

The Kew Society Newsletter • Autumn 2025

Welcome....

to our autumn newsletter. It was good to see so many of you at the AGM and to learn about the changes taking place in The Kew Society, hearing what has been achieved and enjoying a drink with fellow members. Tony Kirkham's talk on trees was an excellent way to conclude the proceedings. You should by now be aware that we have changed our membership subscription. Anyone who hasn't yet renewed will no longer receive a paper copy of the newsletter, so don't forget to renew your subscription at the new rate. Finally, we are trying a new format for the newsletter this time – we hope you like it! Feedback is always welcome.

The Kew Society AGM



Shiona kicked off proceedings with a summary of her annual report – <https://tinyurl.com/TKS-AGM-2025>. The committee and volunteers have carried out a great deal of work this year to deliver the core remit of The Kew Society. Key achievements Shiona described included:

- The new self-guided Kew walk replacing the previous paper version with a digital one;
- Delivering a modernised, simpler to use membership system making it easier to join online;
- Carrying on with 'business as usual' by contributing to a wide range of local groups (relating to Heathrow, the Thames and the Old Deer Working Group, to name a few);
- The work of our gardening team in maintaining our beautiful plantings in the village;

- A range of 17 events, guided walks and outings including a talk from Felicity Aylieff about her inspiring exhibition at Kew Gardens, a historic bus trip in a vintage bus owned by Lord Hendy's charity, a range of family friendly creative activities such as pebble painting, and a walk around Brentford. The Kew Society also had stands at local events such as the Kew Fete and Kew Village Market and contributes financially to Kew Sparkle;
- Responding to key planning applications about developments that could impact negatively on Kew as well as other public consultations such as Thames Water's Teddington Direct River Abstraction;
- Persuading TfL to include announcements on tube trains leaving Gunnersbury about step free access;
- Establishing and building on relationships with key stakeholders.

Shiona told the meeting that, as for other amenity societies, it has not been an easy year given the challenges in attracting and retaining sufficient volunteers to enable us to meet our charitable objectives. The Twickenham Society was dissolved last year. There are a number of vacancies within our leadership team which, if we are unable to fill them, could lead to the Society having to significantly reduce in scope, or even cease.

This would be very sad, given that it is our 125th anniversary next year. If you feel able to contribute, write to chair@kewsociety.org

The vacancies include:

Co-Chair (Governance)	Membership Manager
Events Development Lead	Planning Lead
Communications Lead	

STOP PRESS: We have just learned that our Honorary Secretary – Diana Ormond – died unexpectedly on 21st October. We will include a full tribute to Diana in our next edition. See also her photograph on the back page.

New Governance Arrangements

Members who came to the AGM will know that Shiona, our Chair, has agreed to stay on, sharing her role with Trevor Whittaker who will be acting as her co-chair for the next six months following a change in our constitution which was approved at the AGM. Shiona explains below why she decided to reorganise the post of chair.



Shiona Williams & Trevor Whittaker – Co-Chairs

Those of you who read, or listened to, my 2023-2024 chair's report will remember that I concluded by saying that I planned to step back from the central role at the next AGM, as I wanted to have time to focus my efforts on the 'Connecting the Community' element of our remit. I encouraged members to talk with me about the role and made it clear that I would fully support the individual selected to take over the chair of this charity.

And guess what happened? Months passed, and not a single person displayed any interest in being my successor....and many people said things like 'it must take over your life'...to which I had to say 'well, yes, with the current role description it does take up a great deal of my time'. My skills are very 'communications and people' focused...I have never been a natural administrator and there are elements of the role that could be managed quite easily by someone with a complementary skillset. We tried to think about how the role could be adjusted to make it less time-consuming...and then we decided to explore how other charities have responded to similar challenges. And we discovered that many charities now have 'co-chairs'...even the Charity Commission has a major subcommittee led by co-chairs.

As a result, I started to speak to people with skills that were complementary to mine and – lo and behold – someone put herself forward. We talked about the different aspects of the role and agreed that we would produce two complementary role descriptions for roles of equal status. Broadly speaking, one role (mine) would focus upon external relationships and the other would lead on internal governance and the management of our remit.

We would work in partnership on other areas such as strategic development and succession planning.

I was genuinely excited about what we would be able to achieve together.

And then – these things happen to all of us – a member of her family had a bad accident and requires a great deal of time and attention for (at least) the near future. I felt bereaved...and wondered what we should do. But then – to my great relief – our very own 'white knight' came to the rescue – at least for an interim period. My deputy, Trevor Whittaker – whose skills also complement mine – has agreed to take on the 'governance' role for six months following the AGM.

This – I hope – should give me good time to attract another member to partner with me to lead the Kew Society for the benefit of everyone who lives in, works in, or visits Kew.

Could it be you? Drop me a note on chair@kewsociety.org

Janet Clark



We were sad to see Janet Clark stepping down from her position as Membership Secretary at the AGM. We were, however, pleased to have the opportunity to thank her and pay tribute to her achievements over the last few years.

Janet Clark put herself forward to take over the management of our membership records at a time of great change.... It is fair to say, that none of us realised quite what a challenge she would be taking on as we tried to

streamline our processes and update our records so that – for example – we could record which members came to each event...and that membership renewals would be automatic unless cancelled by the member themselves.... it sounds simple, doesn't it? But it was not simple...a great deal of time, energy and IT skills have been invested in creating appropriate databases...which will be of real benefit to Janet's successor.

You may remember that, by introducing a new direct debit system – hugely easier to manage once established – we had ambitions to persuade a significant proportion of our members to move their subscription payment system from standing orders to direct debit in order to reduce the workload of the membership secretary...and, ultimately, we failed...the vast majority of members have chosen to stick with payment by standing order. Some members, who tried to change to direct debit experienced hurdles... and got in touch with Janet to ask for help. Janet has been stoic throughout the whole process and has worked

tirelessly to encourage members that were/are still paying £6.00 / £12.00 a year to increase their contribution towards our work to the new rates of £10.00 / £20.00.

We should be giving her a medal! And not just a small token of our appreciation...not least for ensuring that her successor will have a much easier time.

Janet will be applying her skills and commitment to the community as a (very talented) walk leader/organiser for some of the Avenue Club walks...and – watch this space – she is hoping to improve her bridge now that she will have more time in her diary.

A very well-deserved retirement.

Shiona Williams

A Cut Above the Rest: Tony Kirkham

Our AGM concluded with a fascinating talk by Tony Kirkham, former Head of the Arboretum and Horticultural Services at the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew where he worked for 43 years managing the 14,000 trees in Kew's collection, which he described as one of the best, if not the best tree collection in the world. Tony is very well known for his work on trees and horticulture, has received many awards and published several books. Since his retirement from full-time work four years ago, Tony has carried on with his work, sharing his expertise, and supporting the work of organisations such as the Royal Horticultural Society and the Chelsea Physic Garden.



