



KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2024

CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW

Dear Member,

The arrival of Spring has brought with it noticeable change. Developers seeking planning approvals for substantial redevelopments or refurbishments in Knightsbridge are now approaching the Association at an early stage to seek our views and input into their plans. One Knightsbridge Green and the Park Tower hotel are two cases in point, discussed in more detail on page 3. Encouraged by Westminster City Council, developers appear keen to oblige. We welcome a change of heart that contrasts with recent experience in Montpelier Street where a substantial redevelopment dragged on for three years in an atmosphere of hostility and suspicion in the absence of any meaningful consultation.

What is the purpose of an amenity society if it cannot change outcomes? Outcomes are not necessarily binary. They are usually far more nuanced and can reflect cohesion within an amenity society and its ability to foster a sense of community. Looked at this way, management of residents' expectations becomes as important as



South Carriage Drive showing the many pedestrians enjoying the wide expanse of traffic-free tarmac! There are only five crossing points from Kensington Road/Knightsbridge into Hyde Park. Those wishing to go from one end to the other either walk along one of the pavements or one of the Park paths.

delivering an 'ideal' outcome. We are not running up the white flag, merely seeking a realistic appreciation of what can be achieved when, as an amenity society, you sit fourth in the great 'chain of being' behind the National Planning Policy Framework, the London City Plan, the two local authorities' plans, and the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Plan!

The Royal Parks (TRP) consultation on the permanent weekday closure of South Carriage Drive in Hyde Park is being strongly contested by the Association working closely with the Knightsbridge

Partnership and the Neighbourhood Forum. We are hopeful that the combined weight of representations from residents and businesses will make TRP reconsider their approach. Our contention is that decisions made by TRP can affect communities adjacent to the Parks profoundly, as evidenced by acute traffic congestion and pollution in Knightsbridge following the temporary closure of South Carriage Drive. This has raised concerns amongst residents about TRP's accountability since becoming a charity in 2017 and, in light of this, I set

out below the formal position as described in TRP's Annual Report:

“The Royal Parks are owned by the Sovereign in right of the Crown. The Secretary of State for DCMS has management powers for the parks under the Crown Lands Act 1851. The Royal Parks was established as a Charity on 16 March 2017, underpinned by a Contract for Provision of Services between The Royal Parks and DCMS. Under this Contract, The Royal Parks was given a licence for 10 years to manage the parks, with the freedom to pursue its own strategy as an independent body. The operational risk of running the parks and of maintaining the parks’ assets transferred to The Royal Parks, whilst the risk for major asset failure remained with DCMS. The Contract with the Secretary of State provides The Royal Parks with a fee for service and the ability to generate income using the parks and their operational assets.”

The Knightsbridge Association along with the Knightsbridge Partnership and Neighbourhood Forum met TRP representatives on 22 March to explain the background to our respective objections. We received assurances that our consultation responses would be seen by TRP's trustee board along with recommendations being collated by external consultants. TRP's trustee board will review these in May and a further consultation to address implementation could follow later.

It is most fortunate that the South Carriage Drive consultation coincides with the Knightsbridge Partnership Place Strategy discussed in more detail on pages 11–12 and the Neighbourhood Forum comments on page 11. The Association contributed proactively to both, attending all three Place Strategy consultations. The confluence of these two significant events, coupled with the Royal Borough's consultation on proposed improvements in Beauchamp Place, provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity to improve public realm in Knightsbridge.

Westminster continues to consult on its Westminster After dark / Night-Time Economy (NTE) proposals. In our view, the economic advantages of a 24-hour economy are over emphasised and understate the costs to the economy and quality of life affected by night-time activity. Economic revenues are relatively easy to record while the cost of broken nights, drunkenness and accidents fall to the NHS and waste collection team to deal with and are

less well documented. The consultation needs considered responses from A&E departments and waste management operators within Westminster's jurisdiction if we are to piece together a credible cost / benefit analysis on which to frame policy. Soho is the most affected area, but the NTE could roll in many directions while food, beverage and entertainment are being promoted to fill the gap left by an under-performing national economy. Knightsbridge residents are potentially in the front line even if they are not aware of it. For further details see page 6.

In the Association's Spring Newsletter 2022, we said “it is hard not to consider what residents' associations could do for their members if ever faced with circumstances like those unfolding in cities across Ukraine”. Since then, we have heard some European countries announcing the re-introduction of military conscription while others are reinforcing schemes already in place. The changing security environment was reflected in a reference to conscription in a recent speech by the head of the British Army. In the last great conflict many amenity societies, including the Knightsbridge Association, did not exist and only came into being in the 1950s and 1960s. It now seems moot to ask what role, if any, might amenity societies play in civil defence if the need were ever to arise again?

