

Letter from Fiona McWilliams
Executive Director of Development
Natural History Museum
(including web links)

Dear Residents

Happy new year. I hope this finds you and your families well and that you were able to enjoy a good Christmas break.

As you know the Museum has been closed since 16 December, and unfortunately due to the new restrictions it looks like we will have to remain closed for some weeks. We will of course keep you informed of our plans when we have further news of reopening. In the meantime, though our public galleries are closed, our science work and activities continue – and we thought you might appreciate an update.

NHM Documentary Series on Channel 5

As you may have seen, the NHM is currently featuring a new four-part documentary series on Channel 5 *The Natural History Museum: World of Wonder* which was filmed over several months during 2020. If you haven't had a chance to watch, it is certainly worth a look as it explores almost every inch of the Museum - from the spectacular public galleries to our labs and scanning suites and the collection spaces housing tens of thousands of specimens, dissection rooms, and the wildlife garden (and its inhabitants!).

The third episode airs this evening, **Thursday 21 January at 20:00 GMT** and all episodes will be available to view on the video on demand player My5.

Palaeontology Building Façade Repairs

Following our last update, this project has proceeded at speed and works are currently being carried out both outside and inside the building behind the white wrapping that encloses the scaffolding.

To ensure that disruption is kept to a minimum, we have installed the building site works areas and equipment within the Museum grounds, and placed noise monitors at the perimeter. To reduce noise and additional vibration the contractor is implementing a variety of systems and operating methods such as the use of diamond drilling rather than noisier percussion drilling.

The new façade will improve the fire resistance, security and environmental conditions of the building, ensuring a safer space for both staff and the collections. At the same time, although the external appearance of the building will not be materially affected, the building will look improved thanks to the cleaning of the concrete and the installation of new glass and metal structure. The completion of works is on schedule and are expected to be finished by the end of March.

Urban Nature Project

Following the confirmation from RBKC last October that we could proceed with our gardens transformation plans, the Design Team have been working hard to progress

detailed designs. These will be completed in spring ahead of preparing for construction to begin in the autumn of this year. More details on the design, construction and conservation plans for the gardens will be shared with you later in the year.

We've also now had our first set of results back from the scientific monitoring carried out in the gardens and are beginning the task of analysing the results and sharing the findings. We've been working closely with our national partners to develop the schools programme to be launched later this year, as also with local community groups as we continue to develop our community engagement and volunteering programme.

Current exhibitions – even while we are closed!

- You can take a [virtual tour](#) with our partners Google Arts and Culture, and also discover highlights, stories and games galore. Tickets will be available for sale once again when we know we are going to reopen.
- The 56th Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition will also be available to visit when we reopen and is on until 6 June 2021. In the meantime, if you would like to view the wonderful photographs visit [Wildlife Photographer of the Year](#).

Digital Activities

And while the Museum is closed, don't forget that the Museum, our exhibitions and our collections are open to you digitally via our [website](#) which is full of activities in which you and your families might wish to get involved! We have also recently launched a [homework club](#) allowing our expert educators to share fun activities for you to do with children at home. The current theme is dinosaurs.

We are also pleased to give you special access to our online hub for supporters, [The Hive](#), which is filled with exclusive videos, articles and activities to help you stay connected with nature and the Museum. Do take a look.

We hope you and your family continue to enjoy your connections with the Museum through NHM online, and we look forward to welcoming you back to the Museum just as soon as we can. Do get in touch if you have any questions.

All best wishes
Fiona

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