



THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2016 NEWSLETTER

Dear Member,

This month, our longest reigning monarch marks her 90th birthday. Many happy returns! These are truly remarkable milestones by any measure that have spanned an entire era of modern history. In our comparatively still wet-behind-the-ears fifty-five years, the Knightsbridge Association has also borne witness to much change and progress in our part of this great city. And yet, much has remained resolutely the same.

When we began in 1961, the Coronation was still a fresh memory. Members were sent irregular typewritten updates run off a Roneo machine (google it if you've never heard of it!). It wasn't until 1978 that an Annual Report that is a recognizable predecessor of the glossy magazine we have today came into being. Planning debates were more about high rises than basements, shisha was more likely to be the name of a fashion brand or a singer and the very idea of a supercar hadn't even been invented.

Over the years, dozens of council leaders have received comments and missives from our committees. Six KA chairmen have been and gone (more on this

below). The London County Council became the GLC which in turn morphed into the GLA. We have already worked with two very different mayors and look forward to getting to know the new one. And as heated as the debate is becoming about the EU Referendum, let us not forget that we were here for the last one too.

The one constant throughout has been our mission – to preserve and enhance the special character of Knightsbridge. Whatever else changes, that will not.

PLANNING AND CONSERVATION REPORT

*Edward Davies-Gilbert and
Carol Seymour-Newton*

55-91 KNIGHTSBRIDGE AND 1-3 WILLIAM STREET

Work to this site continues with William Street being closed to all traffic except bicycles. This allows lorries to turn left off Knightsbridge into William Street before reversing into the site. There are seven banksmen on hand to direct traffic and stop bicyclists while the lorries are manoeuvring. Work to realign the curbs and resurface the road in Albert Gate will be carried out shortly. A second crane was installed at the end of May. The bus lane has been closed in anticipation of the

Vice-President: The Lady Grade

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

Treasurer: Olivia J Cox

www.knightsbridgeassociation.com

scaffolding to be erected on 16 June. The much anticipated façade cleaning commences from 16 August.

K1: THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ESTATE

K1 refers to the triangular site bounded by Sloane Street, Brompton Road and Hooper's Court. We understand that the plans for the first phase of this major redevelopment have been considered by RBKC's Planning Committee who have "resolved to grant planning permission, subject to agreement of S106 and approval from the GLA". RBKC are targeting consent by the end of July. Should this be forthcoming, temporary highway works and demolition of the post-war buildings at 33-35 Brompton Road, to provide construction access into the main site, are due to commence in October along with soft strip of and asbestos removal from the entire site. The main demolition and façade retention will take place from February to December 2017. Target date for completion of the entire development is 2020.

The KA has welcomed in principle these imaginative plans. The Sloane Street and Brompton Road façades and the oxblood tiles of the former tube station entrance in Hooper's Court are quintessential parts of the fabric of old Knightsbridge. Widening the Brompton Road pavement, re-opening the old tube entrance to enable disabled access,

moving the corner entrance further along Brompton Road, routing all servicing, deliveries and car parking to basement levels – these are all pluses. However, the amount of extra traffic in Basil Street that would be generated by the proposed new rooftop restaurant remains a concern. This, coupled with the late night opening of Harrods' Georgian Restaurant, will significantly affect the area.

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

In last year's Annual Report, we commented at some length on the Museum's bold plans for the future. The extensive grounds are being redesigned to reflect the purpose of the Museum, with geology and planting reflecting the progression of the Earth's development from earliest times. Improved access to the Museum will be provided from Exhibition Road, the tunnel and the south west corner with Queens Gate, as will better circulation within. The project currently has a budget of £20 million and they will be fundraising for 100% of the costs including an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a major grant. A planning application has now been submitted to RBKC, public consultation ends on 10 June and July 12 is the target date for the Council's decision.

The KA and other local groups have been kept fully informed from the start as the

plans have been developed, and are enthusiastically supportive.

V&A EXHIBITION ROAD COURTYARD

The construction phase of this project, to provide a major entrance from Exhibition Road, an open courtyard and a purpose-built underground gallery, is due to be completed by the end of this year. Bulk excavation was completed at the end of 2015; the gallery structure has now been created and during the summer the oculus, to bring natural light into the new gallery, will be lifted into place. A major gift recently received from the Blavatnik Family Foundation has meant that 95% of the £49.5 million funding needed to complete the project has been raised. The entrance hall of the new building will be named after the Foundation. The new column free gallery beneath the courtyard will be known as The Sainsbury Gallery, in recognition of joint gifts from The Monument and Headley Trusts. The Sackler Courtyard will be so named in recognition of the grant awarded by The Dr Mortimer and Theresa Sackler Foundation and is due to open in 2017.

