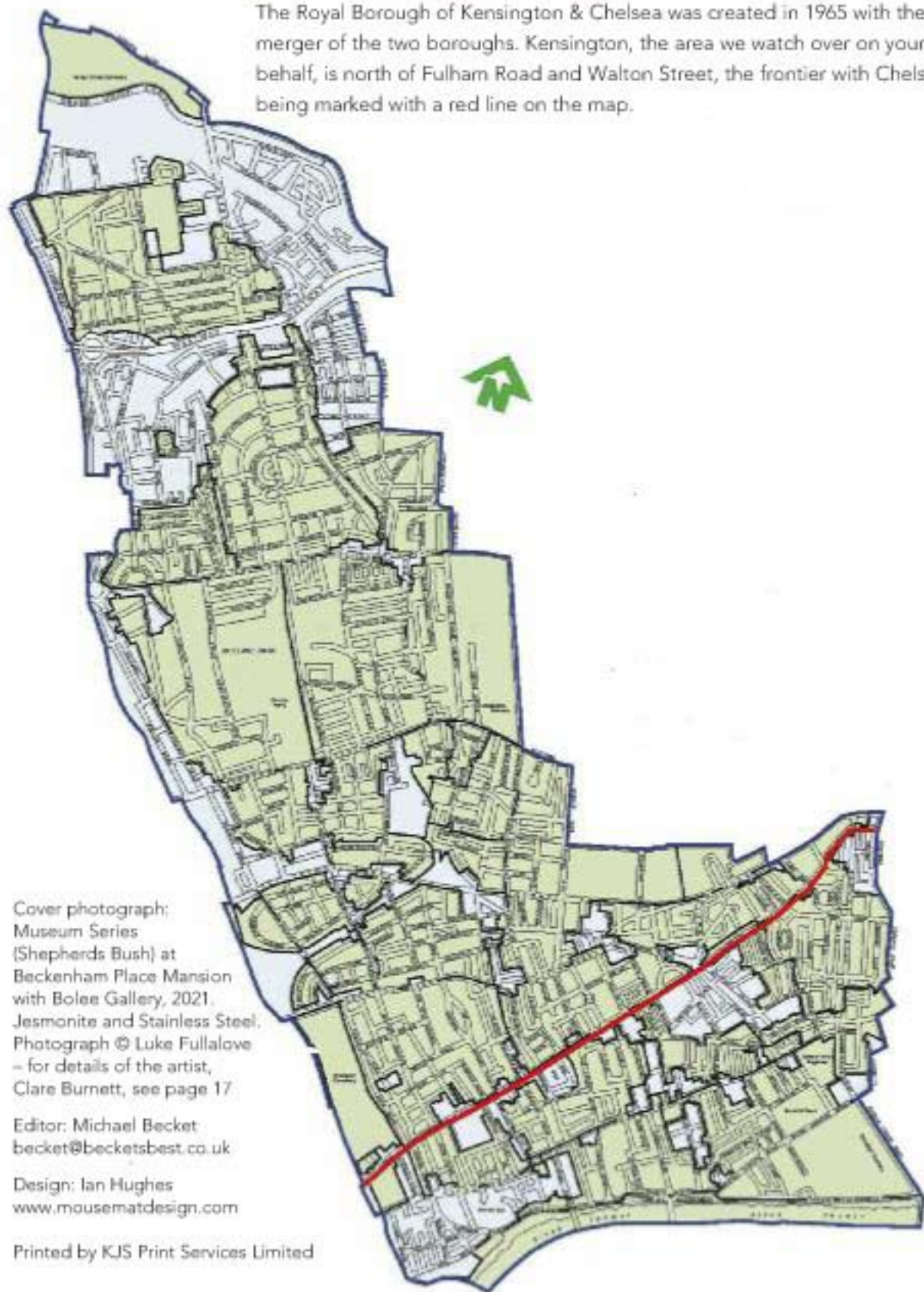


# THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY 2021–2022



## KENSINGTON & CHELSEA

The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea was created in 1965 with the merger of the two boroughs. Kensington, the area we watch over on your behalf, is north of Fulham Road and Walton Street, the frontier with Chelsea being marked with a red line on the map.



Cover photograph;  
Museum Series  
(Shepherds Bush) at  
Beckenham Place Mansion  
with Bolee Gallery, 2021.  
Jesmonite and Stainless Steel.  
Photograph © Luke Fullalove  
– for details of the artist,  
Clare Burnett, see page 17

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Printed by KJS Print Services Limited

# THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY 2021–2022

95 Highlever Road, London W10 6PW  
[www.kensingtonsociety.org](http://www.kensingtonsociety.org)

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The objects of the society are to preserve and improve the amenities of Kensington for the public benefit by stimulating interest in its history and records, promoting good architecture and planning in its development, and by protecting, preserving and improving its buildings, open spaces and other features of beauty or historic interest.

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Photographs:

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# President's Report

Nick Ross

**D**EMOCRATIC DECAY, THE DWINDLING of freedom, is something we associate with other countries – perhaps totalitarian regimes or Russia's invasion of Ukraine – not the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea. But all is not well with democracy in general, and that includes our patch of London. Government, even local government, is remote and unresponsive. Most of us have little influence even on everyday hassles where we could do something for ourselves, as with tackling graffiti, litter and dog poo. The implicit message is, leave it to the professionals.

Little wonder that, denuded of personal or even communal responsibility for civic wrongs, citizens complain 'they should do something about it'.

First a word of sympathy for those in Hornton Street, in City Hall and the rest of London's municipal HQs. There are too many of us, mere citizens, with too many often-competing interests; and we sometimes don't know what's good for us.

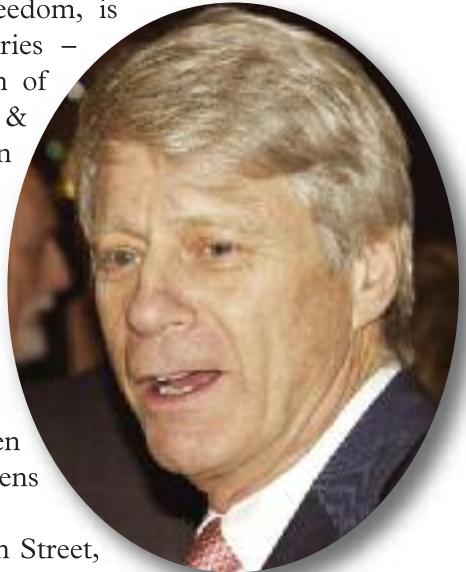
Consider this. Before the Reform Act of 1832 only 400,000 people had the vote across the whole of the UK (which then included Ireland). People knew who they were voting for, often personally. The electorate swelled to 1½ million after the Parliamentary Reform Act of 1867, ballooned to 5½ million after the Third Reform Act in 1884, was joined by 8½ million women in 1918. And so it went on. Now 47½ million of us have the vote, which means 72,000 voters share each MP. Our representatives, of the people for the people, have become distant. Little wonder three-quarters of us can't name our MP. We're mostly reduced to voting for brands rather than individuals.

Things aren't that much more intimate in local government. 5.6 million Londoners can vote for their mayor (though fewer than half bothered) which means that for most practical purposes Sadiq Khan is as remote to them as the prime minister, and not much more approachable than Emmanuel Macron, or, for that matter, Vladimir Putin.

Even here in Kensington & Chelsea few residents know their elected representatives by name let alone in person: we have 50 councillors representing around 100,000 voters. Each council member has 2,000 voters. How many of these individuals and their families do they really know? Things have become corporate.

Universal franchise is a wonderful thing but make no mistake it comes at a price. Representative democracy has detached most of us from the people we elect.

It means that the Leader of our council, however good she is, has her hands full, tied down by sclerotic processes, struggling with national government and City Hall, juggling



the whims of her elected colleagues, responsible for 2,500 staff, managing a £630 billion annual budget, and struggling to avoid the daily upsets, tragedies and beartraps (in our case not least the fallout from Grenfell) that can so easily catch a politician out.

Where does that leave you and me?

As almost an irrelevance.

I can say this with authority because I put this to the test next door in Westminster (where I moved a couple of streets beyond the Kensington border and for whom I chaired an inquiry not long ago). I wrote to the Leader of the Council offering to mediate with BT to resolve scandalously old problems of vandalised and discarded phone boxes – a subject in which, for various reasons, I have more expertise than most. I tendered some other ways I might help as well. And I heard nothing until, weeks later having sent a reminder, I received a simple thank you, but no thank you.

We who live, work and vote – or even volunteer – in the borough, are often seen more as a problem than a solution.

Thank heavens for the Kensington Society. At least our ideas can be pooled and our voices amplified.

But we must do more to close the gap between the governors and the governed – and I give credit to one of our constituent residents' societies, the Pembridge Association, for pushing this forward. They too volunteered, in their case to tackle the local plague of graffiti. Members photographed and audited the problem, and some even offered to remove it themselves. After all, if only the council would provide equipment (notably a steam spray), we citizens could clean up for ourselves. But the council effectively rebuffed them. Don't take things into your own hands; graffiti is *our* problem, they said.

One obstinate example, which you may have seen, was opposite the Russian embassy in Notting Hill Gate. A large white stucco wall had been emblazoned with a (pro-Russian) political slogan, and as weeks and months went by it attracted more and more tags and crude messages. I was frustrated enough to find a bucket of white paint and quickly redecorate the wall. To my surprise, normally reserved passers-by applauded. At least a dozen said thank you, or about time too – and weeks later, as I write this, the wall remains unblemished.

So, inspired by the Pembridge Association, and through the Kensington Society, maybe we should forge a new relationship with the council. As in much earlier centuries, the idea of real participation by the masses is still seen as a dangerous experiment. But democracy means more than voting then doing nothing for four years. Unlock the latent energy of residents. Stop institutionalising problems which citizens could help resolve themselves.

There are so many ways to make the borough better. Tackling graffiti would be a good start.

#### **THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY AND LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS NEED HELP.**

We need people with an interest in the borough, plus knowledge of such subjects as architecture, accounting, conferences, social conditions, or environmental issues. Please participate: make suggestions, recruit people, join in the work of local associations and the society itself. We and the associations also need help with administration, so please come and help, and recruit more people to join.



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Kensington Society drinks in the mayor's parlour

# The 67th Annual General Meeting of The Kensington Society was held on 7 June 2021

AGM

**T**HIS SHOULD HAVE BEEN the 68th but due to the Coronavirus pandemic the AGM for 2020 was cancelled, so the AGM of 2021 covered the business of two years instead of just one, and this one was held on-line.

Amanda Frame, chairman of the society, welcomed members and guests who had joined in on the call and apologised for the cancelled 2020 meeting, pointing out that then online meetings were rare, now they are commonplace. She also noted that the trustees have been very busy (as outlined in the annual report) and that the society is financially sound. President, Nick Ross, conducted the order of business, first making a special plea to meet face to face in the Town Hall in 2022. The minutes and financial statements for the years ending 31 December 2019 and 2020 were approved nem con. Michael Bach, Vanessa Bartulovic, Michael Becket, Thomas Blomberg, Amanda Frame, Martin Frame, Sophia Lambert, Peter Mishcon, Henry Peterson, Mary Sheehan and Anthony Walker put their names forward to serve in 2021/22, were proposed and seconded and elected nem con. Two new trustees were nominated: Steve Mertz and Barry Munday, were proposed and seconded and confirmed nem con. Finally, Martin Frame was proposed to remain in post as treasurer and seconded and approved nem con.

Amanda Frame, gave her chairman's report describing the recent withdrawal from the planning committee of major plans for the redevelopment of South Kensington Station by TfL and Native Land. Although almost 2,000 objections had been registered, against 500 letters of support (all suspiciously similarly worded) they had not made enough of an impression to cancel the application, merely probably to revise it a bit. It seems the developers and TfL want to negotiate solely with the planners: no councillors and certainly no residents. We have no assurances that any of our concerns will even be considered. In 2019 the council admitted the need for change, promising that residents would be at the heart of everything. However, while councillors follow these principles, officers too need to follow them. The pre-application process continues with no resident involvement, and officers' reports read more like marketing brochures and are used to support the developer if there is an appeal.

There were 380 objections (including from the Royal Parks, Hammersmith & Fulham council, the Friends of Brompton Cemetery and six local RAs) to the application for a large tower which will loom over the grade II listed Brompton Cemetery. It was approved on the officers' recommendation. Housing, even if small and providing barely acceptable living conditions, seems to trump conservation. This is not listening. It is ignoring. The same is likely to be true of the plans for the Wellcome building in Pelham Street which will be 116% larger than the present, mainly offices with some residential, the Academy pub and Kensal Canalside which has options for up to 5,000 homes. That means an extra 12,500 people coming and going on Ladbroke Grove.

Michael Bach, as chairman of the planning committee, gave his report. Noting the annual report provides a very full record, he looked instead at government planning

proposals, the London Plan and the Local Plan. Under current plans government is intending to replace local policies with generic national policies, to allow changing most business and commercial uses into housing with no local input. It is trying to create much higher housing completions using algorithms apparently to bring down high house prices.

In Kensington & Chelsea this means replacing a housing target of 448 new homes a year with a 'requirement' for 3,285 homes a year. Impossible without wholesale redevelopment. Under the London Plan, finally adopted on 2 March, there is strong emphasis on 'optimising' the amount of housing which implies higher densities and perhaps taller buildings. However, under the London Plan, boroughs have been made responsible for identifying areas where tall buildings might be appropriate. Most of our borough is classed as inappropriate for, or highly sensitive to, tall buildings. Worryingly though, plans for Earls Court and Kensal Canalside could include many such tall buildings.

After Grenfell we were promised changes – to ensure the community would be consulted as early as possible. We have yet to see an effective process for handling large projects. Summarising, he said there is an urgent need to respond to the challenges of climate change with more sustainable development and complementary transport policies – large projects designed to be carbon neutral and the right development in the right place. We need to press, he said, for a new local plan with a clear vision that better meets local needs, with walkable neighbourhoods, and a genuine sense of ownership by our communities.

Asked by Nick Ross if all this means a lack of trust between national and local government, Michael replied the problem is that big cities are different and RBKC is at the far end of the spectrum, a point made again by two local councillors.

Questions from members, moderated by Nick Ross, covered the role of delegated powers and the value or otherwise of the use of algorithms in plotting housing needs as outlined in the forthcoming government bill. Also discussed was the role of officers throughout the planning process, specifically long pre-application consultations between developers and officers; the success or otherwise of campaigns: the ability to recognise outright defeat and to choose leverage instead; the 'shock of the new': the site of South Kensington Station was once fields, now we fight to defend it from change; pre-application planning; residents are not involved early enough and officers are often compromised: should different officers work on different parts of the process?

Wrapping up, the president entered a plea for greater co-operation with officers as well as councillors, local resident associations and national amenity societies. Finally, he thanked the trustees for all their work on behalf of the members and all those who called in, taking part in this our first on-line AGM.





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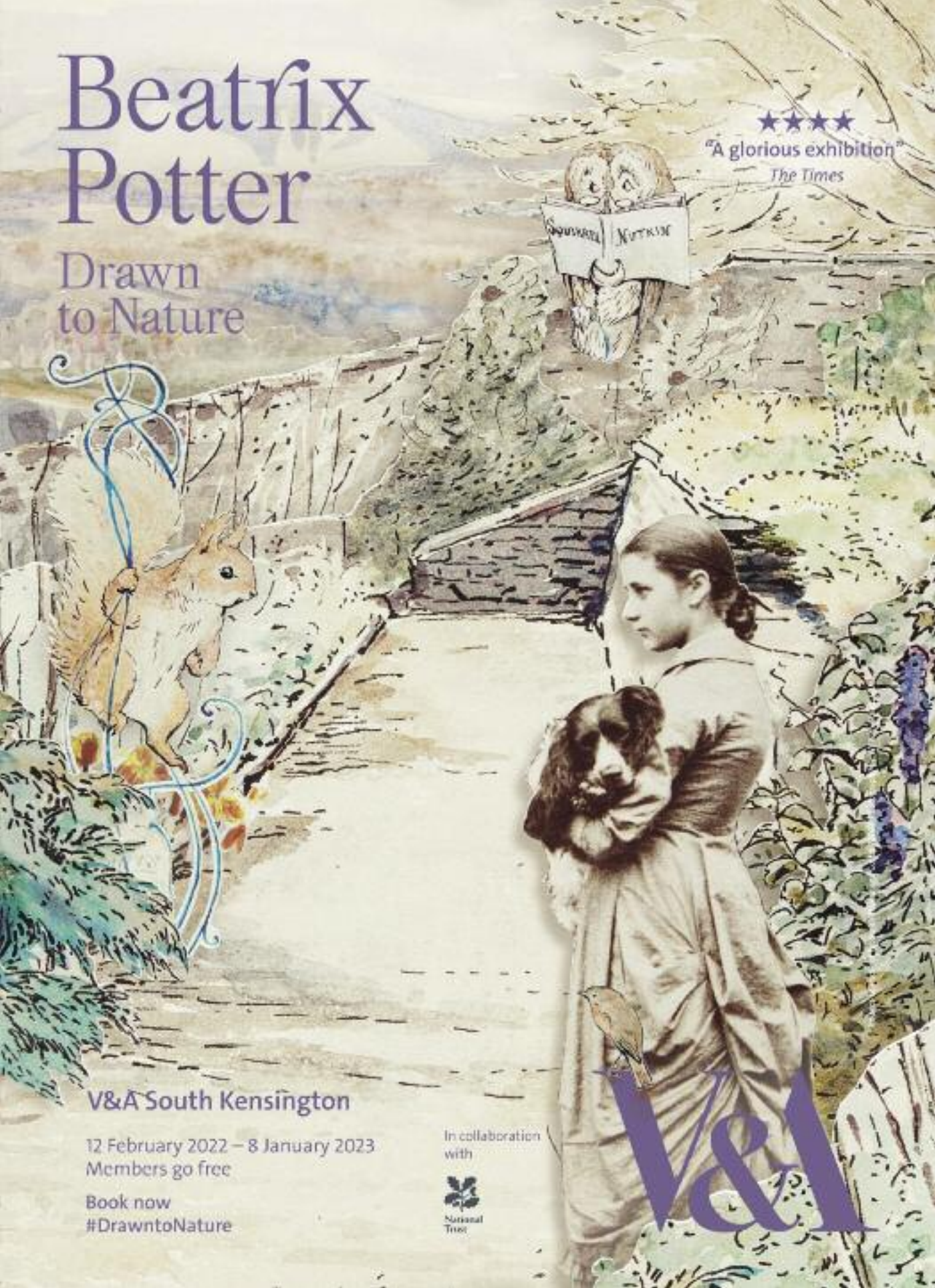


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# Chairman's Report

Amanda Frame

*"Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We know more about war than we know about peace, more about killing than we know about living."– Omar N. Bradley*

I MUST ADMIT THAT writing the chairman's report every year is a challenging task. There is the obvious task of reporting what the Kensington Society has worked on and achieved. The planning report this year gives a full and extensive outline of all we have done. But there is also an opportunity to reflect more generally on what has happened throughout the year and on our future.

