



# KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

## 2021 SPRING NEWSLETTER

### CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

Dear Member

Spring struck early this year at exactly at nine o'clock on 7 March as BBC Radio Three played Charles Trenet's hauntingly nostalgic La Mer to a still housebound nation. The ensuing emotional download expunged the torpor of preceding months and spontaneously propelled the listener to look out of the window.

A chink of bright blue sky fore-shadowed the prospect of renewal and not long after The Royal Parks reintroduced themselves to the world under the guise of Spring. In the interlude between then and now, there have been exceptionally warm spells and some icy blasts but nothing to thwart the miraculous blooming of a star magnolia at the Bishop's Palace in Wells, Somerset or a more modest effusion from its pinker cousin in Montpelier Walk.



Commercial activity has not slumbered during the dark days of winter even if it takes time for its true intent to manifest itself. And, so it has been in Knightsbridge. Planning applications for the redevelopment of the old Montpeliano restaurant; a proposed 700 seat restaurant at



the Burberry House island site; a total refurbishment of 2-8 Rutland Gate; tables and chairs applications in Hans Crescent; and scaffolding at Princes Court have all conspired to catch the critical attention of your Association's committees.

An enormous amount of work has gone into handling these cases, in particular the multiple planning applications submitted by the developer at 13-17

Montpelier Street on which the Association has retained external advice. I would like to take this opportunity to thank residents who responded so magnificently to our Montpelier Street Appeal; and those who took the time and trouble to comment on a complex sequence of Applications. We hope our efforts will not be in vain and that the Neighbourhood Plan and other planning policies designed to protect residents' interests will be respected. For further details see page 15.

Reviving the hospitality sector in Knightsbridge after a year of suspended animation is an important step in returning to something approaching normality. Where practical, we will support temporary Licensing and Planning measures to allow al fresco café and dining activity on pavements, on the understanding that such relaxations will be reversed when we move on from our Covid-stricken world. We hope the Royal Borough will take this into account when determining Applications in Hans Crescent against the backdrop of a prior commitment not to allow the commercialisation of the Crescent.

We applaud Westminster City Council for their proactive support for Solar Together in London. Increased use of solar power will reduce cities' carbon footprint but increasing thermal insulation across our leaky, sashcord-windowed, Victorian housing stock would achieve a bigger and quicker impact. However, huge financial resource is required to make this happen even though evidence abounds that reducing energy demand through thermal insulation in existing homes produces a better carbon outcome than demolishing and rebuilding to a higher standard. Simply exhorting homeowners is unlikely to deliver the needed energy savings. Central and local government need to devise a plan involving tax relief or grants or both to help homeowners make these important conversions.

The Association launched its new website in March with help from website architects ToolKit and many from within the Association. Our thanks to Neil Carthy and Elmar Toime for migrating the email and advising on design thereby facilitating a smooth transition to the new site at [www.knightsbridgeassociation.com](http://www.knightsbridgeassociation.com). Do use it and encourage other residents to join and in writing this I am waving a large green flag to signal that the Association needs a volunteer to manage

the site and keep it updated, in association with ToolKit. Please contact Carol or me if you are interested – [info@knightsbridgeassociation.com](mailto:info@knightsbridgeassociation.com). On behalf of the Association, I would like to wish The Lady Grade a very Happy 100th Birthday on 23 June and to extend the Association's grateful thanks for her longstanding and continuing support.

Melville Haggard  
*Chairman*



The Association wishes to express its deep sadness at the passing of His Royal Highness, Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh on Friday 9 April 2021 and to record its appreciation for his lifetime of outstanding service to the nation.

## PLANNING and CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

*Carol Seymour-Newton*

### SOUTH KENSINGTON AROUND STATION DEVELOPMENT



At the beginning of this year Native Land and TfL Rogers Stirk Harbour submitted amended proposals to RBKC prepared by their architects, Rogers Stirk Harbour. The developers stated that

the changes made to the designs followed from comments made during consultation on the scheme and in response to points made by Ward Councillors and local groups during the consultation process. However, no such consultations took place either with Ward Councillors or local groups and the design changes are so minor it has been a question of spot the difference. The scheme essentially remains the same scheme Native Land advanced back in May 2019 and it remains unacceptable on every level as the now over 2,000 objections received by RBKC attest.

During a Factual Briefing meeting held via Zoom for members of RBKC's Planning Committee, planning officers and representatives of local groups, the developers sought to justify the destruction of the existing Bullnose and its replacement



with a tall semi-circular structure that would loom over the listed Station Arcade by arguing that ‘levelling up’ the Bullnose to the heights of the surrounding buildings was good townscape practice and it was the low scale of the listed Station that was, in their words, “the anomaly”. The idea that the existing scale of the Bullnose (curtilage listed) compliments that of the Station Arcade and that the whole human scale of the station as whole is what is special about South Kensington completely eludes the developers, their architects and their planning advisors.

It is the low scale of the existing buildings which sits so harmoniously with the piazza to the south and pedestrianised Thurloe Street to the north which makes the village heart of South Kensington so attractive. And it is the contrast of these low scale historic buildings with the very much grander architecture of Albertopolis – the towers of the Natural History Museum and Imperial’s Colcutt Tower can be seen across the station complex – that create the unique sense of place. The tube station was built in 1868 to serve Prince Albert’s vision. It is part of the earliest underground railway in the world. It is time its



*The view from 1910 remains remarkably unchanged (see pic page 2) though smog hides the towers of Albertopolis*

historic importance was properly recognised and respected. The contribution the station complex makes to the public realm at South Kensington precisely because it is low scale needs to be appreciated.