Tony told us how he had become involved in trees, following his passion from a young age. His slides showed many of the trees he has come across over the years including some at Kew – he has travelled widely on plant collecting expeditions all over the world to build the collection at Kew. Challenges included the loss of around 700 trees in Kew Gardens during the infamous hurricane in

October 1987 and the serendipitous learning that came from this that has added to our knowledge of how trees respond to catastrophes of this kind. His slides showed us a range of famous trees all over the world including the tallest tree in the world – a coast redwood sequoia which has reached a height of 115.85 metres – and the oldest tree known, a Japanese Redwood, Jōmon Sugi, thought to be between 2000 and 7000 years old.

Tony's talk was full of fascinating and humorous anecdotes – an excellent conclusion to the evening.

New Volunteers

We are always delighted to welcome new volunteers and encourage anyone who would like to help in some way to get in touch. We have a couple of new people who have agreed to help with the work of the Society.

We thought our members would like to know a little bit about them so we asked them to introduce themselves.

Catherine Rostron, Website Manager

Cath is leading on keeping our website up to date and any other technical issues which need tackling.

Most of my career was spent behind the scenes designing and building grant management systems for organisations that support housing, the arts, sport and community projects. When I retired and moved to Kew, I thought I'd left all that technical stuff behind — and happily threw myself into helping with social events for the Kew Society. But it didn't take long before someone discovered my IT background and persuaded me to take on the website and all things tech!

It's been a bit of an eye-opener — working with a big IT department is quite a different world from rolling up your sleeves in a local charity. Still, between us we're figuring out what's possible with the resources we've got. And so far...no disasters!



Cindy Hanegraaf

Cindy is part of our new Communications team. Working alongside the Events team, she produces posters and graphics for our website & social media to promote events, illustrate our website and other forms of publicity such as our new leaflets.



We moved to Kew in 2023 after 35 years raising a family in Fulham and I'm enjoying living in a village. I have a background in graphic design and signage. Over the past 20 years, I've been a competitive

swimming coach and instructor, working with disabled children. Although I now have very little outdoor space of my own, I garden wherever I can find bare earth. Otherwise, I get my horticultural pleasures by visiting the fabulous Botanic Gardens on my doorstep. I'm a keen walker and revel in my access to the towpaths and all they lead to.

David Graham



David is a passionate amateur photographer and globe trotter who lends his graphic design skills to TKS publicity materials (as well as an enthusiastic croquet player).

I moved to Kew in 2015. I am a retired architect and so am particularly interested in art and design, which led me to offer my skills to help with Kew Society publicity. I use Photoshop extensively, both as a means of producing artwork and to enhance my photography, but I consider myself an amateur, having had no tuition in either discipline.



The Pagoda re-imagined by David as a Felicity Aylieff sculpture

Helen Whitten, newsletter contributor

Helen is a very welcome addition to our editorial team, carrying out several of the interviews which appear on these pages. If you have any ideas for future interviews, do let us know – there are so many people worth interviewing in Kew but there might be some we don't know about!



I first lived in Kew in 1992-1997 and returned in 2018. I find it a fabulous place to live. I have written several books based on my career in professional coaching,

two collections of poetry and a novel – *No Lemons in Moscow* (available at the Kew Bookshop). I spend my time writing blog articles and doing voluntary work with Key4Life helping prisoners enter the workplace. I enjoy my work with The Kew Society, and have two sons and four grandchildren living in London, so my life is pretty busy!

Are you up to date with your membership subscriptions?

A big 'thank you' to all of you who have either set up a Direct Debit, or have increased your Standing Order to the new rate of £10.00 per person. This will help our funds immensely.

But...quite a few of you have not done so, and as we mentioned before, you will no longer receive a printed newsletter. Also, please let us know if you have moved, changed your email address, or wish to amend the number in your household.

Please contact membership@kewsociety.org

Shiona and the team



Downton Abbey comes to Kew Gardens

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

Building a third runway at Heathrow

The Kew Society acknowledges that some members of the public (and of The Kew Society) are strongly in favour of a third runway at Heathrow whilst others are strongly against it. The Society felt it would be helpful to have a briefing document presenting the case put forward by supporters of the third runway and the case made by critics against it, so that readers have a more complete account than is usually presented in the media. The briefing by Roger Mason addresses five topics relating to the building a third runway: the following is a summary.

Is Heathrow Airport already full?

The airport says that it has been at full capacity for two decades. The Airports Commission reported Heathrow was operating at 98% capacity in 2015. 75 million passengers passed through the airport that year. However, by 2024 this had increased to 83.9 million, and Heathrow has a plan to expand to about 115 million p.a. by 2080, without a third runway. Additionally, Gatwick, Stansted, Luton and London City airports already accommodate approximately 104 million passengers per year and have approval to expand to accommodate an additional 60 million passengers p.a. by about 2040. Many commentators therefore question whether a third runway is necessary at Heathrow.

The economic benefit of a third runway

Chancellor Rachel Reeves claimed earlier this year, when giving Government backing for a third runway, that it 'would benefit GDP by 0.43% by 2050'. A third runway would also enable the airport to offer new routes to locations with expanding economies, promoting British exports. However, she was quoting a report by Heathrow's own consultants – Frontier Economics! Different analyses predicting economic benefits can produce widely differing results. For example, the Airport Commission's proposal (2015) of the NPV (net present value) of £11.8 billion for a third runway was subsequently revised down to between -£2.2 billion to +£3.3 billion in a TfL update in 2017. Critics say that Rachel Reeves' commitment to Heathrow expansion relies on flawed economics.

The third runway and UK climate change objectives

The Climate Change Act 2008 requires a reduction in UK carbon emissions by at least 80% by 2050 from 1990 levels, subsequently strengthened to "Net Zero" (i.e. 100% reduction) in 2019. Aviation is currently the 6th highest emitting sector in the UK, accounting for 8% of all

emissions. The Government's Jet Zero Strategy relies on technological developments in Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF) and Direct Air Carbon Capture and Storage (DACCS) to come into play at scale to reduce aviation greenhouse gas emissions to Net Zero. Critics say that SAF technologies are new and costly, and that there are problems in scaling them up to provide the required amount of fuel in the future. DACCS technology is in its infancy and is unlikely to make a significant contribution to removing aviation carbon emissions by 2050. The Climate Change Committee, established by Government to advise how the UK can achieve its net zero goal, recommended in its 6th carbon budget that there should be no expansion of UK airports until the aviation sector is on track to outperform on its emissions. Its 7th carbon budget recommends that flying should be kept close to today's levels. Currently the Government does not accept this.



The third runway and its impact on local communities, road networks, rail transport, air quality and noise pollution

The third runway could create over 100,000 jobs locally, particularly those supporting aviation and passenger needs like hotels and catering. However, building the runway requires the homes of 750 residents to be bulldozed, and 3,750 other residents will be

encouraged to move from the area by offering to buy their homes at above-market prices. The M25 will be rerouted into a tunnel under the new runway, causing massive traffic disruption during the years of its construction. Passenger numbers would almost double at Heathrow; to keep road traffic numbers down, up to 200,000 extra public transport trips to the airport would be made each day, requiring massive expansion of rail links. With a third runway, pollutant emissions from the greatly increased number of flights, transport to and from the airport, and the construction of new buildings and the runway itself, achieving WHO air quality standards at Heathrow is unlikely.

