

The Kew Society

Meeting Notes of the Annual General Meeting

Date: Monday 10th October 2016

Time: 18.45 – 20.00

Venue: The National Archives, Kew TW9 4HF

Attendees from the current Executive Committee

Caroline Brock (Chair /Planning)
Martin Taylor (Planning)
Sue May (Webmaster/Events)
Janet Clark (Hon. Treasurer)
Avril Dalglish (Environment)
Mary Done (Hon. Secretary/Events/Environment)

Meeting notes recorded by

Mary Done (Hon. Secretary)

Apologies noted from

Patrons: Sir Donald Insall and Baroness Tonge of Kew.

Councillors Meena Bond, Monica Horner and David Linnette (Kew Ward), Councillor Stephen Speak (North Richmond Ward), Councillor Pamela Fleming (Strategic Cabinet Member for Environment, Business and Community) who were invited as guests but unable to attend due to a meeting at Richmond Council.

Members: John and Margaret Blair-Gould, Sue and Paul Cole, Susan Craig, Maureen and Timothy Green, Libby Insall, John and Frances Leach, Nada Morgan, Robert Smith, Uta Thompson.

Introduction

- The Chair, Caroline Brock, welcomed all to the AGM and especially new members attending for the first time. She thanked Paul Davies, National Archives Operations Director, and his team for providing the venue.
- Members would have the opportunity to meet one another afterwards, and talk informally to the Committee and Patrons.
- The Chair started the evening with a welcome to Caroline Blomfield and a tribute to David Blomfield, Patron of The Kew Society and well-respected local historian and writer who had died in the summer after a short illness. She encouraged members at the end of the meeting to look at the board of memorabilia provided by Caroline celebrating David's life. David had been a Patron of The Kew Society for many years and had always been available to offer wide counsel when needed. Several obituaries and tributes had been written about David – he did so much. He had been a Liberal Democrat Councillor, President of the Richmond Local History Society, writer and lecturer and was greatly respected by everyone he came into contact with – made obvious by the huge number of people present for the celebration of his life at the Barn Church. The venue was full to bursting with family, friends and colleagues who came to pay their respects – a tribute to David's popularity. One of the most touching tributes was by his son, James, who said that when talking to his siblings he found all agreed that when in doubt about something they would think – "what would David do"? The Chair commented that it was a motto she was herself now adopting when considering difficult decisions because in her experience, whatever David would do, was right.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Kew Society planned to have a lasting memorial for David and agreed with Caroline this should be a bench outside Featherstone Leigh Estate Agents in Kew Village at the corner of Leyborne Park where David lived. Caroline Blomfield had said that people had already been very generous, raising over £4,000 for cancer research. The Executive Committee had decided to underwrite the costs of a bench and welcomed any donations members wanted to make for this memorial.
<p>1.</p>	<p><u>To accept the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 14th October 2015</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These were accepted as an accurate record.
<p>2.</p>	<p><u>To receive the Report of the Executive Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presenting the report of the Executive Committee, the Chair paid tribute to her Committee colleagues as well as Kew Society members who helped the Committee informally. A great deal of work had been undertaken over the last year. <p>Objectives and Approach of The Kew Society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair summarised the objectives of the Society, which were set out in the documentation for the meeting – the key aim is to preserve and enhance the Kew area. The Kew Society examines planning applications, as well as commenting on national and local government policy consultations, liaises with local Councillors, planning authorities and local and national organisations, provides a community network to promote understanding of Kew and its heritage and facilitates information gathering about Kew. It also provides a platform to enable newcomers to meet other residents and become part of village life, holding events to publicise the Society and provide information for members. More detail on the objectives of the Society can be found in the Constitution of the Society which is on the website www.kewsociety.org. The Kew Society does not exercise power as such; it needs to maximise its influence by working constructively with decision makers. It also aims to work in collaboration with other organisations in Kew who have shared aims and to work efficiently by assigning areas of responsibility to four Sub-Committees reporting to the main Committee. The Sub-Committees cover planning, events, environment and marketing. It is important that the work of the Committee is transparent so that the Committee remains accountable to its membership. The website, which is regularly updated, provides a key tool to achieve this transparency. The Committee aims to be evidence based in its approach to planning, only commenting on applications which have an impact on the community as a whole, not individual household planning applications, and in terms that Councils are able to action as set out in their Local Plan policies. The Committee is very active and it is important to prioritise the work, including how best to deal with new project initiatives or ideas. Overall the Committee felt it was delivering worthwhile activities for the community and that these were both rewarding and enjoyable. <p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our evidence-based approach to planning is guided by the Kew Society’s Planning Policy (see www/kewsociety.org). The geographical areas covered are Kew Ward and parts of North Richmond Ward, matching the area in the Kew Village Plan, as well as plans in adjacent wards affecting Kew, notably at the moment the developments in neighbouring Hounslow with its major programme of regeneration and high rise building proposals with implications for Kew’s historic vistas, increased traffic and consequent air pollution, and light pollution from illuminated advertising.

