

On Kew

Brentford development: traffic flow concerns

We remain heavily engaged in objecting to the plans for the development of 910 flats and a hotel to fund **a new stadium for Brentford Football Club** just across Kew Bridge. Though Hounslow's Planning Committee approved the application, no planning permission exists until reviews by the GLA and by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government are complete. The Stadium, if approved, would be built first (opening in 2016) and the enabling developments over a 10-year period to 2023. New analysis from our traffic consultants demonstrates our concerns very clearly - the major impact on traffic is from the enabling developments, not the Stadium (the construction of which we do not oppose). These developments would result in a two- to three-fold increase in delays around Kew Bridge which is already grid-locked at peak travel times. This, in our view, means non-compliance with London Plan requirements. We are working hard to raise awareness of this issue - see the planning news item on our website for how you can help.

Additional planning updates

We have been meeting with Taylor Wimpey, the developers for the **old Inland Revenue site** at Bessant Drive, to hear their proposals and influence their ideas for development ahead of their formal application which will be made this Spring/Summer. We are encouraging Taylor Wimpey to include primary health care facilities on the site and have made some initial comments on the issues we will mainly focus on when we look at the final application. The issues include:- density, parking, traffic, sustainability and design, landscaping, the proportions allotted to different unit sizes and to affordable housing, play areas for children and facilities for children over 11 years old. We hope members will comment at Taylor Wimpey's next public exhibition, likely to be in February, which will show their more detailed proposals.

We are also engaging with the Council on their development of a **Village Plan for Kew**. The Council will be consulting again in March on the Plan, including a related Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which will have some force in law to guide the Council's planning decisions.

New homes and 'Historic' drains

For some few years now, there have been intermittent drainage problems which have been noticed by some households in the vicinity of the 'Gypsy corner' area of **Mortlake Road**. There has been a lengthy history of complaints and correspondence from local residents, resulting in periodic small remedial actions by Thames Water.

But just before Christmas the situation worsened rapidly, and the problems were experienced more widely, threatening a truly unpleasant crisis. Urgent local pressure on Thames Water resulted in emergency pumping work and disruptive emergency work in Mortlake Road. We understand that a main drain junction has been replaced and a large tree had to be felled as its root system had been destabilised by the long term underground leakage.

We are concerned that the developments at **Kew Riverside**, the **Kew Retail Park** and **The National Archives** may have put excessive strain on the Victorian main sewer (that was never designed for this capacity) at Gypsy Corner. We are approaching Thames Water to ask for their assessment of the weakness at Gypsy corner and what long-term sustainable action needs to be taken. This may impact on the proposed new development at the Old Inland Revenue site.

Aircraft noise

The Davies Commission's interim report on aircraft capacity was published in December. It has confirmed the need for 1 new runway in the south-east by 2030 and the possibility of another by 2050 which will be assessed over the next year. The Commission did accept that demand by 2050 will be lower than previous estimates, largely because of the scope for increasing numbers of passengers per flight. This accepts part of the evidence the Richmond Heathrow Campaign (RHC) has put forward to support the case for no new runways. The Commission has whittled down options for expansion to Heathrow or Gatwick with further study of the Mayor's proposals for a new airport in the Thames estuary. The report also contains proposals for trials in the short term to even out early morning flights which would mean an increase in flights between 5 and 6 a.m. in return for more daytime respite periods. We continue to work the Richmond Heathrow Campaign (RHC) to oppose expansion of Heathrow and changes in runway use affecting noise and air pollution in the area. More information is at www.richmondheathrowcampaign.org.

The next nine months will be critical to the challenge presented by the current expansion proposals, short term proposals and night flights. The RHC is keen for local people to help develop the arguments and promote the campaign. The issues include noise, pollution, surface access, project financial viability, safety etc. No particular expertise is necessary as guidance is available from an experienced RHC team but interest in gathering evidence, or technical issues, aviation, the law, economics, finance or journalism would be very helpful to support the campaign. **If you would like to help, please contact RHC at action@richmondheathrowcampaign.org.**

Events

After a year of walks, talks, our AGM/supper at the Barn with Paul Velluet who spoke so well on the Old Deer Park area, and our now traditional 12th Night party at St. Anne's - we look forward to a varied programme in 2014.

Friday, 21st February: a talk on the history and function of the Kew Quarantine House by Sara Redstone, Plant Health & Quarantine Officer, with a table reserved for any members who wish to stay on for lunch in the Orangery.

In late April: a tour and talk of White Lodge Royal Ballet school in Richmond Park.

In late Spring: Tony Kirkham, Head of Arboretum at Kew, a tour of the Trees of Kew Gardens.

Saturday, 14th June: In our desire to cater for families in the Society, we are re-instating the Kew Summer evening picnic round the Pagoda in Kew Gardens. The Director will welcome us and we hope the weather is kind!

In late September: a tour of Richmond theatre covering backstage, history and auditorium.

Tuesday, 7th October: our AGM/Supper will feature a talk by Jason Debney of Thames Landscape Strategy. Their focus is a strategy for the future of the river corridor between Hampton and Kew for the next 100 years.

We have lots of ideas for future events but would like suggestions from our members about activities/events that they and their children would enjoy. It is your Society. Please let us know.

We will be having a stall at the Kew Community Market on **Sunday, 6th April**, at the Kew Summer Fayre on **Saturday, 21st June**, and the Kew Horticultural Show on **Saturday, 30th August**. Do come and talk to us then or contact us at any time.

A new view on the environment

Recently, the Society's Committee has been reviewing and revising its Sub-Committees' Terms of Reference. The Society's newly formed Environment Sub-Committee has had its own challenge in attempting to reach a definition that gives a clear focus for its activities while not excluding any areas that impact on the quality of our environment. The sub committee's remit which is now on our web site under "Formal Documents" encompasses:- examination of

issues affecting public green space; the river towpath and shoreline; the street scene; public amenities; and noise and air pollution. It also considers national or local government policies on the environment and historic heritage, which impact Kew.

Some of the issues we look at are small in comparison to proposed developments at Heathrow, Brentford Stadium and the Inland Revenue site but taken as a whole they help to both preserve and enhance the quality of our environment in this particularly beautiful part of London.

Towpath: Resurfacing has taken place along parts of the Towpath between Mortlake and Barnes. Although this has made it much easier to walk along it has also caused problems between some cyclists, travelling at high speeds, and other users. The Towpath is there for everyone but how to ensure its many different users can use it safely?

Member survey update

A big THANKYOU to all the members who participated in our recent survey.

We had a tremendous response from across the membership, and this will help us with decisions about how we can continue to play a major role in protecting the heritage of this wonderful area of London that we all live in.

At the moment we are analysing the results of the survey and we will also be conducting a non-member version to see if we can attract more of the Kew Community to be members of the Kew Society.

More news on all this later in the year.

Contact us

Your Committee

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JOIN NOW by visiting our website

The Committee thanks the Greyhound Pub, Kew Green for the use of their meeting room.

You can write to us at:

The Kew Society, 32 Alexandra Road, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 2BS