Would the third runway benefit or disadvantage areas of the UK outside London and SE England?

Chancellor Reeves and Heathrow believe that it would boost the economy, but a report by the airport's own consultants says that London and the South East would gain 41% of the overall economic benefit of the runway whilst many poorer regions of the UK would gain hardly at all. Up to 27,000 jobs in the regions would be lost through relocation of employees to London and the South East, and

this would cause a loss of up to £43 billion GDP in non-London/SE regions, which would shift to London.

These issues are discussed in the full Briefing papers in greater detail on the Kew Society Website. <https://www.kewsociety.org/environment/heathrows-third-runway-whats-at-stake-for-kew/>

The Briefing is divided into three parts (i) An introduction and summary of the five topics above, (ii) Detailed discussion with references of the five topics, (iii) A reference list of all data sources cited in the briefing.

Prof. Roger Mason
Member, Kew Society Environment Committee

Voicing our opposition to the Thames Direct River Abstraction (TDRA) scheme

Thames Water need to cater for future provision of water to the expanding population of London, particularly on the east side of the city where growth of over 20% is expected by 2032 in boroughs like Tower Hamlets. In a scheme known as the TDRA scheme, they propose to take 75 million litres of fresh water per day from the Thames just upstream of Teddington Weir in times of drought and to transfer it using a new pipeline to an existing underground tunnel to Beckton in East London and then on to the Lee Valley reservoirs. They further propose to replace this volume into the river approximately 180m above the Weir with cleaned-up recycled water from a new Tertiary Treatment Plant (TPP) at Mogden Sewage Treatment Works (STW) in Twickenham via a new tunnel. Thames Water held a public consultation on the TDRA scheme this summer.

Former TKS Chair, Prof. Roger Mason and current TKS Environment Trustee Dr. Sarah Clarke attended an information session held by Thames Water in July 2025 at which they questioned Thames Water representatives at length about the TDRA and reviewed the content on the Statutory Consultation Brochure in depth.

The Kew Society acknowledges that water companies must plan to provide adequate water supplies for the future, taking account of population growth in the context of climate change. However, in our response to the Consultation we call for the TDRA scheme to be put on hold immediately for the following reasons:

- The basis for the TDRA being the preferred option for providing water to East London is unsound;
- The project is likely to bring about harmful ecological changes in the river at Teddington;
- The abstraction site at Ham Lands, a nature reserve, is likely to cause significant damage to that area;
- A full environmental assessment has not been conducted;
- The merits of alternative schemes (specifically the Beckton Water Recycling Scheme) have not been properly considered.

Our full submission to the TDRA consultation can be read on the Kew Society website:

<https://www.kewsociety.org/environment/kew-society-opposes-the-thames-direct-river-abstraction-scheme/>

Prof. Roger Mason and Dr. Sarah Clarke



Thames Direct Water Abstraction Scheme, Thames Water website

Update on the towpath repairs



One of our members took this picture of the work taking place at the Thames towpath breach between Kew and Richmond

19th October marked a year since a section of the towpath collapsed between Richmond Lock and Kew Gardens. The breach is now closed and a culvert is in place, controlling the flow of the water. The Council report that the works are expected to be completed in October – watch this space!

IMPROVING OUR GREEN SPACES

Gardening activities around the village



Our gardening team at their autumn catch-up to review plans and progress (Anna is on the right)

Anna, our Head Gardener, reports on the amazing work she and her team have accomplished this year. Our thanks go to Anna for all the hard work

she has put in over the last four years – I'm sure members will agree that she has done a wonderful job at making Kew Village even more beautiful for all its residents and visitors.

As the growing season draws to a close, it's a good time to reflect on what the gardening team has achieved this year and start making plans for 2026. It's often easier to remember the things that didn't go as well as we wanted and to forget achievements so here is a quick summary of our successes:

- We have a fantastic team of regular hardworking volunteers who are a pleasure to work with.
- We have the support of the TfL team at Kew Gardens station who let us in and out of the station and keep an eye on our planting when the gardeners are not around.
- Several local businesses help with watering.
- Energy Garden have helped to move one of the compost bins and to replace some rotten sleepers at the station.
- Rotten sleepers in the North Road garden have also been replaced and there is now a seat incorporated in the new sleepers so people can sit and enjoy the garden.
- We managed to keep our plants alive through one of the hottest and driest summers for many years with only a small number of casualties.
- After a slow start, the verbena bonariensis in the grass beds at the station put on a good display of lilac flowers amongst the flowering grasses.
- The pelargoniums facing West Park Road under the bridge at the station put on a wonderful display of shocking pink and brilliant red flowers due to the very sunny summer we have had.
- The Acer planted in the village in memory of Irene Kimpton has become well established.

My main disappointment this year has been the raised bed by the Greenhouse Café. We planted anemones, astrantia and geraniums in the spring but most of these have not grown or have disappeared completely. The increasing shade from the London plane trees is proving problematic and we are seeking advice from RBG Kew Gardens about plants that are likely to be more successful next year. But I'm very pleased that the salvia Rockin Deep Purple have provided a display of very healthy foliage and lots of deep purple blooms. They came from Southon Plants, a lovely traditional nursery in Sussex where they grow an impressive variety of excellent quality flowering plants. Well worth the journey.

I will be standing down as Head Gardener at the end of 2025. It's been a privilege to lead the gardening team over the last four years and I have enjoyed seeing the fruits of our labours but it's now time to hand over to new people. More about this in the next newsletter. I will enjoy just being a volunteer gardener rather than an organiser in the future and am sure the gardening team will go from strength to strength.

Anna Anderson, Head Gardener

Litter picking in Kew

Geoff Williams tells us below how he is taking action to tackle litter in Kew....an example to us all. If we all resolve to pick up litter in our own roads, it would make a huge difference.

I can't think of any logical link between playing tennis and litter but that's how it started. A group of us meet every Tuesday and Thursday mornings to play tennis at Priory Park. We hold the occasional coffee morning and that's when 'litter' became part of the conversation.

We are privileged to live in a lovely part of London, but wouldn't it be nice if we could make it even better not just for ourselves but the thousands of visitors who come to Kew each year?

Tuesday is the main refuse collection and recycling day. We meet in the afternoon to cover local streets in the Kew area to add additional support to Peter, our resident LBRuT cleaner. Habitats and Heritage provide us with pickers, hoops and collection bags. We provide our own gloves which are essential. Health and Safety is our own responsibility, as we are a group of individual volunteers. Many people comment on our work. We tell everyone they can play their part, form their own groups or look after the immediate area where they live. We meet at Torelli's for coffee afterwards to compare notes.

Bottles, cans, take away meals, all kinds of bits of plastic and of course the 'indescribables'.... First prize often goes to North Road from the station and beyond, indicating litter is largely a local issue.



On a similar theme, you may have spotted Sarah Clarke, our Environment lead, and 10 others who took part in an organised litter-picking around the village on Sunday 12th October. It was originally planned for the previous Saturday but was postponed due to the high winds caused by Storm Amy.