We started the year still in the midst of a global pandemic, with a war on invisible but real dangers, where we relied on scientists and health care professionals to pull us through.

Now, as I write, Russia is bombing cities in Ukraine. People are dying as they flee their homes in the cold and dark mid-winter to neighbouring countries. Ukraine president Zelensky pleads for humanitarian aid and for NATO forces to assist in stopping the bombing. We all fear for the future, hoping the dying winter doesn't turn into the nuclear spring.

Last year's annual was produced as we ended our third lockdown and in time for Covid infections to start falling. Restrictions were eased. We were just emerging from isolation. We have all lived a year of fearing crowds, privately panicking when on the Tube someone without a mask sits next to us, walking the dog while worrying that a neighbour has come too close and, for Martin and me, visiting our first grandchild became a restricted activity. Thanks to an amazingly successful vaccine programme, the new treatment with monoclonal antibodies and soon the fourth jab for the over-75s and others at risk, we are succeeding in the fight against Covid.

But have we overcome the dangers that face us? No, we have not. Our model for economic growth has led to, accelerated urbanisation, intensive animal farming, global mass travel and, now with the latest oil and gas crisis, re-introduction of coal and other fossil fuels. Floods and wildfires continue alongside the unstoppable aggression of clearing land for food production. Increasingly, extreme weather events produce levels of rain such that our antiquated drains and sewers cannot cope – basements are flooded and lives ruined, but further afield mudslides wipe out entire villages.

We see on the horizon a major development in our own backyard, where gasometers formerly stood. The plan for the Kensal Rise site off the single entrance from Ladbroke Grove to the Sainsbury's store, is for 3,500 to 5,000 new homes to be built over the next ten years. That many homes could realistically mean 4,500 to 7,500 new residents living in them. One thing which we learned from the pandemic





and lockdown, but which seems too easily forgotten or, worse still, ignored, is the basic need for open space. Imagine families with children living in one of the planned high-rise towers (30–35) storeys and very little accessible and child-friendly green space.

We are in the middle of reviewing the next Local Plan for RBKC; it's a big job. All too often when we suggest a policy change of direction, or even a tweak, the response is that national, or even London policy, directs otherwise. Well then, why is there a Local Plan at all, and why is there a consultation process to review proposed changes to it? Because the government actually gives us, as citizens, and gives the council, as the local governing body, the opportunity and the power to direct and shape many planning policies which not only relate to us, but directly affect how we live.

### **Trustees**

The trustees of the Kensington Society are a formidable group. Four chair their own RAs with three others on their executive committees; four are practicing architects with two others who are architecturally trained; former public servants; a former news editor of a national newspaper and a former journalist and translation executive; a chartered accountant; a lawyer. We have recently established an advisory board for members with specific skills and interests, and this has further strengthened the Kensington Society and how we respond to increasing complex development challenges. As the chairman, I feel very responsible for the huge amount we have to do and how we can best get it done, but am very fortunate to be supported by, and rely on, a very talented and dedicated group. All major decisions of the Kensington Society are taken in consultation and, of course, put to a vote whenever needed.

### **Action for 2022–2023**

With this report, I would like to set the direction for us in the next year. There are many challenges we face, some new, others very familiar.

For one, we shall continue to press for more affordable housing. All too often, a validation report is produced which, for the developer and the planners, seems to demonstrate that the high cost of the development is such that the policy required 35% community housing is unattainable. For example, Ballymore/Sainsbury claim that the development costs of the Kensal site will be so expensive that a mere 12% of the new housing will be community housing, and that the new and larger replacement Sainsbury store should be considered by the planners as a public benefit. Likewise, recently a proposal for total demolition of an existing mansion block and reconstruction was approved in the borough with a minimum payment for affordable housing of just over £2m. It then sold with planning permission for +£50m.

The London Plan policy SI 2, Minimising greenhouse gas emissions, allows for an off-set fund where it can be “demonstrated that the zero-carbon target cannot be fully achieved on-site”. For the major new development on Old Brompton Road with two towers, one over 34m tall and built on a site formerly of 2–3 storey buildings, the developer has been allowed to pay a onetime payment of just



£76,661, as an off-set payment for not reaching the zero carbon emission standards called for in the London Plan. To put that figure in context, Rightmove's lowest priced one-room flat in RBKC was £285,000. Given such an apparent anomaly, how will RBKC ever reach its own target of carbon neutral by 2030, a target upon which we all depend? We must all be stronger in demanding the required reduction of carbon emissions.

For that same development on Old Brompton Road, planning permission was granted with no mention of the number of housing units. This leaves the barn door wide open for subsequent arguments, uncertainties, deals and, ultimately, insufficient number of new affordable housing units. The development was to have 51 units, but the only open space is on the roof of the fifth floor, measuring 8m x 7m and shared by all occupants and not, as required by policy, a dedicated and separate child-friendly open space.

Those are just a few examples of planning permissions granted last year which we would have liked to have seen improved and made more rigorous, to benefit all those who will live in and around those developments. We shall continue to push for proper housing of acceptable size, with appropriate open spaces, and sufficient community facilities, not just in the two Opportunity Areas, but all throughout the borough.

The Notting Hill Gate police station will continue to be a major priority for the society. We are delighted to have been able to work so closely with RBKC, which has bid for the building to benefit local residents. This was by a process whereby the society nominated it to be designated as an Asset of Community Value. We and RBKC will together work hard to ensure it remains an asset in the community, for the use of the community.

This year we have moved forward on many fronts. We've worked hard to build good and constructive partnerships with the planners, continuing to object wherever we think they can and should do better, but also supporting them in what has become, for them too, an increasingly difficult job. Likewise, we've made good progress partnering with many councillors, from planning to housing, to work together to scrutinise, to discuss and implement.

### **Thank you**

With these improvements our goals are high and achievable, and there's lots more to do. Thank you all for your support.

As we prepared to go to press we heard the sad news that Earl's Court councillor Malcolm Spalding had died very suddenly. He was 73 and had lived in Kensington for over 50 years.

First elected in May 2014, he proved an energetic and committed councillor who worked hard for his local community. He was also chairman of the Earl's Court Society and vice president of the K&C Chamber of Commerce.



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# Local artist: Clare Burnett

by Michael Becket

A RECENT COMMISSION FOR Clare Burnett destined for the Chinese city of Hengshui to create sculpture for a city park, provides a glimpse of the contemporary art world and how far it has changed. Clare's work was a series of major structures, strictly not figurative. Having spent a long time pondering, sketching and producing potential sculptures, she finally settled on a set of maquettes. Then, in collaboration with an engineer, she produced a digital file which metal workers in China fed into appropriate machinery to produce the structures she had invented. The only thing travelling internationally was a set of electrical pulses between computers.

Another sign of how much her art has put new technology to use is a 3D printer chugging away in a corner of her north Kensington studio. It is slowly – very slowly, possibly taking several hours – creating the layers of plastic to reproduce her mildly feminist comment on Britain's handling of Covid. As she explains, "it is slightly phallic", with smaller phallic protrusions on it, which is her take on the fact that "all the major



Silk Room installation Leighton House Museum. 2012. Photo: Anne Purkiss





**The Cleaning, West Norwood Cemetery. 2012. Powder coated aluminium. Photo: Anne Purkiss.**

political decisions were taken by four men in their 50s with the same demographic approach to risk”. As usual, it started with a process of playing with materials and making small models – a sort of theme and variations – before producing the version programmed into the machine.

Clare is president of the Royal Society of Sculptors, who shows regularly in exhibitions here and abroad and who was appointed as Brooke Benington Artist in Residence at Studioblock M74 in Mexico just before Covid struck. She has worked in the borough, in an ACAVA studio in North Kensington, for the last twenty years.

Her practice involves a mixture of sales, exhibitions, projects and commissions. As part of her role at the society, she champions sculpture generally and helps get support for artists who make it. She also enjoys teaching which extends and contributes to her work and she has taught in several places including the Greycoat Hospital, University of Leeds and Leeds University of the Arts, Christ’s College, Cambridge and the Art Academy.

Her route to this way of life was in some ways surprisingly swift and direct. Having grown up largely in France and Belgium where her parents worked, she went to Christ’s College Cambridge to read architecture and then law – “I didn’t then know what I wanted to do”. It did not take long to discover it was neither of those, and she went back to college to study Fine Art.





**Song of the Sun, Hengshui City. 2019. Painted and mirror polished Stainless Steel. Photo: Artist**

Clare remains somewhat equivocal about whether she should have gone to art school: bypassing that she would have got an earlier start in her career, but in that case she may not have been mature enough to get full benefit. As it was, she started with painting and print-making but “became interested in colour and form – the division between painting and sculpture is more than it ought to be”. An early boost was a commission for the Brompton cemetery chapel in graphite in a “form that had a relationship with the cemetery outside”.

Strangely enough, more recently she had a commission for West Norwood cemetery. In a wantonly brutal fashion the council had taken a tractor to flatten headstones and she was commissioned as part of a cemetery trail to make works that referenced this. Tricky: “colour enough to make them visible but not jarring, but not too dark to fade away” and something that would withstand the weather. The sort of challenge Clare relishes.

She finds it difficult to explain the process of creation. Perhaps all artists do. She starts off with an idea. It might be the sculptural implications of a car, the insistent acquisitiveness of our culture, the construction of a washing machine, the ubiquitous CCTV cameras producing a surveillance society, or the administration of Covid. “It is the aim to explore an idea rather than to make an object.” This might be triggered by or helped on its way by objects and materials she finds in skips and rubbish dumps or sees in the street. A very odd jumble of objects clutter her studio, waiting for a home and a use.



Clare Burnett in her studio

Having come across some new shape, object or even material – plastic, say, papier mache or pewter – sets her off in random directions. “Unexpected things happen and I’m always surprised.” So it is best not to get too bogged down in planning a project but to let the work develop its own personality.

All this has to be accommodated with some pretty serious work at the society of which she has been president for the past seven years. Its splendid headquarters in Old Brompton Road has been in dire need of attention for some time. The chimney needs to be rebuilt, the cement repointing has severely damaged the brickwork, and modernisation is overdue. It has taken up a lot of her time. She has stayed in post until much of the work is funded and under way and, as her term comes to an end next summer, she feels the time is right to hand on to a new president.

The art market is difficult and artists find it hard to keep their head above water. “As a country we do not have a history of buying sculpture”, at least not since the 18thC landed aristocrats of massive wealth indulged their whims. “People do visit contemporary galleries” but it is hard to purchase three dimensional work for the home, especially with radiators and seating taking up so much of the room so most is bought by serious collectors, institutions or commissioned for public space.





Clare Burnett in her studio

Clare continues to be surprised at how often artists are unpaid or asked to give their time and work for free ‘for exposure’. Things are changing though “There is a new and welcome trend I have noticed of charities giving part of auction proceeds to the artists which is wonderful to see as it stops assuming that artists can afford to give away their work.” Such requests for contributions disregard not just the time making the work but the long gestation period from first idea, through elaboration and accumulation, trial and error, sketches, and finally creation.

As she looks towards the end of her presidency, she is more than ever aware of the sweet spot she is in – her daughter, an actor and her son who works in business have moved away and her parents are healthy, and she wants to make the most of it to focus on her career. She has already used her greater freedom to go to China for the installation of her work (and even learned Mandarin for the journey) and is enjoying undertaking residencies around the world, most recently in Mexico and, closer to home, in Hastings in the summer. The main restriction on taking up even more overseas residency appointments has of course been Covid but, as the world opens back up she is looking forward to setting out again.

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## Association for Cultural Advancement through Visual Art

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**I**N 1973 ARTISTS, POLITICIANS, local authority officials and the visual art officer of the Greater London Arts Association tried to discover what artists need. They formed the Hammersmith Art Experiment. That led to creating Association for Cultural Advancement through Visual Art (ACAVA) which in 1976 moved into two studios managed by the studio provider ACME at 23–29 Faroe Road, just north of Olympia, and 62 Hetley Road, just off the Uxbridge Road, as studios managed by the already established studio provider ACME. Twenty artists had workspace, and Faroe Road became a venue for performance art.

Hammersmith & Fulham council had other plans for the sites and give planning permission to redevelop them. The artists responded with a three-year campaign to retain the buildings and in 1983 to the Greater London Council bought the buildings and sold them on to ACAVA. With funding from the GLC the organisation then repaired the buildings.

Further help from the GLC plus funding from the London Borough Grants scheme, Hammersmith & Fulham council, Greater London Arts and London Arts Board, enabled ACAVA to organise art-based communities and educational activities. Revenue funding was withdrawn in 1994 but that did not stop ACAVA which expanded, setting up new studios, and by creating a wider base, established financial independence. When founded ACAVA had 20 members; there are now over 500 at 20 sites and demand for its services continues to grow.

Anyone can apply for an ACAVA studio. Moving in costs £50 administration, with a £25 joining fee. Studio rentals vary widely, depending on size, facilities and location, from about £90 a month to over £800 for a large one at the purpose-built Blechynden Street – most are around £400–450, plus bills. ACAVA staff assess applications and meet applicants in person. Studio licenses are for one year and are reviewed annually.

The studios should be used regularly – at least half the time – rent is paid monthly, tenants are expected to “make a positive contribution to the working harmony of your studio building”, and help ACAVA in its charitable work.

North Kensington City Challenge SRB was established in the mid-1990s to regenerate the deprived areas of north Kensington. Temporary ACAVA studios in the old Talbot motor works in Barlby Road were scheduled for demolition to make way for housing. ACAVA worked with the regeneration agency, Kensington & Chelsea borough, and a local grant-making trust The Campden Charities to find alternative premises. They found a derelict site with highly restrictive developmental potential, 54 Blechynden Street next to motorway arches, unsuited to housing but fine for studios. With support from an Arts Council England lottery grant, the first purpose-designed studio building

built in London for many years, was completed in 1999 with space for 24 artists, ACAVA offices and a community studio.

Another north Kensington site owned by ACAVA is 4 Maxilla Walk. A nursery converted to 24 studios, some self-contained, some open plan, plus exhibition space, under the Westway.

Other sites are in Harlow, Greenwich, Wimbledon, Wembley, Merton, Limehouse, Wandsworth, Wealdstone, Deptford, Acton, Canning Town, Willesden, Colchester, Harlow, Hadleigh, Stoke-on-Trent.

T: 020 8960 5015

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**ACAVA headquarters in Blechynden Street, and home to Clare Burnett's studio**



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# Local retailer: Devlin's

by Michael Becket

**A**T LEAST SIX GENERATIONS of costermongers is Cheryl Devlin's ambition. Her great grandfather Collins started with a barrow in Portobello Road, her grandfather carried on the business, as did her father. Now she is in charge. Her son is designated to take over and there are seven grandchildren potentially destined for the work after him. She has not planned beyond that.

Her two barrows on three sites on the road have recently been building up a corporate identity in preparation for the lasting legacy. All the staff serving have jackets with the Devlin badge, and long-life cotton carrier bags proclaim the name. In addition large plastic display hoardings at the edge of the barrow carry the message "Following in the tradition of Peter & Billie Collins" between a pair of surprising crowns. She also had the vans painted up with the name until the new ULEZ rules about exhausts came in and she had to replace them. "I am trying to promote Portobello Road and establish the business for my grandchildren."

"It is our heritage. I was born in Blenheim Crescent and I am still living there." She loves the community and its long-established atmosphere and the rootedness. There used to be hundreds of market stalls selling fruit and vegetables all the way up the road, "and all making a living". That is why it is so sad there are now just two: her barrows, and only one rival, friends Lynne and Al three sites further down the road. "The last two originals. Without us there would be no community."