Nickie Aiken, MP for the Cities of London and Westminster, announced earlier this year her decision not to seek re-election for personal reasons at the next general election. We congratulate Nickie for her foresight and perseverance



Nickie Aiken

in sponsoring The Pedicabs (London) Bill set to receive Royal Assent in the coming weeks. The Knightsbridge Association has campaigned tirelessly for TfL to regulate pedicabs and it has taken over ten years to achieve this outcome. For further details see page 9. This, along with Nickie's support for the Association over the Nammos licensing case, leaves her with a legacy that will be appreciated by Knightsbridge residents.

I hope you all enjoyed the Easter break and that the summer holidays to follow will refresh and inspire you.

Melville Haggard *Chairman*

PLANNING AND CONSERVATION REPORT

Carol Seymour-Newton

There is still no shortage of major developments in the pipeline – some already prefaced in the Annual Report – so Knightsbridge looks to be blighted by scaffolding and hoardings for some years yet.

THE PARK TOWER HOTEL



The proposals would see the overall height of the tower, shown as existing above and below, increased by a third

A planning application is likely to be submitted in early summer for a major refurbishment of this hotel. This proposes, inter alia, some very welcome improvements at ground level but, not so welcome, a considerable increase in the height of the tower. The current building is



already higher than almost every building in Knightsbridge, the Barracks tower excepted, and the extra height proposed would have a significant effect on views from across the area including from Hyde Park and Belgrave Square.

If planning permission is granted work is anticipated to begin by the end of the year with completion in mid 2027 and reopening in early 2028.

I KNIGHTSBRIDGE GREEN



We have held three meetings with Berkeley Estate Asset Management about the proposed redevelopment of the existing late 1950s building previously owned by Prudential. Refurbished in 2000, the retail space looks dated, and the offices have become increasingly difficult to let. Current office workers number 280 and the redevelopment is expected to raise this number to around 2000. Plans involve demolishing approximately 50 percent of the building and replacing that and the remaining structure, with higher quality office accommodation offering an enhanced

carbon performance. Height will increase by approximately four metres to 56 metres. There will be no extension to the existing one storey basement. The Association supports the proposals in principle but has expressed strong concerns about structural ‘massing’ on residents at 199 Knightsbridge and Lancelot Place and the need to avoid ‘canyon-like’ effects in Raphael Street and Brompton Road. (See also page 11.)

JUMEIRAH LOWNDES HOTEL



Owners of this hotel at the lower end of Lowndes Square, are also considering their options to upgrade or redevelop the site. The KA committee was invited to a meeting to be shown their initial thinking. The site is fairly constricted and is typical of an updated 1970s building with insufficient floor to ceiling heights and small rooms by current standards. Staff facilities are inadequate and energy efficiency and the carbon footprint could be considerably improved. The preference would be to demolish and go down (not up) for better servicing and staff facilities but this may not be allowed by Westminster City Council on sustainability grounds. If all goes well a planning application is anticipated this summer. It is too early to give dates for on-site works. Jumeirah are working closely with the Grosvenor Estate whose perimeter they abut. Jumeirah is a sister hotel of the Jumeirah Carlton Tower in Cadogan Place.

EMORY HOTEL

At last – work having started in 2016 - the Berkeley Hotel’s redevelopment of the adjoining building, 33-39 Knightsbridge, is nearing completion. It will be known as the Emory hotel. This is the building towards Hyde Park Corner with the crane like protrusions hanging from the roof. Each of the 60 rooms will be a suite.

It is due to open in mid-late April

THE PAVILION ROAD CAR PARK SITE

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 some retail provision with associated landscaping, cycle parking etc. A planning application for ‘minor variations’ to allow for an increase in hotel rooms from 120 to 154 was submitted to RBKC in February. It is anticipated that demolition work could begin in September.

Construction work is likely to cause considerable disruption as access to the site is somewhat restricted.



NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

Urban Nature Project

This exciting and imaginative scheme is fast nearing completion and on track to re-open in the Summer. As we go to press the new gardens are filling with innumerable plants, starting with the large tree ferns. These will feature in the Evolution Garden, transporting visitors back to the forests of the Devonian and Carboniferous Periods. In total 85 ferns will replicate the forest of the past that created the fossil fuels used today. Also in the Evolution Garden, beautiful brass inlays will help to mark the passage of time through a changing world. When the gardens re-open it will be possible to weave through the fronds of the ferns and be taken on a journey of how life evolved and changed during this time.

