

On Kew

A key local player

The last few weeks have presented us with two significant opportunities to raise the profile of the Kew Society locally.

The first opportunity came when Lord True chaired Kew Question Time in early March as a follow-up meeting about the Village Plan. We were approached to submit questions and following their acceptance were able to pose the following questions:

1. Does the Council have plans to review the traffic and parking implications of the Brentford Stadium development given that journey times will at least double around Chiswick roundabout, Kew Bridge and Kew Road as a consequence of the enabling developments?
2. What discussions is the Council having with the NHS to support the development of primary care facilities in Kew, including the potential move of the North Road surgery to the Old Inland Revenue site?
3. Does the Council share the concerns of the Kew Society about the changing nature of the riverside from the extensive new developments in Brentford, affecting vistas from historic heritage sites in Kew and increasing light pollution?

You can view a video of the questions being asked and the answers given using the link on our website. The Society's recent activities in relation to the above topics are set out in this newsletter.

The second opportunity arose when Boris Johnson visited Kew village a few days later in the company of Zac Goldsmith. As you can see from the picture below, we were able to bring some important points to his attention for consideration.

The Society has a key part to play locally and therefore we constantly actively look to become involved in local events and activities.



Chair Designate

We are delighted to announce that Caroline Brock has come forward to announce her interest in assuming the role of Chair for the Society at our next AGM. Caroline is an experienced member of our Committee and many people will have come across her as she's both looked at local planning issues as part of our Planning team and worked on the Richmond Heathrow campaign. Caroline represents an exciting bridge for the Society from the present, where she stands as someone who has gained a good understanding of the Society and its values and the future, where the Society must adapt and change as the world changes. Caroline has taken on the role of Chair Designate as of the last Committee meeting with the backing of our Patrons and we are sure that you will join us wishing her well as she assumes her increased responsibilities.

Planning update

Brentford Stadium and enabling developments

In March Hounslow was given the green light to approve detailed plans for the new 20,000 seat Brentford Football stadium on Lionel Road, and outline permission for a hotel and 8 tower blocks of 910 flats after the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government decided not to call in the application for consideration nationally despite objections from English Heritage, Kew Gardens, the Kew Society, Richmond Council and many others. The GLA also decided not to intervene. Based on independent analysis we commissioned, we believe the enabling developments of hotel and tower block flats will have serious implications for traffic congestion and air pollution. We continue to work with 7 other local community groups and Kew Gardens to oppose the proposed development of high rise flats which will still need full planning permission. We will be meeting Brian Burgess from Brentford FC (Lionel Road) Ltd to discuss the current position. And we are examining the recently published draft s.106 agreement and plans for Compulsory Purchase Orders by Brentford Council to acquire the land needed for the developments. Until the s.106 agreement is completed, planning permission cannot be granted.

Inland Revenue Site, Bessant Drive

We had 3 meetings with the developers, Taylor Wimpey, to discuss their plans for this site and attended the 2 public exhibitions at the National Archives. We are pleased that Taylor Wimpey took up our suggestion to discuss with the North Road Surgery the inclusion on the site of new primary care facilities. They have agreed to provide a floor

area 2-3 times larger than the current accommodation in North Road. We also suggested to the National Archives and Taylor Wimpey more landscaping of the site along the edge of the Archives car park, facing Defoe Avenue. This is now looking like a distinct possibility. Taylor Wimpey have now put in their application. We will be attending a further briefing meeting with them before we submit comments to Richmond Council. Among the issues we will focus on are problems of sewerage which have been highlighted by both the Kew Residents' Association and the National Archives who have direct experience of the current problems.

Other planning activities

We have had some success with concerns over the effect of light pollution from developments in Hounslow. Hounslow Council and the developers of Wallis House on the Great West Road, Barratt's, have agreed with the objections we and Kew Gardens raised over proposed decorative lighting on this tower block. Barratt's have significantly modified their proposals. Light pollution is an on-going concern which we have raised, amongst other issues impacting on Kew, in comments we have submitted on Hounslow Council's Local Plan currently out for consultation. We have also added our voice to the new London wide Skyline Campaign recently launched by the Architects Journal and the Observer, aimed at encouraging better design for high rise buildings, sensitive to the local context. See the article at <http://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/home/skyline/aj/observer-skyline-campaign/8661015.article>

In Kew, we have discussed with Kew Gardens the parking of coaches along Kew Road. Though there is no immediate solution to more appropriate parking, we hope that in the medium term improved arrangements might be agreed, possibly linked to parking in the Old Deer Park, given that parking will again become an issue in Kew if the Brentford FC proposals proceed. We have also commented on proposals in North Road which have come forward in a second application (the first was turned down) for a music salon on the corner of Kew Plaza, opposite the station. It would be nice to see this prominent building, unused for several years, brought back into community use, provided any noise or parking issues can be addressed properly.

More information is on our web site www.kewsociety.org under "planning and environment, planning news".

Environment update

The Society's Environment sub-committee has been developing its links with local related groups over the past few months.

As part of the remit in respect of the river towpath and shoreline, we are now working with the Towpath Group so as to develop a more "urban meadow" through considered planting in the open area on the river by Mortlake Crematorium. We are also supporting the West London River Group in looking to change towpath signage so as to emphasise the presence of pedestrians rather than that of bicycles.

Events

In February we were treated to a fascinating **talk by Sara Redstone**, the Plant and Quarantine Officer at Kew Gardens. Sara guided us through the detailed and complicated functions of her work in protecting our native biodiversity and the conservation of endangered species in Kew's partner countries.

The weather was beautiful for our March trip to **Marble Hill House** in Twickenham under the very able guidance of John Moses our local historian. John regaled us with many tales of its inhabitants, (particularly Henrietta Howard, the mistress of George II) and of the wonderful paintings that adorn its walls including a collection of commissioned paintings by the architectural artist Panini.

Did you see us at **The Kew Market** earlier this month? We had a stall which enabled us to talk to many of the local residents about the work of The Kew Society and we were pleased to be able to hear your views in person.

You will have already received the details of the eagerly-anticipated tour of the **Royal Ballet School** at the White Lodge in Richmond Park on April 30th.

We are also very pleased to announce that we are to host another '**Hustings**' at the Barn Church on 15th May at 7.30. This opportunity to hear prospective candidates for the forthcoming local elections proved to be so popular last time we decided to host it again. **Please do send us your written questions to events@kewsociety.org or present them on a card on your arrival.**

Our plans for a **Picnic under the Pagoda in Kew Gardens** on June 14th are taking shape. We hope to encourage many of our younger families who live in Kew to come along to join us and enjoy the special treat of being in Kew Gardens on a summer evening after the crowds have gone home. All are welcome and tickets are on sale via our website.

Contact us

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JOIN NOW by visiting our website

You can write to us at:

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