Ten amazing Kew Society volunteers gave up their Sunday on 12th October along three routes around Kew to pick litter. The activity was part of Richmond Council's Big Borough Clean-up, which ran from mid-September to mid-October, and we were delighted that Cllr Clare Vollum joined our team. A shocking 15 bags of rubbish were collected over a 90-minute period. Included in the haul were hundreds of cigarette butts, three pairs of underwear, a black plastic rat, a gas canister, broken glass, vapes, all manner of paper, tissue and plastic and a surprising number of dental cleaning thingsies!

We can all play our part by putting our rubbish in one of the many bins around the area or taking it home for proper disposal – and encouraging others to do the same.

Geoff Williams and Sarah Clarke



This is what 15 bags of litter looks like !!

Pebble bugs, bees and butterflies raise awareness about wildlife corridors

In the last newsletter, we mentioned the pebble bugs appearing in Kew and described how these have been developed with Energy Gardens as a piece of community art. Sarah Clarke, Environment Lead, provides an update and encourages you to indulge your creative side and get involved.

Users of the footbridge at Kew Gardens Station, and anyone waiting for a friend by the North Road street sign, may have noticed that colourful pebbles have appeared under the bridge! These bug, bee and butterfly pebbles were painted by children and adults living in Kew as part of an initiative by The Kew Society's Environment Team to raise awareness about the importance of wildlife corridors across our village. "We wanted to start a conversation with residents about how we can help little critters move from green space to green space and support the biodiversity of the village" says Environment Trustee Dr. Sarah Clarke. Earlier this year, our Gardening Team were delighted to find, and safely rehome, a stag beetle which was out for a stroll on the station underpass. They're an endangered species, so this one was very lucky to have a helping hand (see summer edition)!



So with the help of Energy Gardens and Trindle Stores, we held two pebble painting sessions where the young, and the young at heart, had a lot of fun painting their favourite insects. We often associate wildlife corridors with large road developments where a green 'corridor' is incorporated into a design so that wildlife can safely move from one area to another. But the same issue can occur



at street level: paving over green spaces to allow for car parking, for example, makes life difficult for anything that crawls or flutters. Happily, there are many ways we can incorporate bug, bee and butterfly-friendly landscaping while still allowing vehicle access. For example, we can help by using permeable paving (such as grass grids filled with gravel) or plant-strips along driveways and raised beds around the edges. Vertical gardens or planting on top of bike and bin sheds are other options. An added benefit is that these simple approaches provide some flood resilience, allowing rain water to drain away rather than onto our streets.

The Environment Team hope you enjoy our piece of community artwork – [#pebbleartkew](https://twitter.com/pebbleartkew) if you use social

media! And, if your family would like to add a pebble bug, bee or butterfly to the design, here's what to do:

- Find a medium-size (10-15cm diameter) flattish, clean pebble, and grab some acrylic paints.
- Paint your bug, bee or butterfly design(s). You can do several if you like.
- Email environment@kewsociety.org when you're done and we'll tell you where to drop off your pebble(s) for varnishing.
- Look for your pebble(s) under the footbridge!

Sarah Clarke

INFLUENCING PLANNING DECISIONS

Homebase

Many people in Kew have been wondering about what is (or isn't) happening to the Homebase site

on Manor Road...and, at last, we have some outline information. Shiona met with members of the developer's (Avanton) team who explained that they have been 'looking at the site afresh' and will be

MANOR ROAD

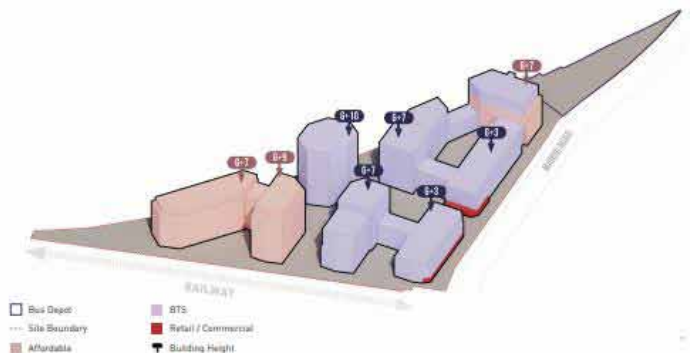
CONSENTED SCHEME VS. UPDATED PROPOSALS

The revised scheme is expected to include:

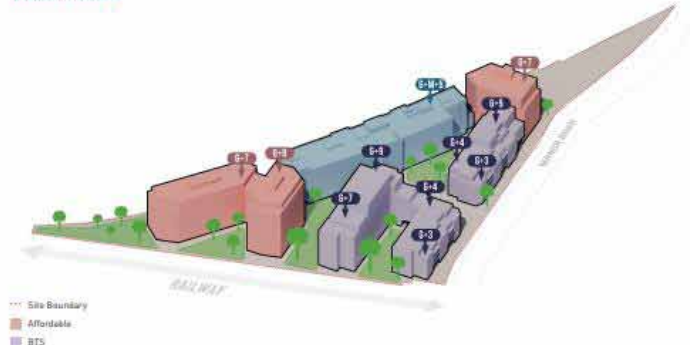
- 220 private build-to-sell units, largely studios and one-beds
- 184 affordable social rent homes.
- New Co-living homes.
- New amenity spaces such as Co-working areas, a gym, café, and lounge.
- New commercial space.
- High-quality landscaping.

Avanton are committed to delivering a sustainable scheme that delivers tangible benefits for the local community whilst also contributing positively to the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames' housing and affordable housing objectives.

CONSENTED SCHEME



UPDATED PROPOSALS



See above for a comparison between the consented and new schemes

submitting a modified planning application in early November. Local residents will be relieved to hear that the original plan for an 11-storey private build-to-sell (BTS) block has been scrapped in favour of increasing the height of one of the other BTS blocks from 8 to 10 storeys, and a range of other details have also changed. John & Shiona provide further details.

If you live near the old Homebase site in Manor Road, you may have received a flyer through your door in early September from Avanton, the developer behind the proposed redevelopment of the Homebase site. Their original plans were approved by the Mayor of London, having been rejected by Richmond Council, in May 2024. Nothing more was heard officially until the appearance of this leaflet, which announced that Avanton has been working on an update to the existing planning permission (reference 19/0510/FUL), and that people were invited to attend three consultation events: two events in person, at The Mitre pub, and one online seminar, to be held between 18th and 22nd September.

Slides from the consultation are now available online, at <https://manorroad-community.co.uk/>.

In essence, Avanton has concluded that the consented scheme is not financially viable under the current economic environment. It has therefore re-jigged the scheme to reconfigure the private housing mix and add an entirely new block comprising purpose-built co-living units - studio or one-bed apartments with communal living spaces, aimed essentially at young professionals (see the block in blue on the previous page).

The central proposal will be to construct this long building next to the railway line, which will contain 320 'co-living' units...rental studio flats, containing a bedroom, kitchen and bathroom, with shared co-working/sitting facilities, a gym and a number of other features. To get an idea about how this will work in practice, do take a look at <https://www.folkcoliving.com/homes/sunday-mills>, an existing development which has inspired some of their design ideas. Monthly 'all in' rental of a standard unit is expected to be c£1,850.

