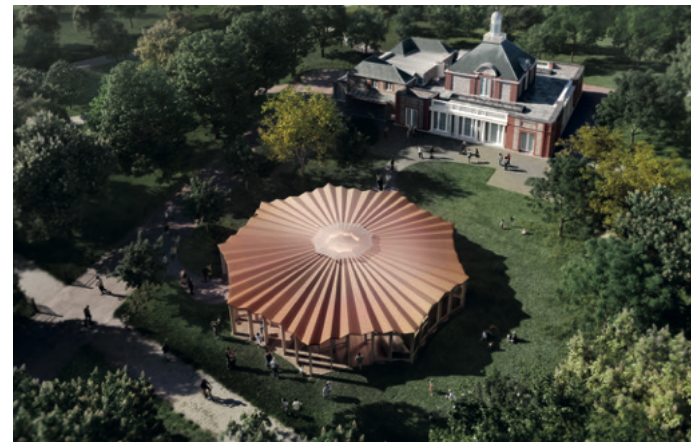
Permission was granted in July 2020 for demolition of the car park and the erection of a mixed use building comprising a boutique hotel, health club, restaurant and retail together with associated cycle parking, landscaping work etc. Work on demolition is finally due to commence in May. We understand there will then be a pause before recommencing in September with completion taking roughly three years. Coinciding with the public realm works

in Sloane Street and major works to 30 – 33 Sloane Street, detailed plans will be crucial to ensuring that traffic can circulate with the least possible disruption.

We anticipate a community liaison group will be set up so that local residents and businesses can raise and discuss any problems which may occur during the course of demolition and construction.

OTHER NEWS

SERPENTINE SUMMER PAVILION 2023



© Lina Ghotmeh – Architecture Courtesy: Serpentine

The 22nd pavilion has been designed by the Lebanese-born, Paris-based architect Lina Ghotmeh and will be unveiled in June 2023. The Pavilion will be titled A table, the French call to sit down together at a table. Lina Ghotmeh says 'A table is an invitation to dwell together, in the same space and around the same table'. Inspired by nature and echoing the grounds and canopies of the trees and its surroundings, the idea of togetherness and community will take centre stage in Ghotmeh's structural architecture.

Built with bio-sourced and low-carbon materials, the structure appears like a skeleton. Sustainably sourced timber ribs are arranged to support a suspended pleated roof.

30-33 SLOANE STREET

An application was submitted last year for partial demolition of the handsome building at 30-33 Sloane Street, which retains the façade but becomes a 5-storey commercial, business and service building with the inclusion of shopfronts and a rooftop restaurant. No. 2 Hans Crescent would be demolished and replaced and the ground floor of 49 Pavilion Road would be reconfigured and extended. The Association attended a presentation by the Cadogan Estate in



cgi of 30–33 Sloane Street showing the proposed 2 extra storeys

July 2022, and made a number of objections prior to commenting to the Council. Cadogan arranged a further meeting with us in recent weeks but our objections to various aspects remained.

IMPERIAL COLLEGE BLACKETT BUILDING, QUEEN'S GATE



An application has been submitted for a mural - 'a new piece of public art' - on the western flank of the Blackett Building, facing Queen's Gate. The design has been prepared through the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP) as part of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and is part of the worldwide 'Ecosystem Restoration Murals' series with the objective of raising awareness of environmental issues.

To date completed works have been installed in Brussels and Houston, with a further one planned for Berlin.

The application has aroused mixed response locally, some feeling that it is a garish intrusion into the rather traditional Victorian surroundings of Queen's Gate, whilst others relish a colourful addition to a blank wall.

The application has yet to be determined.

2–8 RUTLAND GATE.



Here we go again! This 45 room mansion, facing north across Hyde Park, is on the market for a reputed £200m – a drop of £10m on the price paid in 2020.

Built in the 1980s, it replaced a low-rise 1930s building and the one remaining Victorian terrace house. More recently permission was given for considerable extensions and alterations.

HARRODS



Scaffolding going up round Harrods heralds a new lighting scheme to be unveiled later this year.