The planning application looks set to go before RBKC’s Planning Committee in May. The Knightsbridge Association has reiterated its objections pointing out that the paltry changes made earlier this year are mere window dressing. This is a scheme which quite simply should not be allowed. With TfL’s plans for station improvements

on hold due to TfL’s dire financial position it is hard to see what public benefits Native Land’s Around Station Development provide.

## PROGRESS ON MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

### THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ESTATE

The redevelopment of the 3.5 acre Knightsbridge Estate site began in 2010 and is nearing completion this year. It creates new retail units, offices and housing and includes the restoration of the listed building and heritage façade.

This year sees the completion of the shell and core of the new building. The flagship retail unit at the corner of Sloane Street and Brompton Road is currently being fitted out by a luxury retailer ready for launch in early summer.

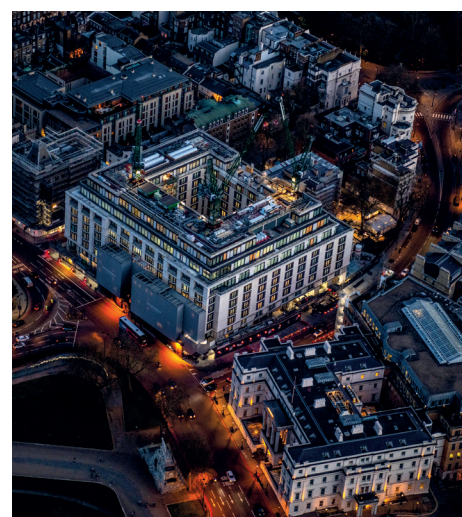
Stonework and specialist castings will be fitted to all the shopfronts over the next few months ready for occupation by other retailers.

Inside the new offices at One Hooper’s Court the finishing touches are being made to get the building read for the summer. Completion of the shell of the new rooftop restaurant will be accomplished in the summer, and work will start to fit out the 33 apartments ready for occupation towards the end of 2022.

Around the new building the paving is being reinstated following the removal of the scaffolding at the end of last year. Along with the reopening of the newly refurbished Hooper’s Court passageway to the public, linking Brompton Road and Basil Street once again, the improved pavements and new tube entrance form part of the plan to improve the public realm.

### THE PENINSULA HOTEL

The target construction practical completion date is the first to second quarter 2022. The Hotel Lobby, ballroom and Spa fit out are almost complete, and the two swimming pools are formed. The residential fit-out is ongoing on four



levels. The hotel Guest Room fit out commenced on 6 levels. The rooftop restaurant fit-out is almost complete. The External façade is 90% complete: the façade colonnade toward Hyde Park corner is still covered by scaffolding, nonetheless the façades on Halkin street and Grosvenor Crescent are fully visible except for the hoarding on the ground floor level.

#### 55–91 KNIGHTSBRIDGE

Work began on site in June 2018 and is due for completion this summer. The entrances to the apartments in Wilton Place and William Street, and the office entrances and other finishing touches are currently being put in place.



The timber shopfronts on Knightsbridge, designed by the Edwardian architect W. D. Caröe, are complete as is the façade, with a little turret on the corner with William Street – above – designed by Dixon-Jones. The new rear elevation brick façade also designed by Dixon-Jones has now been revealed.

#### THE BERKELEY AND 33–39 KNIGHTSBRIDGE

Construction of the extension to the Hotel is well under way, with the steel frame currently being erected and it is already complete to level 8. Installation of the façades and construction of the roof is set to begin in July.

Five rainbow-coloured huts, inspired by Britain's iconic seafronts, opened in April to provide alfresco dining.



*The Berkeley beach huts*

#### NO. 15 LANCELOT PLACE AND 1 TREVOR WALK

Construction and internal works are due to be completed by summer 2022. The main landscaping works, including the green roof, will take place when all construction is completed.



The façade planting has been reduced from the original scheme and indicates a ten year growth plan.

#### 2–8 RUTLAND GATE

The owner's representatives engaged with the KA before lodging the planning application in April. As far as we know, there were no objections. The KA has been very involved in commenting on the draft Construction Management Plan which aims to minimise disruption to neighbours by directing all traffic movements to enter and exit the site directly from/to Kensington Road. If approved, works are expected to continue until September 2025.



### OTHER NEWS

#### 127–139 KNIGHTSBRIDGE

The KA and two others objected to the proposal to enlarge the 'Class E' unit at 127–139 Knightsbridge i.e. the former Burberry and Scotch House. The Government introduced the new Class E classification for commercial properties, making it easier for retail units to become restaurants, in September 2020. We worry that the proposal would result in the permanent loss of the domed space above the former arcade and the intensification of commercial use leading to the opening of a 714 seat restaurant (as was proposed and withdrawn in 2020 under the previous planning 'use classes').

#### HYDE PARK BARRACKS

We understand an application has been lodged with Historic England for the listing of Hyde Park Barracks following the expiry of the Certificate of Immunity from Listing on 19 January 2021.



The KA and KNF have registered as potentially interested parties. Our best guess, is that the 20th Century Society is trying again after failing to list the barracks in 2015.