Avanton states that such units 'provide an affordable option for younger adults and single-person households who are increasingly priced out of the Borough' – this would be the first such scheme in the Borough. We understand that the units will be available for rent on renewable six-month contracts.

The size of the affordable housing blocks remains essentially as before (in pink in the diagram) and their overall height is 'non-negotiable', given the requirement for affordable housing in this scheme. However, there will be one additional affordable housing storey in the northeast corner. The proportion of affordable housing will be increased to around 40% – 184 units contained in two blocks – and there will be 220 mainly studio and one bedroom flats for sale. There will initially be no increase in the number of parking spaces (13 Blue Badge spaces are planned, with the potential to increase to 43 in the future). The majority of units will be dual aspect and sustainable technology – effectively a huge heat pump – will be integrated to help both cool and heat the units.

The tallest block in the scheme will now be ten storeys (one of the affordable housing blocks) not 11 storeys.

Ten storeys is still well above the maximum height for this predominantly low-rise area as specified in the new Richmond Local Plan.

The scheme is still in our view far too dense and over-developed, and some of the blocks too high, placing enormous strains on the local road and rail infrastructure, particularly the nearby North Sheen station, which is already in dire need of an upgrade.

We understand that Avanton is hoping that the new configuration will encourage a more positive response from Richmond Council, so that this new scheme will not have to go through the same extensive call-in process by the Mayor's office as the original scheme.

A new application (not a revision to the existing consented scheme) is, we are told, expected around early November. We encourage people to visit the Consultation website (<https://manorroad-community.co.uk/>) to view details of the proposed new scheme, and to keep an eye out for the imminent planning application.

Avanton is keen to stress that a range of community facilities are likely to be included in the final designs and would welcome ideas. The GLA – which overruled Richmond Council – apparently support the principle of the revised design. Cllr. Richard Pyne informed Shiona that he and colleagues are in discussion on a number of issues.

John Ricketts and Shiona Williams

Grovewood, 345 Sandycombe Road



Grovewood from High Park Road Bridge, October 2025

The Kew Society objected to the recent planning application (25/0010/FUL) for the addition of two new floors to the existing six-storey Grovewood block of flats off Sandycombe Road. Our objection was primarily on the grounds of the excessive height and the external design of the two additional proposed floors, which would be wholly inappropriate in an area of predominantly low-rise buildings and immediately adjacent to the Kew Gardens Conservation Area.

Please go to our planning website at <https://www.kewsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Response-to-Planning-application-25.pdf> to view the detailed grounds of our objection. We are pleased to report that the application has been withdrawn and will keep a watchful eye on future proposals, should they emerge.

Traffic management consultation

All of us who live in Kew have noticed that the traffic travelling towards Kew Bridge on the Mortlake Road is often moving very slowly...and it is not surprising, in these days of SatNavs, that frustrated drivers look for ways to remove themselves from the congestion...and are not very concerned about the effect that this may have on the residents of the streets that they use as 'rat runs'....

But the majority of the residents are very concerned! And so, facilitated by Cllr. Ian Craigie, a consultation, aimed at reaching an acceptable solution, took place earlier this autumn. The proposed options would provide disincentives (in the form of number plate recognition cameras) to drivers looking for an easy through route, but would not prevent visitors, including carers, taxis or deliveries, accessing any address in the area. Any

resident would be entitled to register up to four vehicles, registered with the DVLA at their home address, which would allow them to drive through the cameras without penalty. SatNav companies would be briefed on the position of cameras by the council.

The results of the consultation will be announced soon and we are assured that – probably for a period of 6 months – there will be careful monitoring to look at ways to deal with any unintended consequences.

And so – if cameras do become a permanent feature – people who live elsewhere in Kew and want to visit friends, or go to their allotment or the tennis club will all have to engage their brains before swinging off the Mortlake Road!

Not a lot to ask if it will improve the wellbeing of some of our neighbours.

Shiona Williams

Of The Oak

Between May and September this year, Kew Gardens had an amazing demonstration of the 'internal workings' of one of its great oak trees.

The experience – entitled 'Of the Oak' – included a series of guided walks around Kew's amazing oak tree collection on a free walking tour.

But perhaps the highlight was the moving picture – shown right – which illustrated how oxygen and other vital components are involved in the life cycle of these (and, of course, other) magnificent trees.

Trees use oxygen for respiration, especially at night, converting stored sugars into energy.

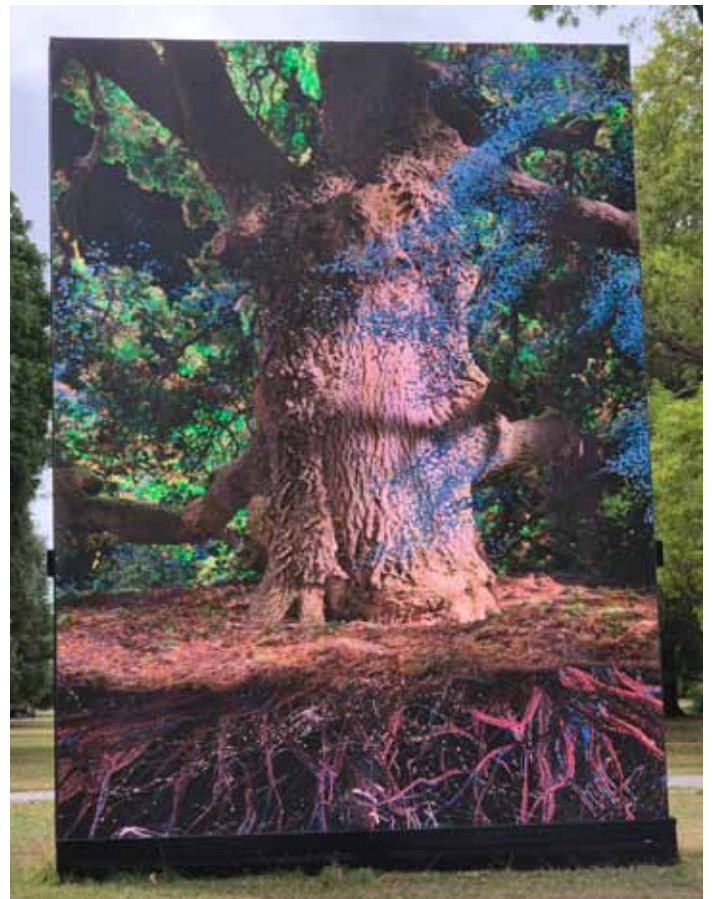
During the day, photosynthesis dominates, producing oxygen and absorbing carbon dioxide.

Trees also communicate and share resources through underground fungal networks called mycorrhizae, transmitting nutrients, water, and chemical signals to support neighbouring trees and maintain forest health.

All this and more was demonstrated by the amazing graphics, based on the huge oak only a few feet away from the screen.

Overall, a magnificent way to educate and create a visually very interesting view of the life of trees.

Paul Bethel



Bons Mots, a contemporary collection of quotes

Giles Dixon, a Kew Society member and former Co-Chair, has recently published *Bons Mots*, a book of quotes he collected for light relief during his 30 years in Kew.