90 BROMPTON ROAD – PARADOX MUSEUM

An unusual application has been submitted for the former premises of Rochester Big and Tall occupying the 1st floor of 90 Brompton Road – part of Princes Court. The proposal is to convert the premises to an 'interactive museum, shop and offices'. Our planning committee is considering its response as we go to press.



3-11 LANCELOT PLACE

Completion for these five townhouses (left) is anticipated for Spring 2024. Developers are circulating regular updates to local residents.

2-12 BROMPTON ROAD.

Change of use from retail to restaurant was permitted under the new Class E use. It will be home to a French bistro boulangerie. See page 10 “La Serre” in Licensing.

THE MUSEUMS

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

URBAN NATURE PROJECT

The Museum’s plans to turn its grounds into a 5-acre welcoming, accessible and biologically diverse green space as part of the Urban Nature Project are well underway; with exciting progress recently in laying the new garden’s foundation, whilst maintaining welcoming refuge spaces for existing wildlife that already call the gardens home. The gardens are due to open towards the beginning of 2024, and all the staff involved in the Urban Nature Project cannot wait to welcome the public to explore this exciting new outdoor space in South Kensington.

V&A – THE RAMADAN PAVILION

Inspired by the holy month of Ramadan, and designed by architect Shahed Saleem, the Pavilion

Matt Rowe (Construct Studio)



represents the dynamic history of the mosque in Britain and inhabits the Exhibition Road Courtyard from the end of March to 1 May.

GREAT EXHIBITION ROAD FESTIVAL 2023

ONE FOR THE FAMILY!

Angus Cerf



Exhibition Road en fête

Returning for another year on 17–18 June the Festival is a celebration of science and the arts with a weekend of free events for all ages. The weekend will be packed full of events from Imperial College, the Natural History Museum, Science Museum, the V&A and more. There will be an eclectic range of performances on the main stage from the Royal Albert Hall and the Royal

College of Music. Visitors will be able to take part in a hands-on workshop and extract DNA from a strawberry, hear about the biggest dinosaurs that ever lived, or step into a world of virtual reality.

This year, the Festival is celebrating the power of awe and wonder to inspire, motivate change and spark innovation. Ground-breaking art, scientific discoveries, and unique landscapes all contribute to memorable moments that stimulate minds and moods, stirring curiosity for the world around. From the Great Exhibition of 1851 in Hyde Park to the communities, artists, and scientists in South Kensington today, awe-inspiring ideas and

moments of wonder can change the sense of what is possible and motivate people to act and achieve great things.

An exciting range of events are lined up with something for people of all ages, including fascinating talks, music performances and installations. Registration for free and more information available at www.exrdfestival.com

In April, the organisers sent letters giving full details of road closures to local residents and there will be a follow up letter in May. Further information for residents on www.imperial.ac.uk/festival/festival-residents/

LONDON OPEN GARDENS WEEKEND 10 – 11 JUNE



Andrew Wilson

Cadogan Place Garden South

The annual event organised by the London Parks and Gardens (LP&G) charity will see more than 100 beautiful private gardens opening their gates to the public – including locally Ennismore Gardens and the lower Rutland Gate garden and Cadogan Place north and south gardens.

Tickets can be booked ahead on line at www.londongardenstrust.org

Please check all details on this website.

LP&G were particularly excited to announce that for the first time 10 Downing Street would also be joining in. The ballot for tickets opened to the general public on Thursday 16 March.

The event supports the year-long work of the LP&G charity to protect the green capital from threats including harmful planning applications.

THE ROYAL PARKS

ANNUAL EVENTS SUMMER CONCERTS



BST Concert 2022

Once again, this year Hyde Park will host 'American Express presents British Summer Time' (BST) – its tenth anniversary – Hyde Park Winter Wonderland and The Royal Parks Half Marathon as well as other smaller events. These will all entail some road closures and details of these can be found on the website royalparks.org.uk

The BST events will straddle the two weekends beginning Friday 23 June to Sunday 9 July with midweek entertainment 26–29 June and 3–5 July. Acts featured this year include PINK, Guns and Roses, Take That and Billy Joel.

