



KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

2020 SPRING NEWSLETTER

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

The usual issues of concern to our membership have been totally eclipsed by the Covid-19 pandemic. It swung in from the East with alarming speed at the end of 2019 while we were preoccupied with Brexit. Its viral mist had no respect for the Channel, defender of our shores for a thousand years. It seeped into our cities, social groups, parlours and the lungs of young and old wreaking damage unimaginable only weeks earlier.

What a change from the optimism of a New Year that brought an emphatic general election result and a concomitant stock market rebound? In barely three months we have moved from the gracious setting of our AGM at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel to isolation at home.

Dramatic changes to London life abound. I had to attend an appointment in the Euston Road at the end of March. Exceptionally, I took a black cab from the Montpeliers in order to preserve social distancing. Such was the effect of the lockdown on traffic flow that we completed the journey in less than fifteen minutes.

There was something rather magical and grand about sweeping through the metropolis unhindered in an electric cab with a glass roof that enabled buildings to peer down at you as you glided through the deserted townscape. There was little noise in the wider city and the air was fresher. It is troubling to witness how a pandemic has achieved in a few days outcomes that environmental legislation has struggled with for years.

The Royal Parks continue to sustain the mental equilibrium of urban dwellers and their dogs. Long may this continue. Activity in the parks contrasts with the utter emptiness of streets and resident parking bays across much of the Knightsbridge triangle, not just at weekends but throughout the week.

The lockdown is also revealing a deep swell of community spirit. Evidence abounds of people shopping for each other; using hard-to-come-by supermarket delivery slots to include groceries for neighbours; dropping off meals for those living on their own. The milkman of the 1950s is back with a shout!

Gone too the clatter of student footsteps through the Hole-in-the-Wall. At night, progress of the lone dog-walker echoes on the flagstones and if you do spot your counterpart, they slip by in a pool of light on the other side of a silent street.

We are being well served by our two Councils who convey the Government's medical and behavioural advice clearly and swiftly to local businesses and residents. We thank them for this, as we thank the NHS for all they are doing to save lives. Some residents

have received calls from local NHS GPs checking on their health and welfare. This is much appreciated in circumstances where the threat is invisible, its symptoms variable and the companionship of friends is forbidden.

Within the KA's curtilage, we have interests that span the pandemic's entire life cycle from epidemiologists at Imperial College advising Government on containment; eminent intensive care practitioners defining research parameters for future antidotes; to one person, in Montpelier Place, who very sadly succumbed to the virus's fatal reach, as reported in The Times on 6 April.

In closing, I observe that we have exchanged the tangible uncertainty of a known world for the intangible uncertainty of a post-COVID-19 world. All communities are being tested by this new trajectory but I have no doubt that within our Knightsbridge community we will continue to support each other and find the strength and cohesion to endure the lockdown and thrive.

Melville Haggard, Chairman

Below, you will find commentaries from from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster City Council



Message from Cllr Elizabeth Campbell,

Leader of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea



These are extraordinary times we find ourselves in as we face the biggest national crisis of a generation.

I know these are anxious and uncertain days for many of our residents and businesses and we are doing all that we can to support you through this pandemic.

I'm really pleased that our residents are listening to government advice and are staying home and staying safe.

To the many local voluntary and community groups who are playing their part in the community, to our NHS staff who are working tirelessly to tend to the sick, to the volunteers

who have given their time for free and to local people who are helping neighbours with shopping and medical supplies, I want to say thank you. By working together we will ensure our borough comes through these extremely worrying times.

We too are supporting residents and businesses. We have set up a Covid-19 hub to support our clinically vulnerable residents to ensure they have access to food and essential medical supplies, created a new £500k business fund for local businesses which cannot get support from government and started a new rent relief fund to make sure those struggling with rent, bills and service charges as a result of the pandemic can access support.

I want to assure you that the Council, alongside the NHS, government and of course our exceptional community groups and volunteers, is working tirelessly to ensure services adapt to changing regulations, and that residents are informed and supported.

Message from Cllr Rachael Robathan

Leader City of Westminster



Thank you for the opportunity to update the Spring edition of this newsletter – an update like no other I have ever written.