There are words of wit and wisdom from 250 individuals, most of whom were born in the 20th century and appear in Wikipedia. They include heads of state, business leaders, artists and journalists.

The entries are divided into 18 sections, from Art to War, via Business, Environment, Love & Marriage and Politics.

A handy volume, *Bons Mots* fits into a pocket and can make an aide memoire for anyone wanting a few words of wisdom to enliven a meeting.

Published by Wordzworth, *Bons Mots* is priced at £7.99 and available online and from bookshops.

CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY

Community Group links

As part of our aims to connect the local community, we are introducing a new section to our newsletter on community links to tell our members about the activities of other local groups. If you would like your local organisation to be included on this page, please write to the editor – claire.bethel@kewsociety.org.

Kew Supper Club

“Good Food. Great Company. Local Spirit”

Join us for a friendly, community dining experience at 102 North Road, Kew. Approximately every two months we host an intimate supper for up to 24 guests, featuring a welcome drink, nibbles, and a freshly prepared three-course meal. Each event showcases a different cuisine – from Italian to Asian, British to Japanese – and we happily cater for vegetarians and most dietary needs.

Next events: Friday & Saturday 14th & 15th November

Email: kewsupperclub102@gmail.com to book or join our mailing list. Private event enquiries welcome!

Kew Horticultural Society

The Kew Horticultural Society is a long-established community organisation dedicated to promoting gardening, horticulture, and a love of nature among local residents.

Founded in the 19th century, it supports gardeners of all levels through talks, plant sales, garden visits, and educational events. Its annual Kew Horticultural Show is a highlight, featuring competitions for flowers, produce, crafts, and baking, alongside entertainment for families. The society fosters community spirit, sustainability, and appreciation for plants and wildlife, reflecting Kew's rich horticultural heritage and its close ties to Kew Gardens. Membership is open to all enthusiasts.

For further details, email

secretary@kewhorticulturalsociety.org

Kew Rotary Club

Local action – global impact. Do you want to make a difference in our community? Do come and join us – Kew Rotary.

We meet once a month on a Wednesday evening at the Coach & Horses on Kew Green, and once a month on Zoom.

In addition, we meet once a month on the first Saturday of the month for a coffee and a chat at Caffè Torelli – 3 Royal Parade.

Through crowdfunding we have raised over £45,000 for the Richmond Foodbank at the Vineyard and over £100,000 for projects re-equipping schools in Ukraine. This is done through Rotary to Rotary ensuring all funds raised go directly to the projects' needs.

Do check us out at: www.kewrotary.org.uk.

We look forward to meeting you.



Concerts at Café Yukari

Have you attended any of the excellent concerts held at regular intervals at Café Yukari on Kew Plaza?

These are well worth attending with a varied

programme ranging from jazz to classical music – all of a high standard and on our doorstep.

All the concerts are presented by 7 Star Arts which organises concerts in and around Richmond, including at Neighbourhood Café Yukari in Kew Plaza – a bustling coffee shop by day which transforms into a convivial, intimate concert space by night.

The picture shows a concert on 11th July celebrating the life of George Gershwin in music, words and song with international concert pianist, Viv McLean, who has a special connection with Kew, his childhood home; Sofia Kirwan-Baez – vocals/narrator and Alex Norton – piano and special guest.

Just a stone's throw from Kew Gardens tube station, the venue boasts a magnificent Fazioli grand piano, allowing audiences to enjoy superb music performed by leading artists.

After the performance, audiences can meet the musicians and mingle with other music lovers.

The next 7 Star Arts concert at Café Yukari is on Friday, 21st November at 7.30pm, with husband-and-wife piano 4-hands duo Emanuil Ivanov and Irina Chagunava.

Info/tickets: <https://www.7stararts.com>



Emanuil Ivanov and Irina Chagunava

Pedalling with Purpose: Kew to Paris for Skylarks & King's Primary School

Deirdre Carswell (Dee), Kew local and Head of Partnerships and Fundraising at Skylarks Charity, took to the saddle this summer for an epic 300km bike ride from Kew to Paris – all in the name of supporting children and community.

In July 2025, Dee, alongside a dedicated team of 10 parents from King's CoE Primary School, set off from the school gates in leafy Kew, cycling to the iconic Eiffel Tower. The goal? To raise critical funding for both King's Primary and Skylarks Charity – an award-winning, national charity based in Richmond which supports children and young people with additional needs and their families. The donations raised were split equally: helping the school invest in much needed classroom resources, and supporting Skylarks to continue providing vital services such as therapy sessions, SEND ('Special Education Needs & Disability') advice and inclusive activities.

For Dee, this wasn't just a physical challenge – it was a personal mission. "Skylarks break down barriers and empowers families by providing tools and a community to thrive. Seeing the impact that these charity rides has on the lives of our local children is what drives me," she said. "This challenging but incredible ride with 10 extraordinary inspiring fellow parents was about showing how far we'll go – literally – to support our community. Thank you to everyone that supported us, along with Caffè Torelli who sponsored our cycle kit".

The ride was part of a trio of rides with other local schools that took place this summer - uniting school staff, parents, and supporters in a powerful show of teamwork and commitment - raising an astonishing £70,000 to be shared across the schools and Skylarks. Skylarks is now taking bookings for the 2026 rides. Six



We made it !!

local schools are already signed up, so get on your bikes and join them!

Raise money, make memories, strengthen community and have an epic journey along the way – email: fundraising@skylarks.charity

Deirdre Carswell

Swanning Around

The eagle-eyed amongst you may have noticed that one of the three cygnets disappeared from The National Archives towards the end of September – she was spotted having crash landed somewhere along the Mortlake Road and reported to our ever-helpful swan rescue colleagues. Imagine our surprise when she turned up a week later at Limehouse in East London, last seen heading off to Millwall Dock with a new young flock.

It's quite unusual for 'our' swans to fly off directly from the Archives as there isn't much of a runway for them to learn to take off, however keen the parents are to see them fly off.

So we (the group in Ruskin Avenue who feed them daily) were delighted that she had been found and identified by her ring, and we know from recent reports that she is now happily settled and safe.

Claire Bethel



Kew Society Summer Highlights

This summer has been full of energy and community spirit for the Kew Society. Following the success of the Kew Fete in June, we were delighted to be part of another lively event on Kew Green – the Kew Horticultural Society Show on 23 August. It was a wonderful day for us to showcase our four guiding pillars – **Improving our Green Spaces**, **Protecting the Environment**, **Influencing Planning Decisions** and **Connecting our Community** – and engage with so many visitors at our stall. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who stopped by, asked questions, or simply came to say hello – your support means a lot.

On 7th September, we were pleased to share a stand with the Rotary Club of Kew Gardens at the bustling Kew Village Market. The market provides a welcome opportunity to chat to existing members and to sign up new ones. It was a productive day: we sold more of our popular Kew Society mugs, welcomed new members, and enjoyed chatting with local residents.