The Arup Bridge

A less welcome proposal was submitted by engineering company Ove Arup on behalf of the Museum to install a massive (90ft long) suspension bridge on the pavement in front of the Grade I listed Aston Webb building. This was to

coincide with the Museum's exhibition to highlight the global impact of contemporary British engineers. Having been recommended for refusal twice, as we go to press a further revised application has been submitted. The unanimous view of local amenity associations, including the KA is that it would severely impact the setting of the iconic Grade I listed building, and set an unacceptable precedent for possible future installations.

SERPENTINE GALLERY

Summer Pavilion 2016

Designed by Danish architect Bjarke Ingels this, the sixteenth Summer Pavilion, will be open 10 June to 9 October. The proposed design is of two surfaces made of glass fibre and reinforced plastic "pixels" joined by metal connectors and bolts which begin as two separate sinusoids at ground level and rise to join at 14m above ground. Like all previous pavilion designs it includes a café and seating and will be open to the public during the day, and available for hire in the evenings.

Summer Houses

This year, in tandem with the temporary pavilion, the Serpentine have extended the concept of an exhibition of architecture as built form, by commissioning four international architects to design a summer house of 25sqm responding to Queen Caroline's Temple, the classical summer house

overlooking Long Water in Kensington Gardens.

SOUTH KENSINGTON STATION

Work on the arcade roof has started and a crash-deck has been installed to protect pedestrians in the arcade. TfL have held meetings with RBKC Cllr. Tim Coleridge and the lead planning officer Sian Saadeh about the station upgrade. They want any scheme to reflect existing elements within the design of the station and platform features. Various schemes for Pelham Street are at a very early stage and will be worked up in the coming months. TfL intend to have another public walk-in consultation before the proposed plans are submitted to RBKC.

WELLESLEY HOTEL

In order to provide outside accommodation for their smoking clientele, the hotel (in the former Pizza Express space built originally as the original entrance to Hyde Park Corner tube station) erected two crude temporary 'outside rooms' either side of the entrance porch. Privacy was achieved by surrounding the spaces with 6ft high plastic box hedge screens, with a long cantilevered canopy above. The hotel has now submitted plans for permanent structures. This proposes surrounding the two front areas with screens composed of approximately 15,000 aluminium or bronze cast metal "buds", mechanically fixed and suspended from laminated structural

glass sheets. The screens would have an overall height of about 2m. The KA will be commenting to the Council shortly.

31 BROMPTON SQUARE

It looks as though work might (again? finally?) begin in the next few months on repairing and restoring this house, constructing the four storey basement and filling in the 40ft hole where the garden used to be. The KA has recently been consulted on a Construction Traffic Management Plan and will be insisting that there be a traffic marshal, no construction traffic to be allowed to enter Ennismore Gardens Mews, and that the Arch be scaffolded to protect against vibration from the site.

LAW AND ORDER REPORT

Maddie Elsdon

RBKC'S NEW PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER

The joint PSPO enforcement operation plans for June and July have now been finalised. These will see additional police officers from the Council's Community Police Team as well as Neighbourhood Policing Team officers and Council enforcement officers patrolling at peak times to enforce the PSPO. The Council are also exploring options to erect road traffic signs, advising of the PSPO, in key locations around the perimeter of the PSPO area (such as Harrods). This is a new measure and we will be interested in seeing the

results. At the present time we feel it is unnecessary to have a PSPO on the Westminster section of the Brompton Road but this option could be explored if needed.

REDUCE YOUR RISK OF MOTOR VEHICLE CRIME

Criminals are using increasingly sophisticated methods to steal cars and a reduction in motor vehicle crime is one of the top priorities set for the police by the Ward Panels. Your vehicle could be at risk if it is controlled with an electronic key. Organised criminals are able to steal some cars in less than 30 seconds by using specialist equipment to program a blank key that is compatible with the vehicle. This means that they do not need to steal your key in order to steal the car. Additional security measures you can take to reduce your chances of becoming a victim of keyless vehicle theft are: use a car alarm and/or steering wheel lock, ensure that your vehicle is locked when leaving, and double check it is secure. Installing a tracking device will increase the chances of your vehicle being traced if stolen. When possible, park in a well-lit area, a garage, a staffed car park or an area covered by CCTV.