The City I have lived in for the last thirty years and the ward I have represented for the past decade have, like the rest of the country, been turned upside down. As the new Leader of the Council, my ambitious plans for Westminster have taken a back seat for a short time while we bring all our resources to bear in the fight against Covid-19.

The Council's effort falls into three areas – keeping our essential services running, looking after vulnerable residents and doing what we can to ensure businesses stay afloat until lockdown restrictions lift.

Westminster City Council has worked flat out to do all three aided by the most remarkable surge in public volunteering I have ever seen. More than 2,400 people have volunteered to help others in a range of ways, coordinated through the new programme the Council has established called Westminster Connects.

Let me give you a couple of examples of how this is making a difference in the community. Our office canteen at Westminster City Council – run by a social enterprise company that helps people with learning difficulties – is now sending nearly 1,000 meals a day to homeless and vulnerable people. I was there

last week helping to pack lunches, alongside people from all walks of life – a private chef; a soldier who plays music in his part time; a Radio 5 broadcaster and a café owner – all now focused on helping their community.

I have also visited our council-run shopper service, where we have a growing band of volunteers who will pick up orders for shopping and drop them off – a big hurdle for those shielding or unable to leave the house during lockdown. We are currently making around 100 visits a week.

Big business is helping with donations of food, parking spaces, even Easter eggs. And we are working to help business by channelling Government grants – at the last count worth nearly £60 million to around 3,500 businesses.

I have urged the Chancellor to ensure central London is regarded as a special case for help as we plan for recovery. We need tourists, visitors and investors back in Knightsbridge and we need an economy ready for them. Planning and licensing meetings continue in “virtual” form in readiness for the point when we can return to normal. The Planning Sub-Committee this week became our first ever virtual meeting with the content live streamed for the public to view. Other committees will follow the same model.

The work before the Council is relentless, the challenge enormous – but with the tremendous goodwill of the people of Westminster and by everyone continuing to pull together, we will restore the City we know and love.

PLANNING and CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Carol Seymour-Newton

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID)

Despite the disruption of COVID19 we are still hoping to deliver a BID ballot by early 2021. At present, we are awaiting proposals to undertake a detailed strategic study for the area and there is no doubt that this is going to be even more necessary to help lead this area through the aftermath of the pandemic.

KNIGHTSBRIDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

The Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum continues to 'bring its neighbourhood plan to

life'. As always, its priority is to shape the development plan for the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Area in close liaison with the Knightsbridge Association and Westminster City Council. The Forum has pursued, at least once, nearly all the 85 priorities in the Knightsbridge Management Plan (which complements the neighbourhood plan). Other priorities include applying to Westminster City Council to renew the Forum's five-year designation in July 2020 (www.westminster.gov.uk/neighbourhood-forums) and contributing constructively to the Examination on the draft new Westminster City Plan.

MAJOR CONSTRUCTION SITES

The Corona virus outbreak has had an impact on activity levels at sites across Knightsbridge, with supply issues preventing the delivery of some materials and new operational requirements put in place to ensure sites comply with the social-distancing guidance from the Government. All contractors are liaising closely with Westminster City Council and will continue to monitor and update operational policies in line with any updates to the Government's guidelines.

33–39 Knightsbridge

Due to the limited access to resources required for concrete pours the site shut down on 27th March until further notice.

The site has been made safe and is being protected by security during this time.

55–91 Knightsbridge

Following a period to assess the management of the site in compliance with social-distancing guidelines, limited work is underway, with a skeleton crew operating on a rota basis, with one-way routes and strict social distancing in place.

The project remains on track for completion towards the end of this year.

