



KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2025

CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW



Dear Members

Spring struck this year with a deluge of greenery more intense than I can ever remember. Such was nature's early brilliance that Park walkers might have reflected on the rapture in those immortal lines '*Bliss was it to be alive but to be young was very heaven*'. The arboreal profusion turned out to be a necessary prelude to one of the hottest, driest summers on record, the tail end of which was still with us in early August. Aside from the poetry, much else is going on that will affect us all in future. Read on!

The random parking of e-cycles is a serious problem affecting residents in both RBKC and Westminster. The problem is not under control despite much photographic evidence and robust correspondence from those affected with Councils and bike operators. It is now evident that the design of the 'dockless' schemes is flawed in several crucial respects. In the nation's uncontrolled 'dash for greening', inadequate provision was made for e-bike parking spaces and little thought given to 'bike clustering' around offices of large employers. Councils are under resourced and completely overwhelmed when it comes to confiscating, storing, and fining cohorts of badly parked bikes. Hounslow Council recently terminated its contract with Lime, and this may be the best way forward to catalyse a reappraisal of e-bike operators' management capability and a reappraisal of e-bike

parking capacity. It is sad to see such a well-intentioned scheme designed to meet environmental and health needs fail so very publicly.

While sun bore down relentlessly over the summer, crime emerged as a priority issue for Knightsbridge residents - even if the crime statistics tell you otherwise. A fatal stabbing and an unexpected domestic tragedy brought Police and Ambulance Services into the heart of our residential neighbourhood, as if to remind us of the fragility of our social order and the mutability of life itself. We owe thanks to the Metropolitan Police Specialised Crime Command and the Knightsbridge Partnership's Place and Environment team who worked together to provide evidence that enabled early arrests to



E-bikes in Walton Place/Hans Road: this obstruction is completely unacceptable.

be made, while keeping residents informed. Such vulnerabilities are not helped by concern over the withdrawal of the Royal Parks Police and rumours that cuts to Police funding could leave the metropolis with a shortage of police officers for many years to come. The Law & Order report can be found on pages 7–8.

August is one of the busiest times of the year for the KA as we try to deal with consultations launched in July with response deadlines in August. Democratic consultation processes are conscientiously observed even if they run into the holiday period when those most affected are likely to be absent. And so it was this year. The Fairer Funding Review launched by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government carried a response date of 15 August that must have put many Local Authorities under a great deal of pressure.

The consultation proposed big changes to the way Local Authorities are funded chief amongst which was the concept of a national average council tax rate aimed at establishing how much money a Council could raise if it charged the national average rate. Inner London councils that had pursued policies over many years to keep Council Tax low could find themselves having to impose substantial council tax increases, along with cuts to services. KA wrote to the Secretary of State at the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government objecting to the proposals' impact on residents while suggesting several reasoned mitigations. We will follow this closely and report outcomes in December.

Local authorities review their Licensing policies every five years. The Royal Borough's review is underway, and Westminster's follows early next year and will report by October 2026. Both are timely and are covered in the Licensing report on pages 5–7.

Westminster's licensing review comes after an extensive consultation on the night-time economy, 'Westminster After Dark', which should provide an opportunity for a realignment of the licensing process and concomitant approach to policing. Local Authorities must take responsibility for their licensing decisions whose social costs are borne mainly by Police, NHS, and residents. The link between licensing and crime and disorder is well established while the negative impact of cumulative licensing decisions on neighbouring communities receives scant attention. These two factors need now to be addressed by these reviews.

KA will object to Government proposals to forbid Council planning committees from considering applications that the Government defines as minor or technical. The proposal is anti-democratic and would seriously undermine the role of amenity societies in the planning process. We will take this up in more detail in our Annual Report.

Equally significant is the inability or unwillingness of

Councils to expedite development work at sites that have planning consents and where there has been no obvious progress. We continue to pursue one notorious case in Rutland Gate, consented in 2013, where buildings remain in a state of dereliction. We argue that such circumstances should precipitate a forced sale process that would crystallise the impaired value of the asset and encourage the introduction of fresh financial capital to enable work to be completed.

Our 2024 Annual Report referred to discussions with the Royal Parks on a trial cycleway layout to enable safe passage for cyclists at Queen Elizabeth Gate while reopening South Carriage Drive to eastbound traffic only. The trial was postponed until Spring 2025 to avoid interference from Winter Wonderland traffic, but I regret to report that no attempt has been made by the Royal Parks to implement the trial or any explanation given for the delay.

There is a legacy of congestion in Kensington Road stemming from the closure of South Carriage Drive to motor traffic so it was a surprise to receive notice of Westminster City Council's plans to introduce 24-hour bus lanes and bus lane extensions in Kensington Road. The effect of these proposals will aggravate the existing eastbound tailback while creating a westbound tailback as traffic is channelled into one lane at the Prince of Wales Gate and Exhibition Road traffic lights. Regrettably, 'collectivisation of transport' leads to slower journey times.