#### PRINCES GARDENS PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Once schools were allowed to re-open on Monday 8 March, children were welcomed to their new premises on the north side of Princes Gardens. The four Grade II listed buildings have been carefully conserved to provide the school with light and airy classrooms and high quality specialist teaching facilities including a music room, a 'maker space' and science labs.

The school also has access to the hidden two-acre garden behind for playtime and character building.

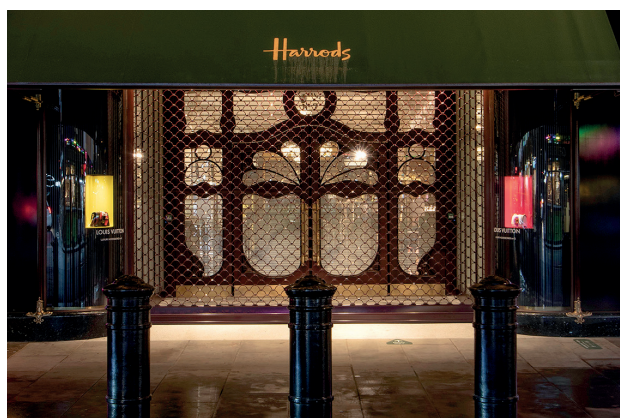
Children and staff are encouraged to walk, scoot and cycle to school so as to instil a sense of responsibility for the wider community. Families are also asked to ensure car engines are turned off when parked, and to avoid taking up respark spaces. (see page 15 for traffic measures)

#### HERITAGE

##### HARRODS RESTORES DOORS 7 & 8 TO THEIR ORIGINAL EDWARDIAN DESIGN

The terracotta landmark presides over the Knightsbridge end of Brompton Road, and its design is the work of local architect, Charles W. Stephens. At first sight it seems that little has changed on the famous Brompton Road frontage since it was built in the years between 1901 and 1905, but when you look more closely, the changes are apparent.

One of the biggest changes over the years has been to the entrances to the store. Early photographs and plans show that originally there were five doorways set at close intervals along the 138-metre Brompton Road frontage. These



entrances were comprised of narrow doors, set between elegant curved-glass windows.

In the late 1920s three of the entrances were blocked off and turned into additional window display space. The remaining two entrances were widened and remodelled in the more modern style of the inter-war period, including the addition of covered walkways extended out from the entrances into the path outside the store. These entrances became known as Door 7 and Door 8. They are now being carefully restored.

#### PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

##### 31-32 RUTLAND GATE

The dilapidated state of these two buildings brought to the attention of the Council in 2019, is the subject of enforcement.

This process is hampered by legal constraints.

In October the owners were served with a

notice of works

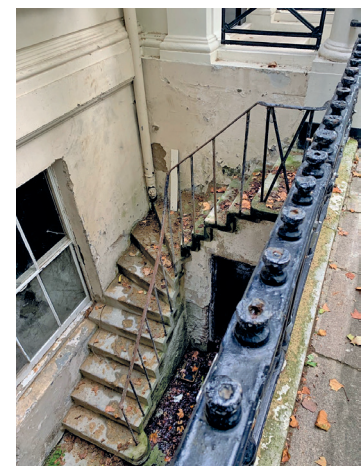
that needed to be undertaken. The owners failed to respond to the Council's request for prompt remedial work to be carried out, and they will now be serving them with a section 215 Notice to achieve this. Failure to comply would or could result in a court hearing and fines.

Earlier this year, residents reported that squatters had again moved in and the police were quick to react. (see page13).

In 2013 planning permission was given for conversion back into two residences each with a basement swimming pool. Some works were undertaken but came to a halt several years ago. Prior to that the buildings had been occupied by Sudanese Airlines.

##### PRINCES COURT 88 BROMPTON ROAD.

The Association became increasingly frustrated that the scaffolding and 18 metre long advertising hoarding, which had been erected in 2018 with permission to the end of 2020, showed no sign of being removed. We were then informed that it had permission to 2023. We contacted WCC and TfL to ask why the licence had been extended





*Princes Court hoarding*

when it appeared that little or no work was taking place. The scaffolding was then reduced to ground and first floor levels, but the hoarding at this level remained. Our concern, apart from the unsightliness, was that it encased pedestrians and trading outlets in a narrow tunnel, impeded access to the pedestrian crossing to Harrods and the tube and, during the pandemic, prevented social distancing along that stretch of pavement.

Further correspondence with TfL and WCC resulted in removal of the rest of the scaffolding along Brompton Road, apart from a limited amount round the entrance to allow for repairs

## 2 MONTPELIER STREET

The fit out of Cedars at 2 Montpelier Street is underway at the time of writing after the owner received a 'Certificate of Lawful Use of Development' for use of the basement and ground floor as a restaurant. In providing the certificate, the Council noted that "the louvre at rear basement level does not have planning permission and [Westminster] may take legal action to remove or replace it". Hot food take-away use would not fall within Class E and would require planning permission. Further, the certificate does not allow any work which would change the outside appearance of the property. Planning permission will be required for any works, including new ducting and equipment, which materially affect the appearance of the property.