Park Tower Hotel

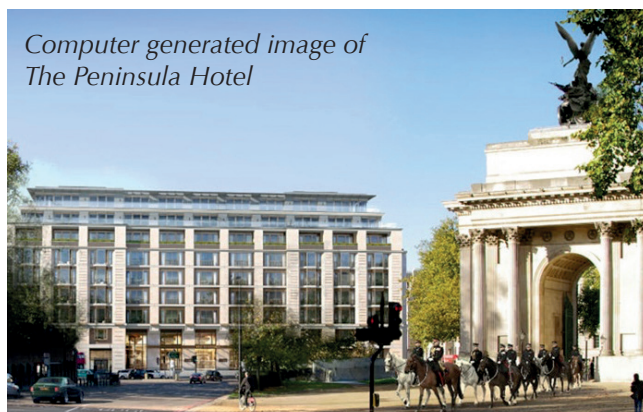
The site and hotel largely closed with a small number of operatives maintaining essential equipment and ensuring the site is secure until further notice.

If you have any queries or would like to receive updates relating to these works, please do contact Alexander Nicholson at alexander.nicholson@fourcommunications.com or via phone on 07798 734 732.

The Peninsula Hotel, Hyde Park Corner

As we went to press, The Peninsula site was currently still on lockdown and following Government and Construction Guidelines.

Computer generated image of The Peninsula Hotel



THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ESTATE

The time-honoured ceremony of 'topping out'

Emma Garner

2020 got off to a positive start with a celebration to mark the topping out of the new building. The Knightsbridge Estate celebrated this construction milestone in January with a ceremony hosted by Skanska at the site.

The history of the topping out ceremony can be traced as far back as pre-Dark Age Scandinavian cultures, with the practice of placing a tree on the top of a new building, to appease the tree dwelling spirits of their ancestors that had been displaced or to ward off evil spirits.

Today, the ceremony comprises a traditional Scandinavian 'flying of the fir' in which a fir tree is flown over the building by tower crane for good luck as the final concrete is poured at the top of the building.

The 330,000 sq. ft. Estate redevelopment has been taking shape along the Brompton Road with the new office accommodation and shopfronts being installed early this year. Over the coming months, the retail units are being handed over to allow fit out works to begin, ready for launch later this year. Work has continued underground as well. The stacker lifts, which will serve the residents' car park and retail units, have been installed allowing all deliveries to be undertaken off the road.



The team is also continuing to restore the historical façade, which will see some of the original architectural features from the 1900s design reinstated, such as a spectacular ornate cupola above No.1 Sloane Street. Work has also been happening to transform Hooper's Court to create the central courtyard

garden for the new apartments.

There are 450 people working on the project and usually there are up to 150 daily workers on site and teams behind the scenes keeping the redevelopment on track for completion in Spring 2021.

From start to end the Knightsbridge Estate estimates there will have been 2.6 million-man hours, which is the equivalent to 30 people employed for all their working life and that the gross labour cost from the project is around £100 million demonstrating that redevelopments like this are huge 'social wealth creators'.

The site has now re-opened for limited working in line with government advice with a limited number of personnel on site.

For further information, please contact 0808 287 9554 or construction@cascadepr.co.uk

SOUTH KENSINGTON STATION

Sophie Andreae, Chairman of the Brompton Association

TfL and their development partners, Native Land, held an exhibition in the foyer of Imperial College at the end of February. A brief questionnaire card was provided seeking views on the proposed development. However, the six questions posed were, in the view of local associations – the KA included – highly misleading, presenting a distorted view of the appropriateness of the scheme and the public benefits of the proposed development. The statements were, as so often is the case in these tick box consultations

entirely intended to secure a strongly agreed response for the developers proposals. For instance, it was implied that step-free access to the ticket hall and Circle & District Line was entirely part of the development whereas Listed Building Consent for step-free access was given by RBKC in 2017 as part of TfL's separate plans to improve the functionality of station, works to be undertaken and funded by TfL. These station improvement works should have commenced by now. The key point is that provision of step-free access is not solely dependent on funding from the Around Station Development

(the subject of the exhibition at Imperial). Various other statements/questions with which the public were being asked to agree were similarly misleading. South Kensington Station and the existing buildings on the site such as the Thurloe Street terrace and the Bullnose (which is curtilage listed) are within the Conservation Area and complement the scale and character of neighbouring buildings. In particular, the Edwardian Bullnose is low scale giving the listed station and the public space which surrounds it a real sense of light and air. The substantial new semi-circular block proposed for the Bullnose would destroy this and obliterate views of the magnificent towers of the Natural History Museum from Onslow Square. The proposed development would destroy the unique village character of South Kensington.