Winter Wonderland will again run from mid-November through to the first few days of January – further details in the Autumn Newsletter.

Any questions/comments/complaints the number to call: 0300 061 2222

WINTER WONDERLAND 2023

In November 2022 Hyde Park Winter Wonderland returned for the second year of its ticketed model. The event welcomed over 2 million visitors from London, the UK and overseas for festive fun on Hyde Park's Parade Ground. The site itself included favourite features including the Giant Wheel, Magical Ice Kingdom, Angel's Market, circus shows and the UK's largest outdoor ice rink, as well as over 100 rides and attractions. 2022 saw the introduction of the Hyde Park Winter Wonderland mobile app, allowing customers to book rides and purchase game tokens, navigate the site via a map and even order food. The event will return in November 2023, with something for everyone from spectacular shows to high adrenaline rides and family favourite activities.

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Joshua Atkins



Winter Wonderland 2022

LICENSING REPORT

Paul Meitner

Yet again plenty of activity on the licensing front, with late night opening and tables and chairs the main causes of concern.

DOMIO

70 Brompton Road (formerly Topshop)



This site was the subject of an application by Sheesh for a multi-floor bar and restaurant, with late night opening and off premises alcohol sales, to which we and many residents successfully objected. The new operator's solicitors have requested a meeting with us so they can present a revised layout plan, which involves a home interior showroom, with ancillary restaurant on the first floor, which would be subject to standard WCC restaurant conditions and operate within 'core hours'.

LA SERRE

2-12 Brompton Road

Both the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum (KNF) and KA objected to this application, as the proposed conditions of use were not consistent with WCC model conditions. Following dialogue with their Solicitors the applicant agreed to a revised schedule of hours and conditions, including no deliveries

between 11pm and 7am, a cap on the number of patrons of 150 and a Noise and Dispersal Plan. In return we (the KNF and the KA) withdrew our objections and the licensing hearing was cancelled. Many thanks to the KNF for leading on this.

360 CAFÉ

176 Brompton Road

Many neighbouring outlets complained about late night noise, unauthorised tables and chairs in front of adjoining premises and obstructed access. We objected to the tables and chairs application. RBKC Councillor Sof McVeigh has offered vigorous support when the application comes before the Licensing Committee.

LORD'S BURGER & PIZZAS

2 Montpelier Street

This operator had more tables and chairs on the pavement than permitted by his licence (he also exceeded the permitted area for pavement occupation). We reported this to the enforcement team at WCC and they duly followed up with the operator.

TREATS

7-11 South Kensington Arcade

This concerned several Residents' Associations in the area, as it involved late night opening up to 1am. Following objections from the KA and other RA's the applicant removed the proposed extension of hours for the sale of alcohol, which will be brought back to 8pm.

WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL (WCC) LICENSING

We have offered to join a working party that will review the existing policy and look at possible changes, with a particular focus on intensification of use, the impact of later terminal hours and the interchangeability of use currently permitted between retail and restaurant use, which makes licensing the only avenue for objection to new applications.

TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT REPORT

Chris Barrass and Simon Birkett



THE CORONATION

There will be many road closures, parking suspensions and changes to public transport for the Coronation (Saturday 6 May) in the week before and over the Coronation Weekend (Saturday 6 May – Monday 8 May 2023). Details were not available at the time of writing, but it seems likely that there will be major restrictions to cope with large crowds, street events and the security needs of visiting Heads of State. You can register for TfL updates and alerts at tfl.gov.uk/status-updates/major-works-and-events/coronation.

SLOANE STREET FUTURE

The scale of the project to improve the Sloane Street public realm is impressive. However, the works are having a major impact on a wide area with Sloane Street northbound closed until at least August 2023 and southbound then closed until at least October 2024. After initial

An image of the completed project



© Cadogan Estates Ltd

'teething problems' with signage and other communications, we are pleased to see the launch of their new regular e-newsletter to provide updates to the local community and about programme progress. This is expected to include information on bus diversions, construction news and other traffic information. An online drop-in session is planned for April 2023 which would allow people to ask questions of the project team, with other sessions to follow. For GDPR reasons, please sign up to their new e-newsletter for residents at <https://sloanestreetfuture.co.uk/> e.g. to get invited to the online drop-in. Please contact FM Conway's Public Liaison Officers directly at sloane.street@fmconway.co.uk if you have any urgent questions, concerns or feedback.