# NEWS FROM THE EXHIBITION ROAD CULTURAL GROUP

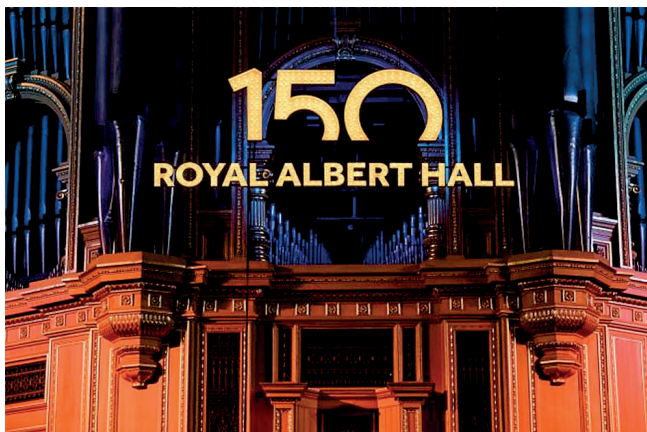
## SUMMER IN SOUTH KENSINGTON

While the doors to South Kensington's cultural venues may be shut, preparations are underway to welcome you back to London's home of science, arts and inspiration.

All being well, venues will be opening from 17th May with a stunning programme of events and exhibitions lined up for a culturally rich and diverse summer season.

One big milestone that has passed behind closed doors is the 150th birthday of the Royal Albert Hall on 29th March. However, our friends at the Hall have a spectacular year of celebrations lined

up ranging from major commissions from British artists, headline performances from musical legends and a series of showcases promoting the next generation of talent. The Hall will have a few events at reduced capacity from the end of May, with full capacity events scheduled to open once larger events are allowed, so after 21st June (subject to restrictions lifting).



There are some unmissable exhibitions which will be either debuting or re-opening. Including a mind-bending journey down the rabbit hole with Alice: Curiouser and Curiouser at the V&A – exploring the origin's of Alice's story and its



adaptation over 157 years. The V&A will also be re-opening Bags: Inside Out where you can see Winston Churchill's despatch box, alongside 300 other bags telling their own story. Epic Iran also opens with over 5,000 years of art, design and culture under the spotlight on one of the greatest historic civilisations.

Over the road at the Science Museum a new, free exhibition will open – 'Our Future Planet' which will showcase the cutting-edge technology and nature-based solutions being developed to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Alongside, will be a series of climate talks with experts, activists and campaigners discussing climate change.



*A mechanical tree which sucks carbon dioxide out of the air like its natural counterpart and then stores it safely*

The Natural History Museum will also be opening with an exhibition about climate change – 'Our Broken Planet: How We Got Here and Ways to Fix it' – exploring how humans have transformed the natural world and revealing some of the consequences of our actions.



*Man-made debris washed up from our oceans*

'Fantastic Beast – The Wonder of Nature' will re-open. Step into a world filled with roaring dragons, a wizardly world created by JK Rowling full of remarkable animals and the wonders of the natural world which have inspired myths and legends for generations. But if mythical creatures are not your thing, take some time to see the stunning images of rich habitats and extraordinary species in the annual 'Wildlife Photographer of the Year'.



*The Pose by Mogens Trolle  
Wildlife Photographer of the Year – Animal Portraits Winner*

The Design Museum will have two new exhibitions. 'Sneaker Unboxed: Studio to Street' – a chance to step up and discover the footwear phenomenon that has inspired subcultures and shaken the world of fashion. Also opening is 'Charlotte Perriand: The Modern Life' – one of the giants of 20th century design who championed good design for all.



*Charlotte Perriand on the chaise longue basculante*

Japan House London have a new exhibition spotlighting the innovative work of Japanese textile designer Sudo Reiko, renowned for pushing boundaries of textile production.



Over in the Royal Parks, the Serpentine Pavilion will open in June. It has been designed by Johannesburg-based practice, Counterspace and is based on gathering spaces and community places around the city.



*Interior view of the 2021 Pavilion*

Exciting plans are also underway to bring a touch of the wild to Exhibition Road this summer. We are looking at ideas for a temporary, 'green' installation or planters which will form part of the London Festival of Architecture. Sustainability and design will be integral to the design and there will be opportunities for the community to be involved. Watch this space....

Finally, The Great Exhibition Road Festival will be returning on a smaller scale, from 9th – 15th October. There will be a complimentary programme of digital events as well as workshops, shows, talks etc together with family events at the weekend.

While the South Kensington venues prepare to welcome you back, visit [www.discoversouthken.com](http://www.discoversouthken.com) to find out what's on and to sign up to our regular newsletter packed with great events, news and competitions.

## COVID-19

### Testing, Vaccinations and Research



In early March, the Science Museum reopened its doors as an NHS vaccination centre, enabling

thousands of Londoners to receive their COVID-19 vaccination in the historic surroundings of the museum. When the doors re-open, visitors will be able to see the vial from the first COVID-19 vaccine administered in the UK as reminder of the huge national effort to save lives and protect the NHS.

Over the road at the Ismaili Centre, their doors are open for community testing for certain groups of people without Coronavirus symptoms. Groups include those who cannot work from home or are the parent or guardian of a child at school or college, or in a childcare bubble with a family of a child going to school or college.



*Cllr. Gerard Hargreaves, RBKC Mayor, visited the Ismaili Centre Covid-19 testing centre*

Testing is to prevent asymptomatic people spreading the virus without realising and these groups are encouraged to get tested twice a week. You can drop in on Monday and Wednesday 8am to 4:30pm or Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday 10am to 4pm.