- All the applications, too many to list, which have been reviewed over the past year can be found on our website.
- The Committee had addressed a number of strategic issues over the year including commenting on Richmond Council's pre-publication Local Plan, submitting evidence to the House of Lord's Select Committee on the Built Environment which published its report this year, picking up on some of the points made by the Kew Society, and commenting on Hounslow Council's proposals for development of the Great West Corridor along the A4, with probable high rise buildings and illuminated advertising affecting vistas from the Royal Botanic Gardens as well as potentially worsening traffic and air pollution.
- Analysing the planning applications the Society reviewed in the year, a number of general policy issues were apparent. These included the Society's comments to ask for publication of financial viability assessments so that these were properly open to public scrutiny as they are often used to demonstrate why affordable housing cannot be delivered within new developments; comments aimed at protecting local employment sites and to retain or improve community facilities; problems with the height and density of new developments; the need for as much soft landscaping as feasible as part of developments; the need for illuminated advertising to be sensitive to the impact on the environment; the traffic and air pollution impacts of cumulative developments; the need to improve the telecoms infrastructure whilst respecting the local heritage and environment; and the impact of developments on historic vistas.
- The Chair listed examples of applications where these issues were raised, all of which were on the Society's website. These included support for redevelopment of 102 North Road to become a café as well as residential accommodation; opposition to the closure of the Kew Gardens station ticket office as this provides a service not just for residents but for the many visitors to the Royal Botanic Gardens and the National Archives from all over the world; support for the expansion of community facilities at St Luke's church; comments on many new developments along Sandycombe Road (275, 267, 1-9) which posed problems of density, height and cumulative traffic and parking issues ; on-going pressure for the long-awaited commitment to the fit out costs by NHS England for the new GP surgery at Emerald Gardens which the Kew Society had been instrumental in securing by putting the developers in touch with the North Road Surgery, due to move into the new and larger premises; support for new and enhanced telecoms equipment; opposition to the high rise enabling developments said to be necessary to fund the new Brentford Football stadium; and opposition to the proposed 32 and 24 storey Chiswick Curve tower blocks at Chiswick roundabout.

Richmond Council's Local Plan

- The Chair described in more detail the work on Richmond Council's pre-publication Local Plan, a key document shaping the way the Council dealt with planning applications. The consultation on the Plan was in 3 phases – scoping areas needing update; consultation on those areas; full consultation on the Plan as a whole before publication and scrutiny by the Planning Inspectorate.
- We supported references to opposing the expansion of Heathrow; policies aimed at supporting retention of smaller retail units, particularly important in Kew; a new telecoms infrastructure policy; policies aimed at the protection of employment space; the welcome designation of London House as office space when it had been proposed as an appropriate location for a new school which we opposed, obtaining our own air quality measurements as evidence in anticipation of any planning application; and policies on the protection of the Royal Botanic Gardens.
- Areas where we said more needed to be done were on strengthening policies on basement

development; promoting non-conflict between transport users on roads and on the towpath; and greater recognition of the National Archives as a visitor centre and local employer.

- Thanks were extended to Martin Taylor, Caroline Brock, and John Oxley for all their hard work on planning issues, as well as Roger Mason on measuring air quality.

Events

- The Chair described the approach to running events. They aim to highlight for members the local architecture, environment, culture and history of the area, to attract new members and to provide opportunities for members to meet one another.
- A very wide range of events had been organised: a Spring party; talks on trees, parks and open spaces, waste management, Capability Brown, and, with the Richmond Local History Society, on Johan Zoffany; historic house tours (Osterley House, Syon House and Park); a tour of the Richmond Poppy factory and of Richmond theatre; a popular and hands-on towpath clearance event supported by the Thames Landscape Strategy; and a schools photo competition for the second year running.
- The Society had a presence at Kew Fete, Kew Horticultural Show, and Kew Village Market.
- In the last year, a new initiative to invite new members to a Chair's reception had proved very successful as a way of making members feel welcomed into the Kew Society and to meet Committee members to hear more about what we do.
- Thanks were extended to Mary Done, Sue May and Jane Hogan for overseeing events.