KA objected to the proposals, supported by letters of complaint, pointing out that "*...this stretch of the Kensington Road has never been congested and buses have been able to operate and get through this area without delay. The part of the road that is congested is the area by the junction with Kensington Church Street, and not the Knightsbridge / Royal Albert Hall end of the road*". Unfortunately, this is not part of the consultation. The proposal also introduces public safety issues for the Little Foxes Club who would be unable to unload kit on the proposed double yellow lines for hundreds of school children using Hyde Park football pitches throughout the year. See Transport & Environment report on pages 9-10 for further details

I was delighted to see so many KA members turn out for the KA summer party at the Athenaeum and extend special thanks to the organisers. Those I spoke to welcome the opportunity to socialise in sunshine at an exceptional location and we may well look to repeat the event at other venues.

You may have had your holidays by the time this reaches you in which case I hope you enjoyed the exceptional summer weather we experienced in this country or abroad; and that you feel refreshed for the 'term' to come!

Melville Haggard *Chairman*

PLANNING AND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Carol Seymour-Newton

PLANNING UPDATES

I KNIGHTSBRIDGE GREEN 44–56 Brompton Road



*Farewell to the old building (left).
The proposed new building
(above) will come right forward*

As reported in the Spring Newsletter, Westminster City Council (WCC) granted permission for this major site in Brompton Road. The current building is outdated, and most of it is unfit for purpose.

Management of construction and deconstruction on this site will inevitably cause maximum disruption to residents and businesses alike. The Construction Management Plan to be hammered out between the Council and the developers will be critical to keeping traffic moving.

It is anticipated that work will begin on site in late 2026/early 2027.

Meanwhile the first Community Liaison Group is planned for the end of September.

Representatives from TfL, the two local councils, local councillors, the KA, the Knightsbridge Partnership and the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Form will be invited to attend.

SOUTH KENSINGTON STATION

TfL tell us that over the summer they have focused primarily on developing the concept design for the station capacity upgrade which is now complete. They are now working with RBKC on developing a plan for delivery that works for all partners.

On funding – they have confirmation from RBKC of up to £12million of the delivery costs.



South Kensington Station concourse

A condition of the development is that the Infrastructure Improvement Framework – stepfree access, re-use of the Circle and District Line northern platform and alterations to the ticketing concourse – must be completed prior to the rest of the development going ahead.

They will continue to liaise with key stakeholders and partners.

PARK TOWER HOTEL



Looking down William Street cgi view

The developers are currently engaged in raising funding for the scheme to upgrade and extend the hotel. It seems likely that it will be 2027 before work can start and they estimate a further three and a half years to completion.

JUMEIRAH LOWNDES HOTEL

In June members of the Planning Committee were invited to a presentation of the revised plans for this hotel at the lower end of Lowndes Square. The existing MEP (mechanical, electrical and plumbing) systems are insufficient for a new hotel and must be upgraded to meet current



building regulations. The façade has now been remodelled and with the number of bedrooms reduced from 81 to 44 it will fall within the 'bijou' hotel category.

Committee members were happy with the overall design, but concerned about the two extra floors for plant etc at roof level. The architect

(Squire and Partners) said they were still working on this aspect.

13-17 MONTPELIER STREET



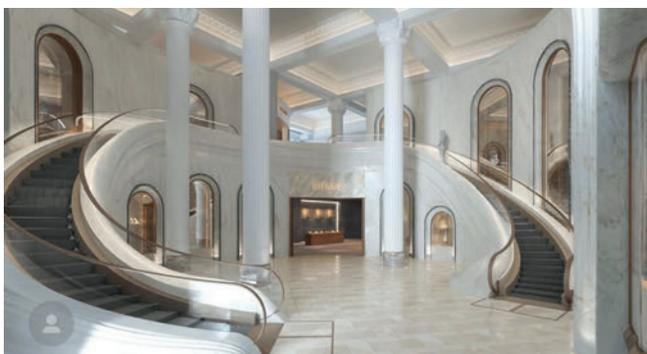
It appears that Nammos, the Greek restaurant/nightclub operators, are not going to open here – something of a relief to neighbouring residents. They have opened other premises in Mayfair and we understand the Montpelier Street premises are up for sale.

The existing licence would carry over, so still one to be watched. We wait to see who might be interested.

HARRODS

As ever there is plenty of activity on the Harrods front with the most ambitious plan being the one outlined below.

REDEVELOPMENT of FINE JEWELLERY and WATCHES DEPARTMENTS



This multimillion pound investment will launch a first of its kind 'vertical' two storey boutique concept and see Harrods, home of the UK's first escalator in 1898, introduce Europe's first curved escalators to act as a striking architectural centrepiece.

With planning permission for this exciting project granted by RBKC in July, construction is set to begin next year and will take a number of years to complete.

HANS CRESCENT

The promising plans for improvements to the Hans Crescent pedestrianised section are referred to below.

Harrods' Hans Crescent façade works are underway and scheduled to complete in late January 2026, although if feasible scaffolding will be partially removed in time for Christmas.



Following completion of the Hans Crescent façade work will commence on the Hans Road façade. To minimise disruption work will take place during daytime with pavements cordoned off for health and safety reasons. Work is scheduled to commence in January 2026; scaffolding to be removed by October 2026 coinciding with the closure of the Prada Caffè outdoor area.