Sure enough just about every third person passing down the road is a friend. "Hello darling. What's the matter with your foot?" "Hello you seem to have got a new boyfriend" – that to a decidedly old pair of pensioners. Some just give a cheery wave across the road and shout a greeting.

Supermarkets selling a wide range of food and a wide selection of other things including clothes have seduced market customers. Parking restrictions have discouraged long-time regular customers loading up with fruit and veg. As a result, the rest of the road stalls have been appropriated by clothes, fast food and tourist tat. "The future is very bleak." The stall is very much "not like my parents used to be".

It is not just the surrounding market, but the range of produce on her stall these days is very different from what she saw her parents selling. Then it was simple fare – "mainly potatoes, onions, carrots cabbages, parsnips and swedes". Very different now. With a multicultural clientele and more sophisticated tastes, it is "exotic fruits and Asian produce coming from all over the world, Peru and Spain, India and so on". Just about the





only country not supplying is Australia, though onions come from Tasmania – “they are the best”.

One aspect of market change she is most concerned about is the mingling of fresh and cooked food. The smell of cooking should not surround the sale of fresh produce. “They should be segregated from the fresh fruit, and done in a civilised way with tables and chairs and a rubbish bin.”

Traders are hit twice over. In addition to fewer customers, there are additional costs. Market trading is not a source of wealth even with vanishing competition. Quite apart from anything else, the overheads are heavy. The two new vans cost £20,000 and £35,00 and the council charges £100 a week for the parking bays across the road. In addition there is the trading licence, the electricity which used to be £20 a year before the bollards were set up as a source at £100 a month. Then there is a shed in Lonsdale Mews rented from the council for storage, and the cost of rubbish collection.

In addition they have a tough price competition with supermarkets – they buy by the case, a supermarket by fields, her son points out. Profits are inevitably thin and this is no way to get rich. Fortunately the family house has a shop on the ground floor which brings in much-needed rent to supplement the market. Or it did until Covid struck and then she did not charge at all for six months. “You’ve got to help and be reasonable with people.”

It may sound surprising anybody should be so keen to keep doing that job considering not just the relatively meagre rewards but also the life that goes with it. Putting up with the physical conditions needs enthusiasm. Cheryl gets up at 2:30 in the





morning to drive the van to the market on her own, where she has to find the right goods and right quality. Then it is back to Portobello Road where the rest of the serving staff arrive by 5 am to set out the barrows, pile up the produce and add the price labels. And they stand around all day in all temperatures.

“I am going to write my life story one day and call it ‘Coming back as man’. It is a physically demanding job. Cheryl has arthritis, a frozen shoulder and troubles with arm from repetitive strain injury: the reaching for the bag, packing it, twisting the bag closed, all done hundreds of times a day. Doctors recommend an operation on her shoulder, but she is not keen. “I don’t smoke and don’t drink” so despite being 63 she is hoping to do another ten years. Well, if she was not working, “I might take to the bottle”.

Her children have given up their own jobs, as chippie, florist and plumber, to help on the market. Cheryl herself started working life as a florist at Harrods for four years. That was before Portobello claimed her.

Even so, the number of locals shopping in the market is declining. Tourists in the summer do add a little to the trade, but most are more interested in taking pictures. Some of them also try to sneak the odd fruit when they think nobody is looking. “You mustn’t be rude” she says, sticking to an old-fashioned courtesy principle, “but you mustn’t steal. And if they try I give them a mouthful.”

As compensation for the long and unsocial hours, the hard work and being on the exhausting work, the family does occasionally splurge on holidays and celebrations. “We have lovely family holidays in Marbella or Greece”, have the occasional big meal at a good restaurant for new year’s eve, and for a child’s birthday they go to some country house venue for the weekend.

Even so, the prospect of her grandchildren inheriting the stall and making a comfortable living from it are looking less than certain.



# Blue Plaques

## Sir Henry Cole

by Michael Becket

**T**HE INVENTOR OF CHRISTMAS CARDS in 1843, and designer of the world's first postage stamp was also the organiser of the 1851 Great Exhibition, which he managed with such elan and success that the profits helped him create the South Kensington museums. Under the pseudonym Felix Summerly he designed a wide range of items which went into production, including a prize-winning tea service manufactured by Minton. Under that name he also wrote children's books, including *The Home Treasury* (1843–1855); *A hand-book for the architecture, sculpture, tombs, and decorations of Westminster Abbey* (1859); *Beauty and the Beast: an entirely new edition* (1843); *An Alphabet of Quadrupeds* (1844); and *The Pleasant History of Reynard the Fox*, told through the pictures by Albert van Everdingen (1843).

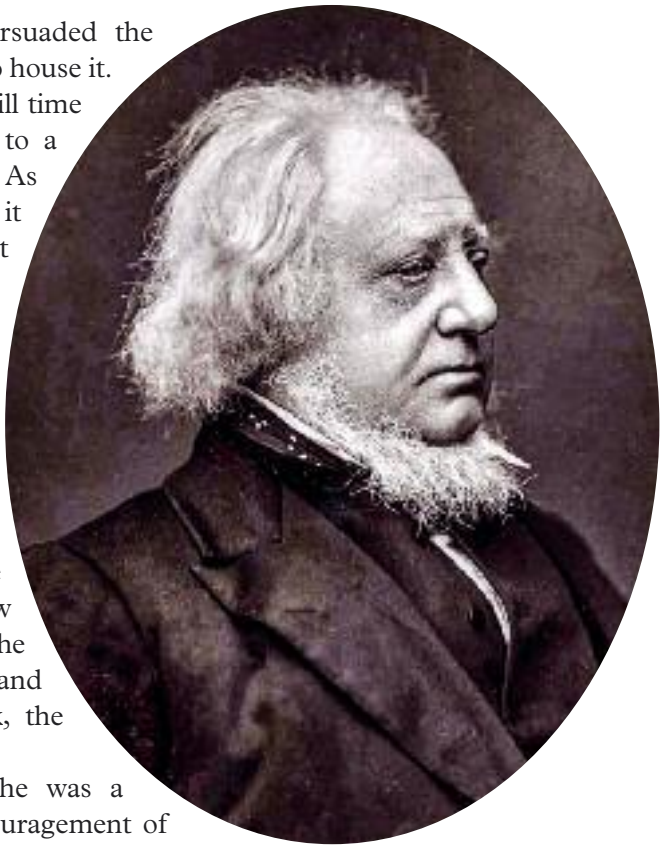
His almost alarming range of successes started early. His first job on leaving school at 15 was clerk to Francis Palgrave, who himself was not just the compiler of *Palgrave's Golden Treasury of English poetry*, but founder of the Public Record Office. Cole was employed in transcribing records, but found time to study water-colour painting under David Cox, and exhibited sketches at the Royal Academy. At the same time he helped the novelist Thomas Love Peacock, who was living in the same house, with writing reviews of musical performances.

At the Record Office a pay dispute provoked Cole into publishing two articles attacking corruption at the institution. This resulted in its comprehensive restructuring. When the new Public Record Office was made official by an Act of 1838 Cole was made



one of the four managers and persuaded the government to erect a City building to house it.

The same year, with apparently still time on his hands, he became secretary to a committee organising postal reform. As part of the committee he suggested it publish a magazine called *Post Circular*, which he edited. His energy in organising petitions prompted the radical free-trade politician Richard Cobden to offer him the secretaryship of the reformist Anti-Corn Law League. But in 1839 parliament approved the postal reforms, Cole won the competition to organise stamps and joined the Treasury to implement the new scheme. As Rowland Hill's assistant he helped organise the penny post, and probably designed the Penny Black, the world's first adhesive postage stamp



In presumably his spare time, he was a member of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, which Cole used as a platform for lobbying government to support his campaign to improve standards in industrial design. In 1845 the society ran a competition won by 'Summerly's' tea service, designed by Cole and manufactured by Minton's pottery works. Cole explained its design "had as much beauty and ornament as is consistent with cheapness". The tea service sold well, and in 1847 Cole founded Summerly's Art Manufactures, through which painters and sculptors designed for industries. In 1849 Cole and the painter Richard Redgrave founded *The Journal of Design and Manufactures*, a publication to promote "the germs of a style which England of the nineteenth century may call its own". He managed to get the backing of Prince Albert, and in 1847 the society got its royal charter (the organisation now abbreviated to RSA) and under Prince Albert's patronage Cole organised a successful Exhibition of Art Manufactures in 1847, with enlarged exhibitions following in 1848 and 1849.

He went to Paris in 1849 for ideas from 11th Quinquennial Paris Exhibition. But characteristically the French allowed no international exhibitors. As a result, Cole spotted the opportunity for the RSA's planned exhibitions for 1850 and 1851 to be adapted into a larger international display. Using his royal connections, he secured the backing of Queen Victoria to establish in 1850 the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 to manage the new exhibition, under the presidency of Prince Albert.

The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations in 1851 was held in the Crystal Palace in a building commissioned from Joseph Paxton using techniques from his greenhouses at Chatsworth. The Hyde Park exhibition demonstrating Cole's campaign for "art applied to industry" and had more than 14,000 exhibitors. It was



visited by six million people – had they all been British that would have represented a third of the population. Thanks to Cole's shrewd and efficient management, it made a profit of £186,000 as the inscription to Albert's the statue behind the Albert Hall explains. It has been calculated such a sum is the equivalent of about £20 million today, but that is a very distorted comparison of relative costs as is shown by the fact it funded the creation of the South Kensington museum complex.

As one of the Great Exhibition commissioners, Cole pushed for that profit to be used for improving science and art education. The commission bought land in South Kensington to found the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Science Museum and the Natural History Museum alongside the Imperial Institute. The area came to be called Albertopolis in recognition of the prince's patronage making the exhibition and its subsequent benefits possible. The development spread its effect to the village of Brompton becoming South Kensington.

In 1852 the Board of Trade set up a department of practical art (later, of science and art) with Cole as secretary. Henry Cole was appointed the first General Superintendent of the Department of Practical Art, set up by the government to improve standards of art and design education, especially for industry. He therefore created the transformation of the Museum of Ornamental Art in Marlborough House into the Victoria and Albert Museum, and became first director of what was then called South Kensington Museum. In 1974 a part known as the Huxley Building was renamed the Henry Cole Wing of the V&A.

To show how much costs have changed, there was still enough money left to set up an educational trust for grants and scholarships for industrial research, which it continues to do.

As if that were not enough Cole was instrumental in creating the National Art Training School, in 1896 renamed the Royal College of Art, and helped establish the rest of the South Kensington cultural institutions, including the Royal College of Music the Royal Geographic Society, and Imperial College. What is now the Henry Cole Wing of the V&A was the original home of the Imperial College Mathematics Department before it was handed over to the Victoria & Albert Museum.

When Prince Albert needed a somebody to implement one of his pet projects, he would say "We must have steam, get Cole". Cole was knighted by Queen Victoria in 1875.

He lived and worked at 33 Thurloe Square opposite the Victoria and Albert Museum, where his blue plaque now is, but later moved and in 1882 he died in his home at Philbeach Gardens and is buried in Brompton cemetery.





HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES

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# Sir Peter Bazalgette

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**SIR PETER BAZALGETTE** IS at least twenty people. The list at the end contains a selection of his major appointments. There is quite a lot more, including four books he has written. Not bad for a man who, fresh out of Cambridge University, started as a trainee in the BBC News section, because “I got a third in law – a disgraceful result”. That may have been caused by spending too much time on the student newspaper and the union but it certainly impelled him to journalism rather than the law or his father’s stockbroking.

Training included being shunted round local news, regional TV news etc. In 1977 he was forced to resign from all that journalistic training as he had been picked by Esther Rantzen to be a researcher on her *That’s Life!* television programme, which was looked down upon and “not considered journalism”. He was subsequently chosen as a reporter at the BBC for *Man Alive* and was then put in charge as producer of the *Food and Drink* programme series.

That became the stepping stone when Mrs Thatcher forced the BBC to take externally produced programmes. Baz, as he’s almost universally known, had set up his own programme production company, Bazal, originally to make corporate videos. It created *Ready Steady Cook*, *Changing Rooms* and *Ground Force*. He is amused by the accusation at the time of making a fortune from letting people watch water boil, grass grow and paint dry.

He sold the company to Guardian Media Group because “somebody wanted to buy it” but stayed with the business. It is a classic example of the flexibility which takes a passing opportunity even if it shunts him onto a new track. *Carpe diem*, he says. He then proceeded to persuade the Guardian to sell the business to the Netherlands-based production company Endemol. By 2005 Bazalgette was chairman and creative director of Endemol.

There he was responsible for distributing *Deal or No Deal* and for adapting a Dutch TV programme idea into *Big Brother*, which he then popularised around the world. The *Independent* called him “the most influential man in British television” as a result of his impact on the development of reality television and lifestyle programmes. On the other hand the success of those produced the characteristically acerbic bile of Victor Lewis Smith accusing him of lowering the quality and taste of television saying his great grandfather, the Victorian civil engineer Sir Joseph Bazalgette was responsible for removing ordure from London’s homes, his grandson had reversed the process.

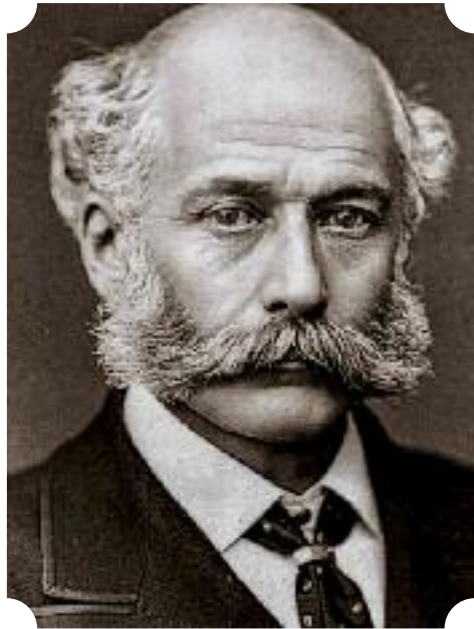
Sir Joseph, the subject of Bazalgette’s keynote speech at the Kensington Society



AGM, was indeed the man who in eight years replaced the disease-ridden open waste flows of London and created 1,100 miles of sewers to ensure most of the town would be connected. It was not a moment too soon. Following 10,000 deaths from cholera in 1853 and 1854 mostly spread by polluted drinking water, the hot summer of 1858 created the Great Stink as the Thames, being an open sewer, became a pullulating chemical monstrosity which made breathing difficult. With the riverside parliament building becoming intolerable, MPs were galvanised into action and gave the job of rescue to him, as chief engineer of the Metropolitan Board of Works.

Energy and action have clearly been running in the family. Sir Joseph mobilised thousands of labourers to reclaim 52 acres of land from stinking riverside slime to build the Thames embankments. Beneath those the workers had dug and built the huge brick-lined and the newly-developed Portland cement sewers, still in use today. He then went on to create the method for removing sewage by using the greatest steam engines in the world to pump away the effluent. In his spare time he also designed the Battersea, Albert and Putney bridges and produced a design for the Blackwall Tunnel.

The architect Norman Foster said “Joseph Bazalgette created a sewer system which he originally sized for London’s needs of the time. He then doubled it to anticipate the future beyond. Those are qualities that I admire”.



Sir Joseph Bazalgette



The Silent Highwayman from *Punch* 18 June 1858, commenting on the Great Stink

His great grandson, Peter Bazalgette, presented a television show for Five, called *The Great Stink*, and chaired the Crossness Engines Trust raising £4.5 million to restore the magnificent Victorian pumping station built by his ancestor.

The Spanish Telefonica company in a burst or “irrational exuberance” bought Endemol in 2000, as was the fashion for communication companies, including the American AT&T and British Telecom to get into television programming. Always a mistake, thinks Baz, “they all regret it in the end”, and BT is

currently ridding itself of its involvement. Sure enough, in 2005 Endemol was floated on the Dutch stock exchange at €9 a share. Rather proudly he explains 20 months later they managed to sell it to private equity investors at €24 a share, as yet another example, he reckons, of irrational exuberance. Thanks to an arrangement he had instituted earlier that meant about 100 employees did rather nicely out of the deal. Baz at this stage decided this venture had gone far enough and stood down as chairman to become an advisor. The company is currently part of a French group.

In 2012 he was appointed chairman of Arts Council England (where he waived the part of his salary), and with his four year term over he moved to the chairmanship of ITV. After the nine year limit in the chair there he is stepping down from that too.

At the Arts Council he was a passionate campaigner for public spending on arts and culture. One of his targets was the word ‘subsidy’ for the arts, and insisted it be called investment. “The primary reason we make both public and private investments in the arts is for the inherent value of culture: life-enhancing, entertaining, defining of our personal and national identities.” He added “The inherent value of culture, its contribution to society, its symbiotic relationship with education and, yes, its economic power (but in that order); this is what we call the holistic case for public support of arts and culture.”

