



The Kew Society Newsletter • Spring 2022

Welcome....

to our Spring newsletter. And what a Spring it has been so far – the magnolias, camellias and daffodils seem more magnificent each year. We have held several exciting events since the last newsletter including a Swinging Sixties Bus Tour which was full of surprises. We hope you enjoyed the warm weather that Easter brought us this year.

Meet in Kew

The 'Meet in Kew' team agreed that the time was right to relaunch these enjoyable community events. Now a joint Kew Society/Kew Community Trust initiative, a team of volunteers welcomed a really great mix of people who live or work in Kew to our 'pop up pub' on April 7th. From my position behind the bar – a great place to chat to people in between serving drinks – I was really gratified to see a lot of smiling faces and to feel the buzz of conversation. All proceeds from this event – we raised more than £200 – have been donated to DEC for Ukraine. If you missed our relaunch, do put future events into your diary – the first Thursday of the month (although we may take a break in August) and introduce yourself to me. I will welcome any ideas about how we can continue to develop the activities of the Kew Society and also welcome any of you who may enjoy helping our team with diverse activities for the benefit of everyone in Kew.



Shiona Williams, Chair



Gardening

Spring has definitely arrived, and the woodland bed at the station has been looking fantastic – pale pink cherry blossom with brilliant lime green euphorbia and white and pink hellebore flowers. It's lovely to see all the pollinators buzzing around the flowers and enjoying the pollen.

The gardening team started work again in March, and their first priority was to tackle the grasses at the station. The tall deciduous grasses have all been cut down and the short evergreen grasses have been 'combed' to remove as many of the dead blades as possible. It was very helpful to catch the Kew Gardens' gardeners tackling their grasses a few weeks ago and to get a demonstration of combing in the Grass Garden. This is a long job, so it was great that several of our volunteer gardeners were able to contribute to the task.

The next big task is to mulch the beds with compost and manure so that the plants continue to be well fed and thrive. We have ordered over 30 bags of compost!

We have received a beautiful design and planting plan, done by one of the team at Kew Gardens, for the triangular planter in the village and the rectangular bed next to it. The plan is a mix of perennials that can tolerate relatively dry soil, and includes plants that collectively provide a long flowering period which will be great for pollinators and for people to enjoy. The colour palette includes blue, purple, white and pink. The Council has agreed to increase the soil level in the planter so that plants have a greater depth of soil, which will also enable low plants to be more visible. This work will be done before the beds are replanted. We will keep the spring bulbs which have put on such a lovely display over recent weeks so that people can continue to enjoy them in future years.

Anna Anderson, Head Gardener

Planning

The last few months have seen numerous applications for planning permission for extensions to houses, but recently activity has increased on a more general front:

- Forthcoming new proposals for the Mortlake Brewery site are expected to include 1,100 homes, with extended cycle lanes, reduced car parking and a 1,200 place secondary school.
- Permission has been given to paint the listed Hennebique Bridge (the footbridge) at Kew Gardens Station.
- DD Classic Showrooms on North Road was given temporary permission for the retention of seven car ramps/stackers in the rear yard: many local residents have objected to this as intrusive and unneighbourly.
- A decision is awaited on the application for a day nursery for up to 80 children at 77 North Road (ref: 21/4423). We commented on concerns about the numbers, possible noise and parking problems.
- A decision by Mayor Sadiq Khan is still awaited for the Homebase development at Manor Road.



Further west along the river, the Port of London Authority has applied for permission to install a water-filling station for walkers and cyclists for a trial period of one year in the former tollbooth at the top of the stairs on the Richmond side of the Richmond Lock and Weir bridge (planning ref: 22/0695). A decorative screen would cover an alcove to make it easier to keep it free from dog fouling. Here are photographs of the tollbooth – the water filling station would



be to the right of the window and the screen would cover the alcove. We will be making observations on this to suggest that the screen will detract from the listed structure and may not meet the intention.

North of the river, the Public Inquiry into the planning application for the redevelopment of the Tesco/Homebase sites on Syon Lane started on the 15th March, with expected completion by the end of April. However, part of the Inquiry addressing heritage issues has been delayed until the end of September owing to the non-availability of an expert witness. A comprehensive review of the Inquiry is available on the website of the Osterley and Wyke Green Residents' Association (OWGRA), who have been leading the campaign against the applications.