Meanwhile, further up the road in the heart of London's home of science and arts, Imperial College has been working with governments and public health agencies around the world to help plan responses to the pandemic. You can visit their website to find out more about their latest COVID research, planning tools, resources and reports.

## NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

During Lockdown the Museum has been busily carrying out repairs to the façades of the Waterhouse and Palaeontology buildings and also progressing the ambitious Urban Nature Project for transforming the gardens. Work on the Project is due to begin in September. Repairs to the Palaeontology building will increase its lifespan and improve its safety.

Terracotta repair works have started on the Waterhouse building and







*The Palaeontology Building under wraps*

will focus on the front entrance and East Pavilion. These should be completed by the Autumn.

Meanwhile the NHM have teamed up with RBKC on the Bee Superhighway project, a council initiative that aims to deliver numerous new meadow sites around the borough. These include the grassy area on Museum Lane in Exhibition Road, and the Urban Nature Project's proposed meadow area in the Museum's west garden.

Further information: [www.nhm.ac.uk](http://www.nhm.ac.uk)



*Museum Lane*

## IMPERIAL COLLEGE

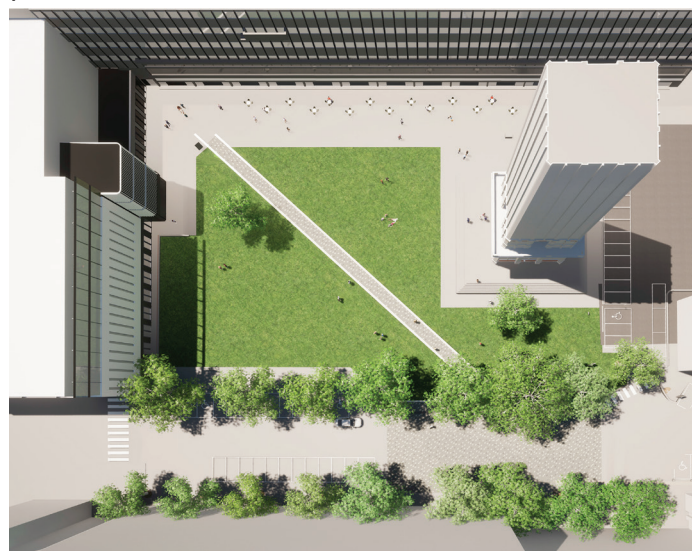
### THE QUEEN'S LAWN and THE DANGOOR PLAZA PROJECT

Sir David Dangoor and the Exilarch Foundation has generously supported a transformation of the Queen's Tower Lawn located on Imperial College Road in the central precinct adjacent to the Library. This revitalised green space includes new landscaping and opening up for community use and will be named the Dangoor Plaza.

This project represents the first in a series of phased works that marks the implementation of the College masterplan and seeks to improve the

quality and accessibility of Imperial College's South Kensington Campus.

The Phase-1 project – see below – involves installing the formal diagonal footpath across Queens Lawn linking the Sir Alexander Fleming (SAF) and the Sherfield building entrances, re-landscaping and pedestrianising an area of Imperial College Road along the frontage of the SAF Building, installing surface water drainage, new lighting and signage, whilst facilitating future phases of work.



A planning application was submitted at the beginning of March and, subject to the outcome, it is proposed to carry out the works over the Summer period.

### RETURNING TO CAMPUS

Last term, the College was advised that students on certain practical and creative courses could go back to in-person teaching and committed to reviewing further returns by the end of the Easter holidays. The Government have recently announced that remaining students will be able to return to in-person teaching alongside Step 3 of the Roadmap, when restrictions on social contact will be eased further and the majority of indoor settings can reopen. This will take place no earlier than 17 May, following a further review of the data against the four tests. A return alongside Step 3 would give many students time to receive some in-person teaching before the end of term, as well as engage with cocurricular activities and enjoy the benefits of on-campus activity, in accordance with Government advice.



# THE ROYAL PARKS

*A message from Andrew Scattergood, CEO The Royal Parks Charity*



The parks have continued to be a lifeline, providing vital recreation, relaxation and respite for all. We have continued to see an increase in visitor numbers, this of course brings with it challenges, but we are so very proud to have kept the parks open throughout all national lockdowns, including the latest one we find ourselves in.

We are immensely grateful to our contractors and staff for making the parks safe and enjoyable for all who visit. We know that being in the fresh air and close to nature is crucial for mental and physical wellbeing. Many people have thanked us for keeping the parks open during lockdown, saying they have been a lifeline during the pandemic, supporting their health and wellbeing.

Over the winter months we ran a 'Welcome Winter' campaign. This encouraged people to get outdoors and enjoy their local green space, highlighting the value of parks and the benefits of spending time outdoors to get a daily dose of daylight, whatever the weather.

At the end of May we will launch a nature campaign. The campaign will reinforce that our parks and associated spaces are important refuges for nature, and offer visitors practical tips on how they can help nature thrive in the parks. We will use the campaign as an opportunity to promote the Biodiversity Strategy and highlight how the Royal Parks are proactively managing the parks for nature in the face of challenges such as climate change, pollution and the spread

of animal and plant diseases. Included in the campaign will be a direct ask for visitors to not feed wildlife due to the negative impact it is having on the parks' ecosystems.