TOP 5 ITEMS STOLEN FROM CARS

Laptops/tablets, smart phones, wallets/purses, satellite navigation systems, number plates. Thieves are now able to detect the presence of electronic devices with a Wi-Fi signal

EVEN IF THEY ARE HIDDEN FROM VIEW. Do not leave items like these in cars at all if possible.

STOP NUISANCE CALLS!

I'm sure that everyone will be delighted to know that new rules for cold callers will make stopping them easier. Now, cold callers pushing everything from PPI to whiplash claims, will have to display their phone number when bombarding people with calls. Every firm that's registered in the UK will be subject to the new rules - even if their call centre is based abroad. So, if you have a phone that can display the caller ID, you can screen unwanted calls and, if you keep getting calls from the same numbers, it makes it easier for you to report the nuisance. Hopefully this will send a clear message to rogue direct marketing companies that these calls will not be tolerated. Unscrupulous operators that hide their identities will be tracked down and action taken against the companies behind them.

How? The first step is to register with the telephone preference service, online or by calling 0845 070 0707. This will mean companies cannot call unless you have given them express permission to do so. If you still get calls, make a note of the number and the date and time, and report them to the Information Commissioner's Office on 0303 123 1113. They will investigate, and can issue fines and force them to comply,

encouraging them not to bother you again.

LOCAL NOISE/NUISANCE/ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

From time to time we receive information about people or premises causing a problem. If residents feel that any persistent noise or nuisance has a negative impact on the locality they should contact their council's environmental action line so enforcement actions can be taken.

Environmental Action Line:

020 7641 2000 (WCC)

020 7361 3002 (RBKC)

BURGLARY

Although traumatic for victims, residential burglary statistics in Knightsbridge are, fortunately, extremely low. Most homes in the area have burglar alarms, but don't let your locks be your weak point. Fit and use deadlocks to all doors and fit locks on all windows. Be particularly vigilant about: laptops and tablets, smart phones, cash and jewellery, bicycles, home entertainment equipment.

RICKSHAWS/PEDICABS

In his pre-election manifesto our new Mayor promised to seek additional powers to regulate pedicabs on London's streets. These rickshaws are clogging up Central London by slowing down traffic, causing extra pollution and ripping off customers. We are actively supporting a

campaign for regulation although feedback from residents suggests a total ban would be preferable.

TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT REPORT

Marc Winer

Three years ago, a joint working group was set up between the KA's Transport and Environment Committee and our counterparts in WCC. Since its founding, the group has expanded from residents-only to include local businesses, and the scope of its activity has expanded from traffic to include noise, clean streets and other issues. WCC have been very responsive and helpful, and the list of issues resolved by this joint group is substantial. A partial list of the group's current actions encompasses the following:

1. By the end of the year, short stretches of single-yellow lines will be converted to double-yellow in a dozen places, all with the purpose of improving the flow of vehicular traffic and improving safety and convenience (for example, putting double-yellow lines at lowered verges used by people in wheelchairs).
2. The east end of Raphael Street is an area of numerous problems and could become even more difficult once construction begins on the two redevelopment projects in Lancelot Place. We are working to improve lighting, the cleanliness of the street and

pavements, noisy early-morning deliveries, blocked drains and collapsed gullies. Bad odours emanating from a faulty drain have been resolved, to the relief of all nearby.

3. Accidents, noise from supercars and ambulance sirens, and speeding on Brompton Road and Knightsbridge are a matter of focus right now. Measures to reduce these problems have been discussed and are in the works.

4. The complex and dangerous intersection at the top of Sloane Street has been investigated and is recognised as a problem spot. After the completion of construction for the Cycle Grid, the situation for pedestrians at this junction will be studied in detail.

5. We have also raised the problems caused by unsafe practices of some bicyclists riding without helmets, without lights and reflectors, running through red lights and other lacks of discipline.

As more concrete progress is achieved, we will report them to you in future newsletters. As noted, this is a partial list. Any suggestions? Contact us: streets@knightsbridgeassociation.com

HYDE PARK CORNER UNDERPASS

The works currently being carried out will 'significantly upgrade the underpass and improve the aesthetic of both the entrances to, and parapets above the tunnel. A new display berth for public art has also been incorporated into the

design of the parapet on the East side of the underpass. From early June, a contraflow traffic management system will be in place within the tunnels to enable works to be carried out safely. It is anticipated the contraflow system will be in place until September.