Previous history

There have been a number of development proposals for the site over the years, the last application, for a massive round tower nicknamed the gasometer, was withdrawn in the mid 2000s following local objection. We are now faced with half a gasometer. Then, in 2013, TfL had a change of heart and indicated that rather than impose a scheme and fight local residents they would like to work with the local community to formulate a scheme



A view of the proposed 'half gasometer' from Old Brompton Road. The new architecture is wholly out of scale with the listed station and of a character completely at odds with the attractive brick and stucco Victorian architecture that comprises the Conservation Area. This image also shows the assertively modern rear elevation to Thurloe Street (illustrated in a recessive pale grey wash which is not at all how it will look in reality). Note too the lumpen plant room on the roof and the beginning of the chasm-like over-scaled development which is proposed for Pelham Street.

that everyone would be broadly happy with. For two years there were regular meetings to discuss the proposed improvements to the tube station (to include provision of step free access and enlargement of the booking hall) and to agree what scale and character of commercial development around the station would be appropriate. This resulted in the publication by TfL of a Design Brief at the end of 2016 which was supported by local groups. The Development Brief would be used by TfL to identify a development partner. In 2017 The appointment of Native Land as TfL's development partner in 2018

with Rogers Stirk Harbour as their architects has seen the Development Brief jettisoned and two years of hard work and constructive consultation by TfL with the local community consigned to history. The scale and character of the proposed new development is again unacceptable and will turn South Kensington into another Fulham Broadway. Small shops will go and be replaced by chains in much larger units, an office block will dominate the Bullnose and Pelham Street will become a chasm with a monotonous block running the full length of the site. The superb Georgian terraces of Grade II* Pelham Place will be dominated by looming over-scaled block of flats. Far from being the conservation-led approach of the 2016 Development Brief which respected the scale and historic character of the neighbourhood, this is the imposition of large scale commercial anywhere style architecture at the heart of a treasured historic neighbourhood. The battle begins once more.

The proposed rear elevation to the bullnose will overwhelm and overshadow the listed arcade (shown in section with people walking through). Instead of seeing open sky through its glazed roof as at present – the light, airy and low scale character of South Kensington Station is one of its unique joys – the public will look up at this over-scaled monster.

CRITERION CAPITAL – PARK MANSIONS



Criterion Capital owns, manages and/or operates many of London's most well-known properties including The Trocadero, Odeon Cinema in Leicester Square and 'Burberry Building' in Knightsbridge (where Burberry and Scotch House used to be). Members were shocked to learn

that planning applications had been submitted for 714-seater and 136-seater restaurants in that Building,

with the latter opening onto Knightsbridge Green. Both applications were withdrawn after the KA and KNF highlighted inconsistencies with the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Plan. A new application (20/01915/FULL) was submitted in March 2020 for change of use of basement and ground floors at 20–22 Brompton Road from retail (A1 use) to restaurant (A3 use) with 40-seats at basement level and 96-seats at ground floor level (between 9am and 1.00am and 2.00am on Fridays and Saturdays). This is part of the Park Mansions block. Such a proposal would merely compound the problems that Brompton Road suffers from, with too many cafés and restaurants, resulting in almost a monoculture, and the KA has submitted an objection. We await news about the larger space.

ALBERTOPOLIS

Great Exhibition Road Festival 2020

They have informed us that this year's Festival, planned for 3–5 July has been cancelled and that they are refocusing their efforts on next year's Festival on the weekend of 2–4 July.

ROYAL ALBERT HALL

Public realm project

A second public exhibition was held in February, where we were glad to see that some of the comments made by the KA, the Forum and other consultees had been taken into consideration. There remain several outstanding issues concerning traffic circulation, disabled access and possible adverse effect on Jay Mews. We recently commented on revised proposals. The works to Kensington Road, narrowing and making step free access to the Park are at the design stage.

Consultations and consents are unlikely to be completed before the Autumn. The works will be carried out by WCC.