PUBLIC REALM SCHEMES

HANS CRESCENT

Final approval for this much needed scheme was issued by RBKC (Kensington & Chelsea) in March. Fully funded by Harrods and the Olayan Group (owners of the estate on the north side of this section of Hans Crescent), work is expected to begin on site in January/February 2026.

Pavement licence holders (tables and chairs) will receive notice in advance and are already aware of the changes. When the scheme is completed these will only be permitted immediately outside the premises – none on the central section.

Once the scheme is up and running, management will be key to its success, ie ensuring that unlicensed traders (peanut sellers), gaudy pedicabs and amplified buskers are kept away.

Europe's first curved escalators

BEAUCHAMP PLACE



Progress with this scheme has been necessarily slow with the requirement to survey the basements up and down the street.

The surveys have now been completed and the findings have apparently raised a few challenges. The

Council will go ahead and regenerate the street, but it will have to be done more carefully and with less loading on the current pavements as originally planned because they are too thin and cannot take any pressure. So engineers and planners have had to go back to the drawing board for fresh plans. There will be a meeting with stakeholders in early September to discuss the new plans.

SOUTH KENSINGTON ESTATES (SKE)

SKE, which has a considerable portfolio of properties at the western end of Brompton Road and in the area around South Kensington Station, holds quarterly meetings with local residents' groups which a KA representative attends. At the recent meeting details were given of retailers who have recently opened up on the estate or are in negotiations to do so.

Meanwhile SKE is working with Space Syntax,



specialists in architecture and urban planning, on a scheme to improve the pedestrianised section of Exhibition Road.

ENFORCEMENT: 31–32 Rutland Gate

The saga continues. The latest we have is that if WCC's Enforcement Notice, issued against the scaffolding on 9 July, is not appealed against, it would have to have taken effect before the end of August with a compliance period of 35 days. However, should there be an appeal... and so on.

Much the same appears to be going on with enforcement on a breach of planning regarding solar panels in Rutland Mews South. It seems that offenders can play the system ad nauseum, as is the case so often in so many areas of the law in this country.

LICENCING COMMITTEE REPORT

Paul Meitner

In contrast with six months ago it's been a busy time on the licensing front, in terms of both licensing policies and the number of contentious applications made.

Firstly, licensing policy. The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea (RBKC) has published the changes that it proposes to make to its Licensing Policy next year. Taken at face value these are minor and some are even welcome, such as requiring operators to implement delivery policies that deal with waste collection and reduce noise. However, we have expressed our concern

about weaknesses in the legal framework and procedures applicable to licensing, as follows:

- Applications for Pavement Licences are not advertised in RBKC's weekly e-Licensing newsletter, instead they must be displayed in a notice at the premises – but only require a week's consultation period. This requires continuous monitoring by concerned parties and can be easily missed, especially at holiday times.
- Enforcement of conditions is patchy at best and local authorities, including RBKC, only seem to act in response to numerous vociferous complaints from residents.

- There is a lack of metrics (i.e. the recording and publication of statistics) to show developing trends and ‘hot spots’ for issues such as late-night opening, crime and complaints. These would be useful when it comes to focussing the deployment of resources by Licensing Enforcement and the Police.

Secondly, a proposal has been made that all licensing applications should be handled by the Greater London Authority (GLA), rather than individual local authorities that are accountable to residents and local councillors. We are strongly opposed to this as we believe that it is undemocratic. The GLA doesn’t understand local needs and concerns and will be more swayed by what it sees as Londonwide and national priorities.

Taking into account the above it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the current priority is the boosting of the nighttime economy (NTE) and thus business rates and tax receipts, to compensate for the nation’s failing industrial strategy.

WESTMINSTER AFTER DARK

In May Westminster City Council (WCC) launched Westminster After Dark, which laid out its proposals to bolster Westminster’s nightlife, and the public was asked to have its say. Recommendations relating to licensing matters included:

- The requirement for all new licensed venues to show that they were prioritising women’s safety, with a zero-tolerance approach to harassment and predatory behaviour.
- Encouraging non-alcohol led activities at night, such as extended retail hours and later museum openings
- Setting up Westminster’s first Late Night Entertainment Zones on Oxford Street, The Strand, and Victoria Street to encourage music, theatre, and creative venues to set up on wide streets with good transport links and few residents.
- Prioritising support and protection for culturally significant LGBTQ+ spaces, ensuring that they continue to thrive as safe and inclusive venues.
- Creating opportunities for our residents to work in Westminster’s thriving hospitality, creative, and cultural industries

The above proposals were proposed by the Labour group and passed without opposition.

ALBA 70 Brompton Road



This was a ‘shadow’ application, which should mean that the terms and conditions of the existing licence were carried over unchanged from one operator to another. We were initially concerned that the wording of the shadow licence would permit ‘vertical drinking’ – i.e. the consumption of alcohol without a meal – and accordingly lodged an objection. On receiving an explicit confirmation from WCC’s Licensing Committee that this was not the case we withdrew our objection and the shadow licence was approved.