WIDER CONSTRUCTION AND UTILITY WORKS

As you know, the KA's Transport and Environment Committee has been concerned about the collateral impacts of the Sloane Street works on diverted traffic. First, it is worth saying that traffic and buses can still 'move' southbound on Sloane Street during the current phase. However, the works have coincided with road closures in Beauchamp Place, William Street, Wilton Place and elsewhere in the area. These additional works have severely restricted route options but had the beneficial effect of reducing rat-running through those roads.

Other major projects are planned e.g. at 30-33 and 51-52 Sloane Street. In practice, this means that TfL has had to divert non-local traffic from Knightsbridge (through signage and traffic light phasing further west). Inevitably however, the road works mean that vehicles can get stuck in traffic when things go wrong or at peak times. In general, unless you know the latest state of the side-street works, it may be faster (in the end) to stick on the A4, Knightsbridge and other red-routes. Please check journey options and likely timings before travelling e.g. using Apple or Google maps or TfL status updates.

ULTRA LOW EMISSION ZONE

The Ultra Low Emission Zone ("ULEZ") was expanded from central London to the north and south circular roads on 25 October 2021. TfL's 'first year report' estimates that concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), a toxic gas, were

21% lower at roadsides in inner London than they would have been without the scheme. This is consistent with monitoring data which shows that concentrations of NO₂ in Brompton Road were 36 micrograms per cubic metre (ug/m³) in 2022 compared to 56 ug/m³ in 2019 i.e. a 36% reduction pre/post-pandemic in the air pollution that we breathe. The latter (bigger percentage reduction) includes the benefit of other measures such as more electric buses and taxis.

DOG POO!

During the very dry weather in February, it was difficult to walk along pavements in local residential streets without seeing dog poo (or stepping on it)! Councils recognise that the problem has got worse in recent years. RBKC and Westminster have tried signage and public awareness campaigns but these are clearly not enough. We encourage you to report (anonymously if you want) all instances of 'dog fouling' in your street or square on the www.fixmystreet.com/ website (which can be bookmarked on your mobile phone to make it easier to include photos). You can also provide descriptions to Westminster of offending dog owners, their dogs and times to aid enforcement at www.westminster.gov.uk/report-it/animal-or-dog-nuisance (which can include £100 on-the-spot fines or prosecution and a fine of up to £1,000). A further escalation of enforcement action might include increased patrols by enforcement officers and collaboration with local law enforcement – perhaps starting with targeted campaigns in hotspots at obvious dog-walking times of day (eg. 7am and 10-11pm). Our thanks to Westminster City Council and Councillor Hitchcock. Please warn your dog walker.

FOOD WASTE RECYCLING

Westminster City Council introduced its residential food waste recycling service in Knightsbridge in late February and early March 2023 for suitable properties. They have introduced this service because around 30% of the rubbish thrown away in Westminster is food waste which can be recycled. Everything collected is sent for processing in an anaerobic digestion plant in Hertfordshire, England which uses food waste to create biogas for generating electricity and heating homes. This plant can

also transform food waste to a biofertiliser which will be used on farmland to grow food. If residents have any queries or feedback about the food waste service they should contact the Recycling Team directly on foodwaste@westminster.gov.uk or the Council's call centre on 020 7461 2000. For further service information, please see www.westminster.gov.uk/food-waste-recycling-expansion.



In other news, we are pleased to see that RBKC has issued fixed penalty notices of £150 to people in Cheval Place who have been dumping rubbish repeatedly outside Savills' office in Brompton Road. Fines of £2,500 can be issued by a magistrate if people are found guilty of the offence in court.