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

Although the Museum is temporarily closed to the public until further notice due to the Coronavirus, its scientific research and planning for the Urban Nature Project continues behind the scenes, and there is a wealth of natural world content for you to enjoy on their website: www.nhm.ac.uk

The Urban Nature Project

Consultation took place in April on the Museum's exciting plans to transform their five acre site in South Kensington into 'a welcoming, accessible

and biologically diverse green space in the heart of London'. Fundraising is ongoing and they have already received initial support from The National Lottery Fund and other donors.

We had hoped to print an article by the museum about the project, but due to lack of space, this will now be carried in the Autumn newsletter

V&A Ramadan Pavilion

The proposal for a Ramadan Pavilion in the Sackler Courtyard, for which a planning application was to have been submitted to RBKC in the Spring, has had to be postponed to 2021. It was to have been in place for some seven weeks from 1st May. The 1st May launch would have featured an Open Iftar, a meal normally 'to be eaten by all faiths and none at the end of the fast on each day of Ramadan'.

The concept for the Ramadan Pavilion at the V&A was born from the research of architect Shahed Saleem. Saleem was commissioned by English Heritage to research and write the architectural and social history of the British Mosque, which was published by Historic England in 2018.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC

The Royal College of Music has moved to digital delivery of all teaching and assessments during the Covid-19 crisis. The College's professional services remain fully operational online. The RCM is showcasing the ongoing music-making of its community via its social media channels – follow @rcmlondon on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. They are also launching a series of free online concerts for the summer.

The RCM recently reached a significant milestone in their More Music: Reimagining the Royal College of Music building development, achieving practical completion on the project. This means

that their two new performance spaces, public café and courtyard will be ready to host audiences and visitors once we are all safely allowed to be together again.

OTHER PLANNING NEWS

The Serpentine Summer Pavilion 2020

© Counterspace



The Johannesburg-based practice, Counterspace, directed by the all-woman team of Sumayya Vally, Sarah de Villiers and Amina Kaskar, has been selected to design the 2020 pavilion. Their design will be based on gathering spaces and community places around the city, folding London in to the Pavilion structure in Kensington Gardens, and extending a public programme across London. It will run from 11 June to 11 October 2020.

Princes Gardens

Day Nursery 8–9 Princes Gardens

Imperial College's Early Years day nursery moved back into their newly renovated and restored premises in January but, sadly, as with all other schools and nurseries has had to close for the time being in line with government policy.

St Nicholas Preparatory School,
10–13 Princes Gardens

The school is due to move in to the renovated premises in time for the Winter term.

Meanwhile, like other educational institutions, whilst closed they are providing remote learning packages for those at home and care for the children of key workers within the school itself.

Their current premises at 23 Princes Gate are for sale.

2–8 Rutland Gate

In January it was reported that negotiations were taking place for the purchase of this 45 room building overlooking the Barracks and the Park for a price in the regions of £210 million. The buyer was reported to be a Chinese billionaire property owner. A previous owner, Rafic Hariri the then prime minister of the Lebanon, was assassinated in 2005. The building features bullet and rocket-proof windows which reflect an ugly blue/green tinge.



LICENSING REPORT

Paul Meitner

A slightly quieter period on the licensing front – even before the effects of the Covid-19 lockdown required the complete closure of pubs, restaurants and other premises. Most of the applications have been renewals of existing licences, which we have reviewed and commented on only in exceptional circumstances. However, new applications are still being made and as ever, some give cause for concern. But first of all, some successes to report.

86 Brompton Road – Kuwait Food Restaurant

When the 2019 Annual Report went to press we were waiting to hear whether Westminster City

Council would approve this application for six tables and 12 chairs on the pavement, between 7.00 a.m. and 11.00 p.m. daily. We had objected to both the proposed terminal hour and the number of items involved, in a busy street which narrows just before the junction with Lancelot Place. We can report that on 6 November 2019 the application was refused. A revised application, for two tables and four chairs, was approved on 14 January 2020, which is more in keeping with nearby cafés and restaurants.