Just to complicate matters, the shop at No. 70 is called YDF Interiors, the Italian restaurant stretching across the whole of the first floor, is called Alba and, on checking with a member of staff, it appears it is the furniture which goes by the name of Domio and which is the name on the licence.

SEKERCI CAFÉ EROL 1807 (Turkish Coffee Shop) 137–141 Brompton Road



This application was covered in the Spring newsletter, at which time the proposed ‘terminal hour’ was 11.00 p.m. The latest application is for a terminal hour of 3 a.m., which is totally

unacceptable and creates an unwelcome precedent for other applications, as well as resulting in significant noise and disruption for residents. Numerous objections have been lodged and support offered by our three RBKC councillors, as well neighbouring residents associations. The new licence runs from 30 September 2025, we wait to hear on what terms it is granted and whether the conditions imposed are adequate.

RIFAI
217 Brompton Road



This application involved the placing of tables and chairs opposite a pedestrian crossing and a set of traffic lights, thus impeding the flow of people

across the road, as well as people walking down the pavement. Accordingly, we lodged an objection (on 25 July) and await to hear whether our concerns are addressed in the conditions attached to the licence.

CHAIWALLAH
241 Brompton Road



Several residents expressed their concern about the noise created by bikers and food delivery agents assembling outside these premises late at night. We supported these concerns and lodged our own objections to RBKC, who in turn referred the matter to their Community Safety and Street Enforcement team.

LAW AND ORDER COMMITTEE REPORT

Anne Wright and Frances Blois

THE ROYAL PARKS POLICE

From November 2025, the dedicated police force responsible for policing the Royal Parks will be disbanded and responsibility shifted to the existing local police teams. This is obviously of concern given the extra responsibility given to an already busy team and the likelihood that it will draw resources away from residential areas to its public order crime team to include manning of the increasing number of protest marches.

MOBILE PHONE AND WATCH THEFTS

Many of the mobile phone and watch thefts are from Lime bicycles which end up cluttering the streets and are a hazard to many pedestrians and disabled people. Please keep your valuables out of sight and only use a mobile where you feel safe. It takes only seconds for a theft to occur. Report any

incident as soon as possible as this may assist in reducing this type of incident.

LICENSING OF PEDICABS

All the information is available on the TFL website, tfl.gov.uk/info-for/taxis-and-private-hire/pedicab-licensing. The new regulations are now scheduled to start in 2026. The first consultation ended on 7th March 2025. The TFL report is 193 pages long. Nicky Aiken did not seek re-election as the MP for the Cities of London and Westminster in July 2024 and has said: 'It is incredibly disappointing that 18 months since the law was passed in the Commons, the Mayor of London continues to fail to introduce a pedicabs licensing scheme. The KA and so many other amenity and residents' associations across Westminster backed the Bill. It is shameful that Sir Sadiq Khan continues to dillydally.'

THE ICE CREAM VAN WARS

The ice cream van once a joy and excitement with the arrival of its jolly chimes now has the opposite effect if you are anywhere near Kensington Gore, the Brompton Road or the Museums. Here you will find certain semi-permanent illegally parked ice cream vans selling exorbitantly priced ices and cold drinks to unsuspecting visitors whilst blocking the entrances to the Museums and other public and private buildings along route and causing chaos and obstruction on the adjoining roads and pavements.

These vans – some of which are parked on Transport for London red routes on an almost permanent basis - are illegal. The operators of the ice cream vans are regularly prosecuted by the Royal Borough or Westminster for illegal selling without licence and for illegal parking but continue to sell their ice creams to the queues of tourists in the knowledge that the impoundment of their vans and accompanying fines still make the economics of their operations worthwhile.

The problem of enforcement or lack of it is as our Panel Police attest that there is no single power with the responsibility to take action against these law breakers. The Hans Town and Brompton and Knightsbridge and Belgravia Police Teams in our area are responsible for policing and stopping illegal offences as they think fit with the resources they have, and the prosecution of the illegal trading is a matter for the Royal Borough and or Westminster which in turn requires the involvement of the licensing and trading standards teams from the relevant Council. The Brompton Road of course is maintained by Transport for London and ultimately under the control of Sir Sadiq Khan.

There is apparently no suitable punishment available through the legal system it would appear. We need to encourage our Council Cabinet Members to work on joint operations against illegal trading by these unlicensed sellers who take advantage of not only our visitors but ourselves who live and work in the area. We know that Transport for London has been given the power to crackdown on pedicabs, but we know too that little has been done so far other than further consultations.

Resources are tight but respect for the enforcement of the law should not be forgotten.

LIVE FACIAL RECOGNITION



Live facial recognition operation arrest

Both our Police Teams have reported to us the increasing use of live facial recognition technology in the Met's drive to tackle 'high harm offenders' driving up the arrests of offenders.

The technology which has been piloted for two years, uses cameras attached to Police vehicles which scan the faces of passersby, assesses them against a wanted list and alerts Police officers in the near vicinity of any match. The result has been numerous arrests of people suggested of stalking, domestic abuse and rape.