The application to redevelop Charlton House, Albany House and Osier Court on Brentford High Street was approved in March (TKS had supported objections submitted by RBG Kew and others on grounds of the excessive bulk of the proposed development).

Alice Shackleton & John Ricketts

Events

Since February 2022, The Kew Society has hosted events to take our minds back to the history in our area or the nostalgic 'Sixties and Seventies'.

Using the National Archives as a venue recently, we have opened up slightly earlier for a 'half hour drink and chat' before the beginning of talks. This is proving to be successful!

- An animated talk in January by the inspiring Celia Holman from The Eel Pie Island Museum kicked off our 2022 events. 'A Slice of Eel Pie – Boatyards & Bands, Artists & Inventors' took people back to the start of when some famous rock bands and artists performed here.
- A cold and very blustery February day saw our gazebo at The Kew Market just about stay put – but we were delighted by the number of passers-by who stopped for a chat or to find out more about the work of The Kew Society and how to join.
- Chris Sumner provided a wonderful and informative talk about the new publication 'Twickenhamshire - the riverside gardens and villas of eighteenth-century Twickenham'. The book is a treat to read, with gorgeous illustrations to match the text.



Mary Done and Jane Hogan from our Events team help to get everyone on board

In March, about 50 Members hopped aboard the Swinging Sixties red double-decker Routemaster bus for a 2-hour Rock 'n Royal tour of Kew, Richmond and Twickenham. Amazing facts about the early careers of musicians, rock and jazz bands were recounted, alongside the unique history of the area. A privileged few also pulled the "ding-ding" cord, alerting the driver to stops on the route!



Continuing the music theme, our April presentation on the history of the Olympic Studios in Barnes proved to be a "must". Original clips showing the Rolling Stones recording at the Studio recalled the days of vinyl LPs and bell-bottom trousers. We will be watching the progress of the new Olympic Studio, and hope to party there once it re-opens!

TLS will be guiding a Wet Meadow Walk in Home Park, near Hampton Court, on Saturday 7th May to tell us more about their ongoing work in this area. Details are on the website. Pull on your wellies, enjoy meeting others and learning about climate change, the riverside and the challenging work undertaken by Jason Debney and Becky Law from TLS to aid wildlife, help control flooding and make these areas safe and attractive.

On 25th May we will be tapping into the expertise of Kevin Martin, Head of Tree Collections at RBG Kew, for an early evening walk around Kew's Arboretum.

More details about the above events can be found on the Kew Society website www.kewsociety.org and on our Kew Village noticeboard. Please also make a note in your diaries to visit our stand at the Kew Summer Fete, Kew Green, on Saturday 18th June.



Finally, *The Kew Society* is hosting a Local Elections Hustings to enable everyone to meet the candidates in the forthcoming local elections on Thursday 5th May 2022.

Come to The Queens School, Cumberland Road, Kew (note change of venue) at 7.30pm for a 7.45pm start on **Thursday 28th April** to hear Kew Ward candidates speak briefly and then answer your questions. Pre-submitted questions will stand a greater chance of being taken, but there may be a short opportunity for questions from the floor. Please send any questions in advance by noon on Friday 22nd April to secretary@kewsociety.org or by post. Similarly, let us

know of any special needs, either by email or by post (the Secretary's address is on Page 8). We look forward to seeing you.

Mary, Jane and Sue (Events team).

Update on Heathrow

The Richmond Heathrow Campaign (RHC) acts on behalf of the Kew & Richmond Societies and Friends of Richmond Green in matters relating to Heathrow, and in particular its environmental impact on community health and wellbeing.

Heathrow Expansion:

Last year Heathrow Airport experienced the worst year in its history as a result of the pandemic and, even though air travel is starting to recover, it is unlikely that passenger numbers will reach pre-Coronavirus levels until around 2026. This has resulted in Heathrow pausing its expansion in the short term, but plans for a third runway have not gone away. RHC has long argued that expansion puts in jeopardy the Government's target for reaching net zero aviation by 2050, and we continue to seek to influence the decision process to avoid expansion.