64/68 Princes Gate – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

This application involved the temporary installation of two vending machines outside the church, for fund raising purposes. We and other residents associations co-ordinated our responses and lodged objections to RBKC, who then liaised with the applicant. The application was withdrawn on 21 January 2020.

39 Thurloe Place – Kulu Kulu Sushi

The management had placed tables and chairs (“T&C”) on the pavement but on checking the RBKC Licensing Register (open to all) we found that they did not have a licence to do so. We reported them to the RBKC Enforcement Team, who obliged the operator to remove the T & C. When an application was submitted at a later date we lodged an objection. RBKC agreed with our suggestion that the terminal hour should be brought back from 11 p.m. to 10 p.m.

102A Brompton Road – Café Illy

As reported in the Autumn newsletter, this café had placed 6 Tables and 12 Chairs (“T&C”) on the public pavement without any form of licence. We informed Westminster City Council’s Enforcement Team, who visited the premises and instructed the owners to remove the T&C. We then found out that

the Council had provided retrospective permission (in August 2019) which we had not been told about – in fact, we have not been able to locate any public notice of the application at all. In January we wrote to the Council to express our disappointment. We also asked that a number of matters be carefully considered when the license comes up for renewal this summer, including the proximity of the site to the nearby bus stop, which creates a bottleneck for pedestrians, the encroachment of T & C into the ‘public realm’ and the fact that the outlet was denied permission for T&C under its previous owners.

4–6 Hans Road – Zia Teresa

This long-established Italian restaurant near Harrods changed hands last year and the new owners were obliged to submit a new licence application. We were concerned by the proposed closing time of Midnight, Monday to Saturday and lodged an objection in January. The owners agreed to a number of changes to their operations to address concerns, including late night noise, expressed by us and the Council’s Environmental Health team.



LAW AND ORDER REPORT

Madeline Elsdon



The Knightsbridge and Belgravia team, Dave, Alex and Zack have continued on the ward as usual throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, using marked police mountain bikes to maximise visibility and reassure residents. The bikes also allow the officers to cover the ward with maximum efficiency whilst maintaining social distancing. The team are avoiding all non-essential house visits but can be contacted if needed. Their role is to engage with people and also explain the restrictions with them if necessary since the Government announced its guidance and rules for households, businesses and mass gatherings. The Met. welcomed the change in legislation giving officers additional powers during these unprecedented times. These are difficult times for everyone and police officers want to maintain their strong relationship with the community whilst continuing to work with local

authorities to support each other in their enforcement roles. The Commissioner called for retired officers to return to the Met. and many responded. Maintaining the best service to the public, protecting each other and supporting the response to COVID-19 are top priorities. Officers are working extremely hard to do that, under very difficult circumstances, both at work and at home.

It's important that we are all on the lookout for Coronavirus related scams. There are a number of such scams and malware campaigns currently circulating. They are designed to encourage you to give away sensitive banking and personal information, or download malicious files to your computer. It is essential that you remain vigilant to protect yourselves from scammers, both on your doorstep and online. If you receive suspicious emails or communications, ignore, delete and report to www.actionfraud.police.uk.

The ward priorities remain the same with a particular focus at the moment in preventing business burglaries

due to the closures. The total number of reported crimes reduced in January, February and March.

Please feel free to contact them on the ward mobile – 07769 164 785 (NOT 24 HRS) should you need anything, otherwise to report non urgent crime please use the online reporting service below or call 101.

www.met.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime

- Call 101 if you require non-emergency police assistance.
- Call 999 if you require emergency police assistance.
- Contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 if you wish to supply anonymous information.

Urgent neighbourhood matters reported via 101/the MPS website will be brought to the attention of AW19, the duty Neighbourhood Sergeant for the BCU. If you need to contact a ward team the details of the various teams are available on the MPS website www.met.police.uk/

TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Simon Birkett

CLEAN(ER) AIR

Knightsbridge has seen dramatic reductions in air pollution during the Lockdown. For example: concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) in Brompton Road at 5pm on Monday 30 March (the first full week of Lockdown) were 58% lower than the average of the 12 previous Mondays; and fine particles (PM_{2.5}), another air pollutant, later the same week, were the same in Brompton Road as Hyde Park. However, despite these reductions, air pollution has not gone away completely, due to emissions from buildings and pollution from farming and as far away as coal-fired power stations in Poland. It is vital that we gather monitoring data, pause to breathe deeply and relish the cleaner air, remember how much we enjoy walking or cycling and find it easy to hold online meetings via Zoom or Microsoft Teams. You might also find time to ask Westminster for an electric vehicle charging point near your front door! www.westminster.gov.uk/request-vehicle-charging-point.