Sir Mark Rowley, the Met's commissioner, has said: "The Met is getting smaller but more capable. We have a laser-like focus on ensuring our officers and staff are in roles where they drive down crime on issues that matter the most to Londoners." We will leave you to make up your own minds on the subject. There is currently a public consultation on phase 2 of A New Met for London. To quote Sir Robert Peel: "For a police service to be effective, it must operate with the support and consent of the people they serve."

ENGAGE WITH MET ENGAGE

Newly launched MET ENGAGE (metengage.co.uk) is a tailored local community crime-fighting communication service which do please consider signing up to. This online platform provides direct access to your local Police Officers together with key information and advice. The platform is a two-way communication and provides an easy way to inform the Police of any concerns so that they can take action. The MET ENGAGE strap line is "**more trust, less crime and high standards**" – all of which we commend to both our Police and to our members.

KNIGHTSBRIDGE AND BELGRAVIA SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD CONTACT DETAILS

Inspector Sonja Morris sonja.morris@met.police.uk

Police SGT Claire Napper claire.napper@met.police.uk

PC Paul Wyllie paul.wyllie@met.police.uk,

PC Georgiana Meadows georgiana.meadows@met.police.uk

PCSO Zack Slaney PCSO Jabeir Ahmed PCSO Margaret Bell (emails as above)

BROMPTON AND HANS TOWN SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD CONTACT DETAILS

PC Ben Tivey PC Chris Meade-King PC Steph Mustard

Email address: bromptonandhanstown@met.police.uk

Mobile 07825 966793 (PC Tivey)

GENERAL USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

Emergency 999 Non-emergency 101

Crimestoppers 0800 555 111

Action Fraud 030 0123 2040

Register for metengage.co.uk



TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT REPORT

Chris Barrass and Simon Birkett

PICCADILLY LINE UPGRADE

New trains were tested successfully during a weekend closure of the Piccadilly Line in early August. The £2.9 billion project should see 94 new trains with walk-through carriages, wider doorways and air conditioning introduced in the second half of 2026. They will replace the existing 86 trains and increase the number of trains travelling through central London from 24 to 27 trains an hour at peak times. Further weekend closures of the Piccadilly Line for testing are expected 26-28 September, 3-4 October and 11-12 October 2025. Check before you travel.

CONSULTATION ON NEW BUS LANES

Westminster City Council is looking to improve bus and cycle facilities along Kensington Road through the introduction of 24-hour bus lanes, bus lane extensions where feasible and the removal of congestion points along bus routes in accordance with their Sustainable Transport Strategy 2023.

As part of this, Westminster consulted on possible new 24-hour bus lanes and bus lane extensions along Kensington Road and Knightsbridge (A315) between Palace Gate and the Hyde Park Barracks in late July and August 2025. The proposals are at early stage with detailed design or formal consultations needed later this year.

Westminster's proposals would involve the remarking of Kensington Road with four lanes whereby the nearside lanes in both directions will become bus lanes and the offside lanes will be general purpose lanes for use by any vehicles. Access to the nearside lane will be restricted to buses, taxis, cycles and motorbikes. The lanes would be operational 24 hours seven days a week. More specifically, they include:

- Extending the eastbound bus lane by circa 140 metres from West Carriage Drive / Exhibition Road signalled westwards to The Royal Albert Hall.
- Extending the eastbound bus lane by circa 670 metres from West Carriage Drive / Exhibition

Road signalised junction eastwards to Hyde Park Barracks.

- Extension of the westbound bus lane by circa 80 metres westwards to The Royal Albert Hall.
- Conversion of the existing eastbound and westbound bus lanes including the extensions to operate 24 hours and 7 days a week.
- Changes to the permanent parking and loading restrictions to facilitate the 24 hour and seven day operation of the bus lanes.

Westminster says the proposals will primarily benefit buses and cyclists. They will also tackle problems caused by parking along the south of Hyde Park at weekends which causes congestion for all road users and problems for pedestrians crossing the road. However, Westminster admits that the proposals ‘may lead to a slight increase in traffic queue length’.

The KA has a number of serious concerns. These include: the likelihood of congestion and its consequences for local people, cultural institutions and businesses; the 24-hour and seven day operation of the bus lanes; the dependence that would be created for a large part of our area on a single traffic lane now that South Carriage Drive is closed pending the outcome of their consultation last year; and the consultation taking place in the peak holiday season.

Perhaps most important, we are concerned that the proposals would cause traffic tailbacks eastbound from Rutland Gate that would lead to inevitable rat-running through the Montpeliers and Trevors and make it difficult to access many large residential buildings and businesses towards Scotch House Corner. They may also cause traffic delays in both directions at junctions with Prince of Wales Gate, the top of Exhibition Road and elsewhere to the west.

A better vision for Knightsbridge would include: massively reduced ‘through-traffic’; a safer and more efficient Scotch House Corner; more cycling, walking and use of public transport; revamped roads and pavements that look and work like a bigger version of the new Sloane Street (i.e. as planned by the Knightsbridge Partnership); and strict enforcement of traffic rules.

The KA has submitted a robust response opposing a number of the proposals, questioning their scale, need and impact – see also Chairman’s Review..