Environment

- The Environment sub-committee aims to help members appreciate, protect and improve the Kew environment, including its green spaces, river and Kew Pond.
- Avril Dalglish sits on several local organisations that work to protect and improve our environment, the towpath and riverside: the Thames Landscape Strategy and West London River Group, working in consultation with the Port of London Authority (PLA) and Richmond Council.
- Avril represented the Kew Society on the Old Deer Park Group looking at improvements to the Park with Richmond Council. The Group were considering a draft Supplementary Planning Document on the Old Deer Park as part of Richmond Council's Village Planning, currently open for public consultation.
- The Society had made suggestions to Richmond Council for the management plan for Kew Green under its Green Flag status.
- A great deal of work was being undertaken through the Kew Society's membership of the Richmond Heathrow Campaign to oppose the expansion of Heathrow through a third runway. Noise, air pollution and flight path redesigns were all of concern. An announcement and decision relating to Heathrow expansion is expected by the Government during October 2016. The Society and the community owed much to the hard work of Peter Willan who chaired the Campaign, as was acknowledged in Richmond Council's community awards this year.
- The Society had raised with Network Rail, our local MP and the British Transport Police the need to improve security and remove the graffiti which had appeared in the last few months along the Kew to Richmond rail track and also to Gunnersbury and beyond. Network Rail had not met the commitment they had made to remove all the graffiti by 4 September though new graffiti next to Kew Gardens station had been removed. We continue to press for action and for new planting along the route as an additional preventative measure in front of blank canvases of fencing or walls.
- The Society had instigated a project to re-plant the open areas alongside Kew Gardens

station platforms. The Royal Botanic Gardens had provided designs and planting plans pro bono and put the Society in touch with Energy Garden who would fund most of the costs, undertake the initial clearance, replanting and maintenance in the first year and fund a volunteers co-ordinator for on-going maintenance. Some 25 volunteers had been recruited, several becoming new members of the Kew Society. A successful bid had been made to Richmond Council for Civic Pride funding and the Society would be contributing some funds itself. Work was expected to start in the autumn.

- Thanks were extended to Avril Dalglish, Mary Done, Caroline Brock, Roger Mason and Peter Willan for their work on the local environment.

Marketing

- Our key communication tools are now the website and e-mail, overseen by Sue May, Paul Firby (website designer) and Nick Hutchings. These provided the quickest form of communication for members, with the website being updated every month. Those who had not yet provided an email address were encouraged to do so.
- The Society continued to publish its Quarterly Newsletters to update Members about our work, edited by Nicholas Armour.
- People moving home in Kew are contacted by Susan Craig to welcome them to the area and invite them to join the Kew Society.
- Robert Smith had continued to help us step further into the digital age through Facebook and Twitter.
- We are encouraged to see Membership numbers increasing. There were 64 new members during the year. Payment by Standing Order was encouraged as this reduced the administrative burden. A lot of work by the membership secretary, Michael Fletcher, and the Treasurer, Janet Clark with Mike Adams, went into inviting members to renew their membership and to reconcile membership and financial records.
- Thanks were extended to Sue May, Mike Adams, Nicholas Armour, Janet Clark, Susan Craig, Paul Firby, Michael Fletcher, Nick Hutchings and Robert Smith.

Conclusion

- The Chair thanked all the Kew Society Trustees, and helpers, as well as our Patrons.
- Succession planning for Trustees remained a key issue. In the next year the Society would need to appoint a new Honorary Secretary and an Events lead, as Mary Done would be completing her 6-year term of office. The Chair asked members to contact any of the Committee to discuss how they might get involved or to suggest anyone they knew of who might be interested in more active engagement.
- The Chair invited questions from the floor. None were raised.

3. To receive the Accounts

- Janet Clark presented the accounts for the year ending 31st July 2016.
- Thanks were extended to Geoffrey Turner, Independent Examiner for the Accounts.
- Income in the year was just under £7.4k and expenditure was £5.6k. The statement of financial activities shows a surplus for the year of £1,782. The overall balance carried forward was £26,179.
- Subscriptions from members totalled £4,606 and donations £855. Interest was £110 and gift aid was £1,151. A small surplus had been made on events. Overall income was slightly down on last year, but remains fairly constant year on year.
- Members raised no questions and the Accounts were approved.

