

On Kew

Impending Changes to the Planning Law

Anyone who observes the activities of a local authority's planning system will know that there is already an implicit presumption in favour of development, but in order to succeed, various planning criteria have to be met. If the applicant satisfies these, the local authority will rarely refuse consent, however vocal the opposition of local interest groups, not least because an appeal would probably reverse their decision and incur the council in a substantial bill for the costs

Under the draft National Planning Policy Framework published in July the Government wants to get rid of a lot of the existing controls and make the presumption in favour of development explicit, so local authorities will have even less opportunity to refuse a development, however unwelcome it is to the local community. The proposed Framework not only opens the way for some dire developments, it also gives the lie to the suggestion put about by the Government when they published the Localism Bill last year that local communities would have more say in how their communities are developed. The Policy is very clear that it will override any local plan or local community that wants to check, rather than encourage, development. And it goes further – e.g. the Framework says "Policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes." So much for protecting the character of an area!

The Kew Society is naturally concerned at the Government's proposals and we ask all members who share our concerns to let us know. The National Trust has a petition on its website that you might consider signing and letters to our MP and to Ministers are encouraged. There may be a number of things wrong with current planning law but the new Policy in its current form will only make matters worse.

http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-chl/w-countryside_environment/w-planning-landing.htm

Meanwhile, a few local planning decisions: The Council has just turned down a garden creep proposal to build two new out-of-character 5 bedroom homes in place of an existing house in West Park Avenue – a decision that we lobbied for, but one that would not be possible if the new regime is introduced. But it won't worry the St. Georges of this world who received consent from Hounslow

Council for Phase 2 of the Kew Bridge development – to replace the Thameside office complex with more tall industrial-style blocks of flats on the river.

Aircraft noise alert

Several of our members have highlighted two areas of note in respect of aircraft noise and as a sponsor of HACAN we are bringing these to your attention.

First, we understand that Heathrow Airport is shortly to be given more freedom to land aircraft on both runways at the same time, but this provision is only to be used to recover from serious disruption. The new practice is going to be trialled for a period starting in November 2011 and running till February 2012, followed by a further period of public engagement to assess the impact on local communities. The second phase will run from July to September 2012, to provide "increased resilience" during the Olympics. We advise members to carefully monitor noise levels during these first trial months and keep a record of any concerns, so that they may be reported during the public consultation which will follow. We are very aware that there is a risk that this provision could turn into a permanent arrangement if only limited concerns are raised by the community.

Second, we understand that Richmond Council has stated that it will reply to the Government's consultation on night flights with a call for a full ban on night flights from 11pm to 7am. We welcome this excellent news as it supports the view presented by the Society and the Richmond Heathrow Campaign to the Council this Summer.

A big "Thank you"...

...to all the volunteers who joined the towpath litter pick on 9th July.

This much-needed event was organised by the Society together with the Environment Trust for Richmond. It was perfect weather to be out by the river and together we recovered over 40 sacks of litter from the towpath between Kew Bridge and Putney.

AN INCOMING CHAIR...

Nestled away in amongst the streets of residential Kew, is Pensford Field. Records of this field stretch back over several centuries as it has variously been the site of market gardens; a school playing-field; and most recently a little-known area of natural beauty. The field is now cared for by the Pensford Field Environmental Trust and the Kew Society has been proud to support the Trust's work in recent years.

Mary Smith has recently taken over as Chair of the Pensford Field Environmental Trust and we welcome the opportunity for her to share with us reasons for taking on the role and her vision for the future of the Field. Having lived away from Kew for a number of years, Mary returned and found in attending a couple of events in the Field that her interest in the area grew. When the role of Chair became vacant, she felt that she could contribute to the twin values of conservation and education that form the cornerstone of the mission of the Pensford Field committee. Mary is looking to raise awareness of the Field and is engaged in doing so through a programme of events to both encourage visitors generally and engage local schools. Whether it's checking the log pile for Stag Beetles, helping to plant native wild flowers or simply enjoying this oasis of calm in west London, it's hoped that everyone will find something to enjoy in Pensford Field.

To volunteer to assist in one the Field's gardening days or for more information on Pensford Field itself, either visit their website www.pensfordfield.co.uk or contact us (please see section "Contact Us") and we'll be pleased to put you in touch.

Railway Gardens – North Road Triangle

We have been pleased to learn that the new design for the Railway Gardens that is to be sited at the North Road triangle is starting to move ahead. Many of you will have seen the plans that have been posted on the fences of the area for a while now and we understand that the hard landscaping is to take place shortly during October and November. The soft landscaping is then to follow and Cllr J-F Burford who has been instrumental in driving this project forward is keen to hear from any local volunteers who would like to help with the planting at this stage. Cllr Burford can be contacted on CllrJBurford@richmond.gov.uk. We are sure that the completion of this project will greatly improve the look of this area and be appreciated by locals and visitors alike.

Kew Village Community Market

We understand that from October, Kew village will be hosting a monthly community market with 12 to 20 stalls, selling a range of top quality foods and arts and crafts. The market will take place on the first Sunday of every month from the 2nd October in Station Parade between the hours of 11.00am and 2.00pm and will run for an initial 3 month trial period. The organisers hope that the market will become a focus for the local community. The market is being run by a local volunteer committee and we understand that any profits made will be distributed

to local charities or volunteer organisations. We would be most interested to hear from our members on their views of the market (please see section "Contact Us").

Events

A most informative and entertaining evening was enjoyed those members who attended the Society's first visit to the Ham Polo club. The Club's Chairman gave an introduction covering the sport's history and rules before joining his team members in a dazzling display of the sport in action. It was truly impressive to watch the riders and horses displaying their skills at such close quarters.

The Society has played its part in the Summer events in Kew. Despite the changeable weather, our stall did attract visitors at both the Kew Midsummer Fete and the Kew Horticultural Society Annual Summer Show. Tiddlywinks were the attraction at the Midsummer Fete and a combination of berries with cream, home-grown plants and our postcards at the KHS Summer show. In addition, we are one of the sponsors for "Richmond in Bloom" helping to brighten a corner of Kew Village.

A number of our members also attended the opening concert of the Kew Music Festival that was held at St. Anne's church. This proved to be a popular event and we look forward to a continuing link with the Festival itself.

Our AGM is shortly to be held at the Musical Museum in Isleworth this year. Details of this event are available separately.

Contact Us

We would be very interested to hear if any of our members did take advantage over the Summer of the free day pass offer for both the National Trust and English Heritage. These offers were advertised in our Summer newsletter and were made possible through our membership of the Civic Voice.

Your Committee

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JOIN NOW by visiting our website

You can write to us at:

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