DOCKLESS CYCLING BAYS

The changes that Westminster has made to dockless parking bays in Montpelier Square, Montpelier Street, Rutland Gate, Ennismore Gardens and Exhibition Road over the last couple of years seem to be working well. We have asked them to extend the bay in front of 15-17 Montpelier Street southwards to include the immediately adjacent residents parking bay to address the problems of overflowing.

CAR CLUBS in EXHIBITION ROAD (and CYCLISTS JUMPING RED LIGHTS)

Our Councillors have been working hard to find solutions to the problems of car meets in Exhibition Road. It has now been agreed to resurface the roundabout at the junction of Prince Consort Road and Exhibition Road. This will be unnoticeable for those driving normally but will make it impossible for those seeking to provide high-speed stunts. Perhaps more importantly, evidence has now been gathered to apply for an injunction to make car meets illegal in Westminster and thereby hand the police the powers to arrest those involved. Both of those actions should act as a powerful deterrent. In the meantime, the police continue to issue penalty points and fines as much as they can.

In related news, the Metropolitan Police conducted a cycle enforcement operation regarding traffic offences that target cycling through red lights. This operation was conducted on Exhibition Road on the junction with Kensington Gore on 9 August 2025. Tickets were issued to cyclists who committed the offence of cycling through a red light (Legislation: Contravention of The Road Traffic Act 1988).

DRAINAGE IN MONTPELIER WALK PIC

FM Conway undertook major improvements to stormwater drains along the length of Montpelier Walk in early August. They are part of Westminster’s wider maintenance and resilience programme and link to the similar works in Cheval Place in 2024. As mentioned before, please report any road flooding, particularly after a heavy downpour, to fixmystreet.com with a photo and the location so that FM Conway and Westminster can do something to prevent it in future. It takes two minutes and doing so, may save your property from flooding in future.

THE ROYAL PARKS

QUEEN ELIZABETH II MEMORIAL



FOSTER + PARTNERS

Foster+Partners' design concept features figurative sculptures

In June the Memorial Committee announced that Foster + Partners had won the competition to design the national memorial to the late Queen.

It will be located in St James's Park, an area of historical and constitutional significance, which also has a personal connection to Queen Elizabeth II. It will include an area of the Park adjacent to The Mall at Marlborough Gate, an area adjacent to Bird Cage Walk and replace the existing bridge between the two with a new crossing.

Foster's design concept features figurative sculptures and a new Prince Philip Gate. The new bridge will feature a translucent glass balustrade that recalls Queen Elizabeth's wedding tiara. We understand the design concept will be subject to change as it undergoes refining.

SERPENTINE GALLERIES

SERPENTINE NORTH *The Delusion*

The Delusion will debut a groundbreaking video game commission run on game engines



© DANIELLE BRATHWAITE-SHIRLEY

that explore themes of polarisation, censorship and social connection and will be presented at Serpentine North from 30 September 2025 to 18 January 2026.

The Delusion, by London and Berlin-based British artist and game designer Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley, will combine satire and absurd humour with cooperative gaming and participatory theatre to explore the real-world impacts of societal division.

SERPENTINE SOUTH *The Play Pavilion*



The Play Pavilion, designed by Peter Cook (Peter Cook Studio Crablabs), in collaboration with Serpentine and the LEGO Group.

For 3 months during the summer, the Serpentine collaborated with the LEGO Group to present the Play Pavilion, a new vibrant and interactive public art commission situated alongside the Serpentine South. Incorporating LEGO® Bricks into the design, the Play Pavilion commission offered an immersive three-dimensional environment in which play became both a method of exploration and a space of imagination.

Designed by British architect Sir Peter Cook, visitors of all ages were invited to engage with the creative possibilities of play as a fundamental human impulse.

Meanwhile the Pavilion, A Capsule in Time by Marina Tabassum – featured in the Spring Newsletter – will remain open until 26 October.

Further info on exhibitions:
serpentinegalleries.org

THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE PARTNERSHIP

EVENING STREET TEAM

From 10th July, Knightsbridge Partnership introduced a new evening Street Team that will operate from 3pm to 11pm on Thursday to Sunday evenings. During the 3pm to 8pm this will increase the strength of security during the peak crime period alongside the daytime street team. In addition to patrols and combatting crime and disorder, the new team will also provide an on-call service where members of the Partnership can request for the team to escort customers and staff to key gateways and transport hubs in the district.

This on-call service will also support the office sector, whose staff work later hours and have expressed concerns about leaving their premises in the evening.

Residents can also call on this service for support directly in Knightsbridge and the Brompton Road, please call 07984 815209.

KNIGHTSBRIDGE PLACE and PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY

The Knightsbridge Place and Public Realm Strategy aims to restore Knightsbridge as a safe, attractive and distinctive place to live, work or visit. It includes public realm improvements for Knightsbridge and Brompton Road, a 'family' of neighbourhood public realm projects and improved ways to clean the streets and ensure they are safer for everyone.

Key improvements for Knightsbridge could include:

- Widened and decluttered footways at key pinch points
- Better and additional pedestrian crossings
- Improved signal and traffic lane management to reduce traffic delays and improve air quality
- New green spaces and biodiverse rain gardens to support nature recovery and to provide places for people to rest and dwell
- Public art installations to create attractive gateways
- Better wayfinding and signage

WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW?