We were also delighted to host Sue Pandit – Co-Chair of Arts Richmond and Chair of the Barnes Literary Society – on 23rd September at The National Archives. Sue shared insights into the work that Arts Richmond do to support new voices in playwriting and radio drama, curating

Richmond's Literature Festival, and generally championing the arts including through the Swan Awards for local drama productions. Judged by independent adjudicators, including the Kew Society's very own Paul Bethel, the Swan Awards recognise excellence in all forms of amateur dramatic art, from serious plays via various musicals to pantomimes. In particular, the Swan Awards recognise the importance of encouraging youngsters to 'tread the boards', with a number of award categories specifically for young people.

Sue's talk illustrated the rich cultural life we have on our doorstep in the borough with many opportunities to participate whatever your particular interest,

see <https://artsrichmond.org.uk/>

Finally, on Sunday 28th September, 30 members braved the elements for a fascinating special guided walk in Kew Gardens with Kevin Martin, Head of Tree Collections at Kew Gardens. Kevin shared his extensive knowledge of the tree collection, focusing on the impact of climate change. The 90-minute walk included the new Carbon Garden which showcases the landscapes which are likely to become more familiar to future generations.

Bettina Kaemmerer



Sue Pandit



Kevin Martin explains all



Joint stall at the September Kew Village Market

The next Kew Village Market is on 2nd November. Anyone wishing to exhibit in a future market should contact the Committee: See <https://kewvillagemarket.org/> for more details. And below we reproduce a still from their excellent video.



The Swedish School in London: Hidden in Plain Sight at The National Archives

Surprisingly few Kew residents know that tucked away in a corner of The National Archives resides the Swedish School in London, a sixth form for 16–18-year-old Swedish students. In the Swedish school system, sixth form is three years long. Here, Helen Whitten learnt from speaking to School Coordinator – Gustav Johansson – that these young people are encouraged to go ‘beyond their comfort zone’ to experience life outside Sweden, broaden their horizons and learn boldness, self-reliance and respect.



**Graduation Day, Tuesday 17th June 2025
Photograph by David Thompson**

Started originally in 1907 by the Swedish Church in Marylebone, to educate the children of Swedish families working in the UK, it grew in 1976 into a private, not-for-profit school in Barnes. The Sixth Form, created in 1994, was originally based in Twickenham, and then in the American University in Richmond, until it moved into the Kew National Archives in 2020, which was, with Covid, a challenging time for the school.

There are approximately eighty students; and the aim is that London is used as a classroom. Similar schools exist in Paris and Madrid, but apparently London is the most popular. Jane Simmonds, whom Gustav describes as their ‘British Ambassador’, runs a course called British Cultural and Political Studies and arranges for students to learn and compare British and Swedish culture and democracy. There are programmes in Business Administration, Natural Sciences and Social Studies. During their stay they visit museums, galleries, the Houses of Parliament, the Law Courts and, of course, Kew Gardens. Students are therefore exposed to many institutions and ideas designed to broaden their perspectives, develop their powers of observation and critical thinking, and become both confident and ambitious. When parents visit for the first time, walking from Kew Gardens station down to the Archives, passing well-tended houses, blossom and rose bushes, they can’t quite believe how delightful the area is. “What is this place?” they ask Gustav when they arrive. “Is it for real? It is so picturesque!” Easy access to transport facilitates the school’s cultural trips and also makes the daily commute easy for students. Half the students live with their parents, who are based here. The other half are guest students from Sweden, living with British host families around the area. The students living in a host family typically stay at

the school for five to ten months. The host families share responsibility for the student with the school and commit to providing the student with bed, breakfast and dinner. The relationships that build up during these stays are deep and meaningful for all parties, often lasting beyond their stay. Several of the host families have been with the school for many years, providing both care and guidance.

Inevitably it is a responsibility to care for a young person, but the students are given a strict understanding that if they break the rules or do not contact their host family should they be late coming home, then they will be given one warning and, if not heeded, they will be put on the next flight home. Together with the ethos of the school, which promotes compassion and responsibility, this creates a high standard of behaviour, and Gustav assured me with pride that those students who come here are the ‘best students’ and love their time in what he describes as ‘cute’ Kew. The school would welcome more local Kew families to open their doors to a student. If you are interested, please contact their host family coordinator Malin Edsbagge by email: hostfamily@swedishschool.org.uk or visit the website <https://swedishschool.org.uk/en/become-a-host-family/>. The experience of being alone in a foreign country can be frightening for some, and the school gives them practical advice about finding their way around, making sure they care for one another and keep in communication with their host family. Gustav told me how delightful it is to observe how the tears and fears quickly get forgotten as each student blossoms and develops the ability to manage their own problems and decisions. They become socially adept, confident and independent.

Lovisa Claughton-Wallin, an 18-year-old student, enthusiastically recommends the experience of her time at the Swedish School. She has enjoyed meeting people beyond her hometown of Malmö and has learnt so much about herself, how to manage life on her own, meet new people, and find her way around. Both the School and her very welcoming host family in Twickenham have supported her in making the most of her time in London, which she has found to be a very friendly city. She graduates this summer and plans to travel, but feels that she may well return to London in the not-too-distant future. Not surprisingly, the school and its boarding facilities are all ranked as ‘Outstanding’ by Ofsted, who apparently show an interest in learning how to replicate the approach in other schools.

When their time is over, and the exams finished, there is an exuberant Graduation Ceremony where the girls dress in white dresses and all students wear white caps. Once the formalities of the graduation service are complete within the school, they “run” out of the building into the arms of their proud parents and families, who hold up posters of their child, and welcome them with cheers and music. It is obvious that Gustav and the staff take huge pride in their students and how they mature as they go through the cultural and educational syllabus during their time in the school. Clearly, it is a hugely enriching and rewarding experience for all concerned.

Helen also talked with a couple who have regularly hosted Swedish students. Here's what they had to say.

David Baker and his wife Louise have been hosting students in their home in Isleworth for 20 years. In that time, they have welcomed 33 students, several of whom still visit and stay with them many years after they have left the School. David is even godfather to one of the girl's daughters. He speaks of the experience of hosting the students – and they are mainly girls as there are fewer boys who travel here – as a privilege. Watching them arrive somewhat nervous of their new environment, they mature, become aware of their surroundings and become very resilient, making friends and enjoying London and the parks around Richmond. David and Louise always send the student a welcome letter and introduce themselves, their house and garden via FaceTime before arrival.

David also gives them a whistlestop tour of London on their first weekend, introducing them to the places to visit – and the places to avoid. When I asked him what drew him to this role, he spoke of wanting to provide their son, originally seven when they started to host, with company. To those families who might be considering taking in students, he advised that they should not do so for the financial reward but only because they really are interested in taking in a young person and treating them as part of their family for nine months or so. With this responsibility comes much fulfilment but also inevitable times when the student gets ill or homesick and needs support. It is obvious from all David said to me that he and his wife have found watching these young students grow up to be a poignant and rewarding experience.

Helen Whitten

PEOPLE IN KEW

“The Lady with the Wheelbarrow”

This is how Celia Fisher, plant and flower connoisseur, is described by her Kew neighbours as she wheels plants and produce from her allotment, on the Short Lots Allotment by the River Thames, back to her home. Indeed, as Helen Whitten found when she spoke to her, her fascination with flowers has taken her on a lifelong journey of exploration, travel, research and experimentation, culminating in the creation of her beautiful garden in Kew, shown in the photograph with her husband's ceramic studio in the background.