Funding for this ambitious project has been contributed by, amongst others the Heritage



The newly planted tree ferns

Fund, The Cadogan Charity, The Wolfson Foundation and the Garfield Weston Foundation.

Amongst the innovative ways of raising money to reach the funding necessary to complete the project, the Museum introduced a scheme for individual members of the public to donate amounts for anything from £50 to sponsor a square metre of the garden, £250 to engrave a name on the

jetty railings in the wildlife garden, to £10,000 to have a personal engraving on a brass plaque on one of the historic benches in the Cromwell Road entrance crescent.

SERPENTINE GALLERY

Summer Pavilion 2024.

In February the Serpentine Gallery announced that Seoul-based Korean architect Minsuk Cho and his firm Mass Studies had been selected to design the 23rd Pavilion. This will be unveiled at Serpentine South on 5th June with Goldman Sachs supporting the annual project for the 10th consecutive year.

Titled *Archipelagic Void*, the Pavilion will consist of five 'islands' designed around an open space. Mass Studies envisions a void defined by a series of smaller, adaptable structures located at its periphery, intertwining with the park's natural ecology and its temporal conditions. The structures will form a constellation that shapes a singular central circular void. The central void will act like the madang, a small courtyard

Photo Mok Jungwook; © Mass Studies. Courtesy: Serpentine



found in old Korean houses accommodating rich spatial narratives ranging from individual everyday activities to large collective events.

Throughout the Summer and until October, the Serpentine Pavilion 2024 will become a platform for Serpentine's live and events programme.

LICENSING REPORT

Paul Meitner

A relatively quiet period for licensing applications, here is a summary of the more important ones.

BULGARI HOTEL RESTAURANT and BAR 4 Knightsbridge Green

This involved live and recorded music, late night refreshments and the sale of alcohol, until Midnight (Monday to Wednesday) and 1.30 am – 2.00 am. (Thursday to Saturday). We expressed our concerns, as the proposed closing times were well beyond Westminster’s definition of core hours. The application was heard on 7 December; despite our objections (and those of several residents, including those at 199 Knightsbridge), permission was granted, subject to a set of mandatory conditions, including CCTV monitoring of patrons and noise restrictions.

UEFA FAN MEETING POINT Hyde Park

Those of you who are keen football fans will know that the UEFA 2024 Champion’s League final will take place at Wembley Stadium on Saturday 1 June. As part of the arrangements for managing and coordinating the movement of the crowds a Fan Meeting Point will be set up in an enclosed

space north of the Parade Ground in Hyde Park, and will include live music, dance and a film exhibition, from 10.00 a.m. until 9.30 p.m. It is not clear from the advertised notice exactly which days (other than 1 June) the Meeting Point will be in operation, we will notify our members if this becomes a matter for concern.

WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL (WCC) Westminster After Dark

WCC sought the views of its Residents’ Associations (RAs) and other organisations on the night- time economy and its effects on local residents. We expressed our concerns, including the lack of focus on noise and an over reliance on historic data, rather than on projections. The consultation is continuing.

LE PAIN QUOTIDIEN 15-17 Exhibition Road

This application included leaving Tables and Chairs on the pavement until 11 p.m. each night. We lodged an objection in support of the Brompton Association, who took the lead as the premises are in their area. Unfortunately, the application was granted.

TRAFFIC AND ENVIRONMENT REPORT

Chris Barrass and Simon Birkett

SOUTH CARRIAGE DRIVE

The Royal Parks (TRP) announced and held a consultation on the proposed permanent weekday road closure of South Carriage Drive (SCD) between 5 February and 17 March 2024.

SCD has been closed to traffic on Sundays for living memory. In 2020, TRP consulted and trialled an extension of this closure to include Saturdays as part of its stated commitment to reduce the volume of ‘cut-through’ traffic in the park. At the same time, Traffic for London (TfL) introduced a new cycle lane on Park Lane that intersects with SCD. TRP decided to temporarily close SCD to all traffic, seven days a week, allegedly to address safety

concerns between cars and cyclists. This closure has been in place for over three years.

The KA’s long-standing position has been that SCD should be open to two-way traffic at least five days a week. We understand that this could be achieved, even with the new cycle lane in Park Lane, by letting cyclists use part or all of the northern side of the road space between the Queen Elizabeth Gates.