The proposals are at RIBA Design Stage 3. The design team is developing the designs to a greater level of detail.

Traffic counts and kerbside parking surveys have been carried out to understand current demand and needs. This information will be used to carefully model the design proposals to ensure they are workable, maintain traffic flows and importantly to protect residential areas from traffic.

The modelling outputs will be shared with residents and stakeholders in the autumn before progressing any further.

WHEN WILL IT BE BUILT?

We are keeping everyone informed well in advance of construction. Public realm projects on this scale can take many years to fully design and then deliver.

Formal statutory consultation with residents and stakeholders will take place prior to decisions being made.

You are encouraged to stay involved and share your thoughts and feedback on the proposals.

Please email place@knightsbridgepartnership.com if you have any questions or would like to be informed of the date of the next engagement session in the autumn.

HYDE PARK CORNER GATEWAY

Following feedback from Partnership members and through the Knightsbridge Place and Public Realm Strategy, Hyde Park Corner station and the connected subways have been identified as key opportunity for improvement. Therefore, Knightsbridge Partnership and the London Heritage Quarter have appointed Attis, LDA Design and Michael Grubb lighting studio to work alongside Partnership members and local stakeholders to develop RIBA stage 2 proposals for creating a high-quality gateway to the district.

At present the area lacks sufficient wayfinding, is below desired cleansing standards and has safety concerns, ultimately it does not reflect the luxury destination.

An additional co-design workshop will take place in September to explore creative solutions to enhance this critical gateway to Knightsbridge. If you would like to get involved or to feedback on your experiences at Hyde Park Corner, please email info@knightsbridgepartnership.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Join us on Thursday 27th November at 6:00pm in the church for a carol service with the

Choir of St Paul's Knightsbridge, alongside poetry readings from members of our community, followed by festive refreshments.

Meet many of your fellow Knightsbridge businesses, residents and stakeholders, and commemorate the end of 2025 with the local community.

All are welcome, and you can RSVP by emailing Alasdair@knightsbridgepartnership.com

EVENTS PAST

THE GREAT EXHIBITION ROAD FESTIVAL 7–8 June 2025

A CELEBRATION ON OUR DOORSTEP *Freya Stannard*



This June, our neighbourhood was once again host to the Great Exhibition Road Festival. Over 55,000 visitors and locals participated in a variety of cultural and scientific programming that included interactive exhibitions, talks, workshops, performances, and outdoor installations. The weekend was an opportunity to engage with the extraordinary work taking place within our neighbourhood's museums and academic institutions, and have a chance to speak with some of the key individuals behind the work.

The Knightsbridge Association continues to support dialogue with organisers to ensure the festival remains a positive experience for local residents. This year, like years before, the GERF team held online meetings ahead of the festival to discuss any changes to the set-up, running and take-down of the event, the location of key programming and to share new initiatives. In an effort to encourage senior locals to attend, we are in discussions

with the team about how best to promote the event next year to our community, and highlight programming geared towards adults only and families to showcase the variety of events taking place. We encourage all members to visit, participate, and share feedback to help shape future festivals.





Astonishment...

LONDON OPEN GARDENS WEEKEND

Photo: JAMES GILLGRASS



Ennismore Gardens

On the weekend of 7 – 8 June, alongside new precious green spaces, one hundred plus returning gardens, normally closed to the public, opened their gates for the annual Open Garden weekend.

Of the visitors who come from across the UK and around the world to explore the parks and gardens, 33% visit between six and ten gardens and 20% manage to get to an astonishing ten! And 71% go onto visit other attractions such as museums, churches, exhibitions and theatres while taking advantage of the city's cafes and restaurants – making a valuable contribution to the economy.

All proceeds from some 40,000 garden visits made by ticket holders each year go to support London Parks and Gardens' work to nurture and protect city green spaces. A percentage of profits are shared with participating community gardens.

London Parks and Gardens, the charity which runs the weekend, tells us that, surprisingly, almost half of London is green space but only a fifth is publicly accessible, and that whereas the Open Garden weekend is important to them, it's a small part of their work defending heritage parks



and musical delights at the GER Festival

and spaces. They have twice defeated the UK government in the courts over its plans to develop parks, and Mayor Sadiq Khan in his London Plan urges developers to consult them on any plans impacting heritage parks.

HYDE PARK BST CONCERTS

In July, Stevie Wonder brought this year's BST Hyde Park to a thrilling close. Despite the disappointing cancellation of Jeff Lynne's ELO on



the final weekend, nearly 500,000 fans enjoyed a diverse range of artists from pop, country and soul. Olivia Rodrigo opened this year's event and brought the legendary Ed Sheeran to join her on stage; then followed two nights of American country star Zach Bryan. On the second weekend Noah Kahan took to the Great Oak Stage and reflected on how his first London show had attracted just 77 people! Then followed pop sensation Sabrina Carpenter for two sell-out shows and a guest appearance from Duran Duran. The final weekend saw legends Neil Young and the Chrome Hearts alongside appearances from icons Yusuf/Cat Stevens and Van Morrison. Finally, Stevie Wonder delighted fans with 'Isn't She Lovely' and 'I Just Called To Say I Love You' amongst many other classics! Open House also returned and was hugely successful, the Royal

Parks Learning Team were once again on hand taking part in the popular schools programme. Hyde Park hosted its first Darts Championship,

which attracted over 6,000 fans and the third year of All Things Orchestral took place with a record year, welcoming over 2,500 fans.