STREET CLEANSING

Our streets, during the first weeks of Lockdown, have never been cleaner. This is a great credit to the street cleansing and waste collection teams working for

Westminster and Veolia. You can do several things to help them keep it that way. First, put out your rubbish and recycling the night before regular collections. You might also consider using the micro-recycling centres in Relton Mews or Ennismore Gardens (by the Russian Orthodox Church) at other times. Please don't dump rubbish on the street 'out of hours'. Second, please register with FixMyStreet.com and use their website or app to report any rubbish or recycling dumped 'out of hours' – it can be reported anonymously to the Council, if you like. It helps the cleansing team a lot if you report the *street number* as well as *street name* where the rubbish is dumped so they don't have to search for it! Third, please don't start flytipping or having a massive 'clear out' at this time as it may overload the collection system. We are asking Westminster to take robust enforcement against offenders to keep our streets clean.

ROYAL PARKS MOVEMENT STRATEGY

The KA highlighted several concerns and inconsistencies about the Royal Parks' Movement Strategy in our response to its consultation. Key concerns related primarily to the need to: encourage safe and enjoyable cycling (with the probable lack of meaningful enforcement of proposed rules to address fast cyclists); keep West Carriage Drive open to through traffic (for the sake of local residents and to

reduce congestion in Kensington Church Street and Park Lane); and stop the excessive commercialisation of Hyde Park (which uses valuable space for long periods, resulting in many heavy vehicle movements and generating pollution of many sorts). We await the final strategy.

BROMPTON ROAD WORKS

Works to upgrade the two pedestrian crossings in Brompton Road by Brompton Square to two countdown crossings are well underway. The upgrade work should improve pedestrian safety following two serious collisions there.



In early March, Cadent Gas informed all businesses and residents in the area – so we hope all local residents were among the recipients – that from 30 March to September work would continue to replace and upgrade the old large diameter metal gas mains between the Brompton Oratory and Knightsbridge Green with tough new piping that's future-proofed to carry natural gas.

“To allow enough space to replace the pipes we will need to reduce the carriageway by at least one running lane in either direction. This is likely to result in some traffic disruption. We will also need to suspend some bus stops and parking/loading bays. Throughout the work there will be no right turn from Cottage Place and for part of the work you will not be able to turn right into Hans Road. There will be a signed diversion route”.

They recently sent us the following update:

The gas industry is amongst those listed as a critical sector ‘Utilities, communication and financial services’ as issued by Cabinet Office and DfE on 18th March. Following the Prime Ministers’ announcement on Monday evening which detailed enhanced restrictions for the UK public, we have liaised with our key stakeholders: Ofgem, government, GLA, TfL and local authorities.

*We will be continuing with our essential work to replace the old large diameter metal gas mains in Brompton Road (A4). **To carry out this work we do not need to visit or enter your property.***

Please be assured we take the safety of the public and our employees extremely seriously. We will continue to review our programme of work in line with resources and government advice on COVID-19. This does not change our response to gas emergency works and your support on this is appreciated as we continue to safeguard life and property.

Further information: 0800 389 8261 or info@communityrelations.co.uk.

ROYAL PARKS EVENTS

An update from the Royal Parks:

We have been working closely with all our major events organisers and key agencies during Covid-19 and following government advice during the pandemic. It is with great sadness that our partner and promoter, AEG presents, have made the incredibly difficult decision to cancel this year’s BST Hyde Park 2020. This decision has been made to protect the safety of fans, staff and guests in these uncertain times.