The KA worked with the Knightsbridge Partnership (i.e. the Business Improvement District) (KP) and the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum (KNF) in preparing its consultation response. During this time, the KP asked its transport consultants

to consider how best to re-open SCD from a technical perspective. The consultants proposed eastbound only re-opening of SCD so that all cycle traffic could be funnelled through the northern side of the Queen Elizabeth Gate with all road traffic exiting through the southern side.

The KA is well aware that people, businesses and cultural institutions in Knightsbridge hold strong and sometimes opposite views on the closure of SCD. In any event, there are winners and losers whether SCD is opened or closed. For example, Montpelier Street and Trevor Street were popular rat-runs for taxis, minicabs and others when SCD was open e.g. for those travelling from the Oxford Street area to Knightsbridge, South Kensington or Harrods. Some businesses (and residents) immediately adjacent to SCD and those in favour of cycling or walking prefer it closed. Others want it open.

After considering different views, the KA wrote to Andrew Scattergood, Chief Executive of TRP, in response to the consultation strongly objecting to the proposed weekday road closure of SCD and emphasising our championing of the opening of SCD for more than 20 years. Our letter expressed concern that the closure of SCD has forced traffic along Kensington Road, Knightsbridge and Brompton Road and reduced the resilience of the traffic network, with consequent impacts on air pollution, congestion and road traffic collisions. We also referred to the KA's previous correspondence with TRP where we encouraged them to work with TfL to improve the cycling and pedestrian infrastructure along the Broad Walk which is closely related to the February 2024 consultation.

The KA also said that it was aware of the KP's response to the consultation which included a 'compromise' proposal to make SCD eastbound only to traffic. The KA therefore urged TRP to enter into a genuine dialogue with the KA, KP, the KNF and others about how SCD could be re-opened to two-way traffic and encouraged TRP to explore the KP's proposal if two-way opening proves impossible.

After the consultation, the KA, KP and KNF met Darren Share (Director of Parks) and Jason Taylor (Hyde Park Manager) on Friday 22 March to discuss the consultation. TRP had not yet received details of the consultation responses and was at pains to emphasise that it had an open mind on the consultation outcome. This seemed

very genuinely sincere. They were also open to considering options other than simple permanent closure or re-opening e.g. the KP's proposed 'compromise' or undertaking further work. An analysis of the consultation result and outcome is expected to be published in "late Spring 2024" (which ends on 21 June). Whatever is decided, TRP would need to undertake a lot of further work before implementing its decision e.g. new road layout.

BEAUCHAMP PLACE

In parallel with the SCD consultation, RBKC consulted on proposed Beauchamp Place Streetscape Improvements between 12 February and 24 March 2024. The KA responded that it is keen to see Beauchamp Place improved but it objected to the current proposals because there is no detail on how the tables and chairs and outside activity would be managed or the detail or impact of the traffic changes. In our view the street needs a greater flow of traffic not "traffic calming" which would displace traffic towards Scotch House Corner or through the Ovingtons and add 'friction' to westbound traffic in Brompton Road. If the road is reduced to a narrow single lane each way, with a new traffic light in the middle and loading not drop-off bays, it could come to a standstill whenever a taxi or minicab stops for a passenger i.e. similar to Hans Road at the moment. The problems in RBKC on the north side of Brompton Road and in Montpelier Street are unfortunate precedents for the proposed scheme. The KA asked to be consulted at an early stage on revisions to the scheme.

KNIGHTSBRIDGE PLACE STRATEGY

As mentioned on page 11, the Knightsbridge Partnership (KP) has been undertaking a massive co-design project for the Knightsbridge area.

The most significant change being considered from a traffic perspective would be a ban of the right turn northbound from Sloane Street, except for buses and taxis which would complete a 'left hook' right turn, as this would allow the phases of light at Scotch House Corner to be reduced from four to three, with a potential significant increase in capacity there. The consultants think that the number of other vehicles being affected by the ban would be fairly small.

Our main concerns or questions about the traffic proposals are whether they would result in the displacement of traffic from Brompton Road to Knightsbridge (i.e. the road), Kensington Road,

Exhibition Road or other streets or a loss of resilience to the wider traffic network e.g. for the sole benefit of Brompton Road businesses. It is still possible to send comments to place@knightsbridgepartnership.com.

ILLUMINATED ADVERTISEMENTS



A number of local planning applications or similar have been submitted or approved recently for illuminated advertisements. In reviewing these, we have been keen to reduce the risk that parts of Knightsbridge might begin to look like Piccadilly Circus. Bright light at night has also been shown to affect sleep.