In 2019 he became an honorary professor at Manchester University, and is still investing in high-technology start-up companies. Having also produced for government a report on encouraging the arts – surprisingly enough it appears he even managed to get some of it implemented – he currently shares the chair at Creative Industries Council with Kwasi Kwarteng and Nadine Dorries. Aged 68 he is not contemplating ever retiring, and seems not even to be slowing down. This year he became chairman of the Royal College of Art. He is also on the panel of judges for the Baillie Gifford prize for non-fiction books. That is part of another interest. He has written four books, including one on empathy which, he explains, is what the stories in art encourage. One of them was self-published but he still managed to make a profit on it.

He lived for many years with his wife (an intellectual rights lawyer) and (now adult) children in Notting Hill but when the children moved out the house became too large for the pair of them, so they elaborately adapted a house just across the border in Bayswater.

*He is or has been*

chairman Arts Council England  
non-executive director Base79  
advisory board member BBH  
director Channel 4  
chairman of Baillie Gifford trustees for  
non-fiction book prize  
chairman and president Crossness  
Engines Trust  
chairman Culver Digital Distribution  
trustee Debate Mate  
director Edge Performance VCT

chairman Endemol  
chairman English National Opera  
non-executive chairman ITV  
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director MiriAd Advertising  
deputy chairman National Film School  
president of the Royal Television Society  
consultant to Sony television companies  
non-executive director Nutopia  
director UK Research & Innovation  
advisory board member YouGov  
honorary professor Manchester University



# Green Kensington

**K**ENSINGTON HAS BEEN VERY lucky in having so much greenery that from the air some parts look like countryside. In addition to the public green spaces, such as Kensington Gardens, Holland Park, Brompton Cemetery, Avondale Park and Meanwhile Gardens there are private gardens, street trees and large communal gardens available to residents. Here are a few examples.

Background photograph: Ladbroke Square



Holland Park



Pembridge Place









Addison Avenue



Brompton Cemetery





Background photograph: Meanwhile Gardens



Addison Place



St James's Gardens





Portobello Green









Stanley Gardens





Natural History Museum



Gardening, Kensington style

# A Brief History of The Science Museum

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**T**HE SCIENCE MUSEUM HAS its origins in the Great Exhibition of 1851, in Hyde Park. The popularity of the exhibition ensured a large financial surplus, which its patron Prince Albert suggested should be used to found a number of educational establishments on land available nearby.

The first of these was the South Kensington Museum, opened in 1857 which is now part of the Victoria and Albert Museum. The South Kensington Museum's first building was an iron-framed structure clad in sheets of corrugated iron. Its ugliness and factory-like character soon caused it to be known as the Brompton Boilers. It was opened on 24 June 1857 and was principally a museum of industrial and decorative arts, but also included a few miscellaneous science collections such as Animal Products, Food, Educational Apparatus, and Building Materials.

Within the building was a separate exhibition of machinery organised by Bennet Woodcroft, the Superintendent of the Patent Office. As well as contemporary apparatus, the Patent Office Museum also included historical items such as an early Boulton and Watt beam engine and Symington's marine steam engine of 1788. The locomotives 'Puffing Billy' of 1814 and Stephenson's 'Rocket' of 1829 were put on display in 1862.

A collection of ship models and marine engines was soon added. The expansion was such that during the 1860s the science collections were gradually moved across Exhibition Road into buildings originally constructed for the International Exhibition of 1862. These collections grew by casual additions rather than by planning. In 1876 an exhibition, the Special Loan Collection of Scientific Instruments was accompanied by lectures on the progress of science worldwide. At its end, many of the exhibits were retained to form the basis of what are now scientific collections of international importance.

In 1883 the contents of the Patent Office Museum were transferred to the South Kensington Museum. At about the same time a science library was established and from 1893 the Science Collections had their own director though still part of the South Kensington Museum. Queen Victoria laid the foundation stone of a new range of buildings in 1899 and directed the museum should be renamed The Victoria and Albert Museum which therefore also applied to the Science Collections. In 1909, when the new buildings were opened, the title was confined to art collections and the science and engineering collections were separated as the Science Museum.

Norman Lockyer, founder-editor of the journal *Nature*, organiser of the 1876 loan exhibition and persistent lobbyist for the museum, made him a prime instigator for founding it, while senior civil servant Robert Morant engineered the separation from the Victoria and Albert Museum.

By mid-1908 questions were being asked in the House of Commons about the establishment of a "science museum properly housed in immediate proximity to the Imperial College of Science and Technology".



A committee to organise it envisaged a range of buildings all the way from Exhibition Road to Queensgate. Work began on the East Block in 1913 but owing to the First World War it was not completed until 1928. The displays were arranged by subject inside glass-topped showcases within galleries lit mostly by daylight. Object labels presumed a previous knowledge of the subject and were often unashamedly lengthy and complex. Colonel Sir Henry Lyons, director from 1920, argued the needs of ‘the ordinary visitor’ should be placed ahead of those of specialists. One of his innovations was a Children’s Gallery with simple displays and many working models. There was also a scheme of temporary loans from leading industries and special exhibitions on current topics such as noise abatement and smoke pollution.

During World War 2 the galleries were closed, though the library remained open and was intensively used. Most of the collections were stored away from London and it was not until about 1950 that the Science Museum was a settled institution once more. The 1862 buildings were unusable so there was even less space than before. They were demolished in 1949 to make way for the Centre Block that housed the Science Exhibition of the Festival of Britain 1951. Again, post-war financial restrictions stopped further work. Relief came in the late 1950s when an expansion of Imperial College included completion of the Centre Block, opened between 1963 and 1969.

The emphasis began to shift from technical education informed by historical exposition, to preservation of historical artefacts in their historical and social context. The East Block gallery light-well was ‘infilled’ in the late 1970s to house the Wellcome collections of the history of medicine, acquired in 1976.



Making the Modern World Gallery



**Medicine and Bodies Gallery**

Launch Pad, opened in 1986, was to explain technology with interactive exhibits to show how things work. Its popularity was such that it has been expanded several times over the years, with a new and much improved interactive gallery, Wonderlab: The Equinor Gallery, opening in 2016.

New museums including the National Railway Museum, opened in York in 1975, and the National Museum of Photography (now the National Science and Media Museum), opened in Bradford in 1983, helped establish the organisation now known as the Science Museum Group. A former airfield at Wroughton, near Swindon, was acquired in 1979 for storage and is now home to much of the museum's stored collection.

The Science Museum and its sister museums were devolved from direct Civil Service control to administration by a board of trustees in 1984. Westward expansion at South Kensington began again in 1996 with a new wing sponsored by the Wellcome Trust and opened by The Queen. Since 2000, further redevelopments have transformed much of the Science Museum. A new gallery, Making the Modern World, explored the cultural history of industrialisation from 1750 to 2000. In 2014 The Queen returned to open the Information Age gallery, celebrating the two centuries of communications technologies explored in the gallery by sending her first Tweet. Designed by Zaha Hadid Architects, the bold and thought-provoking Mathematics: The Winton Gallery followed in 2016. And in late 2019, Medicine: The Wellcome Galleries – occupying much of the museum's first floor – opened to the public. These five vast and visually impressive galleries provide a home for the most significant medical collections in the world.

The museum has been rapidly moving on and clearly worth a repeat visit if you have not been there for some time.





Tim Peake's Soyuz Spacecraft in the Exploring Space Gallery



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# Imperial College

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by Michael Becket

**I**MPERIAL COLLEGE IN SOUTH KENSINGTON, primarily known for its scientific discoveries and Nobel prize winners, has become a major financial enterprise and property developer. As its accounts explain, it has “financial strength ...large cash reserves and access to ample credit”. Income in 2019–20, despite big dents from reduced donations and endowments during Covid, was over a billion pounds.

Unsurprisingly, a third of this came from tuition fees. That however is, in the current international political position, vulnerable as a source of income, especially for Imperial as 60% of students are from overseas, and they pay more than UK students. Of those foreigners 45% were from China, with which diplomatic relations are going through a sticky patch. As the Imperial financial statement of 31 July 2020 said “Our scenario planning over the last six months has reminded us of the scale of the exposure we have to international students in our funding model and that we have yet to find a sustainable long-term solution to funding our research activity that does not rely on their contribution; we continue to engage with government on this point.”







In that Covid-afflicted year residences, catering and conferences yielded £48.3 million for the college despite giving students a partial rent holiday. Administering its range of NHS hospitals produced another £24.1 million.

Imperial has already been involved in substantial property development with the construction of towers along the A40 road, and its student housing in North Acton won the Carbuncle Cup nomination for Woodward Hall and Kemp Porter Building. The college is currently extending its holdings by investing heavily in property and further

developments. It currently has planning applications submitted for a tower of 55 storeys and outline permission on the A40 for two more of “up to 50 storeys”, with Pilbrow & Partners as lead architect, to join the near-completed 55 storey tower by City and Docklands. Local residents in the Acton area are unhappy about this latest plan as they see North Acton as a worsening urban renewal disaster, comparable with Vauxhall/Nine Elms/Battersea.

This project is purely commercial and has no academic content. The college is therefore getting even more deeply involved in the notoriously volatile property market, at a time when the prospects of foreign students enrolling in British universities is becoming increasingly uncertain.









The Acton development, in collaboration with developer FrameRe, on land bought by Imperial in 2017 includes 845 homes in a 56-storey tower and an 18-floor building, plus 811 flats for rent or sale in 50-storey towers and just 53 social-rent homes along the road against the 35% required. What had been the headquarters on the A40 of Carphone Warehouse prior to its acquisition by Currys, has already received planning permission for 764 student bedrooms. This is a purely commercial investment proposition by the College's Endowment Fund, with no academic buildings involved.

The application is pretty vague in important aspects, such as the total number of homes, the numbers in co-ownership, the employment floorspace and the heights of seven proposed buildings.

In November 2019 the Court of Appeal in *Finney v Welsh Ministers* [2019] EWCA Civ 1868 closed off a popular route for developers getting permission for one plan and then carefully changing it for greater profit. Varying the terms or descriptions in the "operative part of a planning permission" is no longer permissible under S73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. "The local planning authority must consider whether the proposed variation would constitute a fundamental alteration to the proposal for which permission had previously been granted" and if so reject it.

Applicants wanting later to move to a more convenient plan will have to make the development description vague and unspecific – with just enough to allow the proposals to be understood for consultation. For example, they will not be able to change the number of homes. Flexibility may need a generic application such as "residential development" with numbers varied through later planning conditions. An applicant wanting to alter a restriction will have to resort to an S96A application, which is for small non-material changes or submit a new application.

The college has recently developed a "White Campus" site at Wood Lane of four blocks of student housing, academic buildings plus commercial office space, with a 35-floor residential tower. That last was approved by Hammersmith & Fulham in 2013 in face of fierce opposition from north Kensington residents.

Part of the complaint derived from the feeling these developments are part of a forest of high-density towers overwhelming north Kensington. The cluster of high towers at White City, has changed views from Norland and Notting Barn wards. Latest additions at this already dense location will be of 44 storeys along the A40 as part of the increasingly notorious 'North Acton cluster'. Apart from North Acton there is the near completed 'Oaklands Rise' in Old Oak Common Lane, and construction imminent at 'North Kensington Gate' and 'Mitre Yard' to the north west on Scrubs Lane.

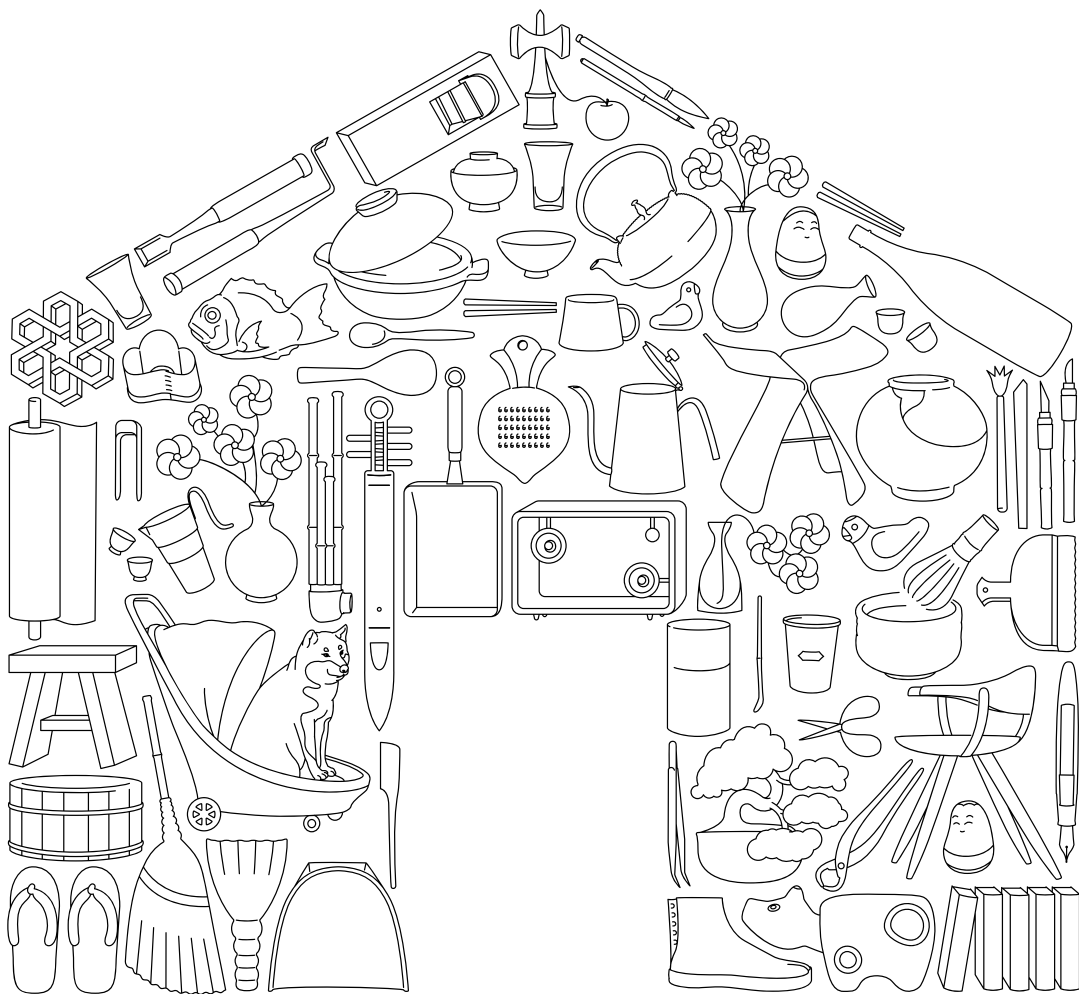
Until 10 years ago, Erno Goldfinger's Trellick Tower of 31 storeys was the tallest building in Kensington. London's first wave of high-rise residential towers in the 1950s and 1960s largely ended with the Ronan Point collapse in 1968 and the recognition that Le Corbusier's visions of 'streets in the air' did not work as well in real life, as on an architect's drawing. A warning about the fragility of markets and the impossibility of merely extrapolating from past experience, is the fate of the Nine Elms development which has unsold apartments and developments that may never be completed.



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**O**LYMPIA HAS BEEN MAKING a decent return as an exhibition venue, perhaps helped by the destruction of the nearby Earls Court space and having its principal competitors in less accessible spaces such as the Excel at London's eastern end and the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham. Yoo Capital thought more could be made of the large site in a prime position just over the Kensington border, and bought it from Capco for £297 million. It collaborated with a German private equity business Deutsche Finance International (nothing to do with Deutsche Bank) plus a few other participants in a consortium for the £1.3 billion development cost.

Yoo is an odd group, started by John Hitchcox with the architect/designer Philippe Starck as a design company, but the group has branched out into solar power electricity generation, through Yoo Capital it is involved in developing Greenwich Square for the local council, managing property assets for owners, and now getting into property itself. Not just Olympia but also the somewhat tatty Shepherds Bush Market, completely redeveloping one and renovating and improving the other. Retaining the profitable exhibition space, it took the unusual step for a developer of asking users and neighbours what they would like for the area and use of the space, in addition to the demands of the Hammersmith & Fulham council. Exhibitors asked for more hotel accommodation in the area, both up-market and at a more modest level, plus a greater variety of catering on-site or close by. All that might not only get more people to come but also encourage them to stay longer.

If hotels were to be built, they would need other sources of income, as the intermittent exhibitions would not provide enough business nor the continuing flow of customers to keep them profitable. So Yoo is trying to create a cultural village around the site in the hope visitors to the venues will not just stay for the entertainment and go home. It seems somebody believes that to be the case as Hyatt Regency has signed to create a posh hotel and Citizen M is expected to build a more modestly-priced one.



Access to all these things is by the Olympia station which is linked to the Underground system, and by a number of bus routes along the Hammersmith Road in front. Access has raised fears of congesting Kensington High Street with car and taxi traffic on the way to and from all these developments. Not to worry says the company, as under new rules for London construction there is to be no provision for car parking. Well, not much anyway. There has to be a huge

underground park for 130 lorries bringing material for exhibitions. When not all of that is in use there will be space for cars.

As there is a rail station with a bridge from the Kensington side, residents within RBKC expressed concern over the increase in parking by RBKC residents using the new development. The Kensington Society and other local residents asked for improvements to the TfL rail station as a public realm improvement. The station is also steps only. Hammersmith & Fulham council did not press for these improvements and Yoo has not included them in the development.