INDOOR AIR QUALITY

Simon Birkett, Clean Air in London

The Chief Medical Officer's Annual Report in 2022 was about 'Air pollution'. At least five of his 15 recommendations were about indoor air quality where most people spend 80-90% of their time. There's a lot that you can do to protect yourself. In general, the most important step is to understand that buildings can have ventilation, air conditioning and filtration, none of these or any combination. Opening windows can improve ventilation and reduce COVID-19 risk but it will tend to increase energy bills during hot summers and cold winters. It will obviously help less when the air is bad outside. In public buildings, schools and offices with mechanical ventilation, you might ask if the HVAC system uses regularly maintained air filtration that complies with current technical standards such as BS EN 16798-3:2017, BS EN ISO 16890:2016, BS EN ISO 10121-2:2014 and Eurovent 4-23. You might also ask when the ducting was last cleaned. Good air quality and low energy use can be achieved using three ePM1 70% efficiency bag filters in a typical HVAC configuration ie. two on the supply air side and one on the recirculation air side. These particle filters can quickly reduce the presence of particles and COVID-19 and other viruses if sensible other precautions are followed.

Facilities managers might consider testing the building's indoor air relative to the World Health Organisation's air quality guidelines and good practice statements published in September 2021. At home, key sources of air pollution often include cleaning products, furniture and carpets, mould and damp, consumer sprays and gas cooking (which produces high levels of nitrogen dioxide). It can therefore be worth checking product labels and official online advice and replacing your gas hob with an induction one (which should also be quieter, easier to clean and produce less 'fug'). In homes without mechanical ventilation, you might consider opening one or two windows from time to time – while always paying careful attention to security – after rain when pollution levels tend to be lower. Standalone air filtration can also be used in homes or buildings where mechanical ventilation doesn't exist or doesn't reach regularly. In the end, it's important to check outdoor air pollution forecasts (such as www.londonair.org.uk) relative to new WHO guidelines, reduce your use of harmful pollutants and exposure to them and take a few sensible precautions. There is lots more information at www.cleanair.london.

LAW AND ORDER REPORT

Frances Blois and Anne Wright

In her recent analysis of the Policing and Crime Survey Nickie Aiken MP has set 5 priorities with residents wanting to see more Police Officers on the streets and action taken in conjunction with Westminster City Council to have a zero tolerance to crime and anti-social behaviour. The priorities, some more relevant to Knightsbridge than others, are:

1. Increase police presence across all our neighbourhoods
2. Re-introduce estate wardens to tackle anti-social behaviour
3. Enforce a zero-tolerance policy on marijuana smoking in public places
4. Re-establish the Integrated Street Engagement Unit to tackle begging and ASB
5. Create a single Police Commander of Westminster

Inspector Sadler held a briefing for Safer Neighbour Teams in South Westminster with presentations from two Panel Chairmen, the KA and The Soho Society Chairman – very different areas with different demographics and activities. Sgt Dave Rowsell was in attendance. Dave Alford has now left the team after many years and his replacement will be in post in April hopefully before the next Ward Panel Meeting. The local priorities remain unchanged, although we all need to remain vigilant.

GANGS USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO TARGET WEARERS OF LUXURY JEWELLERY AND WATCHES

The Westminster and Belgravia Police team have a number of rather frightening real-life stories of unsuspecting local residents, restaurant diners and hotel residents falling prey to organised gangs who have been tipped off that they are wearers of a certain watch maker or piece of jewellery. Luxury watches and jewellery as status symbols are being stolen to order across London including the Knightsbridge area. Social Media accounts are being scrutinised by organised criminal groups for evidence of who wears what and where. The number of robberies rose markedly in the hot summer when watches

and jewellery were more visible. Tackling robberies such as these, particularly knife enabled street-based robberies is something our Police are giving priority to, but they need our help to report matters to them so that they can improve the chance of arresting suspects.

THE ABUSE OF SHORT-TERM LETTING

Westminster Council has been actively investigating the number of apartments in residential blocks that are being used for short terms holiday stays. In some cases, particularly in the summer months, the proportion of short term lets outnumbered those of long-term residents – notwithstanding the required annual 90 day letting limit. In Westminster alone there are 13,000 Airbnb properties. If you live in such an apartment block you will have almost certainly experienced the constant coming and going of visitors' suitcases and luggage. Westminster is concerned that the overuse of residential properties in this manner allows lower residential rather than business rates to be paid to them – not to mention consequent higher rents and lesser number of long-term rental properties in Central London.