In addition to the government rightly enforcing a prolonged period of social isolation, the event would not want



to place any extra strain on the emergency services, who we are lucky enough to have working alongside us at our events.

We will continue to monitor the situation closely and follow government advice with the hope that we can still deliver the events that occur in the latter part of the year. We will update you about these events when we have the necessary information to do so.

For further info:
www.royalparks.org.uk

KA EVENTS

Annual General Meeting, Monday 13 January 2020

A record turnout of members and our guests attended the AGM in January, amongst those present we welcomed new MPs, Nickie Aiken, former Leader of WCC, for Westminster and Felicity Buchan for Kensington. Both MPs answered questions from the floor.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, Monday 11 January 2021

We are delighted to announce that the Mandarin Oriental have kindly once again agreed to let us hold our AGM in their beautiful Ballroom.

Future Events

We are drawing up a list of possible events but have decided that until the Coronavirus has run its course it would be unwise to organise anything for the time being.

Cllr Ruth Bush, WCC Lord Mayor draws one of the winning tickets for the Raffle in aid of the Royal Trinity Hospice.

PARLIAMENT

The General Election in December saw the election of new MPs for both Westminster and Kensington. Nickie Aiken, who had been a pro-active and effective Leader at WCC for several years, succeeded Mark Field as MP for the Cities of London & Westminster.

Felicity Buchan won the Kensington seat from Labour reversing the number of votes by which the Conservatives lost the seat in the previous election.



Nickie Aiken MP



Felicity Buchan MP

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY ELECTION 2020



The next election to the London Assembly is due to be held on 6 May 2021, alongside the 2021 London mayoral election. The mayoral and Assembly elections were originally to be held on 7 May 2020, but on 13 March 2020 it was announced the election would be postponed until 2021 due to the 2019–20 Coronavirus pandemic. It will be the sixth election since the assembly was established in 2000.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The Councils inform us that the majority of services continue to operate normally. However it is a continually evolving picture.

WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL

New Leader

Cllr Rachael Robathan who was first elected councillor for the Belgravia/Knightsbridge ward in 2010, and has previously held Cabinet and Deputy Cabinet portfolios, was elected to succeed Nickie Aiken as Leader of the Council in January.

Westminster City Plan

The Planning Examination on Westminster City Council's draft City Plan is continuing after some hiccups. The Planning Inspectors wrote to Westminster in late January to pause the Examination while the Council produced further documentation relating primarily to its plans for new housing. In early April, the Council responded by removing formally allocated/strategic sites from their draft Plan, including the Hyde Park Barracks. Instead the Council has published a housing trajectory appendix and said that a 'Site Allocations Development Plan Document' will be prepared next year. Whether this changes much is unclear but the KA and KNF continue to monitor the situation.

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. Robathan: rrobathan@westminster.gov.uk

Cllr. Elizabeth Hitchcock
ehitchcock@westminster.gov.uk

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

Renovation of the 'Hole-in-the-Wall'



The KNF submitted a successful application to Westminster City Council last Autumn for up to £20,000 of the neighbourhood portion of the Community Infrastructure Levy, with matched funds from the Council's larger 'pot', to be used to renovate the Hole-in-the-Wall and improve its lighting. We understand that formal approvals have been progressing within Westminster and the works should be undertaken by the Council's contractors when the lockdown restrictions are lifted. The KA supported this application which follows the adopted Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Plan. The 'Hole' has become world famous and is on every tourist's agenda.

CORONAVIRUS INFORMATION

Latest information from the Government is on radio and TV. Both WCC and RBKC are sending local residents and businesses information and advice, by email, or by letter for those who do not have access to the internet.

This can be accessed on:

www.westminster.gov.uk/coronavirus

www.rbkc.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/coronavirus-covid-19

More information from: <https://nhs.uk>

DISCOVER SOUTH KENSINGTON

To help you while away the hours, this website is full of information and ideas.

www.discoversouthken.com

All information accurate at the time of going to press

Vice-President: The Lady Grade

Chairman: Melville Haggard, Vice-Chairman: Carol Seymour-Newton, Treasurer: Olivia J Cox

www.knightsbridgeassociation.com