From a childhood in Kent, where her father sowed the seeds of the joy of tending a garden, to her first garden beside their mud hut in Ethiopia (where she was teaching in the English School), Celia has researched the history of flowers, their provenance and how they have been painted and depicted in art and illuminated manuscripts. An intrepid traveller in her early years, she spent time working in Sierra Leone and Ethiopia, where she met her husband and married in the British Embassy, amidst the student riots and upheaval that erupted in Addis Ababa and elsewhere, in 1968.

Her experience in Africa led her into a 'behind the scenes' research role in intelligence at the Foreign Office, recording the affiliations of African personalities, both in government and opposition, including those involved in coups.

During this time, their first London home was in Fulham, followed by three years teaching in Hong Kong, where she managed without a garden but enjoyed buying ginger flowers and orchids from Singapore in the flower market, and learning more about oriental flowers. She and her husband then bought their current house in Kew in 1978. The garden was a scrubby lawn, and it has been



her pleasure and passion to transform it into a vision of colour and flowers. The latest experiment is incorporating ornamental grasses (it is much harder than it seems to achieve the delicate effects much admired in Kew Gardens).

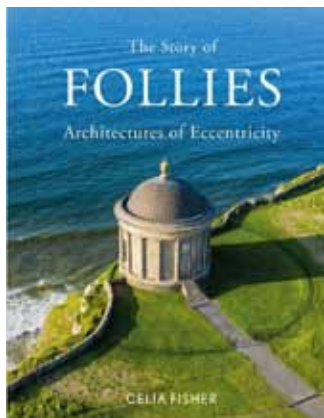
While her sons were young, she worked in Kew Gardens, contributing to a database of economic botany which, for the untrained ones among us, means how plants are used worldwide, for textiles, medicines, construction and trade as well as food.

A period of study doing an MA and PhD as a mature student led her into the specialism on which she has written several books – the paintings and manuscripts of Flemish artists during the Northern Renaissance. Her book – *The Medieval Flower Book* – came nearest to a bestseller, and she has written several other books, including *Flowers of the Renaissance* and *Tulips*, describing the history of how they made their way from their Asian origins to Europe, where their ability to break into wonderful streaks of colour led to a collectors' frenzy, especially in the Netherlands, where 'tulipmania' became the first example of how trading in futures can lead to a crash in the market – see, for example <https://tinyurl.com/Tulip-Crash>. A quick author search on the internet will find her books, and some have been translated as far afield as China and Japan!

Follies, within their varied and global landscape settings, became another interest for Celia, starting of course with



An example of Celia's 'Guerilla Gardening' in Forest Road



those in Kew Gardens and Chiswick House, and she has written a book detailing how these eccentric and quirky buildings convey messages, from classical narratives like Stourhead in Dorset, to follies that represented political affiliations, or whose construction provided employment in hard times.

These days Celia can be seen decorating the area with grasses, flowers and plants around trees in Maze and Forest Roads (now looking sadly end of season, but a useful test of what will survive in a more arid Kew: 'better luck next year'). She still volunteers at Kew Gardens and remarks on how many opportunities Kew offers to develop communities around volunteering, the allotments, the church, book clubs and more. I might add choirs, the classes and activities at the Avenue Club – and, of course – The Kew Society!

Helen Whitten

Kew Sparkle Returns: Friday 5th December, 4.00pm to 8.00pm

Kew Sparkle is now in its 18th year. On the first Friday of December, local businesses, community groups and the people of Kew come together to transform Kew Village into a vibrant festive wonderland for everyone to enjoy. Kew Sparkle combines an excellent Christmas market with food, drink and craft stalls with family entertainment, as well as raising money for local and national charities. Last year, they supported Skylarks, who support young people with additional needs and their families (see page 13).

The Kew Sparkle Committee also organise the Kew Village Christmas Lights which light up the village during December and early January. The funding comes from donations from residents, local businesses, the local School Christmas jumper appeals and council grants, as well as a donation from The Kew Society: we gave Kew Sparkle £700.00 last year and have promised the same again. And – for the first time – we had a table at their fundraising dinner and are planning to do the same this year.

Details of the annual fundraising dinner and auction are shown below.

**KEW VILLAGE
CHRISTMAS LIGHTS
FUNDRAISING DINNER**



**BOOK YOUR SEAT
TODAY!**

*Wednesday 12th November
£50pp
From 7pm
Tap On The Line Kew Village*

*Join us for a super evening of festive
food and drink, Christmas surprise
boxes and a secret auction!*

Use the QR code and head to
www.kewsparkle.org/dinner or
email kewlightsdinner@gmail.com
to secure your place!




Pensford Field Closes Its Gates



We have previously updated our members on the developments at Pensford Field Environmental Trust following the Council's decision to terminate their lease prematurely on 29th September 2025. The Trust has now been wound up and the physical assets distributed. Their website reports that any cash remaining will be distributed between four different charities.

With great sadness, the charity has now disbanded and handed back the keys to the site that they have looked after so effectively for the last 33 years.



Although a judicial review was considered this did not proceed, and the date for mounting a review has now passed.

The field won awards this year from London in Bloom and Green Flag so it is fair to say they went out on a high.

We would like to thank the committee and all the volunteers for the wonderful work they have done over the years – and sincerely hope that whatever the future for the field, it remains a haven for wildlife.

Claire Bethel

The Great River Race

One again, your intrepid reporters went to watch The Great River Race on Saturday 20th September. The Great River Race takes approximately 2½ to 4 hours to complete, though the fastest boats can finish in just over two hours.

The 21.6 mile course starts in the Docklands at Millwall and finishes in Ham, Richmond, with the race duration depending on the crew's speed, as a handicapping system is in place to ensure all boats have a chance to succeed.

Below are a couple of the pictures we took – it really is quite a spectacle.

The date for the 2026 event is on Saturday 12th September 2026 – try not to miss it !!

Claire & Paul Bethel



KEW DIARY 2025

July onwards	<i>The Carbon Garden</i> exhibition	Kew Gardens
2nd November	Kew Village Market	Various
3rd November	Greenland's Greener Past: Exploring a tropical Arctic and mass extinction event using fossil plants by Prof. Jennifer McElwain, Lady Lisa Sainsbury Lecture Theatre, Kew Gardens	KMIS*
8th November	<i>Repair & Share</i> at St. Luke's, The Avenue	Kew The Transition
14th/15th Nov	Kew Supper Club	See Page 12
21st November	7 Star Arts concert – 7.30pm	Café Yukari
12th November	Kew Village Fund-Raising Dinner	See Page 18
26th November	Theatre Talk by theatre designers Claire and Nick Thompson at TNA	The Kew Society
29th November	Barn Frost Fair – 11.00am to 2.00pm	The Barn Church
5th December	Kew Sparkle, 4.00pm to 8.00pm	Various
7th December	Kew Village Market	Kew Village Market Committee

* Kew Mutual Improvement Society



Diana Ormond – RIP

Contact Us

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JOIN NOW by visiting our website:
www.kewsociety.org

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