Our research has highlighted the importance of seeking planning conditions or other controls. These should specify: drawings in the application or subsequently approved by the council; static images with no 'flickering'; lighting (colour) temperature limited to 3000K (i.e. 'neutral' between 2000K ('warm') and 6000K ('cold') with the warmer the better); and brightness e.g. complying with the Institution of Lighting Professionals' guidance (PLG 05/23) on display advertising including Table 10.4. Brightness should be limited to 300 cd/m³ (nits) at night with a curfew between 11pm and 7am. Lux is a similar measure.

The brightness of Harvey Nichols, Burberry and Harrods illuminated ads can sometimes seem to hurt the eyes late at night (e.g. if sitting in a taxi stuck in traffic). It is also very important that wildlife in the Royal Parks is protected with a transition from dark to light. Brompton Road and Knightsbridge (i.e. the road) should be part of that transition, not a stark wall of light.

UPGRADING STORM WATER DRAINAGE



FM Conway, Westminster's preferred contractor, is spending several weeks upgrading storm water drains, replacing pavements and undertaking other improvement works in Cheval Place, Fairholt Street, Montpelier Walk and Rutland Street. These works are part of an ongoing maintenance programme that has benefited Knightsbridge over many years.

SLOANE STREET FUTURE



Last but not least, don't forget to check the sloanestreetfuture.co.uk website and sign up for their email newsletter for regular updates about their programme. These are valuable and have got much better over time. You can also email questions, concerns or feedback to their Public Liaison Officers at FM Conway at sloane.street@fmconway.co.uk or call Helen McConnell or Cate Green on 07917 518 529 or 07443 077 444. Please also visit their website to book a place at their next online meeting with residents which is likely to take place in May 2024.

LAW AND ORDER REPORT

Anne Wright and Frances Blois

The main message is to ensure that any crime incident however large or small is reported to 999, if an emergency or, 101 or the Met Police website. The hard-working Safer Neighbourhood team will see the reports and take any necessary action. This has been proved lately following an incident when the team visited to take statements and follow up on the incident.

PEDICABS



Through the hard work of Nickie Aiken MP, a mention in the King's Speech and assisted by a number of local residents' associations including the Knightsbridge Association and many others, after 10 years, 4 Private Members Bills and a government-backed Bill the Pedicabs Bill has passed through Parliament and is on its way to becoming law.

DANGEROUS DOGS

Please be aware that there some dogs being exercised in the area which may be aggressive. If an incident occurs, please report this to the Police.

Through a local WhatsApp group members have been made aware of a number of young people on bicycles in Ennismore Gardens and other Knightsbridge areas. They are usually clad in black with masks and are responsible for watch and mobile thefts as well as drug dealing and sometimes breaking into cars which often belong to visitors. The Police Patrols have now been increased in these areas. In the case of mobiles, be aware of your surroundings before becoming engaged in conversation.

Next Door is also a useful way of keeping up to date with the events in the area.

CAR MEETS

Residents of the affected areas are usually quick to report these although they were unaware recently of one being quickly moved in early evening. There is little or no warning of when these are going to take place.

BEWARE PACKAGE DELIVERY SCAMS!

Residential properties without a concierge should be aware of deliveries to flats for sale. The 'prospective buyer' on viewing the flat will pick up the parcel on their way out. It transpires that these parcels have been found to contain drugs. Other packages are also being stolen on doorsteps if not safely delivered to the recipient. The Met Police are aware.

PROTEST MARCHES

Residents have frequently been inconvenienced by road closures usually on a Saturday to enable the protests to go ahead. Sometimes they go down Park Lane, through Victoria and across the river or around Knightsbridge towards Kensington or into Parliament Square.

THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE and BELGRAVIA SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD PANEL

The panel meets quarterly and welcomes new members ensuring that there is good coverage of the area. Although Knightsbridge is considered a low crime area. If an incident is not reported it is not reflected in the statistics. Please contact Aadil Baqar or Paul Wyllie if you are interested in joining the Panel or to report any incident.

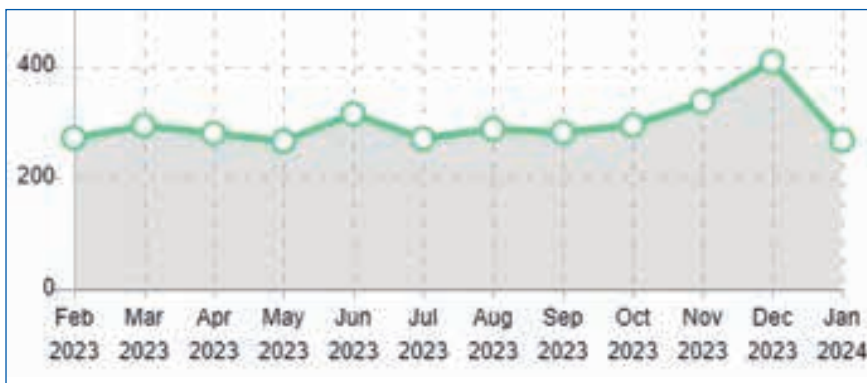
For the wider area of Knightsbridge, to include Belgravia, detailed below are the up to date crime figures by type from the latest recorded data being January this year together with overview crimes per month for the previous year.