NIGHT TUBE

London Underground's long-awaited new Night Tube is due to be launched on 19 August – almost a year later than planned – with 24-hour trains on the Central and Victoria lines. Night services on the Jubilee, Northern and Piccadilly lines will follow in two separate phases later in the autumn, as new Tube drivers complete their training. However, the RMT Union have made it clear that they are not entirely happy with the revised arrangements and suggested that further industrial action remains a possibility.

GOVERNMENT

THE EU IN/OUT REFERENDUM – 23 June

This is one of the most important issues we shall be asked to vote on in our lifetime. If you haven't made up your mind which way to vote, there is still time. But if you were not on the electoral register by midnight on 7th June, you will have missed the boat.

HOUSING AND PLANNING BILL

In February the Government launched a consultation on a proposal from the

DCLG and the Mayor of London for a new Permitted Development Right in London which would help deliver much-needed new housing. It would allow householders to add “a limited number of storeys” to existing buildings without the need for planning permission. There is no mention of Conservation Areas and very little about listed buildings. From 6 April the temporary Permitted Development Right for a change of use from office to residential will be made permanent, subject to prior approval and, for existing areas has been extended until May 2019. The KA is deeply concerned about this one-size-fits-all approach as, in our patch of London, it is likely to lead to smaller offices being turned into more unoccupied luxury flats and houses, doing nothing to relieve the housing shortage. The KA and others have been lobbying MPs to oppose certain aspects of the Bill.

GREATER LONDON ASSEMBLY

In May, Tony Devenish, one of our Knightsbridge Belgravia ward councillors at WCC, won the West London constituency. Labour’s Sadiq Khan won the Mayoral election, replacing outgoing mayor, Boris Johnson. Two of Khan’s early policies are a London wide freeze on public transport fares and the restoration of neighbourhood policing. The KA wholeheartedly supports both and will watch closely to ensure they are delivered as promised.

LONDON FORUM OF CIVIC AND AMENITY SOCIETIES

The London Forum of Civic and Amenity Societies is concerned that many of the 436 tall buildings already approved or in the pipeline will harm London. It feels there are better ways of intensifying land use than allowing skyscrapers on any piece of land a developer wishes to exploit for profit. There is a petition to request the new Mayor enforce a six month moratorium on new tall building consents until the situation has been analysed by his new administration. The petition can be accessed at www.change.org/p/major-sadiq-khan The KA, together with over 100 other amenity associations, is a leading member of the London Forum.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Basement Development Article 4

RBKC have confirmed that under an Article 4 Direction they have obtained an exemption from the Government’s Permitted Development Order 2015. The Council therefore retains the right to require planning applications to be submitted for basement developments.

WCC City Plan

Revisions to the City Plan, which include policy on basements, are waiting for a date for an Examination in Public, when a Planning Inspector will test whether the policies are sound and will stand up on appeal. Since November, the Council

has been able to apply weight to some parts of the policy revisions.

KNIGHTSBRIDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

Simon Birkett, KNF Chairman

Since writing last time, the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum (Forum) has held its first drop-in events to seek people's views on our draft Vision and Objectives to help us shape our draft neighbourhood plan. The first draft of the Vision and 10 Objectives are at: www.knightsbridgeforum.org/planning/vision-and-objectives

Navigus Planning, the planning consultants advising the Forum, organised the drop-in events which were attended by over 100 people and produced an excellent report about people's comments and the feedback we received in meetings or in writing from the KA and many other organisations. Their report is available on the homepage of the Forum's website.

The main conclusions from these initial consultations were a need to refine our Vision and Values statement and two of the 10 Objectives, namely: the wording to describe the special character of Knightsbridge; and what needs to be done to improve the workings of Exhibition Road. Amongst other things, we had very strong support for: efforts to strengthen the sense of community in

Knightsbridge, its character and our quality of life; protecting and enhancing the Hyde Park Barracks; action to improve air quality by reducing diesel emissions; a 20mph speed limit in all our local residential streets; and developing a strong environmental policy. I encourage you to take a look at the report.

Since then we have been refining our thinking and taking the Objectives forward into more detail that will help us shape specific policies in our plan. We have also published a report on Metropolitan Open Land in Hyde Park by Land Use Consultants, generously donated by the Knightsbridge Apartments, and the Board has accepted and confirmed its support in principle for the Albertopolis scheme to improve the area between the Royal Albert Hall and the Albert Memorial.