The neighbours, across the railway line in Kensington were also keen not to have giant towers blighting their view and overshadowing their homes. The company has accepted some of the advice by keeping the tallest elements to the centre of 11 acre site.

It is an ambitious set of establishments. The new exhibition venue retains the preservation-order street frontage but to the west of it has been for some time just a blank area behind some advertising hoardings. In that space the plan is to build a separate tower of 10 storeys, to contain a 1,575 seat theatre. That seems brave. Competition is intense not just from TV and streaming, theatres outside the West End including the Lyric Hammersmith, the Gate theatre above the Albert pub as well as the refurbished Coronet theatre at Notting Hill, Finborough pub theatre and the unresolved future for the 20th Century Theatre in Westbourne Grove. Once again however, it has already found a taker in Trafalgar Entertainment, which already has a string of provincial theatres.

In addition, tucked at the back of the large site, there are plans to create a jazz club, a small concert hall, and a school of performing arts. Along the side road which leads to the Olympia station the plans are for a line of small retail outlets. All of which is reckoned to provide income for the developers. But the main source of revenue will be the floors of residential space above the exhibition halls. These will be in a tower block of up to 13 floors and for all the working from home during Covid, Yoo reckons will get tenants..

A final brave claim is for all of it to be simultaneously up, running and open to business towards the end of 2024 or possibly early 2025.





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# Planning Reports

**T**HIS HAS BEEN A very busy year as well as one of continuing uncertainty about evolving government planning policy. The London Plan has at last been adopted – it has taken over three years from draft to adoption, with considerable implications for the borough for housing numbers, tall buildings and Opportunity Areas. Now the proposed new Local Plan is in full swing, promising a very busy 2022.

## General:

### 1. Changing Context: National and London-wide picture

#### **National: The Impact of Government Policy changes**

*Planning White Paper:* Following the Planning White Paper of August 2020, the government's response and, perhaps, the anticipated Planning Bill are now expected later in 2022. The proposals have been roundly criticised, especially the changes which would have limited public consultation to proposals for 'growth areas' and to limit public consultation on planning applications. The delay in publishing the government's response and bringing forward legislation suggested they were having second thoughts and over the last few months there have been signs of a climbdown. The new Secretary of State for the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Michael Gove, has already indicated there will be changes on community involvement and housing numbers.

*Housing figures:* As reported in the 2020-2021 annual, the government deferred applying the manifesto commitment to deliver 300,000 houses per year nationally, 97,500 for London with 3,247 for RBKC. This compares with the mayor's London Plan target of 448 net additional homes a year. Although even to achieve this will rely heavily on two Opportunity Areas – Earl's Court and Kensal Canalside, delivery will be spread over the next ten years.

In January, the now former Planning Minister, Christopher Pincher, said "the government does not set local housing targets. Housing requirements are decided by local authorities when they write their local plan, taking account of constraints they face locally."

However, the prospect of the government pressing for a higher target has influenced the council's approach in considering the new Local Plan Review and its initial approach to the number homes to be accommodated at Kensal Canalside and Earl's Court. (See more below.)

#### **Use Classes Order and Permitted Development Rights**

Last year's annual report on the government's proposals for the changes in Use Class and increases in the rights on Permitted Development have now been approved and we have seen the results, with many retail units lost to restaurants



The current borough-wide protection of offices, first introduced in 2013, is due to expire at the end of July 2022. The council has applied for an Article 4 Direction to extend this protection, covering not only offices but also other business and commercial uses. Government changes, if the exemption is not extended, could have a severe impact on our new Local Plan Review. Oddly we are seeing more offices built as the penalty for affordable housing does not apply.

### **Housing Delivery**

The government, to secure the delivery of housing, monitors how many new housing units were completed over the last three years compared with the borough's housing target. Completions, dependent on speed with which developers build their planning consents, have been low over the last three years. As a result, it is possible for the government to penalise the council by demanding it identifies 20% more housing sites.

The council, through the new Local Plan Review, is seeking to justify its future delivery rate by identifying a higher proportion to be delivered in the second half of the next ten years from the two Opportunity Areas.

### **London Plan 2021**

The London Plan was adopted by the Mayor of London on 2 March 2021, replacing the 2011 London Plan. It raises new issues including fire safety, sustainability and climate change. More issues are expected to appear in the next London Plan which is at least three years away. In the meantime, the government needs to provide leadership in the next review of the National Planning Policy Framework, and RBKC's new Local Plan will need to tackle these issues.

### **Tall Buildings**

The London Plan 2021 Policy D9 represents a major breakthrough. The task of identifying where tall buildings might be appropriate has been delegated from the mayor of London to the boroughs.

Meanwhile the prospect of more tall buildings is causing considerable concern, especially in Opportunity Areas, such as Kensal Canalside and Earl's Court, and indeed over our border in Hammersmith & Fulham. The tallest new building with planning consent is the 29-storey building next to Tesco at 100 West Cromwell Road. A local campaign in the Golborne area to put a 14-storey building at Edenham Way within the shadow of Trellick Tower has forced the council to reconsider this housing scheme.



### **Opportunity Areas**

These areas are nominated through the London Plan 2021, which identifies indicative targets for both new housing and jobs and required boroughs, through their Local Plans,

to reassess the capacity of their Opportunity Areas. The Earl's Court/West Kensington Opportunity Area has been much reduced by the removal of several council housing estates in Hammersmith & Fulham. The figures for Kensal Canalside were contingent upon a Crossrail/Elizabeth Line station, which will not materialise. Though planners and developers may disagree, this should reduce the housing and jobs numbers, since poor public transport accessibility levels should rule out this site for major office development.

## 2. Local plan update

Our current Local Plan was drafted in 2016 and went to an examination led by a planning inspector in Autumn 2017. It was adopted in September 2019. The current Local Plan Review has its origins in 2017 and will need review.

In preparing for the new Local Plan Review, the council has used various Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), on housing and green issues (June 2021) to scope the policy areas that need revision and expansion. The council also adopted an SPD for Kensal Canalside in July 2021, with which the society strongly disagrees with the density proposed.

Following consultation on Local Plan, Issues and Options in 2020, the council has been developing the draft Local Plan and the Regulation 18 consultation. This draft, the Local Plan Review, went to public consultation on 9 February with the end before this annual will be produced on 23 March 2022. This is possibly the last chance to make meaningful changes before the Local Plan is published in the final version in September. From there formal objections can be registered, which may be chosen by the inspector for debate at the subsequent examination in public.

Key issues for the Local Plan will include:

- Whether the Local Plan can enable the council to meet a housing target of 448 net additional homes per year on average over the next 10 years – the council has identified sites where housing could be completed over the plan period;
- How to secure a better mix of housing types, tenures and sizes to meet the needs of residents. This will specify the mix of sizes with less emphasis on large units;
- Whether the indicative targets in the London Plan for housing and jobs for the two Opportunity Areas are appropriate after assessing future public transport accessibility;
- Whether there are suitable locations where tall buildings might be appropriate and how high they could be;
- What sort of development opportunities we should expect, given that there are likely to be limited opportunities for developments in conservation areas – probably “gentle densification”;
- How best to manage the future of our town and neighbourhood centres following government changes which will limit the council's degree of control;
- Whether a better balance can be struck between the needs of residents and those of visitors in South Kensington District Centre; and
- How to achieve greater sustainability in new developments, such as to reduce life-cycle greenhouse gas emissions, which will influence decisions on redevelopment.



The Society will be scrutinising the draft new Local Plan closely, to ensure that there will be few unresolved issues by the time we reach the final version in September.

### Kensal Canalside Opportunity Area

Discussions have lasted for years between landowners/developers and the council on how this area of brownfield land should be developed. In 2012 RBKC undertook consultation on three levels of density, ranging from 2,000 to 3,500 new homes. This latter figure remains as the London Mayor's indicative target for the Opportunity Area in the 2021 London Plan, subject to further testing of the current capacity through the forthcoming new Local Plan.

In its 2021 Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Kensal Canalside, the council argued that new development capacity studies justified a higher target of up to 5,000 new homes, if a sufficient proportion of affordable housing were to be achieved. This was despite the previous 3,500 maximum depending on a Crossrail station.

In November 2021 the RBKC Planning Department held its first Development Forum at which the two landowners with plans for the site presented to the public their near finalised proposals. The teams from Ballymore/Sainsburys and St William (Berkeley Group) faced a well-informed and critical local audience. Both developers said affordable housing would be lower than the policy requirement of 35%, perhaps in the range of 12%, due to the cost of developing the site.

The Kensington Society has long argued for this sort of tripartite session at which developers, planning officers and the public are in the same room. Assumptions by developers can be challenged by those who know the area – and its local needs, its traffic and transport problems.



Pre-application masterplan for developments at Kensal Canalside.



This session proved its value, as both applicants have taken extra time to review their plans before submitting applications. The proposals are heading towards 4,000 new homes across the Opportunity Area, with the strip of land south of the railway lines yet to be released by the Department of Transport as a further phase of development. A decade of construction work is likely, with a first phase including a new Sainsburys store. As for every current major development proposal in West London, very tall buildings are part of the mix. In this case three residential towers of 35 and 36 storeys, justified as ‘markers’ and ‘gateways’.

These developments will consist of largely car-free residential apartments, with public transport access reliant on more buses. There is a proposal to bridge over the canal and connect via Kensal Cemetery to the Kensal Underground station. However, this proposal is opposed. This is at a time when Transport for London’s budget crisis threatens fewer buses and curtailed Underground services across London. The Kensington Society will be working alongside local groups and forums to try to ensure a set of sustainable proposals.

### **Earl’s Court/West Kensington Opportunity Area**

This Opportunity Area was designated in the 2008 London Plan, followed by a masterplan, an SPD and planning consent was granted to CapCo for both the RBKC and LBH&F sites in 2012. The site allocation is in the current (2019) RBKC Local Plan.

In the last ten years the council housing estates in Hammersmith which were sold to Capco have been returned to that council. Capco made a “material start” by demolishing both the Exhibition Centre buildings, leaving most of the site in RBKC totally cleared. Eighteen months ago the site was sold to the Earl’s Court Development Company, a joint venture between Delancey and Transport for London formed in December 2019.

At an introductory meeting no mention was made of a proposed development of the site of the former Tournament Pub, at 344-350 Old Brompton Road. This 9-storey development, opposite the listed Brompton Cemetery and adjoining the Philbeach Gardens conservation area, was in an area previously identified by the council as “highly sensitive” to tall buildings. The site was not within the Opportunity Area and is partially in a conservation area. Its nearest neighbour is the Royal Park’s Brompton Cemetery. The society challenged the council in its interpretation of its and GLA’s policy for tall buildings. The council nevertheless granted consent.

We recently met the Earl’s Court Development Company for a discussion of its plans and stressed our concerns over the density and reliance on tall buildings. ECDC is proposing a series of master-planning workshops, involving local residents, voluntary organisations and businesses throughout 2022, leading to a new masterplan for the whole opportunity area in spring 2023.

## **3. Conservation Issues**

### **Conservation Area Appraisals (CAAs)**

The major programme of completing a set of conservation area appraisals (CAAs), which were to replace the conservation area proposals statements (CAPS) is all but complete – only the CAA for Edwardes Square and Scarsdale Area is still to be signed off.



### **Conservation Area Management Plans (CAMPs)**

A key part of the legal duty for conservation areas, was lost when CAPS were cancelled upon completion of CAAs. The CAAs, unlike the CAPS, do not identify these opportunities for enhancement. These now need to be built back into conservation area management plans (CAMP), both to identify these opportunities and help develop an action plan for implementing them. This will help case officers as well as developers identify enhancements to be sought as opportunities arise through developments.

The council began a new programme of CAMPs, starting with the Thames Conservation Area in Chelsea, as well as the Edwardes Square and Scarsdale Area and Holland in Kensington. Several of the society's affiliates have requested a CAMP, including for the Ladbroke and De Vere conservation areas.

### **Conservation and the green agenda**

Making our houses more energy efficient is a major objective, albeit one not easy to achieve with our 19th century housing stock. The council has produced a Supplementary Planning Document on Greening, together with a guide to householders on measures that they might take, with details of what planning permission might be needed.

The council has also consulted and now approved a Key Decision listed buildings consent order for solar panels. So far, the planners have resisted double-glazing on listed buildings (except on non-original buildings)

## **4. RBKC Practice**

### **Pre-application engagement with the community**

We have long been concerned at the lack of opportunity for the local community to influence the plans for major development before they come forward in the form of a planning application and are almost impossible to influence. The council has agreed to set up Development Forums for the big development projects, involving the developer, the council and the community. The first one was held last autumn to look at the Kensal Canalside development – rather late in the day as the developer's plans were far advanced. The council has agreed that in future it will hold such meetings earlier in the process.

Forums will be organised only for really large projects. But there are many smaller ones where we think it would be useful for the council to organise more informal meetings with attendance by the developer, council officers and local community representatives. We successfully urged them to hold several meetings with residents and the professional advisers for the South Kensington station applications and recently to discuss the proposed development of the former Christies South Kensington site in Old Brompton Road. Having seen positive results, the council agreed to offer more such meetings.

### **Planning Committee size**

Since 2018 the size of the main Planning Committee has been four members plus a chairman, which was a reduction from over ten members. This was in part due to a

significant reduction in the number of councillors with training and experience in dealing with planning. A review by the national Planning Advisory Service recommended increasing this to 6 or even 8 plus a chairman, to bring together more experience and knowledge of the borough. We have encouraged the council to revise the numbers and increase the member training. We have been promised this should happen after the forthcoming local elections.

## 5. Issues and updates

### Natural History Museum

Some years ago Natural History Museum presented plans for the development of the museum frontage along Cromwell Road. The first proposal was extensive, complicated and expensive. Often when grand plans are not able to be fulfilled a better solution is found, as is the case with the latest development at the museum. The Urban Nature Project will transform the museum's five acres of gardens and alter the entrance from Exhibition Road through step-free new outdoor galleries starting with a Diplodocus in its own garden and doubling the area of native habitats within the grounds.



### Exhibition Road

Exhibition Road seems to have reached a compromise between access to museums, a pedestrian thoroughfare from South Kensington and Hyde Park and road traffic. The three installations for the London Festival on Architecture (LFA) 1–30 June were successful with a green trail extending across the cultural district linking planting schemes and related activities in a range of sites. The winning commissions focused on regenerative design principles. The result proved how successfully the entire road can be used without changes. There are plans to carry on such installations.





From 18 to 19 June 2022 there will be the Great Exhibition Road Festival, an annual celebration of science and arts with talks, workshops and performances and exhibitions.

In October 2017 a car struck several pedestrians walking on the road. Panic set in before it was understood to be a 'road traffic collision' and not a terrorist attack. However, it did focus the museums and RBKC on the potential of a terror attack. Temporary Hostile Vehicle Mitigation defences were installed and Dixon Jones Architects, designers of the original shared space road scheme costing £25m–£28m proposed eight granite 'features' to be installed on the crossing pavement. The presentation at first showed people sitting on the 'features'. As the road is busy, the benches were opposed. However an Executive Decision was signed by RBKC officers approving the 'features' in May 2020.

The 'features' now called 'coffins' in the Key Decision were sourced from China as it was said to be cheapest source. We strongly opposed this. Dixon Jones went into receivership and the Chinese supplier was having difficulties with lockdown. An alternative source was found in India, one of the worst hit by Covid, and that supplier is now unable to supply the granite. We have suggested the council and planners work with the Natural History Museum to source the stone from the UK as NHM is doing for its own Urban Nature Project.

Meanwhile the V&A has installed on the road, stone pieces removed from the original V&A Aston Webb Screen in the dual function of HVM blocks/urban furniture. We understand the installation is temporary which is unfortunate as they are quite attractive and functional.

### **Notting Hill Police Station**

The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) which owns the former Notting Hill police station, announced in July last year it will be offering the site for sale. Knight Frank, appointed to market it, produced a glossy brochure proposing it could be turned into luxury flats and mews houses. The Kensington Society believes strongly the site should be retained for community use. We had already obtained Asset of Community Value status for the site from RBKC, which restricted the sale for a six-month moratorium to allow the community to put together a bid. The Kensington Society has been working with the council, which is interested in buying the site to accommodate *inter alia* a badly-needed new GP surgery, a police base for North Kensington to replace the temporary one due to close at the end of 2022 and specialist accommodation for young adults with severe learning difficulties currently housed outside the borough, away from their families.

Kensington Society has sponsored a petition 'Ensure that the Notting Hill police station retains its community use' which has been well supported. We held a public meeting where the council presented its proposal to around 150 local people. In addition, we have distributed over 1,500 leaflets.

Whether the council could outbid a developer, however, is in doubt – although prospective developer who buys it will have to take account of the council policy (CK1) which means that planning applications resulting in the loss of community facilities will be resisted.

## **Flooding**

The borough has suffered flooding several times over the years. The most recent in July 2021 had severe impacts, leaving hundreds of residents displaced and over 75 businesses, schools and community facilities affected. Basements and even lower ground floors are highly vulnerable to flooding. The most prevalent flood risk sources are surface water and sewer water. Planning policy controls natural water, in other words the waterways – river and canal. Our floods are not due to river flooding or over-saturated soil. Our flooding is due to increased surface water run-off as more and more land is covered and a limited and insufficient sewer system. More controls over increase in surface water run-off, controls into the sewer system and most of all, an increase in our sewer capacity are urgently required.