The increase in thefts from persons and vehicle thefts continues particularly in the quieter residential areas of Knightsbridge and obviously after dark and peak over busy December particularly around Hyde Park Corner and Winter Wonderland.

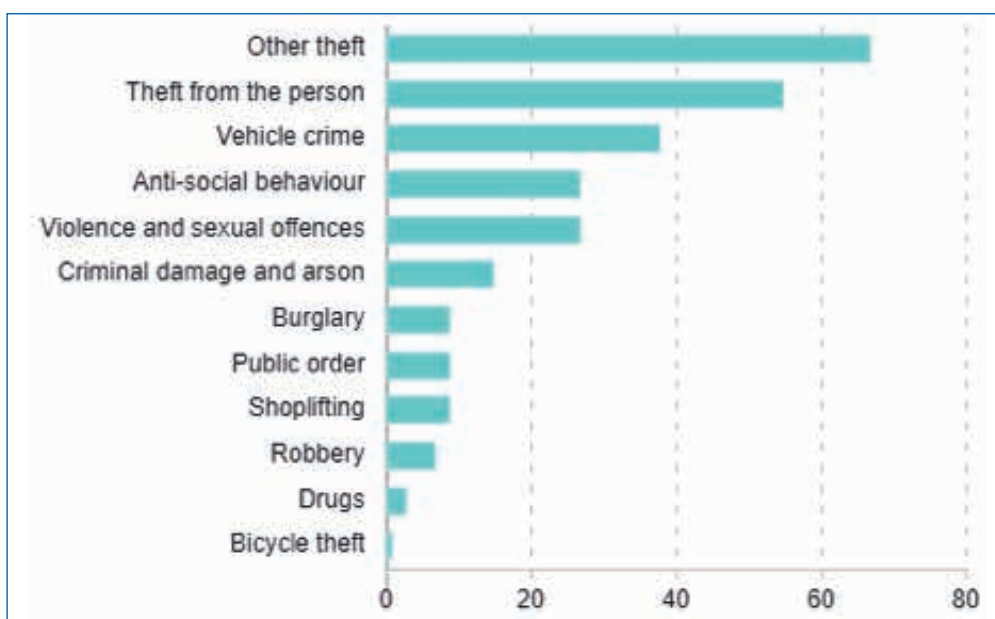
If you are unfortunate enough to be subject to a vehicle theft, mugging, attempted mugging or

witness to the same it is really important to report the incident. Following up any crime with our Neighbourhood Police means that they are better

able to see whether they need to increase police presence and cover what may be a new target area for thieves. The relevant contact details are below.



Crime Levels Overview for the 12 Months to January 2024



Knightsbridge and Belgravia Crime Types by Description for January 2024

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)

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

Other useful links to note are:

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

Action Fraud www.actionfraud.police.uk

Call 101 if you require non-emergency police assistance.

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

IN AN EMERGENCY ALWAYS CALL 999

KNIGHTSBRIDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

Simon Birkett

The Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum (KNF) has been busy since passing the fifth anniversary of the 'making' of the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Plan (KNP) on 11 December 2018.

First, we published our updated '100 page' Knightsbridge Evidence Base Document in February 2024 which underpins every policy in our Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Plan (KNP) www.tinyurl.com/KNFkebd. This can support our planning or licensing representations.

Second, we have provided detailed feedback to Berkeley Estate Asset Management about their proposals for the re-development at 1 Knightsbridge Green and in Raphael Street. This included identifying some 32 of the 40 policies in the KNP as relevant. The re-development would represent a major investment in Knightsbridge that could do much to improve the area. Our main concerns at the moment relate to the height, bulk and massing proposed which could increase floor space by 50%. The Forum is leading in expressing concerns about the high cliff-edge proposed along Brompton Road and sense of enclosure that would result when looking towards Knightsbridge Green from Harrods and Scotch House Corner.