The next step will be a second drop-in event between 1pm and 8pm on Wednesday 6 July at the Goethe Institute at 50 Princes Gate, Exhibition Road, SW7 2PH. Please do come along as we expect to present more detail than last time and explain how we've responded to feedback in February and to subsequent meetings with the KA, the Royal Parks, local businesses, people interested in improving the workings of Exhibition Road and others. We will also publish the new drop-in materials on our website the following day.

Thereafter, we will digest consultation responses with a view to starting the drafting of our actual Neighbourhood Plan, with detailed policy wording, in July and August. If all goes well, we should be able to publish the full draft plan on our website by October or November 2016 for your specific comments. The final steps in the process include a legal consultation on the draft plan by Westminster City Council, a review by a Planning Inspector and then a formal referendum on the plan, in which only residents have a vote, which should take place in 2017.

Finally, please take a look at our website www.knightsbridgeforum.org and consider becoming a member of the Forum if you live, work or study in our area. Applications can be submitted online and membership is free.

AROUND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION 55th AGM

We are delighted to let you know that KA members, The Bulgari Hotel and Residences, will be hosting our next Annual General Meeting and reception in their magnificent Ballroom. We are extremely grateful to Sylvain Ercoli, General Manager, for his dedication to the community and generosity well beyond the call of duty for undertaking this commitment. Thank you, Sylvain.

In a significant change to previous years, the event will take place not in December but on **Wednesday 11 January, 2017**. Further details will become available nearer the time and members will receive an official invitation as usual. But please do save the date.

I thought this would also be the appropriate place for us all to say a big thank you to Gill Weavers who, having organized really beautifully the last five AGMs and other social events, has decided to take a well deserved break from KA activities. Gill has been an invaluable member of the team and we will miss her quiet efficiency and effectiveness.

21st CENTURY COMMUNICATIONS

www.knightsbridgeassociation.com
[@KAKnightsbridge](https://twitter.com/KAKnightsbridge)

As we move further into the digital age, please get into the habit of checking our website regularly. We will be using it increasingly to communicate with our members as well as the outside world and, in line with many businesses and organizations today, it will eventually replace mailings altogether. Our twitter feed, which anyone can follow free of charge, can be followed by going to [www.twitter.com](https://twitter.com) and entering our handle, [@KAKnightsbridge](https://twitter.com/KAKnightsbridge).

Open Garden Squares Weekend – 18-19 June

Explore over 200 gardens ranging from the historic and traditional to the new and experimental across 25 London boroughs. Full details, and tickets, at www.opensquares.org

Participating gardens in Knightsbridge, on the Sunday only, include Ennismore Gardens, the Ismaili Roof Garden, Rutland Gate south garden and Thurloe Square.

British Summertime Concerts, Hyde Park – 1-10 July

The extravaganza will again run for ten days. It will feature numerous food and drink outlets, six evening concerts at the weekends and during the week, comedy acts, films and a variety of other entertainments. As in previous years, associations around the perimeter of the Park, including the KA, have been involved in consultation meetings throughout the year where problems that have arisen in previous years have been discussed and solutions suggested.

Cancer UK Race for Life Marathon, Hyde Park – Sunday 31 July

Any feedback or complaints should be addressed, at the time, to: eventfeedback@royalparks.gsi.gov.uk or 0300 061 2222

Prudential Ride London – Sat 30-Sun 31 July

The ever popular festival of cycling with 95,000 plus cyclists participating on traffic free roads in London and Surrey. The family event in central London on 30th July will be followed on Sunday 31st by the London and Surrey event. Information, including on road closures, can be found at www.PrudentialRideLondon.co.uk. Any questions can be directed to enquiries@ridelondon.co.uk

Finally...

It is with great sadness that I write this concluding paragraph as this will be my final Newsletter. As a family we have upped sticks and now reside primarily in the Oxfordshire countryside. I have always believed that a resident Chairman was not only desirable but essential for the KA, so after six extremely enjoyable years in post I have reluctantly decided to step down. I leave you in the capable hands of the Executive Committee to be chaired pro tem by Melville Haggard whom many of you will know well from his work as the KA Licensing Representative. You will have the opportunity to express your approval and vote for him formally at the AGM.

I wish you all an enjoyable summer.

Yoshi Nishio

Yoshi Nishio
chairman@knightsbridgeassociation.com



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