Last year RHC spent a substantial amount of time ahead of COP 26 in Glasgow researching carbon emissions from aviation and in particular Heathrow flights. RHC believes the industry and government to be over-optimistic on future replacement of fossil fuels with bio-fuels. The only way to achieve net zero in time and avoid a climate crisis is to manage demand, with the cost of carbon emissions reflected fully in ticket prices, to account for the environmental harm. The industry is opposed to demand management, but RHC continues to promote its research and conclusions on aviation's carbon emissions. 2022 will be an important year because the United Nations will be deciding how to achieve aviation net zero. RHC has submitted a paper to the UN on the subject.

Airspace Modernisation:

Modernisation of UK airspace is a major project planned by government. Heathrow shares its airspace with 14 other airports, and the industry claims there is a need for improved punctuality and increased airspace capacity, but RHC has reviewed evidence which suggests this has been overstated. In February, Heathrow submitted a set of airspace design principles to the CAA which will be used to establish flight path options and a public consultation on proposed flight paths in about two years' time. RHC initiated a co-ordinated response from over 15 community groups to the proposed principles – rejecting many of them and objecting to the lack of proper engagement by Heathrow. Some changes were made, but a bias towards concentrated rather than dispersed flight paths remains which will result in concentrated noise impact, primarily because of the introduction of Performance-Based Navigation whereby aircraft fly very precise trajectories. Importantly, Heathrow has confirmed the airspace is being designed for a two-runway airport within the existing planning limit of 480,000 flights a year. The issues are therefore about the re-allocation of noise impact rather than an increase in noise emitted through expansion.

Over the next two years, RHC will deploy its knowledge and experience of airspace design to engage with Heathrow and other community groups for a fair allocation of noise impact.

Nora Dennehy

Richmond Borough Climate Emergency Strategy – an update

Richmond Council declared a climate emergency in June 2019, recognising that the global emergency is a threat everywhere, including in our borough. Subsequently, the Council developed a strategy to achieve carbon neutrality in its own buildings and operations by 2030 and committed to making the whole borough net zero for carbon by 2050 – the target set for London and the UK by the Mayor and the UK Government. This update summarises a recent progress report submitted to the Council's Environment Committee.

Only around 2% of carbon emissions in the borough come from Council buildings and operations. Even so, these emissions were reduced by 54% between 2019/2020 and 2020/2021, mainly due to energy efficiency measures introduced in council buildings and to reductions in CO2 emissions associated with council electricity use. The national grid helped this by producing more electricity from low-carbon sources such as wind and solar energy. This reduction shows what can be done in a relatively short period. However, the borough as a whole faces a formidable challenge to reduce its total emissions to net zero by 2050. The latest data from UK Government sources (<https://naei.beis.gov.uk/laco2app/>) for Richmond upon Thames shows that 612.8 kt of CO2 were emitted in 2019, equivalent to 3.1 tons per resident! 49% came from the domestic sector, 31% from transport and the rest from industry. Three quarters of the domestic emissions are from gas used for heating and cooking, and almost all the transport emissions come from vehicles driving on our roads. This shows that it will be critical to improve energy efficiency in our homes and to drastically reduce use of carbon-fuelled vehicles on our roads.

In line with these data, the Council's strategy recognises that it needs to inform residents about the causes of climate change and what they can do to reduce their carbon emissions. A new Local Plan has been drafted to guide borough development over the next 15 years. Its central concept is of 20-minute neighbourhoods where most facilities needed by residents are within easy walking or cycling distance. This is still under consultation. Richmond has continued installing electric vehicle charge points. There are currently about 464 in the borough, and funding has been obtained for a further 130 lamp column charge points in 2022. Plans will be developed in 2022 to restrict delivery vehicles in the borough's high streets to create consolidation hubs. All council vehicles will be zero emission by 2030.



Charging Points in Kew

The Council supported energy-efficiency improvements for residents with energy inefficient homes and low incomes under the Government's Green Homes Grant scheme. A further £1,155 million funding has been secured to improve around another 100 properties in the borough in future phases. Richmond has also promoted 'Solar Together' – a scheme allowing residents to access cheaper deals to instal solar panels. Richmond had the highest sign-up of all London Boroughs, with 249 residents taking advantage of the scheme.