Third, we have continued to comment selectively on other significant planning and licensing applications. On some occasions this can be very time-consuming e.g. spending a whole day at Westminster's City Hall waiting to make oral representations to a licensing hearing or speaking

at a planning sub-committee at 9.45pm. We are usually pleased or at least broadly content with the planning or licensing decision arising.

Fourth, the KNF have been fully engaged in the co-design work on the Knightsbridge Partnership's (KP's) Knightsbridge Place Strategy. This ambitious project could do much to make the Knightsbridge International Centre a spectacular world-class destination. As always, our aim is to ensure that the vision would achieve win-wins for residents, businesses and cultural institutions. We have been particularly impressed by the extent to which the consultants and the KP team have adjusted their plans for feedback received. We have also been pleased to see that the Strategy aims to include 'place management' rather than just traffic and improvements to the public realm. This work linked conveniently to our objection to The Royal Parks' proposal to close South Carriage Drive permanently to road traffic on weekdays.

Last but not least, please contact us if you have ideas for the spending of the neighbourhood portion of the Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) which is held by Westminster City Council www.tinyurl.com/KNFcontact. The KNP provides clear guidance on the use of this money www.tinyurl.com/KNFncil. As you may remember, the Forum's priority themes are the restoration of heritage assets, public CCTV, investigating the path to a 'zero air emission' and resilient neighbourhood and encouraging biodiversity.

KNIGHTSBRIDGE PARTNERSHIP

Steven Medway CEO

The Knightsbridge Partnership convened stakeholders, including RBKC, Westminster City Council, TfL, businesses, property owners and amenity and resident groups to work together to develop a Place and Public Realm Plan to address the challenges in Knightsbridge. The co-design approach intends to identify a strategic approach to resolving traffic congestion, poor air quality, road collisions, lack of green spaces and trees, personal safety and a decline in the retail,

cafe and restaurant offer, in particular on the north side of Brompton Road.

Knightsbridge has historically been an exclusive place to live and visit, with a distinctive retail offer and a range of attractions with international renown. However, a survey of residents, workers and visitors identified concern over its decline, key challenges and priorities for improvement:



Map of the Study Area

- 70% describe Knightsbridge as a good or excellent place but a sizable proportion (31%) think it is getting worse
- Knightsbridge and Brompton Rd are too crowded for pedestrians, have too much traffic and are busy, noisy, unsafe and polluted
- More green spaces and wider footways are the key two improvements requested by survey respondents
- Looking beyond the main roads, survey respondents appreciate the tranquillity, character and charm of Knightsbridge
- The Knightsbridge Partnership's services, specifically cleansing and security, are contributing to improving the area

BROMPTON ROAD INITIAL DESIGN PROPOSALS

Transformational proposals are being developed for Brompton Road and Knightsbridge, which would better manage traffic in order to release space to widen footways, provide safer crossings and introduce more trees. These are complemented by a series of local public realm projects, which aim to restore the area's distinctive character and contribute to ensuring residents enjoy a better quality of life, with cleaner air and safer streets.

The full strategy will be published in summer 2024 and The Knightsbridge Partnership intends to continue to work with the



local community to progress the strategy into becoming funded and deliverable projects.

THE ROYAL PARKS



Spring flowers blossomed early due to the mild winter but otherwise it has been a torrid year so far for the Royal Parks.

Extensive flooding under the escarpment north of the Police Station in Hyde Park has reduced this formerly lush meadow to a barren moonscape. The flooding lasted for much of the winter and will almost certainly have killed all worms and insects in the soil,



an outcome similar to that reported by a Lincolnshire farmer whose 250 acre property suffered a similar fate over the winter months. Flooding occurred before in this location but has not drained away naturally this year most likely because of a rise in the level of the water table. The Parks may consider turning this into a wet area pending further research.



Checkpoint Charlie

The above checkpoint was installed in mid-March at the western end of South Carriage Drive to deter unauthorised use of the carriageway and, no doubt, to re-state TRP's claim that the thoroughfare should remain closed permanently to all but the Army, Police and Kensington Palace vehicles. In the meantime, a consultation on the proposed permanent closure closed on 17 March to which the KA lodged an objection along with the Knightsbridge Partnership and the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum.

SUMMER EVENTS

HYDE PARK

Saturday 1 June

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL –
FAN MEETING POINT

See under Licensing - Page 6

Saturday 29 June – Sunday 14 July

BST HYDE PARK WEEKEND CONCERTS

Includes mid-week entertainments. Some road closures. Stars appearing include Kings of Leon, Andria Bocelli and Robbie Williams.

