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THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

June 2012

SUMMER EVENTS SPECIAL EDITION

Dear Member,

As the summer gets into full swing - with the rather obvious but hopefully temporary exception of the weather - I am sure no one needs reminding that Knightsbridge will very much be at the heart of the activities and celebrations. Given the heavy reliance by organisers on providing information primarily online, I thought it might be useful for me to summarise here the most pertinent dates and events most likely to affect members:

18 Jun to 30 Sept	The Mall closed
8 July	Concert – Rihanna in Hyde Park
14 July	Concert – Bruce Springsteen in Hyde Park
17 July	Concert - Madonna Live in Hyde Park
25 July - 14 Aug	Olympic Route Network (ORN) in operation. Road closures: Constitution Hill, Birdcage Walk, Horse Guards Road, West Carriage Drive. Other routes restricted between 6.00am and midnight.
26 July	Torch relay - Park Lane closed
27 July	Opening ceremony - Park Lane closed
27 July - 12 Aug	Africa House open in Kensington Gardens
27 July - 11 Aug	London Live (big screens) in Hyde Park
28 July - 5 Aug	Exhibition Road Show (see over for details)
28 July	Women's Road Cycling - Brompton Road closed
29 July	Men's Road Cycling - Brompton Road closed
4 Aug	Women's Triathlon – from Hyde Park along Kensington Rd, Knightsbridge to HP Corner and Constitution Hill.
7 Aug	Men's Triathlon – route as above
9 Aug	Women's Marathon Swim - Hyde Park.
10 Aug	Men's Marathon Swim - Hyde Park.
12 Aug	Closing ceremony - Park Lane closed
27 Aug - 11 Sept	Paralympic Route Network (PRN) in operation (details as per ORN).
Driving	TfL's advice is to avoid driving in central London, around Olympic venues and on or around the ORN/PRN. If driving in these areas is 'absolutely essential', plan ahead and allow extra time.
Clearways	Some roads, including resident parking bays marked on them will be designated as 'Clearways'. No parking or stopping will be allowed on these at any time. No further details are available at this time, so look out for suspension signs and check www.westminster.gov.uk/olympicparking .
Essential Contacts	
WCC Parking	Helpline 020 7823 4567
Events in Hyde Park	Hotline complaints: 07791 492 400
General information	www.getaheadofthegames.com
Venue information	www.london2012.com/local-residents
WCC information	www.westminster.gov.uk/olympics
	WCC has published a leaflet with useful information collected together in one place. All householders will have received a copy; additional hard copies available at council libraries.

Although this does feel like an awful lot of admin and quite frankly a huge headache, let us not forget one important fact: that London was awarded the Olympics among fierce competition from other global cities, and having won that contest, it has chosen to host so many of the events right here in Knightsbridge. We should be proud and honoured to have the privilege of living and working here throughout the year.

President: The Lord Marshall of Knightsbridge

Vice-President: The Lady Grade

Chairman: Yoshi Nishio, *Vice-Chairmen:* Edward Davies-Gilbert, Carol Seymour-Newton,

Hon. Treasurer: Phyllis Lusher.

PLANNING AND CONSERVATION

Albertopolis

In March, The 1851 Royal Commission held a meeting to discuss the possibility of a long overdue improvement to the public realm around the Royal Albert Hall and northwards over Kensington Gore to the Albert Memorial. In 2010 twenty two million people visited the 16 institutions in the area and with the Serpentine Gallery, and soon to be opened Zaha Hadid's Serpentine Sackler Gallery, a logical step is to improve pedestrian access between them. It's not intended to be a major scheme but to include improvements such as lowering the pavement by the Albert Memorial for easier access. The 1851 Royal Commission doesn't want to take the lead but hopes to encourage others such as the major institutions to carry this forward. The KA feels this is a worthwhile project and we would like to see it progressed.

78 Brompton Road

The former American Express office in Brompton Road was converted by Caffè Concerto into a café/restaurant and opened over Easter weekend. Although a licensing application was submitted, and subsequently a planning application, the opening went ahead without either application having been determined by WCC. They have now been granted a licence to sell alcohol but the planning application has not yet been determined. The KA particularly objected to the change of use as there is an abundance of restaurants in the area. We are concerned about the proposed two sets of double doors opening on to Lancelot Place, where the pavement is extremely narrow and the road crossing dangerous, especially as they could be opened for ice cream vending.