It is obvious climate change has led to more intense storms with increased probability of flooding. The government's long-standing policy allowed connection to the sewage system without regard to capacity assessment. However, our existing sewer system, mainly Counter's Creek, was built in the mid 1850s. It is clear our main sewer system is inadequate to drain increased water to prevent flooding.

Water retention systems and more and better-quality green-blue infrastructure are needed to enhance natural drainage. We propose the new Local Plan includes flood risk assessment for development below ground level. We also need to know why and how Thames Water was allowed to avoid its agreed obligations in 2008 to construct a flood alleviation sewer along the Counter's Creek line.

## **South Kensington Station**

The application by Transport for London and Native Land for an extensive development around the station took up much of our time last year. For years TfL has promised a redevelopment of the station and in 2016, after over a year of consultation with the local residents associations and the Kensington Society, it published the South





Kensington Station Around Station Developmental Transport for London, Development Brief. Though a few issues were still contentious, we generally approved the brief.

What followed was an application for “demolition of disused platform, construction of widened eastbound platform and associated canopy, extend and remodel ticket hall, safeguard for step-free access, installation of platform barrier on platform, install emergency exit; and associated works”. There was to be no step-free access. They were approved on 18 January 2018 and a minimal material start was made.

In December 2019 TfL disclosed Native Land Limited was to be development partner with a 51% share. Only one meeting was held with the local RAs and Kensington Society. Public exhibits showed Native Land’s vision was radically different from the 2016 agreed brief. Applications, LB and PP submitted on 11 June 2020 were totally different from 2016.

Mixed-use development of the land around South Kensington Station included demolition and redevelopment of the Bullnose building, demolition and façade retention of the Thurloe Street building, refurbishment of the retail facades along Thurloe Street, refurbishment of the arcade, construction of a building along Pelham Street comprising residential and retail, and office use, construction of a building along Thurloe Square to provide for housing, alterations to South Kensington Station to provide for step-free access to the District and Circle Lines and fire escape, including consequential alterations to the layout of the ticket hall, construction of two retail facades within the subway, and other works incidental to the application proposal.

The local residents lead by the Thurloe Owners and Leaseholders Association, with Onslow Neighbourhood Association, Pelham Street contingents, Princes Gate Mews Association, and South Kensington & Queensgate RA mounted a massive campaign. Expert advisers were hired, professional reports produced and single subject meetings were held with the planners. Despite requests, no meeting other than public exhibitions, was ever held with TfL or Native Land.

One day before the planning meeting scheduled for 3 June 2021 TfL and Native Land withdrew without explanation but with a confirmation they were not withdrawing the applications. On the 16 August 114 revised documents were submitted by TfL/Native Land. The RAs reconsulted the professional experts.

Native Land retained a PR firm to stand outside the station and solicit support for the scheme. Most support letters had the same wording:

*“Dear Sir, I am writing to support the above planning application for around South Kensington Station. The proposals, which are clearly designed to be sympathetic to the surrounding area, deliver vital Step-Free Access, affordable housing, and look set to improve the arrival experience for visitors and residents.”*

An officer’s report on 18 November 2021 recommended approval. There were 2205 objections and 829 support emails. The documents totalled 4,258 on the website. The planning committee met on 18 November 2021. RAs and residents including the Kensington Society were given 30 minutes to present objections. The applicant was given the same time.

Amanda Frame, chairman of the Kensington Society, spoke as an objector representative of Kensington Society’s members. The main points of objection were insufficient affordable housing and absence of step-free access. The applicants argued

the project is so expensive they cannot provide the amount of affordable housing required for development on public land.

A 106 Agreement recommended by the officers allowed the developers to build the Thurloe Street and Pelham Street buildings, the most profitable part of the development, without any works to the station. With the 51% controlling power Native Land could then decide not to redevelop the station, with no means of enforcing installation of step-free access. The committee was assiduous in asking both the RAs and the applicants specific questions about the proposal and refused the application.

The reasons were for height, massing and architectural design would harm to the conservation area; and development would fail to preserve the context, character and appearance of the conservation area and the architectural and historic interest of the listed buildings. The identified harm is not outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal. The applicant had failed to agree to enter into a legal agreement to secure necessary associated infrastructure improvements generated by the development.

### **63–81 Pelham Street**

The 2021–2022 annual reported on The Wellcome Trust Ltd's two planning applications, for 40 Pelham Street and 63-81 Pelham Street.

The 63-81 Pelham Street involved the demolition of the existing building of 4,587m<sup>2</sup> including a gym of 1,271m<sup>2</sup>, retail of 167m<sup>2</sup> and offices of 2325m<sup>2</sup>. The proposal was for a reduced a gym of 824m<sup>2</sup>, loss of retail and an office of 9,823m<sup>2</sup>. The on-site parking was removed on to the public street with the displacement of pay and display parking.

The application came before the five councillors committee of the planning department on 13 September 2021. Residents were allowed a total of seven minutes to state their objections. The applicant was allowed the same time. However, the councillors,





with the exception of one question, confined their direct questions to the applicant therefore giving the applicant the opportunity to fully expand or counter the objections.

The application was approved by a vote of two against and three for.

### **The Kensington Society Response to RBKC Consultation on Al Fresco Dining**

In July 2020, the government in response to Covid and the need for outdoor dining, introduced pavement licences under the Business and Planning Act 2020 as an emergency measure to permit hospitality businesses to operate on-street with minimal bureaucracy. These pavement licences remove the need for express planning permission and include dining 'parklets' using part of the highway.

These measures proved popular with the hospitality industry and their customers. RBKC supported the concept, and the original scheme was further extended until 30 September 2022.

The council issued a consultation document on Al Fresco Dining towards the end of last year. This proposed bringing back planning, highways and with annual licences based on British Summer time. The Kensington Society broadly supported the proposals, subject to provisos.

The RBKC proposals would move to something semi-permanent requiring higher standards of design, amenity and consultation. We welcomed the approach and would be concerned if the government extended the fast-track scheme. Each location will need to be considered on its merits and with full local consultation. Some existing temporary



terraces are close to or within residential streets which are more sensitive to noise and nuisance.

There should be more detailed design guidance available. The proposed summertime arrangements should include a requirement to demonstrate how the design allows for demountability. We believe heaters should be banned as it is a summertime proposal, and heaters used “when absolutely necessary” is not enforceable.

We also strongly agree that each site contributing to urban greening should be a planning requirement. Each site should be considered in relation to the degree of parking stress in the area.

The cost of dealing with applications, monitoring, enforcement, and loss of parking income etc should be fully covered by the fees for planning and licensing.

Monitoring needs to be regular and thorough. Breaches of planning and licence conditions must lead to removal of the licence. Every site should be thoroughly cleaned daily with debris and food waste disposed of hygienically.

Proposals to reduce existing pavement widths should not be allowed.

The council has now adopted its new al fresco dining policy.

### **High streets/ BIDs**

The council has been working with businesses and landlords to introduce Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to revitalise town centres. BIDs are mainly driven by businesses, but include the council and residents. They raise money from businesses to undertake to improve attractiveness and competitiveness.

So far BIDs have been established for the King’s Road, Brompton Road and, most recently, for Kensington High Street. The first two were agreed by the businesses in autumn 2021. The latter, with the name Opportunity Kensington, had its vote result on 11 February, which will enable the BID to implement improvements over the next 5 years.

### **Thomas’s School, St Alban’s Grove**

Thomas’s currently has three buildings in the Victoria Road area. It has recently bought the former Richmond University building in St Alban’s Grove, which has been in education use since the 1880s, although most recently used as student accommodation. It proposes to move pupils from the two main school sites to St Alban’s Grove and to convert the two existing schools at 39–41 Victoria Road and 17–19 Cottesmore Gardens to housing.

The current schools have a legal agreement, dating from the last expansion in 2006, which limits pupil numbers to 400. The proposal for the new site is for the pupil numbers to rise to 500. The other aspect of the legal agreement is to have a School Travel Plan which aims to reduce the number of children arriving by car. The move to the new site could cause problems if pupil numbers increase with the number of car delivery and collection trips.

The current Local Plan requires the council to “ensure that social and community uses are protected”, policy CK1. What is proposed is the loss of two buildings currently in educational uses, 39–41 Victoria Road and 17–19 Cottesmore Gardens, to what most likely will be luxury housing without any affordable housing proposed. In addition, the fact that the Richmond University site is student accommodation means this would result in loss of housing on a 2.5 to 1 basis. With a loss of over 50 bedrooms this amounts



to the loss of 20 units. It is important to consider these applications in the light of others in the past, i.e. recently the hostel on Pembridge Gardens where the council refused the loss of the residential units and further back the former Jamahiriya School, where the proposed development would involve the loss of a social and community use.

### **The Knightsbridge Estate**

The redevelopment of 3.5 acre site sandwiched between Harrods and Harvey Nichols is nearing completion. Burberry has moved in the central apex and the newest London Apple store will open soon. The development will be a 31,580 m<sup>2</sup> mix of retail accommodation, 67,000 sq ft of offices, 33 rental apartments around an internal courtyard garden, and a rooftop restaurant. A new step free Knightsbridge Underground station is in Hooper's Court and a cooling system is added to the platform levels, all significant public realm improvements.

### **Post Offices**

The post office in South Kensington (picture of building now) closed in August 2019, leaving another hole in network of post office coverage. Its replacement, after creating a large shop window, will be yet another café – Ole & Steen. The post office on the corner of Gloucester Road and Cromwell Road also appears to be under threat. The network of post offices in this borough has been thinned out considerably in the last ten years, just when they are being seen as an answer to the growing number of bank closures.



## **6. Updates**

### **Heythrop College**

Following the appeal decision in August 2020, very little has happened. Negotiations with TfL to raft over the Underground lines have not been resolved. Apart from marketing of town houses on Kensington Square, soft stripping of some of the buildings and the unauthorised felling of trees along the railway, nothing much has happened in the last 18 months. This has created a sense of uncertainty.

### **The Academy Pub**

Despite community-supported planning permission in place from 2018 to develop the Academy pub site respecting its Asset of Community status in February of 2021 the owners submitted a new planning application. This time it was to develop the site to the side of the pub and take in the upper two floors for residential flats. The ‘refurbished’ pub was to be relegated to the basement and a smaller area of the original ground floor. Aside from totally ignoring the ‘ACV’ status awarded for a second time by the council in 2020 including all four floors of the pub, the proposed new layout would have made the pub business unviable.

The Kensington Society, along with the Norland Conservation Society and Clarendon Cross residents’ Association commissioned a viability report from an independent pub expert and met with the RBKC planning team to discuss our concerns. Over a hundred objections were submitted and it was refused in August. The owners in the meantime, submitted documents to fulfil the conditions of an application approved in June 2018 but there has been minimal progress and we are still waiting to see building work begin. They have now appealed the refusal of the 2021 application.

### **Kensington Forum Hotel**

Following the withdrawal of the planning application in March 2021, just ahead of the call-in public inquiry due in May, there has been little information about the future of this hotel. Both the council and the local groups had by that time incurred considerable costs and have sought an award of costs to cover the abortive work, including commissioning expert witnesses. Payment of these costs is still awaited.

The hotel has been sold, the airline contracts terminated, the hotel staff dismissed and the building closed by end of February 2022. The new ownership is a partnership of a Singaporean hotel company (51%) and the previous owner, a Hong-Kong based company, Queensgate Bow Ltd. The latest proposals are that the hotel will be refurbished over the next three years. The society and local groups will now focus on reconfiguring the former garden square into a new local park.

### **Odeon Site: Kensington High Street**

New contractors, Ardmore, have been appointed to begin work on the above-ground structure. Concerned residents have since commented on the disappearance of the much-loved entrance arch, the one remaining feature of the old Odeon. The reason for this, as explained by Lodha, is that the old structure had developed “Regent Street





Disease” which is caused by corrosion of the steel reinforcement holding concrete together. A planning application was therefore submitted to take apart the façade and rebuild it, using as much as possible of the original facing material and replacing any non-salvageable elements with matching new stone and terracotta. The council granted approval in December 2020, subject to conditions and detailed method statement which have since been provided.

#### **Update on Allen House and Avon House: Allen Street**

**Allen House:** Planning permission was granted in December 2020 for 45 apartments behind the retained façade of this attractive Edwardian building, subject to completion of a Section 106 agreement. This was despite 24 objections to the proposals. An earlier permission had contained a basement for onsite car parking whereas the later approved scheme removed the basement (a positive move) but allowed for on street parking permits for a proportion of the apartments. This flew in the face of zero parking for new development and the Borough’s zero carbon ambitions. Since then, very little seemed to be happening.

In June 2021 the building went on the market for £50 million with the agent describing it as an “incredibly rare trophy asset”. It was purchased by developers Residence One and The Kensington Society and ESSA were invited to an introductory meeting on 9 February. Residence One explained it had bought the property on the basis of the existing permission and was prepared to build that out. However, it said the design team is looking at an alternative approach with full retention of the existing building and major refurbishment. The external fire escapes would be removed and there would be infilling of the side recesses and the internal lightwell. A new dormer roof would be added but with no overall height increase over the existing planning permission. An additional unit would be gained. It believes this will be more cost effective and could save a year on the construction programme. It explained the final decision would be predicated on speedy planning approval.

It has long been our view that retention would be the better option as it will be less disruptive to the neighbouring properties and better for the environment. The previous developers claimed retention would not work. So, it was encouraging to hear that the new team is coming at this with fresh thinking. There are no doubt many obstacles to overcome and we will be scrutinising the detail as and when a new application comes forward. However, let us hope that this new approach can be made to work and ends uncertainty over this fine building.



**Avon House:** A few hundred yards further south from Allen House sits Avon House, which was a care home for the elderly until its closure in 2013. Since then, developer



Melford Capital has been seeking planning permission to redevelop the site. Permission was granted in 2016 for redevelopment into a residential rehabilitation unit for neurological disorders. Exceptionally, permission was granted for a two-storey basement on the basis that much of the supporting and ancillary spaces could be accommodated below ground level.

The developer could not find an operator for the facility and therefore changed the proposed use to a residential care home for the elderly. This required a new design and planning application. A new application was submitted in 2019 and refused in September 2020 on the grounds of its impact upon the living conditions of surrounding properties.

A third application made in 2021 for a revised scheme addresses the daylight and sunlight issues for surrounding properties, but fails to do so for its own internal arrangements, with a number of the bedrooms at basement level with restricted access to daylight and views. The proposals rely on full air-conditioning for the whole building with consequent need for extensive plant at roof level and consequential noise issues for the surrounding properties.

The Kensington Society and its local affiliated association, ESSA, have strongly objected to the proposals. We believe a more environmentally-friendly approach is needed and that the double basement should not be allowed for what is a completely new design.

At the time of writing the application has not gone to the planning committee so the outcome remains uncertain.

### **Newcombe House**

As we go to press we have been informed that the Newcombe House site has been acquired by Beltane Asset Management. Beltane is a privately owned property investment



and management business with a focus on central London. We understand that the plan is “To retain the tower and repurpose as ‘best in class’ office space”. We do hope to have the opportunity to work with Beltane and the community to ensure that the public realm improvements planned for the approved development are not lost.

### **Old Oak and Park Royal Opportunity Area**

To the immediate west of the railway lands of Kensal Canalside lies the boundary of a further mayoral Opportunity Area. This includes parts of Hammersmith, Ealing and Brent. The Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation has been the planning authority for this, the “largest of the UK’s regeneration areas” since 2015.

In our winter newsletter we covered the spate of tall building that is now surrounding North Kensington, including the notorious North Acton Cluster with three further towers above 50 storeys now proposed by Imperial College.

The OPDC has yet to complete Step 1 of its new approach, adoption of its Draft Local Plan. Running five years behind its original timetable, the planning inspector has yet to submit his report on the Draft Plan. Further examination hearings took place in January. One of these explored the question of whether OPDC has been sufficiently clear in identifying suitable locations and appropriate heights in its maps and text in the Local Plan.

The current draft documents mention no specific heights above 12 storeys and the maps define large expanses of land where buildings of varying heights are deemed to be appropriate. The Old Oak Neighbourhood Forum has fought a long battle for a Local Plan that is more honest, given that planning consents have already been granted to buildings of 55 storeys. The planning inspector has required OPDC planners to be more specific before the Local Plan is accepted as meeting the test of ‘general conformity’ with new Policy D9 on Tall Buildings in the 2021 London Plan.

Meanwhile the number of objections mount, on Imperial’s proposals at North Acton. The college has been slow to respond to questions on whether speculative property development is a lawful or appropriate undertaking by the college endowment.

### **Looking Ahead**

If 2021 was busy, 2022 will be even more so. Responding to the consultation on the draft Local Plan (February/March) will be followed by the final formal consultation on the revised version in September, after which objections will go to an Examination in Public in 2023. There will be major planning applications for Kensal Canalside, a new master plan for the Earl’s Court site and a planning inquiry for the South Kensington Station scheme.

**Planning Team – Michael Bach, Amanda Frame, Sophia Lambert, Barry Munday and Henry Peterson, with assistance from Carolyn Arnold**

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## *Transforming The Knightsbridge Estate into a luxury destination to shop, eat, work and live.*

Since its acquisition over a decade ago, The Knightsbridge Estate has seen huge improvements: the most significant enhancement being at the junction of Sloane Street and Brompton Road.