In December last year following a question from Nickie Aiken, Conservative MP for Cities of London and Westminster, the Prime Minister confirmed that the government was committed to introducing a new tourist accommodation registration scheme for short term holiday lets. Further the government would be consulting on whether planning permissions should be required especially in tourist hotspots – such as Knightsbridge. The Association is keeping watch on the progress of this pending legislation and will report further in the next newsletter.

REPORT FROM THE METROPOLITAN POLICE BROMPTON AND HANS TOWN CLUSTER

We have as residents in this area of Knightsbridge been asked to keep vigilant and report any concerns to our principle contact Ben Tivey (Benjamin.tivey@met.police.uk – 07825966793).

The area police team are aware of an increase in begging and thefts around the ward and are currently planning an operation this month to help tackle increased crime and nuisance.

Volunteers are being sought for Neighbourhood Watch. If you would like to either help or volunteer your services, please do contact Ben.

E-BIKES



There is no doubt that e-bikes are a convenient and sustainable form of travel and have certainly helped the Capital get back to work post Covid.

News too that Paramedics will be using electric bikes in a London trial for speed of access to call outs underlines their now accepted and established use.

But there are obvious concerns with e-bike users blocking pavements and forcing pedestrians into the road to avoid them.

Westminster have introduced fines although a £10 penalty is hardly something of a deterrent for most users. In certain areas users continue to be charged by the app until the bike is removed and indeed bikes can be confiscated in cases where there is a significant safety risk.

Both Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster are looking to provide dedicated parking bays for e-bikes and to enter into agreements with operators regarding their use, but this will only provide a solution if the bikes are used responsibly.

Lime UK are considering measures to resolve the situation including GPS-based no parking zones, mandatory end trip photos to help review rider parking, an enhanced system of rider education, warnings, fines, bans, to double the team retrieving the bikes, and a London-wide best-parking-practice campaign.

We will see what further action is taken to limit this current safety concern for all pedestrians but particularly those who are blind or disabled.

LOCAL SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAMS

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

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

Other useful links to note are:

Police websites www.met.police.uk and www.police.uk

Action Fraud www.actionfraud.police.uk

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

Email: Brompton.SNT@met.police.uk
Tel: 020 8246 9247
Mobile: 07825 966 793

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

KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

AGM 2022/23 and 60th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Everyone was delighted to be welcomed back to the Ballroom of the Mandarin Oriental for the first time since January 2019. The Mandarin pulled out all the stops and we welcomed many guests including the Cllr Hamza Taouzzale, Lord Mayor of Westminster and Cllr David Lindsay, Mayor of Kensington and Chelsea.

AGM 2023/24

We are happy to announce that the next AGM will again return to the Mandarin Oriental.

The date for your diary is Monday 15 January.



Chairman Melville Haggard welcomes guests to the 2022/23 AGM

INTERVIEW WITH DENNIS HERCULES – our local hero

Meet Dennis Hercules who is one of a 9-strong team (from the Westminster ward) responsible for maintaining our local streets in the Knightsbridge area. Dennis is originally from St Kitts and Nevis and has been in charge of maintaining the Rutland and Montpelier Streets for the past seven years. He works extremely hard beginning his shift at 5.30



every morning and finishing early afternoon seven days a week. He thoroughly enjoys his job in all weathers although the cold does get to him. He is a father of eight children and always smiling. I see him every morning on Rutland Gate when I walk my dog around 8am and we always have a friendly chat together. *Didi Malek*

Due to problems with the postal service we apologise if those receiving hard copies only do not receive them before the Coronation.

USEFUL NUMBERS

Noise: WCC **020 7641 2000**
RBKC **020 7361 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

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

REPORT A FAULT

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

www.westminster.gov.uk/report-it

www.rbkc.gov.uk/report-it

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

Cllr. Sof McVeigh Cllr.sof.mcveigh@rbkc.gov.uk