Due to the pandemic, we were unable to hold any major events in 2020. With the Government setting out its Roadmap for coming out of lockdown, 2021 looks a lot more positive. However, the Royal Parks and our event partners still face many challenges and so we are expecting to see a reduced calendar of events this year.

Unfortunately, BST for July is cancelled. Proms will not happen in 2021 and BBC has announced that it is leaving Hyde Park and going regional from 2022 as part of a wider strategy.

In April we hosted a 'virtual' Royal Parks Half Marathon. The event continues to serve as an important fundraiser for The Royal Parks charity and we were pleased to welcome 232 charities to the event and runners from 36 countries around the world.

We are also delighted that Van Gogh Alive is coming to Kensington Gardens from 4 June to 26 September. It is





a one-off event which will be situated on the East Albert Lawn. The illustration on page 10 shows visitors admiring one of his masterpieces at one of the exhibition's previous international locations.

As part of our fundraising strategy, we are beginning to install 'tap and donate'

terminals across the parks. We are starting in outdoor locations before moving to indoor locations within our catering outlets. The terminals are set at a £2 donation, visitors then tap a contactless card to complete the transaction. This is an exciting step forward for us and our fundraising ambitions.

## LICENSING REPORT

*Paul Meitner*

In the last newsletter I wrote "there has been a steady return to normality on the licensing front....". No sooner had these words appeared in print than a mirror image return to lockdown began! Bars, pubs and restaurants closed, with just a few instances of take away business. As you will have heard, there was light at the end of the tunnel, with reopening for outside custom (where possible) on 12 April and further relaxations due in May and June.

Here is a brief update on recent licensing applications. As before, the main theme is applications for tables and chairs on the pavement, often until a late hour. I have listed some of the most concerning ones but owing to space limitations I cannot detail them all. Rest assured that we remain vigilant in pushing back against the most egregious applications, although our task has been made more difficult by changes in the regulations, such that the consultation period for pavement licences has been cut back to seven days (28 days remains the timescale for premises applications).

### CAFÉ 360, 176 BROMPTON ROAD

Sometimes it takes continued vigilance by local residents, backed up by the enforcement action from the local authority, to ensure that repeated breaches of regulations are addressed. This was certainly the case here. Following complaints by a resident RBKC Councillor Mary Weale (Brompton and Hans Town) asked officers to find out what had taken place. They informed her that Environmental Health had found evidence of smoking in an enclosed space, a breach of the Health Act 2006. The owners were advised of the legal prohibition against this. Trading Standards then applied to the Court for an entry warrant in November 2020, which unfortunately owing to an error by the Court was not granted.



Shortly afterwards the 'COVID' Regulations were amended, such that shisha premises were now covered by the legislation and so required to close (the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (All Tiers) (England) Regulations 2020). As a result of COVID, the issues at the premises were enforced by the Police, who obtained a 3 month partial Closure Order, under the Antisocial Behaviour, Police and Crime Act 2004. The Noise and Nuisance Team Manager followed up with a Prohibition Notice in December 2020, requiring the premises to remain closed. Council Officers continued with their night-time visits to check for any continuing activity. If evidence is provided of new activity (as had been recently reported) they have promised to take further action. Many thanks to all involved at RBKC for this.

### ELAN CAFÉ, 239 BROMPTON ROAD

Readers with good memories will recall that we have objected previously to the proposed placing of tables and chairs on this busy section of the Brompton Road pavement. The latest application involved the placing of tables and chairs on the

pavement until 10 p.m. We, along with another residents' association, lodged an objection and wait to hear the outcome.

### CAFFE CONCERTO 150–152 BROMPTON ROAD

A similar application, this time involving 19 tables and 38 chairs on the public pavement, until 11 p.m. on weekdays, on a section of the Brompton Road where most other cafés already have them. We also lodged an objection, on the grounds of public safety (obstruction to pedestrian flow, risking people walking into a busy main road) and public nuisance (late night noise from patrons).

### 2–6 EXHIBITION ROAD

This application, for the placing of 20 tables and 40 chairs on the pavement, was of great concern to our neighbouring associations to the west, including the Kensington Society. We supported them with an objection, on the grounds of public safety and nuisance.

### HARRODS

Just to prove that we do not object to everything.... this involved proposed changes to the internal layout of the store, including the Chocolate Hall on the ground floor and removal of the patisserie counter from the Tea Room. The Association has a good working relationship with Harrods and in 'normal times' we aim to meet their representatives quarterly. Proposed changes to internal and external décor are notified to us in advance, giving us a chance to comment before a licensing application is made. We were happy to see this one go ahead.

### GRAN CAFFE, 32–34 HANS CRESCENT

This involved an application for 28 tables and 56 chairs on the pedestrianised part of Hans Crescent. When the Crescent was pedestrianised some years ago the Council assured us that it would remain as public space and not be encroached upon. However, as the Chairman has noted in his summary, we do understand the case for supporting al fresco café and dining activity as a way of supporting the hospitality sector during the pandemic. Although we lodged an objection we very much hope that once the pandemic is over the Council will ensure that the area reverts to open space, thus allowing for the free flow of pedestrians.

### 13–17 MONTPELIER STREET – NAMMOS APPLICATION

You will have read about the planning application earlier in this newsletter, in the Chairman's Report. I need to alert readers to the fact that if the planning applications are approved they will be followed by one for licensing, covering matters such as the terminal hour, the playing of music on the premises and placing of tables and chairs on the pavement. The KA and its members will need to marshal the same levels of energy, organisation and determination that they found for their objections to planning applications to ensure that any licence granted is on acceptable terms – i.e. it must not have a serious negative impact on the quality of life (and sleep) of nearby residents.