THE KA, IMPERIAL and SOUTH KEN ZEN+ TEAM UP TO TACKLE LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ISSUES

South Ken ZEN+, an initiative by the Exhibition Road Cultural Group, also known as Discover South Kensington, that brings together the cultural institutions in South Kensington to address the climate crisis, has teamed up with Imperial College's Urban Wildlife team and the Knightsbridge Association to look at ways that local residents can play their part in encouraging more biodiversity in our area.

The Imperial College's Urban Wildlife team have developed an initiative that encourages residents to use their window boxes, terraces, and roof gardens to grow plants that are both climate-resilient and pollinator-friendly. The aim is to give the responsibility of greening our streets to each

household, and collectively, resulting in a more sustainable local ecosystem. The Imperial team have developed a decision tree tool that local residents can use to choose the best plants to grow in their spaces depending on the light they receive, where they are planting and how often they are able to water their plants. This can be found on the KA's website: www.knightsbridgeassociation.com/guide-to-urban-plants. The KA encourages all members to get involved in this initiative and make Knightsbridge a leader in climate resilience.

This project sits alongside a wider programme of climate action across the South Ken ZEN+ programme, including emissions reduction workshops, carbon literacy training, and the development of a Circular Economy Re-use Hub for local institutions. You can find out more about this programming at southkenzen.org.

EVENTS PRESENT

V&A CARTIER EXHIBITION – ONE LAST CHANCE

Photographs: NILS HERRMANN FOR CARTIER COLLECTION



The V&A generously made three early morning openings of this stunning exhibition available to residents' associations. **This is a reminder that there is still one further date left – Friday 6 November, 8.30 – 10.00 am.** You need to book and say you are a member of the Knightsbridge Association: Museumeventsinvite@vam.ac.uk

Far left: Panthère clip brooch, Cartier Paris, 1949. Sold to the Duke of Windsor.

Left: Rose clip brooch, Cartier London, special order, 1938. Owned by Princess Margaret

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM – WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

The 61st exhibition will open at the Museum in October 2025 and includes categories for all ages. The 25 nominated images for this year's Wildlife photographer of the Year People's Choice

Award received a record number of votes with over 76,000 wildlife photography and nature fans from around the world voting for their favourite image. Tickets are already on sale.

KA EVENTS

HYDE PARK SUPER NURSERY VISIT

A group of KA members were delighted with their visit to the Nursery in early May. Robert Dowling, The Royal Parks Nursery Manager, took them on an inspiring guided tour of the hundreds of thousands of plants on view waiting to be planted out for the summer season. In late May/early June they were bedded out in the eight Royal Parks, Windsor Castle and 10 Downing Street and can be seen to full effect around the Queen Victoria Memorial outside Buckingham Palace. Here the bright red geraniums are grown to several different heights, 2, 3 and 4 ft to enable them to be 'banked up'.

GARDEN PARTY AT THE ATHENAEUM

It was a splendid occasion and happily the weather smiled on members attending the Garden Party on the last day of June – the hottest day of the year by then. Champagne and refreshments were enjoyed in the welcome shade of the London plane trees. Our thanks and congratulations to Panda and Alexandra Morgan Thomas for arranging this elegant evening.



Melville Haggard with guests enjoying the party in the Athenaeum gardens

64th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and NEW YEAR CHAMPAGNE RECEPTION

The 64th AGM of the Association will take place on Monday 12 January 2026 at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel. Our thanks to the management of the hotel for once again making the Ballroom available to us. Our chosen charity to benefit from the Champagne raffle is The Passage which is dedicated to providing a wide range of services to meet the varying and complex needs of the homeless in Westminster.

USEFUL NUMBERS

Noise: WCC 020 7641 2000

RBKC 020 7361 3002

The Parks: 0300 061 2222

REPORT A FAULT

To report faults re lighting, pavements, potholes, blocked gulleys etc. go to:

www.westminster.gov.uk/report-it

www.rbkc.gov.uk/report-it

USEFUL CONTACTS

WCC Knightsbridge/Belgravia
Ward Councillors

Cllr. Tony Devenish tdevenish@westminster.gov.uk

Cllr. Rachael Robathan rrobathan@westminster.gov.uk

Cllr. Elizabeth Hitchcock ehitchcock@westminster.gov.uk

RBKC Brompton and Hans Town
Ward Councillors

Cllr. Mary Weale Cllr.mary.weale@rbkc.gov.uk

Cllr. Walaa Idris Cllr.walaa.idris@rbkc.gov.uk

Cllr. Sof McVeigh Cllr.sof.mcveigh@rbkc.gov.uk

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

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