Exhibition Road Show - 28 July to 5 August

The Exhibition Road Show is a free festival being promoted by RBKC, in association with WCC and the Museums, to celebrate the Olympics. A diverse range of entertainments will include music and dancing, acrobat displays, films and more. (<http://exhibitionroadshow.co.uk/home>). The entire road will be closed from 9.00am to midnight at weekends and from 5.00pm – 11.00pm weekdays. The Council has set up a Hotline Telephone Number 07739 314285 should residents need to contact them about noise, obstruction etc.

V&A Courtyard Project

The major application for the formation of a new entrance from Exhibition Road to the museum was submitted to RBKC in March. The proposal includes building a large subterranean exhibition gallery and a public courtyard accessible from Exhibition Road by

altering the Aston Webb Screen. The courtyard, which could also be used as exhibition space, would include a café. The KA fully supports this inspired project as it would enhance both the V&A and the Exhibition Road cultural centre. However, we do have severe reservations about the type and colour of the floor tiles to the courtyard, the treatment of the column bases of the listed Aston Webb Screen and the lack of detail in the application for the proposed security gates. We have pointed out that to obtain Listed Building Consent the design has to be complete in detail as it isn't possible to have "outline" permission as with planning consent. We have suggested that the café should only sell food and refreshment to seated customers and they don't provide paper or polystyrene cups and plates for takeaways. The project is expected to take five years.

Tea Clipper

A planning application for change of use from pub to a residential unit has been sent to WCC. Opinion is equally divided between those who live near to the pub and would like to see it become a house and those who live further away and feel it would deprive the area of an asset. The KA remains a disinterested party; however, we wrote to WCC to emphasize the need for due process, which decrees that any property has to be empty and marketed as a public house for 18 months before the planning committee can agree to change of use.

Brompton Road

The KA remains concerned by the nuisance caused by late night cafés and restaurants, attracting as they do to the area undesirables, unlicensed Pedicabs, noisy supercars and petty crime. The third Knightsbridge Summit, led by The KA and the Knightsbridge Business Group, took place in May, and good progress is being made by WCC, RBKC and the police to take coordinated action to mitigate the problems.

Councillor Philippa Roe

In March The KA sent a letter of congratulations to Cllr. Philippa Roe, Councillor for Knightsbridge and Belgravia, on becoming Leader of Westminster City Council.

Baroness Cllr Shireen Ritchie

It is with great sadness we report the death of Shireen Ritchie. She was a Councillor for RBKC from 1998 where she represented Brompton Ward with distinction. In June 2010 she was created a life peer. As well as being an outstanding Councillor, she championed the interests of families and children

both in the Royal Borough and nationally, and was a hugely respected figure in this field. The KA always appreciated her support in local matters and she will be greatly missed.

Knightsbridge and Belgravia Councillors Surgery

The K&B ward councillors held their first ward meeting at St Peter's, Eaton Square just before the Jubilee weekend. Unfortunately this was the only date in early summer when they and the relevant officers could make it. Once we have the date for their next meeting we will post it on our website and hope that local residents will take the opportunity to meet their councillors and raise any local issues.

Bulgari Hotel

The Bulgari Hotel & Residences opened on Monday, 28th May. The hotel will undoubtedly become a valuable addition to Knightsbridge. We wish the General Manager, Sylvain Ercoli, and his team every success for the future.

Knightsbridge Barracks

Although rumours have been circulating for sometime about a possible sale of the Barracks, the recent announcement by the MOD that they are to be sold for redevelopment has come as a bolt-from-the-blue. Since 1793 there has been a Barracks on the site over looking Hyde Park. The Barracks demise will take the heart and history out of Knightsbridge and change it irrevocably, particularly if any new building becomes just another exclusive development in which nobody actually lives.

LAW AND ORDER

During the wet weather crime statistics fell significantly but summer brings an increase in house burglaries. The police are catching more burglars and around half of burglary offences in Westminster are now 'detected', Residents are often their own worst enemy by leaving doors and windows open and unattended. So, please do close your windows and make sure that burglars don't have a ready opportunity to slip into your home, especially leading up to and during the Olympics where our regular police teams may be seconded to duties in other parts of London.

Diamond Jubilee

Our local officers were part of the large scale policing operation for the celebrations, not just policing bridges during the River Pageant and lining the route of the ceremonial procession, but also keeping an eye on pickpockets and bag thieves among the crowds.

Protests

Residents are increasingly irritated by the large number of protests and marches disrupting our day-to-day lives. The police do their best under the law to pre-empt serious disorder by identifying and clamping down on protesters.

Pedicabs

Most people agree that pedicabs are a nuisance and the police continue to issue warnings to riders or in some cases impound their vehicles. Councils would like the authority to license them under the Localism Bill, with a package of measures to keep them in line. Meanwhile, they are spreading further and further outwards with over thirty reported lining up at once outside the Chelsea Flower Show this year blocking the traffic.