<p>4.</p>	<p><u>4.1. Election of Members to the Executive Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the constitution, the Chair, Honorary Secretary and Treasurer require election annually. The importance of succession planning was noted, with Trustees able to serve a maximum term of 6 years (3 years plus a 3 year renewable term). • No further nominations had been received from members for Trustee posts over and above those proposed by the Executive Committee. • Sue May was standing down having completed the maximum 6-year term of office. Avril Dalglish had completed her first 3-year term and was standing for re-election for a further 3 years. Janet Clark was standing down as a Trustee and Honorary Treasurer after 3 years. <p><u>4.2. Re-election of Trustees to the Executive Committee after 3 years</u></p> <p>The Executive Committee proposed Avril Dalglish for re-election to the Executive Committee after 3 years for a further 3-year term. This was seconded by Teresa Hartley and approved.</p> <p><u>4.3. Election of Trustees (previously co-opted) to the Executive Committee</u></p> <p>The Executive Committee had proposed Michael Adams and John Oxley for election as Trustees. Michael was seconded by Sue Goodman and John Oxley by Juliet Thompson. Both appointments were approved.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><u>Election of Officers to the Executive Committee</u></p> <p>The Executive Committee had proposed Caroline Brock as Chair, Michael Adams as Honorary Treasurer and Mary Done as Honorary Secretary. Caroline Brock was seconded by Diana Dunrossil, Michael Adams by Sue Goodman and Mary Done by Teresa Hartley. All 3 appointments were approved. It was noted that no Vice-Chair had been identified for nomination and the Chair confirmed she was working to identify someone for this role.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p><u>Appointment of Mr G. L. Turner as Independent Examiner for Statement of financial activities for the year to July 31st, 2017</u></p> <p>Mr Turner's appointment was proposed by Caroline Brock, seconded by Donna McDonald and approved.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p><u>New Patrons</u></p> <p>The Committee had been considering for some time the appointment of more Patrons for the Society, not least to broaden and strengthen links with other groups in the community, and is delighted that the following have agreed to take on this role:</p> <p>Nick Baird Nick has been Group Corporate Affairs Director of Centrica PLC since March 2014. Before that he had a long and varied career in Government. He was CEO of UK Trade and Investment, a Director General in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and British Ambassador to Turkey. He was a member of the Board of the FCO and of the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills. He is a non-Executive Director of Nordanglia Education, a member of the Advisory Council of the Sheffield University School of Management, was on the Cole Commission giving advice on exports to the Labour party before the last general election and is a member of the Development Committee of the Prince's Teaching Institute. Importantly for the Kew Society he is a Trustee of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.</p>

	<p>Sir David Durie David and his wife, Sue, have been Kew residents since 1977 when they have not been abroad. David is a retired public servant, working mainly in the Department of Trade and Industry and in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. He was Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Gibraltar from 2000-2003 and UK Deputy Ambassador to the European Union from 1991-1995. He is currently co-chair of Governors at The Queen's School and is also a Patron of the Kew Community Trust.</p> <p>Gudrun Edwards Gudrun Edwards is a founder and, until this summer, leader of the Kew Sinfonia which was established in 1986. She gives many recitals, performs as a soloist with various orchestras and is a well-known music teacher in West London. She is now, with her husband David, President of the Kew Sinfonia.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p><u>Change of status for The Kew Society to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in 2017</u></p> <p>8.1. Mike Adams summarised the purpose of changing status from an Unincorporated Association to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) which the Executive Committee were proposing the Kew Society should adopt.</p> <p>8.2. Mike set out the main types of charitable structure available, the advice from the Charity Commission, the nature of a CIO and its benefits, and how the change to the new status could be managed for the Kew Society.</p> <p>8.3. The main types of charitable structure were a Trust, an Unincorporated Association, a charitable company limited by guarantee and a CIO. In 2000 the Charity Commission had identified the need for a new form of legal entity which became a CIO. Enabling legislation was enacted in 2006, regulations and guidance was published in 2011 and the first CIO was formed in 2013. The Commission was overwhelmed by a large number of applications for CIO status: 6,500 new CIOs to 31 March 2016. Charitable company conversions will be permitted from 1 October 2016 but with time slots to manage the demand.</p> <p>8.4. A CIO is a corporate entity and may be formed as a Foundation CIO or an Association CIO. The benefits of a CIO were continuity and strengthened protection for Trustee and member liabilities and Trustee legal liabilities. For the Kew Society, conversion was administratively reasonably straightforward and a small Steering Group reporting to the Executive Committee was being formed to take forward the work. Costs involved were minimal – a registration fee and possibly some legal costs to check the new Kew Society Constitution was sound, working from the model provided by the Charity Commission. The main cost was time for the Committee and Steering Group.</p> <p>8.5. The process for the Kew Society involved outline approval of the change in status at this AGM; the appointment of a small Steering Group to recommend the changes in detail to the Executive Committee, including drafting a new Constitution; an Extraordinary General Meeting to wind up the existing Unincorporated Association and adopt the CIO; and registration with the Charity Commission.</p> <p>8.5. Mike asked for approval to pursue the change of status. This was seconded by Caroline Brock and approved.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No members had submitted items for any other business in advance of the meeting as

required.

- The Chair presented flowers on behalf of the membership to thank Janet Clark and Sue May for all their hard work for the Society. Janet had offered to remain involved by distributing leaflets from time to time and Sue was continuing to help in the background on organising events.
- Serge Lourie led a standing ovation for Caroline Brock to thank her for her hard work as Chair.