Tickets for all concerts are on sale now, at www.bst-hydepark.com/festival-weekend-tickets/

LONDON OPEN GARDENS WEEKEND

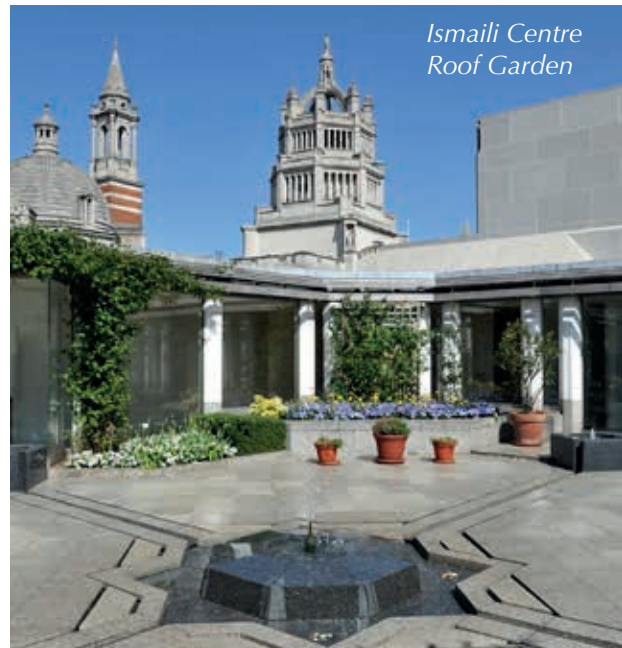
Saturday 8 – Sunday 9 June



The 25th year of this annual event once again sees the opening of over 100 gardens to the general public, with nine newcomers including The Charterhouse Courtyard Gardens (above) on the edge of the City and the Cloth Fair Hidden Garden situated at the rear of the iconic 900 year old Church of St Bartholomew the Great. More locally Ennismore Gardens, Rutland Gate South, the Ismaili Centre Roof Garden, Belgrave Square and Cadogan Place North and South are opening their gates.

Tickets for the London Open Gardens Weekend can be obtained in advance at:

londongardenstrust.org/whatson/London-open-gardens-2024/ which also displays a full list of participating gardens. Tickets are also available in



Ismaili Centre
Roof Garden

the gardens on the day. Check the times and days as these vary.

GREAT EXHIBITION ROAD FESTIVAL

Saturday 15-Sunday 16 June

The popular festival returns this summer when South Kensington's science and cultural institutions combine to present a weekend of talks, workshops and innovative events.

Visitors will be able to enjoy hands-on workshops, fascinating talks, performances and installations from iconic museums, research and culture organisations. Highlights announced so far include a talk with broadcaster and professor of physics, Jim Al-Kahlili on the weird and wonderful nature of time, an AI silent disco, and awesome activities, games and experiments created especially for families with children under 12 in the Family Fun Zone, alongside family-friendly shows and pop-up movement sessions.

Food from all over the world will be available as will eclectic performances from the Royal College of Music and Royal Albert Hall.

The Great Exhibition Road Festival team have been working with local residents in the planning of the festival in order to minimise impact on the local community.

There will also be hundreds of free activities organised by Imperial College and its partners, including the Natural History Museum, the V&A, Science Museum, the Royal College of Music the Royal Albert Hall and many others.



The Great Exhibition Road Festival

WCC KNIGHTSBRIDGE WARD STREET SURGERIES

As we went to press our local ward councillors were about to host two street surgeries on 16 April. Residents had been invited to attend and draw attention to local issues such as lights not working, missing signs, potholes, dangerous paving. The missing lamp in Ennismore Gardens was first reported to Westminster in 2021 and has been regularly reported since then. There is also a lantern missing from a lamp post outside 23/24 Montpelier Walk – which brings into question just how effective the Report-it apps are.



Missing lamp in Ennismore Gardens (left) and redundant and dilapidated phone boxes on Brompton Road

KA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS



Chairman Melville Haggard and committee members listening to the London Air Ambulance officer explain some of the challenges the charity faces

Our 62nd AGM took place on Monday 15 January by kind courtesy of the Mandarin Oriental management in the magnificent ballroom. Guests included Felicity Buchan MP for Kensington, Cllr. Dori Schmetterling, Deputy Mayor of RBKC and his wife, Tony Devenish, GLA member and Cllrs. Elizabeth Hitchcock, from Westminster and Cllr. Sof

McVeigh from RBKC. The Raffle, in aid of London's Air Ambulance raised £1,000.

**A date for the diary:
Monday 20 January 2025**

We are delighted to announce that our 63rd AGM will once again be in the beautiful ballroom of the Mandarin Oriental.

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