## LAW AND ORDER REPORT.

*Frances Blois (Chairman of the Knightsbridge and Belgravia Safer Neighbourhood Panel)*

The Knightsbridge and Belgravia team, Dave, Alex and Zack have continued on the ward as usual throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. April 12th was the next stage on the roadmap of opening up although social distancing should still be maintained.

During the lockdown there were less people out, although the theft of expensive watches is still occurring and also theft from motor vehicles usually these are not residents. There are now more e-scooters being ridden illegally on the

pavements, legislation is required for these. The three-month trial of the acoustic cameras in RBKC has come to an end.

### THEFT OF MOTOR VEHICLES

This has been occurring more frequently, probably via cloned keys, consequently the vehicle is driven away very quickly. The advice is to use a good steering lock and Faraday pouches or boxes for the keys when the vehicle is not in use.



*A Faraday pouch*



## SCAMS

It is more important than ever that we are all on the lookout for all scams. They are designed to encourage you to give away sensitive banking and personal information, or to download malicious files to your computer. These scams usually come in on the telephone, by email and texts. If it sounds too good to be true it probably is. Do not be taken in by an HMRC rebate, slow running computer or other way of soliciting money or your personal details. Your bank would rather you hung up and contacted them on ANOTHER telephone line. Never click on a link in an unexpected email. It is essential that you remain vigilant. It is worth looking at [www.which.co.uk/scam](http://www.which.co.uk/scam) which is fully of real-life examples also report to [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk).

Although not one of the Ward priorities, the securing of the property and removal of rough sleepers from the basement of 31/32 Rutland Gate was accomplished through cooperation from residents, the neighbourhood police and the council working together.

## ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Following the beginning of relaxation from lockdown, Knightsbridge is becoming a weekend outing of choice for hordes of young "travellers" coming to visit us from Ireland, Scotland and other parts of the UK. They fill the hotels and have plenty cash to spend. When they find they are not welcome in Harrods they



*In December a police van parked in Montpelier Street to deter illegal activities reported by residents*

roam the surrounding streets drinking and generally causing mayhem. Local shops have to close their doors. Intelligence via social media allows preparations to be made. There is a dispersal order in place but they are clever and split up into small groups of four or six. Saturday is the big day for them but by Sunday afternoon they have left. We are involved in many discussions as how to prevent these events happening again and will keep residents posted.

The ward priorities remain the same. 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 numbers below or call 101.

[www.met.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime](http://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.

Non urgent neighbourhood matters reported via 101 or the MPS website will be brought to the attention of the duty Neighbourhood Sergeant. If you need to contact a ward team, the details of the various teams are available on the MPS website [www.met..police.uk/](http://www.met..police.uk/)



# TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT REPORT

*Simon Birkett and Chris Barrass*

## ALBERTOPOLIS

We are pleased to see the pavement widening and hazardous vehicle mitigation measures being implemented around the Royal Albert Hall (RAH) on its 150th anniversary. This is part of the Albertopolis scheme to improve the public realm and pedestrian links between the RAH and the Albert Memorial. Kensington Road traffic capacity should not be reduced but the carriageway narrowing will hopefully encourage vehicles to slow down. The changes to traffic flows on the other sides of the RAH are technically a 'trial' so please report if you experience new problems e.g. in Jay Mews.



## CADENT GASWORKS AND GENERAL CONGESTION

Cadent Gas works restarted in the New Year and have reached one of the most complicated stages. The main areas impacted by this work are: the junction of Brompton Road and Knightsbridge at Scotch House Corner (with lane closures until mid-June); Sloane Street and the junction with Basil Street (closures for general traffic until early May); and Seville Street and the access onto Harriet Walk (closure until



early May). Many of the approach roads have signs warning people to avoid the area. Please contact their Community Relations Team at [info@communityrelations.co.uk](mailto:info@communityrelations.co.uk) if you have any questions. The final stage of works affecting us are likely to move east along Knightsbridge towards Hyde Park Corner through the summer months.

## ELECTRIC CHARGING POINTS

Westminster has been busy installing electric charging points in our area. For example, there are now three in upper Rutland Gate with others installed or planned in Ennismore Gardens and Prince Consort Road. A Rapid Charger should also be installed soon at the western end of Prince Consort Road to complement another in Kensington Road. Westminster have been severely restricted in the selection of points due to the limitation of some of our lampposts or other issues. You can find local charging points at <https://www.zap-map.com> and ask Westminster to install one near you by filling in this form <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/request-vehicle-charging-point>.

## HIGH STREET KENSINGTON CYCLE LANES

The KA responded to RBKC's further consultation about the High Street Kensington cycle lanes by saying that the KA supports their removal and not reinstatement, although there are mixed views within our association, but wishes to see meaningful other measures



taken by RBKC to enable active travel to and from Knightsbridge, particularly to support the cultural institutions and link up to the cycle Super Highway and Quietways.