Built behind the retained and restored historic facades, this ambitious project is delivering: seven flagship retail stores, a 67,000 sq ft office building named One Hooper's Court, 33 luxury rental

apartments, and a destination roof-top restaurant with a ground floor café.

Major improvements to the public realm include widened pavements on Brompton Road and Sloane Street, a new entrance to Knightsbridge tube station, and – the introduction of – step-free access to the platforms from the pedestrian walkway Hooper's Court.



# Reports from AFFILIATED SOCIETIES, 2021

## ALEXANDER SQUARE REPORT

2021 was a continuation of the themes of 2020, with the area gripped by periodic lockdowns from Covid. Local businesses have struggled as some residents have spent more time outside the capital in other homes and there has been a significant decrease in the number of tourists to the museums and Knightsbridge. In addition to the gradual recovery in street life as the year progressed, we have seen the positive stirrings in the real estate market after little or no activity the previous year, with sales and showings suggesting a return to a more normal pattern with the attendant reappearance of builders' hoardings and vehicles.

The refusal of the development application for the South Kensington Underground Station was a great example of what residents can do when working with each other as well as with businesses, and local councillors and MPs, although there are several other major developments in the area that are threatening to change the look and feel of the area.

**William Fall, chairman**

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## ASHBURN COURTFIELD GARDENS RESIDENT ASSOCIATION

As always, 2021 was a very busy year for our residents' association, most notably due to our continued campaign to stop the monstrous development of the Holiday Inn Kensington Forum, which came to an abrupt (and unexplained) end when the owners withdrew their appeal to the Planning Inspectorate at the 11th hour before the start of a 3-week Planning Inquiry. The hotel has since been sold and we hear the new owners want to refurbish the existing building. Needless to say, we are sleeping with one eye open.

Another partial success was achieved in a major enforcement case against the owner of a grade II listed building of historic significance, which had been illegally altered without planning permission after being shrouded in scaffolding and an opaque plastic cocoon for eight years. Enforcement action commenced and the owner appealed. Eventually some parts of the appeal were granted by the inspector, while others were refused and we are awaiting the remedial work.

We also dealt with a number of smaller, but nonetheless important cases: air conditioning units in inappropriate locations, non-compliance with permitted plans, plexi-glass infills to handrails on roof terraces in otherwise pristine historic mews, gratuitous felling of trees and many more. Many small



changes, if unchecked, will amount to a big change in the character of an area.

We are fortunate to have the support of the Kensington Society, our neighbouring RAs and our ward councillors in our continuing endeavour to keep our area pleasant for everyone. A big thank you for that!

**Frederike Maeda, chairman**

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## **THE BOLTONS ASSOCIATION**

This year The Boltons Association has focused on two issues. Firstly, the extraordinary number of basement digs currently being undertaken in the Boltons Conservation Area. This has resulted in competing Construction Traffic Management Plans, where contractors are vying with each other to complete works on a timely basis. Multiple residents' parking bays are suspended, and there have been many complaints to enforcement of CTMP breaches regarding hours of work, misuse of suspended parking bays and failure to adhere to stipulated ingress and egress routes.

At the planning application stage the association offers applicants a consultation meeting to bring to their attention our model CTMP – which contains routes (for example, one two-way road we recommend is used one-way by contractors' vehicles), plus wait and load spoil removal methodology using an over-pavement skinny gantry (and keeping pedestrian tunnels to a minimum length, so walkers do not feel unsafe at night). We are finding that enforcement is overstretched. Additionally, planning declines to make co-ordination between contractors, and taking into account the cumulative impact of the amount of local development activity, as conditions of planning approval.

The second issue on which the association has focused is RBKC's consultation proposals regarding 'parklet terraces'. The response submitted by the association was firmly against the proposals to make parklet terraces permanent on two local streets (namely, Hollywood Road and Park Walk). Our reasoning was that – those who live on the streets concerned (or the immediate environs) may be very unhappy that all the potential noise and public realm disturbance are being dumped on them, whereas patrons who live farther away (or even from out of the borough) may be delighted to have more al fresco dining opportunities. The association's view is that RBKC should give far greater weight to the former group than the latter.

To our eyes, it seems strange to be considering subsidising proprietors of a minority of restaurants (by suspending PAYG parking and providing additional enforcement resource) when RBKC has so many other calls on its resources from less wealthy parts of the borough.

**Calvin Jackson, chairman**







## CLARENDON CROSS RESIDENT ASSOCIATION

In February, the owners of our local pub, The Academy, closed since August 2016, submitted a new planning application to develop the site to the side of the pub and take in the upper two floors for residential flats. The 'refurbished' pub was to be relegated to the basement and a smaller area of the ground floor. Aside from totally ignoring the Asset of Community Value status awarded for a second time by the council in 2020 including all four floors, the proposed new layout would have made the pub unviable for too many reasons to list here.

Once again, we joined forces with the Kensington Society and the Norland Conservation Society and commissioned a viability report from an independent pub expert and discussed our concerns with the RBKC planning team. Over a hundred objections were submitted and it was refused in August. The owners in the meantime, submitted documents to fulfil the conditions of an application approved in June 2018 but there has been minimal progress and we are still waiting to see building work to begin.

In March, we also joined with the Kensington Society, the Ladbroke Association and volunteers working with the local police to encourage RBKC to look at the viability of retaining the former Notting Hill Police Station, which also has ACV status, in community use ahead of it being put up for sale by the mayor's office for police. A small group has been meeting regularly with the relevant councillors and officers and good progress has been made. The result is a bid being prepared by the council to purchase the site to address an extensive list of much needed community uses within it.

Summertime saw the rolling out of new planters funded via our Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy grant, outside each Clarendon Cross business. They replaced old, damaged planters with new ones filled with herbs, grasses, and pollinator-friendly plants to brighten the area and tie into RBKC's Bee Superhighway project. The planters were supplied and are maintained by Clarendon Cross's florist and gardening business Harper & Toms.

**Carolyn Arnold, chair**



## EARL'S COURT GARDENS & MORTON MEWS RESIDENT ASSOCIATION

It has been a quiet year in Earl's Court Gardens with no major refurbishments underway. Earl's Court is returning to its usual busy and vibrant atmosphere as people return to normal routines.

In Earl's Court Gardens we have had a gradual loss of private trees through building works in front and rear gardens. The council required replacements for some of these, however they have not been replaced to date. The cumulative effect is substantial loss of amenity and a lost opportunity to improve air quality.

Last year we reported that the Earl's Court Health & Wellbeing Centre had taken the decision to install a set of doors to close off the rear alcove which has become coupled with anti-social behaviour such as street drinking and public urination. Due to a change of provider at the practice, this project has not been delivered. With the return of match day crowds at the Courtfield pub, combined with less consistent policing of these gatherings, the problem has increased again. We hope that 2022 will see this project delivered.

Over the past year, we have seen numerous local shop closures on Earl's Court Road. Many have been replaced by delivery-focused fast-food restaurants, as well as a new gaming shop, unwelcome changes which bring the consequent problems such as congregating delivery motorbikes and electric bikes which then believe they have carte blanche to drive down our one-way street the wrong way. If we are to reduce vehicle journeys and air pollution, more will need to be done to support local businesses that serve residents within walking distance of their homes. There is no sign of any electric vehicle charge points in our street yet nor a 20-mph speed limit which would be welcomed.

Finally, our residents' association lost a much-respected friend and our longstanding treasurer last autumn when Joan MacDonald passed away. She will be greatly missed.

**A.C. Level and J.N. Green**





## EDWARDES SQUARE, SCARSDALE & ABINGDON ASSOCIATION

Last year we celebrated our 50th anniversary with a summer garden party in September, with the mayor and our member of parliament in attendance. Inevitably it rained but Chatsworth Court provided a warm and welcoming environment in their lovely art deco reception area.

Perhaps because of the pandemic, there was a noticeable increase in applications for home extensions of all kinds. Most of these were sensible but where necessary we objected. Issues included loss of green space to over ambitious garden rooms and the closing of historic gaps within terraces. Of the planning applications we commented on last year, 80% were either refused permission, withdrawn, or significantly revised. All such proposals need to strike a balance between individual freedoms and the public good.

On the major applications front, we continued to do battle over Avon House, the former care home in Allen Street. Whilst accepting the need for more care homes, the proposals are in our view, simply too large for this heavily constrained site, resulting in potentially poor accommodation and years of disturbance for local people.

On a more positive note, it was good to see some of the Kensington High Street developments emerging from beneath the scaffolding including number 197 and the Boots site.

Progress on the Conservation Area Appraisal and proposed boundary changes was disappointingly slow, but it was finally published in draft and sent out for consultation in January. We look forward to its adoption.

**Barry Munday, chairman**

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## THE FRIENDS OF HOLLAND PARK

Visitor numbers were high during the pandemic, causing compaction right across the park. Compaction reduces oxygen to tree roots and results in rainfall run-off, rather than being absorbed where it falls.

The Friends were influential in getting another area of compacted ground aerated, with nutrients added for tree health. The Trumpet Lawn should become a nice green sward, under the shade of vibrant tree canopies. The Friends contributed £6,500 towards the cost.

We worked with the conservation architects overseeing stage two of the much-needed conservation of grade II listed Holland House. New balustrades have been hand cut to fit. The work has been on schedule, on budget, and we hope that Holland House can soon be removed from Historic England's At Risk Register.

On the agenda are tree planting, new toilets and improvements to the inside of the café.

For a second year, The Friends' cancelled events held





inside, due to Covid, except the joyous Christmas concert. In the fresh air we resumed history and sculpture tours of the park, with Blue Badge guides. Pop-up stalls in the Café Yard, sold Holland Park honey, plants from the plant nursery, guidebooks for Holland Park and a range of merchandise.

The park has been a solace to many who craved fresh air, exercise, or just a quiet space to enjoy the tranquility of the woodlands. We are fortunate to have this safe green space in our borough and intend to work hard to ensure it remains a benefit for future generations.

**Jennie Kettlewell, chairman**

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## GOLBORNE FORUM

We continued to network during the Covid lockdown period and came together for face-to-face meetings from June 2021. Throughout the pandemic we continued to produce Golborne Life a biannual newsletter about the area, and to maintain the Golborne Life web site which showcases event and issues in the ward which can be found at; [www.golbornelife.co.uk](http://www.golbornelife.co.uk).

During this period our members were unable to organise the Golborne Festival but we aim to bring it back as soon as we can. We have continued to take part in some key developments in Golborne, including involvement in new homes developed by the borough on Kensal Road and Acklam Road. We have taken part in campaigns to challenge some developments in the ward: Cheltenham Estate/Trellick Tower proposals, Wornington Trees and Phase Two of Catalyst's development at Wornington Green, Catalyst's revised





planning application for Phase 3 of this same development, Kensal Canalside proposals in neighbouring Dalgarno Ward; and have continued to monitor and respond to other planning applications and proposals in Golborne.

We have responded to and promoted the borough's consultation on markets. Our members are participants in activities around safety and policing in the ward, in developments at Westway Trust, on Golborne and Portobello Reads Market Action group and on initiatives designed to make Golborne a better place to live such as the developing Green Wall and space on Acklam Road in the Swinbrook Estate. We have been pleased to celebrate the success that The Venture Centre has had in adapting to the wider community's needs throughout the pandemic and have maintained information about how Golborne and Portobello Road businesses adapted over the last two years.

**Roger Roberts, chairman**

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## **KENSINGTON COURT RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION**

Sadly, 2021 was another awkward year. Due to Covid restrictions we held our AGM via zoom in April and abandoned any plans to hold our usual street party in September.

Restaurants and businesses stayed open in Thackeray Street with restaurants occupying 'parklets' on the road. This café culture has been embraced by most of the residents.

We had a spate of thefts from cars in September with the main cost to car owners being the damage repairs. Our very own treasurer, Mike Gee, fell victim to these thugs. There was also an attempted burglary on the east side of the Court – very disturbing.

Our police liaison committee member, Rita Bologna, took on the role of Queen's Gate Panel Chair and she holds quarterly meetings covering crime in the ward. We are lucky to have her input.

Nearby Richmond University vacated two of its buildings in St Alban's Grove and Ansdell Street. The former has been bought by Thomas's Kensington and it will be able to amalgamate the entire school into one building instead of the three it has at present. The planning process is in hand.

Jako's nightclub in the High Street, backing onto north Kensington Court has been a serious noise nuisance to residents for years and its clients leaving the premises wake residents by shouting, banging car doors, fighting and taking drugs and alcohol, all evidenced by bottles and cartridges they leave behind. We are trying, with the help of the police, who had to attend stabbings recently, to have the licence revoked.

Let's hope 2022 will bring more cheer.

**Linda Hamilton, chairman**



## THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

The KA was amongst the many local residents' associations which successfully opposed Transport for London's controversial plans for the redevelopment of South Kensington Station which would have ruined the unique character of South Kensington itself.

For many years Brompton Road has been looking increasingly down at heel so we welcomed the formation of the Brompton Road Business Improvement District, now the Knightsbridge Partnership Business Improvement District. The area covered falls partly within RBKC and partly within Westminster City Council and it is the first cross-border BID in the whole country. We are delighted our chairman has been invited to be the local residents' representative on the board

The new Use Class 'E' which allows changes between class uses, avoiding the need for planning consent, continues to have unintended consequences, especially now that the pandemic is severely affecting many parts of the retail trade. Where use is changed to restaurant, residents are left to rely on the four licensing objectives – a pretty meagre line of defence.

The KA is delighted that most of the major construction sites in the area are nearing completion. This includes the eastern part of the Knightsbridge Estate from the junction of Brompton Road and Sloane Street, with two new tube entrances due to open in the first quarter; 55–91 Knightsbridge, between William Street and Wilton Place; with the new Peninsula Hotel at Hyde Park Corner and the extension to the Berkeley Hotel due to open to guests later this year.

Our Transport Committee continues to engage with Transport for London and the Royal Parks over the problems caused by the northbound cycle lane in Park Lane and the closure to traffic of South Carriage Drive.

Due to the pandemic, the party at the Mandarin Oriental to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the association in 1961 has yet to be rescheduled.

**Carol Seymour-Newton, chairman**

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## NEVERN SQUARE CONSERVATION AREA RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Planning could, and should, be used as an instrument for change for improvement. Our Conservation Areas were created as areas to protect our architectural heritage and through planning changes we see these areas gradually being eroded. The mantra should be to "improve, enhance and restore" with each planning application that is submitted, and that includes the shop frontages within the Conservation Area.

We have had some battles within our Conservation Area, and one significant battle in Earl's Court, 344 Old Brompton Road a site which impacted on several Conservation Areas and Listed



Buildings and caused concern to the many residents that objected when passed.

Many residents were alarmed over the refurbishment/development of an ex-housing association building that still retained unit sizes, which did not comply with RBKC or GLA standards, had one staircase, and proposed flank wall brick work and detailing that is contrary to the unique feature brickwork of Nevern Square.

Evolution of an area with different requirements emerging responding to resident need such as bike hangars need to be considered so that they do not compromise the architectural integrity of the area such as placement in a garden square but still provide the amenity for which they were designed, in a place of safety.

So, we would ask as wish list that there was a more holistic approach to planning bringing in the different strands such as borough policy, conservation officer feedback, National guidelines, consultation – we need to protect our Conservation Areas more than ever and need to ensure that height, scale, massing and materials are appropriate and considered. Our heritage once lost cannot be replaced.

**Linda Wade, chairman**

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## **NORLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY**

St James Church is a listed building in the centre of Norland Conservation Area. A large tondo in the west gable was in such a bad state of repair that it was going to be boarded up. NCS applied for a City Living Local Life fund which it match-funded, enabling stained glass artist, historian and church warden, Mark Cazalet, to organise restoration and return to the west gable in January this year. NCS along with residents of St James Gardens will be supporting the restoration of all St James' doors in 2022.

Through Community Infrastructure Levy funding NCS negotiated to have a traffic acoustic camera installed in Holland Park Avenue to monitor noise. Since Covid, there has been an increase in modified vehicles emitting ear-shattering noises. It is hoped that fines will deter them. A Public Space Protection Order is now in place borough-wide and the camera data will support those infringements it records.

NCS continues to see more applications for large air conditioning units, while the on-going development of gardens for studios, gyms and offices reduce our important green spaces and natural soakaways. NCS intends to make amendments to its Neighbourhood Plan to better reflect these and other important climate change issues.

NCS is also looking to address solar panels and air source heat pumps, which are somewhat cumbersome in size. This will be done in accordance with any new policy being considered by the council, particularly on solar panels.

As the council is consulting on the draft Local Plan, an opportunity for such matters to be considered in more detail is available.

It is not known if Transport for London will reopen the debate about the cycle route along Holland Park Avenue. NCS





supports the council's quiet cycleway as a safer alternative.

A number of homes were flooded in June. Felicity Buchan MP and Norland Ward Councillor David Lindsay have been instrumental in organising meetings with Thames Water to hold it to account for lack of infrastructure investment.

**Libby Kinmonth, chairman**

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## OLD COURT HOUSE RESIDENTS

It's difficult put a description to the last 12 months.