War on Crime

As part of the MPS and Bernard Hogan-Howe's total War on Crime some examples of operations taking place which residents may find particularly interesting are:

OPERATION STIMTONE: focus on economic crime such as money laundering, identity fraud, handling stolen goods, conspiracy to defraud and those who target the vulnerable and elderly in our community.

OPERATION PROMOTE: Police intend to take reports of car crime offences more seriously and Westminster now has two vehicles allocated as 'appointment cars' so the police can offer crime victims support visits by officers for cases that would previously have been dealt with over the phone. Police are using new technology, such as mobile fingerprint readers and aim to make better use of the forensic clues left in car break-ins.

OPERATION CUBO: The Commissioner's ongoing regular day of action is where police officers all over London target uninsured drivers. CCTV and Automated Number Plate Recognition cameras are used. Vehicles are stopped and may be seized if they have no insurance. Offenders can be prosecuted and their vehicles destroyed. This operation has been very effective and includes supercars in Knightsbridge, where police last month impounded and then crushed a Bugatti with a value of over £1 million for failure to provide insurance.

TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

Olympic and Paralympic Route Networks

Members of the "Games Family" - competitors, officials and sponsors - will be whisked along "Zil lanes" (made famous by the Soviet politburo), more

formally called the Olympic Route Network (ORN) and Paralympic Route Network (PRN). The plans boil down to:

- a) trap pedestrians and drivers in local residential streets;
- b) force drivers down one lane or perhaps two alongside the ORN and PRN with all the taxis and buses
- c) use of discredited scare tactics to dissuade Londoners from driving or working in London for weeks on end to achieve a 30% reduction in 'background' or non-Games traffic for 18 hours a day for long periods between July to September and
- d) in some cases, restrictions will apply 24 hours a day and begin in June or early July 2012 and continue well into September e.g. North Carriage Drive, The Mall, Horse Guards Road and Marlborough Road.

More specifically in our area, the ORN/PRN will operate along the A4 with restrictions including:

- Closure of Grosvenor Crescent at Hyde Park Corner
- No exit from Sloane Street into A4 Knightsbridge
- No entry from Knightsbridge eastbound into Sloane Street
- No exit from Thurloe Place into A4 Cromwell Gardens
- No right turn from Knightsbridge eastbound into Trevor Place and/or Trevor Street
- Barriers to be installed to prevent 'u-turns'
- Suspension of many pedestrian crossings between Earls Court and Hyde Park Corner
- Reversal of traffic in Hans Road with banning of right turn onto A4 Brompton Road

For details please see:

<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/corporate/kenington-chelsea-a4-earls-court-road-to-hyde-park-corner.pdf>

Members should assume that most, if not all, right turns are banned in Knightsbridge during the period of the restrictions. The best way to access Knightsbridge by road: from the east is likely to be along Knightsbridge and Kensington Road; and from the west along Cromwell Road and/or Brompton Road.

Some pedestrian crossings will continue to operate but these may involve a longer walk to get to them and a longer wait while the movement of Games traffic is prioritised. Please bear in mind that journeys on buses and the London Underground are also likely to take longer than usual.

It is frustrating that Mayor Johnson has chosen a thousand micro-restrictions, that are sure to inconvenience many, rather than the approach advocated by The KA and others since 2008 of banning the most-polluting diesel vehicles from the most-polluted places during the Olympic and Paralympic Games with a legacy zone to remain thereafter. We still hope that Mayor Johnson will deliver a road transport legacy from the changes we are likely to experience. If we see benefits from the myriad changes this summer, let's insist on keeping them permanently.

Last but not least, our Councillors and Martin Low at the City of Westminster deserve great credit for listening to our concerns and championing our interests. Just one example, they stopped the unnecessary and pointless total closure of Lancelot Place at Brompton Road!

KA EVENTS

THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION HM QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE DINNER MOSIMANN'S CLUB

Wednesday 5 September 2012 7.30PM

Legendary chef Anton Mosimann has specially devised for us a celebration menu to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee year. A guest speaker will be confirmed nearer the time.

Tickets are £95.00 to include a welcome cocktail, three courses and half a bottle of wine per person. To apply, please contact Gill Tickner at events@knightsbridgeassociation.com or on 020 7808 0426. Cheques should be sent to 6 Montpelier Street, SW7 1EZ.

Places are strictly limited to 50 and your attendance is not confirmed until we have processed your payment and you receive a formal numbered invitation/ticket.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

11 December 2012 6pm Concert Hall, Royal College of Music.

Yoshi Nishio

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chairman@knightsbridgeassociation.com

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