## ROAD SAFETY MEASURES – PRINCES GARDENS PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Westminster is considering a number of road safety measures around the newly opened Princes Gardens Preparatory School. These are likely to include school signage and one or more ‘Vehicle Activated Signs’ (VAS) that warn drivers when they are speeding. We are hoping that Westminster will also install two or more VAS in Kensington Road to tackle some serious speeding problems. While not being ‘speed cameras’ they do collect useful data. One or more acoustic cameras, like those used by RBKC around Sloane Street, may also be installed in Exhibition Road though these require considerably more work (and cost) to set up and monitor.

## ROYAL PARKS MOVEMENT STRATEGY

The Royal Parks’ Movement Strategy trials have been extended to March 2022 following our complaint about their consultation taking place during strict Lockdown when traffic was light. North Carriage Drive therefore remains closed to traffic. The trial is intended also to assess the

closure of South Carriage Drive (SCD) to vehicle traffic on Saturdays (in addition to the current closures on Sundays). SCD remains closed all week because The Royal Parks consider it is not safe for vehicles to enter or exit the road through the new cycle lane in Park Lane. As we heard at the KA AGM, the best solution is likely to involve a compromise whereby the Royal Parks creates a segregated pedestrian / cycle route along the Broad Walk (i.e. parallel to Park Lane), as they have done alongside Constitution Hill, with TfL providing more space for drivers in Park Lane. In other news, TfL bailout funding has been extended until 18 May i.e. after the 6 May Mayoral election, postponed from last year. Both sides have been criticised, but it is undeniable that TfL revenues have collapsed during successive COVID-19 lockdowns. Some big changes are likely whoever wins the election.

## SOUTH KENSINGTON ESCALATOR WORKS

The Piccadilly line will not stop at South Kensington tube station until March 2022 while Transport for London (TfL) replace old Piccadilly line escalators. The District and Circle lines will run as normal and the station will remain open and Piccadilly line trains will continue to stop at Knightsbridge

# KNIGHTSBRIDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM (KNF)

*Simon Birkett*

The Forum has been busy responding to a barrage of Government consultations on important changes to the planning system. These have included proposals for Design Codes which seem to be neither fish nor fowl and a radical re-classification of the country into growth, renewal or protected areas. Westminster has taken an impressive lead in briefing neighbourhood forums and amenity societies and listening to our concerns. In other news, the new London Plan entered into force in March 2021 and the new Westminster City Plan has reached the final stage before

likely formal adoption in April or May. The Forum has worked extremely hard throughout all of these processes to ensure, hopefully, that the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Plan is strengthened not weakened by them. Separately, please contact the Forum or the KA if you have ideas for the use of the neighbourhood portion of the Community Infrastructure Levy (‘CIL’) held by Westminster. A recent example of its use was the successful hole-in-the-wall restoration.

<https://www.knightsbridgeforum.org/contact/>

## KA EVENTS

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020

The virtual AGM took place on Monday 11 January via Zoom and we were delighted with the way things went. Over 90 members attended together with both MPs and Leaders and local councillors from both local authorities. Each committee chairman gave a brief report on the year's activities, and following the business of the meeting, there was a lively question and answer session.

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR THE YEAR 2021

Monday 10 January 2022

In anticipation that a live AGM will be able to take place in January we are delighted to announce that the Mandarin Oriental Hotel\* management have once again kindly agreed to let us hold the event in the Ballroom.

### KA 60th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The date has been set for Monday 13 September. The venue, the Mandarin Oriental Ballroom. Invitations will be sent out near the time.



*\*The official re-opening for the Mandarin Oriental is 17 May, but from April 12 bookings could be made at the extensively restored Spa, and dinner reservations were available outside at Dinner by Heston Blumenthal on The Terrace.*

### OPEN HOUSE 2021

Open House London is the capital's largest celebration of architecture, design, engineering and public space. Now in its 30th year, the festival is a truly city-wide celebration of the buildings, places, and neighbourhoods that make London special. Open House 2021 is scheduled for 4th and 5th of September.

Additionally, the festival is a unique opportunity to visit private residences and gardens, usually closed to the public. There are architectural gems hidden inside people's homes and we are extending the invitation to Knightsbridge Association members. Covid-19 guidelines should have relaxed enough to allow indoor gatherings without too many restrictions. Open House will produce guidelines covering the number of guests, mask-wearing, social distancing etc. that apply as appropriate at the time. We can discuss what works best and how we can make safe arrangements.

If you would like to open your home during this year's festival, please contact Sophie and Joyce at [openhouse@open-city.org.uk](mailto:openhouse@open-city.org.uk) for detailed information about taking part.

### 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](mailto:tony.devenish@london.gov.uk)  
(Tony is also our GLA/TfL member)

Cllr. Robathan: [rrobathan@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:rrobathan@westminster.gov.uk)

Cllr. Elizabeth Hitchcock  
[ehitchcock@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:ehitchcock@westminster.gov.uk)

RBKC Brompton and Hans Town

Ward Councillors

Cllr. Mary Weale [Cllr.mary.weale@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.mary.weale@rbkc.gov.uk)

Cllr. Walaa Idris [Cllr.walaa.idris@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.walaa.idris@rbkc.gov.uk)

Cllr. Sof McVeigh [Cllr.sof.mcveigh@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.sof.mcveigh@rbkc.gov.uk)

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

Vice-President: The Lady Grade  
Chairman: Melville Haggard, Vice-Chairman: Carol Seymour-Newton, Treasurer: Olivia J Cox  
[www.knightsbridgeassociation.com](http://www.knightsbridgeassociation.com)