Our mansion block, home to 44 families, is facing Kensington High Street, and like most communities Covid has impacted hugely on our lives and businesses around us. Sadly one of our much loved residents died from the virus.

I'm sorry to say the rest of the news is not good. In early December a bank robber was shot dead in a confrontation with police within sight of Kensington Palace and about 500 yards from our building.

Then in January three men were stabbed and police officers assaulted outside nearby Jako's nightclub. One stabbing victim died.

Cllr Sof McVeigh, chair of the council's licencing committee, said she agreed with police that the venue was "associated with serious crime." Our response was: why the heck wasn't the place shut down? Jako's licence is, even now, only suspended, not taken away.

We sought assurances from police about residents' safety, but apart from an increased presence of officers in the days after the stabbings the High Street is back to how it was in terms of patrols.

Both shocking incidents are a stark reminder of the way Kensington like other London boroughs is fundamentally changing – and not for the better.

Less serious an issue, is the high number of cyclists and e-scooter riders travelling at speed on pavements. One child was knocked over by a cyclist outside Ryman, although not badly hurt. Police tell us they cannot do much as neither cycles nor e-scooters are registered and their owners give false addresses if caught.

On the plus side Covid definitely brought residents of Old Court House more together. We now run a very lively daily blog documenting our thoughts. The blog also works as a help line; for example when someone is self isolating and they need shopping, another resident always answers the call. Our blog with thousands of short entries covering March 2020 to March 2021 was accepted by Kensington Library's Local Studies section as a record of how one Kensington community dealt with the crisis.

**John Cookson, chairman,**



## THE ONSLOW NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION

The most significant achievement in the last year was the campaign to stop TfL/Native plans to redevelop the area around South Kensington Underground station culminating in the council's refusal of planning consent. This was a shocking scheme totally out of keeping with the historic, built environment and which would have blocked many of the views of nearby museums. ONA would welcome a heritage-led and sensitive re-development, not only of the area around the station but the promised upgrade of the station itself, including the long-awaited step-free access. We are now waiting to hear whether the developers will appeal or bring forward amended proposals.

Sadly, we suffered a significant defeat in the planning consent given to Wellcome Trust to demolish and re-build the large office block at 63–81 Pelham Street. While not of outstanding quality, the building is nevertheless an old friend and at the ground and second floors of fine construction which could have been renovated. The replacement doubles the size and increases in the height by two floors. This will result in significant overlooking of the houses on South Terrace and reduction in the open aspect and light enjoyed by flats in Crompton Court. Another proposed re-development by Wellcome Trust at 40 Pelham Street also given planning consent resulted in some improvements to the design.

In other areas, ONA has strongly welcomed the forthcoming permanent pedestrianisation of Bute Street. We have also sought RBKC enforcement action on the feeding of feral pigeons on the concourse outside the South Kensington underground station. We have been delighted the Holiday Inn on Cromwell Road has been saved from demolition (not that it is any beauty) and will now be renovated by new owners. We have also intervened in many licensing applications by local cafés for overly large outside eating areas and the so-called on-line convenience stores which are popping up everywhere.

Overall, it has been a busy year despite the pandemic.

**C H H Lawton, chairman**

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## PRINCES GATE MEWS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

While entirely sympathetic to the extreme difficulties the hospitality industry has faced over the last couple of years, the sheer numbers of new tables and chairs on the street/on the pavement/in the road combined with multiple items of illegal street furniture are becoming a major issue in parts of Kensington. Illegal sandwich boards deliberately placed right in the middle of the 'pedestrian desire line' have sprouted all over South Kensington – in one area there are now eight within the space of 100 metres – as well as unapproved menu stands, planters, ropes etc.

Requests for enforcement have made no progress as despite the supply (on many occasions) of timed and dated photos this does not constitute evidence for RBKC. The impact on the disabled,



blind and partially sighted is particularly concerning, but all pedestrians suffer from having to slalom up the street. Where tables and chairs are placed on narrow pavements (cf Bute St) they themselves become a problem and again it has been difficult to obtain enforcement – and suggestions people can just walk round the obstruction simply miss the point.



A disability scooter cannot readily descend and mount curbs every few paces. One can debate the merits of permitting, nay encouraging, ever more external tables and chairs, but surely the licence fees (once liberalised) could be priced to fund robust enforcement? Similarly, if consultation (already limited to five days) on new tables and chairs is to be more than a fiction, it is essential that the proposed tables and chairs street plan is published when the proposal is first put out to consultation. It should not be left to residents, as at present, to request a copy of the plan while all the time the clock ticks down.



**Jane Whewell, chairman**

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## **ST HELENS RESIDENTS AND THE ST QUINTIN AND WOODLANDS NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM**

Our relationship with the Planning Department is now good. In 2021 we worked jointly with council officers, building owners, and local residents in drawing up a Design Code for redevelopment of the light industrial units in Latimer Road W10. Our chair is a Kensington Society trustee and planning committee member.

Over the next year our main focus will be on the consultations on the new local plan for RBKC, and in working with the Old Oak Neighbourhood Forum and the Friends of Wormwood Scrubs in trying to mitigate tall building proposals impacting on North Kensington (including those at Kensal Canalside). We will be responding to the consultations on the Regulation 18 and 19 versions of a new Local Plan for the Borough.





We may need to review and update the policies and site allocations in our own neighbourhood plan, to take account of Local Plan changes from the 2019 adopted version.

We live in hope that we are seeing a second peak of tall buildings across London, as happened after the Ronan Point collapse in 1968. Shrinking projections of London's 2040 population, the cladding scandal, rising construction costs, fire safety in tower blocks, and not least the changed patterns of commuting and working from home all combine together to demand a rethink. Yet developers continue to come forward with more of the same. We will continue to do what we can, at the neighbourhood level, to prompt such rethinking.

**Henry Peterson, chairman**

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## **SOUTH KENSINGTON & QUEENS GATE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION**

This year has seen us all now accepting the new normal as just that. Dark and deserted streets. Empty shops. Untidy make-shift platforms that litter the roadways outside cafes and restaurants to provide extra income for the cafe. More lockdowns and more e-scooters and e-bikes riding on the pavements.

We have rallied neighbours by keeping to our regular monthly committee meetings and our frequent mailings to update our members alerting them to borough news.

At the top of our agenda in the newly formed SK&QGRA in 1971 was South Kensington Station facing a new, awful plan for refurbishment. Fifty-one years on, and six further, unacceptable versions later, it was still top of our agenda this year. Happily, thanks to our brilliant consortium of associations and supportive ward councillors it was dismissed. And hopefully, the Royal Borough will step in to ensure this iconic treasure in this unique historic setting will be forever intact.

Also in our remit have been other major developments like the Forum Hotel/Holiday Inn, Cromwell Road, which again has a hopeful outcome. However, nothing can ever obliterate the mistake made when this ugly multi storey hotel was erected in the '60's.

Construction Traffic Management Plans for the continuing basement builds is high on our list, and so too are the intrusive rooftop builds that impose on nearby neighbours' privacy. Parking, rubbish on our streets, begging, anti-social behaviour can all be problems we are asked to help with – even bird feeding.

Sadly, it remains a continuous vigilance (no matter if it is very locally rubbish left on the street) or major changes to our Local Plan. We must all take our part and that includes the wonderful engagement we receive from organisations like the other local RA's and especially the Kensington Society who are always there to advise and assist us.

This year we are looking forward to a real AGM in our usual St Stephen's Church Hall near Gloucester Road sometime in mid-



May and our Garden Party later in July. It will be good to see all our members and neighbours once again.

**Caryl Harris, chairman**

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## **VICTORIA ROAD AREA RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION**

2021 was the year when some of the worst things did not happen.

Heythrop College: This major 142-unit luxury extra-care housing scheme, which was allowed on appeal in August 2020, has still not started. It would appear to have run into difficulties, but the prospect of a four-year major construction project, with all the traffic coming through narrow residential streets, still hangs over us.

Kensington Forum Hotel: At the beginning of the year we were working with several residents' associations to appear at a public inquiry in May, following the secretary of state having called in the scheme. In mid-March, we were informed that the developer had withdrawn the application. This was a huge relief.

Thomas's School: we heard that the former Richmond University site was for sale, the buyer being Thomas's School, which already owns three buildings in our neighbourhood. It proposes to transfer its schools at 39–41 Victoria Road and 17–19 Cottesmore Gardens, into Atlantic House (1 St Alban's Grove). The aspiration is to expand the school roll to 500 pupils. The schools have a legal agreement for 400 pupils and a plan to reduce the number of pupils coming by car. Concentrating pupils on one site on a street too narrow to allow pupil drop-off and collection, is difficult for 400 pupils, let alone 500. Putting a major traffic-generating activity in a low-traffic neighbourhood with only two ways into the area creates traffic problems. The proposal also includes converting the two existing schools to housing. The planning application is due shortly.

Low Traffic Neighbourhood: Our area was made into a 'low traffic neighbourhood' in 1971/72. We will be celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2022. This was achieved by cutting out a rat-run route for through traffic from Gloucester Road to Kensington High Street, via St Alban's Grove. The 20-mph speed limit has been welcomed and we are looking forward to improvements which will make the two one-way street exits more effective at preventing abuse.

2022 should also see the installation of piece of public art associated with the One Kensington Road development in Victoria Road.

We are looking forward to a year of celebrations – our 40th anniversary, the 50th anniversary of the traffic scheme and the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

**Michael Bach, chairman**



**THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY – CHARITY NO. 267778**  
**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED**  
**31 DECEMBER 2021**

<b>Income</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
<b>Donations and legacies</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Membership subscriptions	9,757.00	9,757.00
Donations and legacies	2,553.50	2,076.71
Gift Aid	2,238.49	2,202.08
<b>Total donations and legacies</b>	<b>14,548.99</b>	<b>14,035.79</b>
<b>Charitable activities</b>		
Events	625.00	0.00
Annual report advertising	5,225.00	7,925.00
<b>Total charitable activities</b>	<b>5,850.00</b>	<b>7,925.00</b>
<b>Investment income</b>		
Bank interest	32.89	189.39
<b>Total income</b>	<b>20,431.88</b>	<b>22,144.18</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
<b>Charitable activities</b>		
Newsletter	2,719.94	3,968.76
Events	750.00	2,390.00
Annual report	9,344.93	12,869.24
Planning	9,330.68	7,244.00
Membership	1,079.99	1,355.19
Charitable	195.00	195.00
<b>Total charitable activities expense</b>	<b>23,420.54</b>	<b>28,022.19</b>
<b>Other</b>		
Insurance	518.78	350.33
<b>Total other expense</b>	<b>518.78</b>	<b>350.33</b>
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>23,939.32</b>	<b>28,372.52</b>
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>	<b>(3,507.44)</b>	<b>(6,228.34)</b>
<b>Total unrestricted funds brought forward</b>	<b>76,698.77</b>	<b>82,927.11</b>
<b>Total unrestricted funds carried forward</b>	<b>73,191.33</b>	<b>76,698.77</b>



## BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021

	2021	2020
	£	£
<b>Current assets</b>		
<b>Debtors</b>		
<b>Accrued income and prepayments</b>		
Insurance	596.09	227.72
<b>Total accrued income and prepayments</b>	<b>596.09</b>	<b>227.72</b>
<b>Cash at bank and in hand</b>		
Nationwide Building Society	60,000.00	75,000.00
Barclays Bank	15,181.41	3,185.66
PayPal	1,520.61	20.01
<b>Total cash at bank and in hand</b>	<b>76,702.02</b>	<b>78,205.67</b>
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>77,298.11</b>	<b>78,433.39</b>
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>		
<b>Deferred income</b>		
Subscriptions and donations	702.00	0.00
<b>Creditors</b>		
Creditors	2,389.94	719.78
City Living	1,014.84	1,014.84
<b>Total deferred income and creditors</b>	<b>4,106.78</b>	<b>1,734.62</b>
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>73,191.33</b>	<b>76,688.77</b>
<b>Funds of the charity</b>		
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	<b>73,191.33</b>	<b>76,588.77</b>

**Approved by the Trustees 26 January 2022**

Signed: Martin Frame

Martin Frame, Chartered Accountant

Treasurer and Membership Secretary

The Kensington Society

## FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Society wishes to thank all the members who have generously subscribed £9,757.00, donations and legacies of £2,553.50 which qualified for Gift Aid of £2,238.49.

The total income for the year was £20,431.88, a decrease of £1,712.30.

The cost of administrative help is allocated on a time basis to the various charitable activities.

The total expenditure was £23,420.54, a reduction of £4,601.65.

The balance sheet has unrestricted funds of the Society of £73,191.33 a reduction of £3,507.44. These funds are necessary to secure the future of the Society. However, it is important that new friends and neighbours are invited to join and legacies are received to rebuild funds.

## NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS For the year ended 31 December 2021

- **Charity registered address and number**

The Kensington Society's registered charity number is 267778.

- **Accounting policies**

These accounts have been prepared based under the historical cost convention in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities – Statement of Recommended Practice (FRS 102).

### Income

- **Recognition of incoming income**

These are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when:

- The charity becomes entitled to the income;
- The trustees are virtually certain they will receive the income; and
- The monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

- **Donations**

Donations are only included in the SoFA when the charity has unconditional entitlement to the income.

- **Tax reclaims on gifts and donations**

Incoming income from tax reclaims are included in the SoFA to the extent that claims have been made.

- **Volunteer help**

The value of any voluntary help received is not included in the financial activities.

- **Investment income**

This is included in the financial activities when receivable.

### Expenditure and liabilities

- **Liability recognition**

Liabilities are recognised as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to expenditure.

### Financial instruments

- **Debtors**

Debtors do not carry any interest and are stated at their nominal value. Appropriate allowances for estimated irrecoverable amounts are recognised in the SoFA when there is objective evidence that the asset is impaired.

- **Cash in bank and on hand**

These comprise cash at bank and other short-term highly liquid bank deposits with an original maturity of three months or less.

Membership

Charity No. 267778

The objects of The Kensington Society are to preserve and improve the amenities of Kensington for the public benefit by stimulating interest in its history and records, promoting good architecture and planning in its future development and by protecting, preserving and improving its buildings, open spaces and other features of beauty or historic or public interest.

The membership subscription of £20 is payable by bank standing order only and is renewable annually on 1 January.

This entitles one person to be a member. Please complete further forms for additional memberships.

Individual subscription £ 20 Renewable annually on 1 January.

Donation £

Total £ 20 Please pay by bank standing order only; no cheques.

Title: ..... Full Name: ..... Date of Birth: .....

Address: .....

City and Postcode: .....

Email: .....

Mobile: ..... Home telephone: .....

How did you hear of us? Renewal ☐, Friend ☐, Planning issue ☐, Other ☐

*giftaid it* ☐ Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money to  
The Kensington Society made today or in the past four years or in the future.

I confirm that I have paid or shall pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the Charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand that the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give after 6 April 2008. You can cancel your Gift Aid declaration at any time. Please let us know if you change your name or address or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains. If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HMRC to adjust your tax code.

X Signature: ..... Date: .....

Bank Standing Order

\*\* The reference number \*\* below will be allocated when we receive your membership form. Please check that your bank address and post code are given below as this form will be posted to your bank for processing. The bank will need your original signature. Please post to The Kensington Society, Westwoods, Clatford Bottom, MARLBOROUGH SN8 4BY. For further information email [kensingtonsociety@outlook.com](mailto:kensingtonsociety@outlook.com) or call 020 7193 5243. Thank you.

Bank Name and Branch: .....

Bank Address: .....

City and Postcode: .....

Sort Code: ..... Account: ..... A/c Name: .....

Please pay Barclays Bank Nutting Hill Gate sort code 20-47-34 for the credit of The Kensington Society

account 70519138, reference \*\* ..... \*\* a first payment of £: ..... immediately and an annual payment of £: ..... on 1 January until further notice.

X Signature: ..... Date: .....





## ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT KENSINGTON?

**Do you cherish where you live and want to ensure that what is wonderful about the Royal Borough is both loved and protected?**

**Then join us.**

Your membership of the Kensington Society is most appreciated. We do need more members to give greater weight to our negotiations with the council, developers and others. And there are more opportunities to support us.

If you have the time and the interest, why not join us on one of the committees or on a specific project:

- Membership and events
- Accounting and finance
- Special projects such as Save the Police Station and other Assets of Community Value
- Website and blogging
- Newsletter and annual report writing and research

We need more people to participate in the work of the society. We would like to broaden the range of experience and expertise and to widen and deepen the subjects we consider. That might mean setting up sub-committees to look at subjects such as air pollution, crime, transport, schooling, and sponsorship such as competitions and awards.

It is not a full-time commitment that is needed. What **is** needed are individuals with a specific interest and some time to meet and take forward that enthusiasm for the betterment of Kensington.

Email us and let's talk: [kensingtonsociety@outlook.com](mailto:kensingtonsociety@outlook.com)

Alpha Plus Group  
17 Individual Schools - 3 Individual Colleges



NURTURE


Wetherby Kensington School  
is part of the Alpha Plus Group.

Learn more: [www.wetherby-kensington.co.uk](http://www.wetherby-kensington.co.uk)

Tel: 020 7487 6000

Twitter: @Alpha\_PlusGroup

[www.alphaplusgroup.co.uk](http://www.alphaplusgroup.co.uk)

 **Alpha Plus**  
group

