

On Kew

Required – A Chair for the Kew Society

As you know we have been actively looking for new talent to help run the Kew Society and we are delighted to report that five members have come forward to provide support, two of whom will be standing for election as Trustees at the AGM on the 9th October 2013. However, despite extensive efforts, we have not yet found anyone willing to take over as Chair on Giles' & Juliet's -retirement at the AGM. At its most basic, the role is one of co-ordination, but is also an opportunity for someone with strategic vision to work on ensuring that the Kew Society remains engaging and relevant to the residents of Kew, and continues its valuable contribution to local issues – all the more essential in this age of "localism".

Given the potential vacancy, we would ask once again if any member is willing to consider chairing the Committee? If so please let us know by email to chair@kewsociety.org, or phone Giles on 020 8241 1059.

If we are unsuccessful in our quest we will need to look at the way forward, perhaps restructuring – so if you have any ideas, please let us know before our next Committee meeting on 30th September.

Director of Kew Gardens talk

In June, Richard Deverell, Director of Kew Gardens, addressed a packed room of members and their guests in the impressive surroundings of Cambridge Cottage, Kew Gardens. Moving from being a former Trustee of the Gardens to his current role explained Mr Deverell, has given him a unique approach to his new post. He is looking to rejuvenate the visitor experience at Kew and ensure that it is distinct from that of any others available. Mr Deverell is keen to develop an experience that is more clearly science-based and enables visitors to more easily engage with plant science. As part of the desire to maximise all that the Gardens have to offer, he is also planning sensitively those parts of the Gardens that today stand in need of improvement. Listening to Mr Deverell talk, it is clear that the Gardens will have an exciting future in his hands and we thank him for such an interesting talk.

Brentford FC

Brentford Football Club's application for a new 20,000-seat stadium, plus 910 flats and a hotel, on Lionel Road still has to be considered by Hounslow

Council's Planning Committee, so there is still time to object.

Whether or not you are a football fan, if allowed in its present form - this development would have a serious long term impact on Kew.

Inadequate improvements to public transport are proposed and provision has been made for only 835 parking spaces for the stadium, hotel and flats. On match days it is forecast that over 3000 cars will be looking for somewhere to park in the neighbourhood. Traffic will also be affected and, with simultaneous events at Twickenham or Wembley (plus the Kew Gardens visitors), West London could be gridlocked. To make matters worse, on match days the Club plans to close Lionel Road, the slip road to the M4. For a weekday evening match the position would be even worse.

Most alarming is the "enabling" development of flats (the profits from which, over a 10 year construction period, fund the stadium). This not only breaches planning rules with its density but the 17 storey blocks will loom over Kew Green and Kew Gardens, causing permanent harm to the local conservation areas and UNESCO World Heritage site.

If you share our concerns, and those of English Heritage and Kew Gardens, please write to planningcomments@hounslow.gov.uk or to Shane Baker, Town Planning Department, London Borough of Hounslow, Civic Centre, Lampton Road, Hounslow, TW3 4DN quoting Planning Application ref: P/2013/1811.

Inland Revenue Site, Ruskin Avenue

The receivers for the owner of this large site invited bids from developers during the summer and a decision is expected soon on which of them will succeed in buying it. We had a meeting with one of the bidders who wants to use it primarily as a care home and we will continue to monitor the position in the hope that any development will take full account of the concerns of the local community.

Richmond Heathrow Campaign Update

The Davies Commission on UK airport capacity has now received all the proposals for solutions to the problem of UK airport capacity. It's working now on short-listing those it thinks are the front runners.

It's a crucial stage in one of the most important investment decisions for the UK. Get it right, and the UK keeps its competitive edge without increasing the misery for millions from noise and pollution. Get it wrong and the UK loses competitive edge and jobs, and makes things worse for the environment.

A wide range of solutions are proposed from a brand new-super hub airport in the Thames estuary to dispersal of capacity either across airports in the South-East or a re-balancing to the Midlands and North. Arguably the most radical solution is from the Richmond Heathrow Campaign: don't think new runways, think passengers numbers and better use of existing runways.

The Campaign is now finalising a paper on noise and is also analysing the proposals from the main contenders for short listing to identify the common themes and the questions the Commission should now be asking itself. Do we need to invest in new runways at all? What weight should be given to minimising noise impacts, to minimising pollution, to using air transport to spread regional growth more evenly?

More information is at
www.richmondheathrowcampaign.org

Kew Pier Rubbish Bins

In 2009 the Kew Society engaged with the Council in improving the Pier environs. Many of these works were very successful but the outcome of the relocation of the pier/ferry operators' private refuse bins into the public towpath domain has been less satisfactory. First impressions for towpath users and visitors to Kew Gardens from the Thames ferry have all too frequently been very poor in terms of cleanliness and public health whilst the setting of the "key & lock" public artwork has been damaged. The Committee has resolved to engage again with the Council to return the bins clearly to private stewardship in order to restore and preserve the unique rustic character of the towpath and ensure that reduced costs fall on the community.



A recent view of the area.

Events

There was an excellent response to our invitation to members to join a private tour of Kew Palace, The Queen's Gardens and Royal Kitchens which is

due to take place around the time that this newsletter is going to press. The event sold out in a matter of days. We are always keen to arrange events that we believe will be of interest to our members and where the response is far greater than can be accommodated at the time, will look to arrange a further such event in the near future.

Also taking place in mid-September is the Richmond Running Festival. On the morning of Sunday, 22nd September two races up to about 2000 runners each will start at Kew Gardens. The 10km and half marathon course will be run in the locality and will end at Old Deer Park – so there will be plenty of opportunity to cheer on the runners!

The Society also took part in two local events over the Summer, the Kew Fete and the Kew Horticultural Fair. Running a stall at these events in weather that ranged from bright sunshine to torrential rain, did provide a good opportunity to touch base with many of our members and of course add to our number.

And looking forward . . .

We are returning to the lovely surroundings of the Barn Church in October for our AGM. After the AGM, we are delighted that our guest speaker Paul Velluet will continue the evening by speaking to us about a local area that both has a fascinating past and is facing some interesting challenges in the near future, the Old Deer Park. Full details about this evening are available separately

Finally, although the first signs of Autumn are only just appearing, we're already planning for 2014. Aside from our now-traditional 12th Night drinks in January, we're arranging a tour of the Kew Quarantine House in the Spring as well as a talk by Tony Kirkham, Head of Kew Gardens' arboretum.

Contact us

Your Committee

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JOIN NOW by visiting our website

You can write to us at:

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