For the vast majority of residents, it will be largely up to us to improve the energy efficiency of our homes with added insulation and by replacing our gas boilers with heat pumps when the time comes for renewal. Similarly, it will be down to individuals to decide to decrease their carbon footprint by reducing car use and walking, cycling, or using other means of sustainable transport. Reaching net zero carbon goals will be achievable only by such personal decisions, and the Council has held several events to educate residents about climate change and encourage such decisions. These included Richmond Climate Week in November 2021. Over 20 sessions were delivered online and in person, focusing on reducing carbon footprints

at home. Around 1,050 people took part in the Climate Week. The Council has also worked with young people on climate change, providing £10,000 funding to the Youth Council to commission climate-related projects by youth groups.

The Progress Report covers other important issues relating to climate change such as waste, plastics and the circular economy; water management and flood abatement; green infrastructure and biodiversity. These are not discussed here but can be accessed at <https://cabinet.richmond.gov.uk/documents/s94462/RCES%20Refresh%202022%20Cover%20Report.pdf>

It is noteworthy that in a recent analysis of all local authority climate action plans by Climate Emergency UK, Richmond was ranked 11th overall in the UK and the 3rd best in London, but residents must also play their part if carbon reduction goals are to be achieved.

Dr. Roger Mason

How green is our waste?

Ever wondered what happens to your refuse and recycling when you leave it outside to be collected every week? There is a great deal of information on the Council's website. For example, your glass, cans, foil and plastic bottles and pots are collected from your black boxes and delivered to the Council's depot in Craneford Way, Twickenham. From here it is sent in different directions, going to various sites in bulk to be sorted.

Some of it is sent to a sorting plant near Mansfield in Derbyshire: this plant separates the glass, steel cans, aluminium cans/foil and plastics from each other as well as from any non-recyclable contaminants present (which are in turn sent for incineration with energy recovery). Glass is processed in the UK and the Netherlands and ends up as new bottles and jars, aggregates, artificial slate or bricks.

Food waste from your green food-waste boxes is delivered to the West London Waste Authority in Transport Way, Hounslow. It then goes to Bio Collectors' anaerobic digestion facilities located in Mitcham, where it is turned into biogas (mainly methane) and fed into the national gas grid. The energy produced from recycling food waste therefore goes straight to homes and businesses, helping reduce the UK's reliance on less sustainable energy sources. The bio-fertiliser is used on farmland to grow crops.

If you're interested in what happens to everything else you leave in your bins, see richmond.gov.uk/what_happens_to_your_recycling Let us have your thoughts and comments – are you clear about what to recycle and what can't be recycled?

A Council Interview

We asked Yvonne Perkins – Head of Waste and Street Cleansing at the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames – to answer some of our questions about our waste and recycling and how we can help to reduce its impact on the environment.

How good do you think we are in the London Borough of Richmond at recycling, especially when compared with other London boroughs? Are there targets set for how much we recycle; and if so – by whom?

Richmond currently recycles or composts 40% of all waste produced in the Borough, ranking 8th of the 33 London Boroughs.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) sets recycling targets for all local authorities. Our future targets are now being determined by DEFRA since the introduction of the Environment Bill in November 2021.



Townmead Road Re-use and Recycling Centre

The latest accounts show that £7.7 million went to the West London Waste Authority (WLWA) last year (2020/21), a cost of £38.52 per resident: is that the total cost of our waste and recycling? If not, what other costs are there?

The costs paid by Richmond to the West London Waste Authority (WLWA) are for the haulage and treatment/processing of all waste and recycling collected from households in the Borough and those collected at the Townmead Road Re-Use and Recycling Centre.

Does the Council have plans to reduce the environmental impact of our waste? If so, can you give examples?

The Council keeps the environmental impact of our collections service under review and will take all available steps to minimise this wherever possible. We have introduced electric vehicles where technically efficient to do so (these are usually the smaller supporting-service vehicles), are taking steps to ensure that all collection rounds are as operationally efficient as possible, and enforce a 'No Idling' policy on our vehicles.

Do you think people are clear enough about what can and can't be recycled? If not, how could this be made clearer?

In 2020, every household in the borough received a waste and recycling guide, outlining what can and cannot be recycled. We know it can be confusing for people, especially as different local authorities have different rules, and packaging recycling instructions are not always clear. We have comprehensive information on our website and regularly share this with residents through our social media and other digital channels. Residents can access this information at www.richmond.gov.uk/services/waste_and_recycling/household_recycling

We are always working on engaging ways to encourage residents to think more carefully about what they are recycling and, equally as importantly, helping them make changes to reduce the overall waste they produce.

Recycle Now (www.recyclenow.com) has a really helpful tool in which you can enter the item in question and your postcode to find out if it's recyclable, and how best to do so.

Has the damage from the fire at the Townmead Road site been fully repaired; and when will the restrictions that were put in because of the fire and Covid-19 at the site be lifted?

The damage from the fire at Townmead has been fully repaired. All social distancing measures on site have already been removed.

Is there a booking system still in place and, if so, why is it still needed?

With the site now operating at normal levels, the booking system has been amended to allow full use of capacity. It is being kept in place as it has proven to be a successful way to manage visitor flow to the site, which avoids backing-up of cars at peak times, including the weekend. Not only does this improve traffic in the area and reduce queueing times for visitors, but it also ensures we do not have lots of idling vehicles waiting to get in, which is of course beneficial for air quality in the area.

Do you think the inclusion of the site within the ULEZ area is deterring people from using it?

The Council has monitored the booking system data to review the impact of ULEZ. There is no evidence to suggest that site usage levels have declined since the ULEZ was introduced.

On the Council website, it says that none of our waste goes to landfill. What happens to the household rubbish that can't be recycled?

Any waste that cannot be recycled is sent for incineration. The energy released is utilised to generate electricity for the National Grid. Metals are recovered for recycling afterwards, and most other ashes and aggregates produced are used for construction materials.

What can we all do to help to reduce the impact of our waste on the environment and to reduce the costs of processing it?

As is always the case, the solution to the financial and environmental impacts of waste is for everyone to do everything that they can to avoid producing it in the first instance. Achieving this doesn't have to mean huge changes to your everyday life. There are plenty of simple things we can all do, such as



Typical food-recycling bins

ensuring that items are purchased without unnecessary or/non-recyclable packaging. Richmond upon Thames lists a number of local zero-waste refill shops where you can stock up on refillable food and household products while cutting plastic use.

Another good and regular way to manage waste is by purchasing more efficiently. Food waste, for example, is easily managed with better meal planning and food storage, to maximise shelf-life.

While it's very important to ensure that any unavoidable waste is managed correctly within the home by ensuring all items are placed in the correct recycling container, it's also important to be mindful of avoidable waste. We are lucky to live in a borough with so many local reuse and recycle schemes, which support residents to reduce waste by donating or exchanging unwanted items.

Storm Eunice hits Kew

Storm Eunice brought strong winds across the UK on 18th February, causing widespread disruption including the closure of Kew Gardens after a rare red weather warning from the Met Office. The Princess of Wales Conservatory was forced to close the next day after suffering damage. Around 20 trees were lost, including some that were hundreds of years old and of special scientific interest. The towpath was blocked for several days by a large tree.



But the Gardens quickly recovered in time for Spring !!

This was one of three major storms in February, the others being Dudley and Franklin. The Royal Botanic Gardens Kew (RBGK) reported: 'We're sad to have lost around 20 trees at Kew Gardens due to Storm Eunice, but things could have been much worse without our dedicated Tree Gang who look after our 14,000 trees, 7 days a week'.

But as the famous taxonomist Carolus Linnaeus is reported as saying: "if a tree dies, plant another in its place, we will be nurturing saplings from the fallen trees".

And no doubt RBGK will continue to use timber from fallen trees to create beautiful things, as they did with the fallen 'Verdun Oak Tree', turning it into the memorial bench marking 100 years since the end of the First World War.



A fallen tree on the River Thames towpath

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