



The Kew Society Newsletter • Summer 2016

Welcome...

to another summer in Kew, with a calendar of events for almost all tastes and with plenty of opportunities to care for our community.

Planning and Environment Update

Re-planting Kew Gardens station platforms

Our Chair approached Richard Deverell, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, to ask whether they would work with us to come up with a design for the four areas of planting at the station which some will remember used to be in much better condition than now. The station platforms should, in our view, be a showcase as the main approach for visitors to the Botanic Gardens. We are very grateful to Richard Barley, Richard Wilford and especially Suzie Jewell, who has come up with what we think is a beautiful design. You can see the design ideas on our website and a snapshot of one planting area below. Nawal Didi, the Area Station Manager, is also very supportive and station staff are keen to participate.



The planting plan has now been costed and we are very pleased to have made contact with Energy Garden, who fortuitously had contacted the Botanic Gardens themselves with similar ideas to ours. You can see who they are at <http://energygarden.org.uk>. They have agreed to put up most of the funds needed and will carry out the initial planting and

maintenance using their "Green Team". We will put in some funds ourselves and will be bidding to Richmond Council for funding too. We expect to enter the Underground in Bloom award scheme which would provide more funds.

A community engagement event will take place on Friday 17 June from 6-8pm when you can take a closer look at the plans. Do come. We are looking for volunteers to be involved in on-going upkeep to make Kew even more beautiful and special than it already is.

Caroline Brock said "this is exactly the kind of project I think the Kew Society should be working on – linking up with other local interests, making a visible impact in Kew on behalf of our members and showing non-members what we are all about so that they will want to join us".

Graffiti

We wrote to our MP, Zac Goldsmith, to ask him to raise with Network Rail the need to clean up the extensive graffiti along the rail track between Kew and Richmond. Sir Peter Henty, chair of Network Rail, responded to say the graffiti would be removed. Previously Network Rail had said they did not have a budget to do this. Their website shows they have a sizeable budget nationally and that the criteria they use to prioritise areas for clean-up include areas visible by rail passengers and the general public - clearly the case here.

Network Rail followed up on Sir Peter Henty's undertaking to say that local teams regularly removed graffiti from the area though this was often quickly vandalised again. They have given an undertaking that their maintenance team will revisit the site as soon as possible to remove the latest graffiti. We have also asked Richmond Council what they can do to remove the graffiti on the "land side" of the Network Rail security fencing.

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Planning and Environment Update

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We have included in our comments on proposals for re-development at 1-9 Sandycombe Road and at 275 Sandycombe Road, which back onto the rail track, the need for the developers to consider how to design-in graffiti deterrence, working with Network Rail.

The local police Safer Neighbourhood Team are working with the British Transport Police and residents to improve security to prevent trespass on the track. Network Rail are also discussing with Richmond Council installation of permanent

cameras to help catch perpetrators and have said they want to continue to work with the Kew Society and with the British Transport Police to raise awareness about reporting vandalism and to catch those responsible.

We have also alerted the Richmond Society and the West Chiswick and Gunnersbury Society, as more graffiti is visible in both areas.

You can help by reporting graffiti in the Borough yourself to the police and the Council.

Traffic calming measures along Sandycombe Road

You may recall that, following a consultation by Richmond Council on whether to introduce a 20mph speed limit which residents voted against, we raised the possibility of introducing traffic calming measures on Sandycombe Road. Three areas for traffic calming were agreed, starting with the new raised table at the junction of Station Parade, Lichfield Road and High Park Road.

Now complete, the raised table is designed in accordance with bus design standards. The coloured heritage footway surfacing, street furniture and side entry treatments onto Sandycombe Road are designed to provide a visual impact on all approaches to help change drivers' behaviour. New street furniture has

been installed and the line of sight for visitors from the station to the Botanic Gardens has been improved. The community notice board has been moved to a more prominent position. The Council have also realigned the pedestrian traffic island at the junction with Broomfield Road. The previous island had been damaged regularly by large vehicles turning left into Station Approach as there was insufficient room to make this manoeuvre easily. It was also substandard in width. The changes will benefit pedestrians, including those accessing Broomfield House School, and HGV access, as well as reduce the likelihood of future maintenance costs from vehicles hitting the island.

Telecoms Equipment

We have successfully resisted applications by telecoms providers to locate new equipment in insensitive locations in Kew, most recently at the junction of Mortlake Road and West Hall Road which went to appeal. There is no doubt that reception needs improving in the area. This can be achieved by finding the right locations and by careful design. Planning permission is not always required but, where suitable locations are found, we are pressing for these to accommodate all the major providers. We support new equipment being installed at the National Archives and concealed within the bell tower of St Anne's church on Kew Green. We are also supporting location in the campanile at the Victoria Gate entrance to the Royal Botanic Gardens. We have offered to engage with Cornerstone Telecommunications Infrastructure Ltd (CTIL), looking in Kew for Vodafone and Telefonica, to help identify more locations should these be needed. We are keen to help where we can and have already advised that Richmond Council's planning department have confirmed to us that they are not aware of any moratorium on using locations owned by the Council which CTIL had told us was their understanding. **Do you have ideas on more acceptable locations?** If so let us know. CTIL believe more may be needed in the Mortlake Road area.

Across the River...

In conjunction with other residents groups north of the Thames, we promoted a public meeting in Chiswick opposing the "Chiswick Curve" 32-storey skyscraper tower block at the Chiswick Roundabout. A packed audience heard from Barbara Weiss of the Skyline Campaign that high residential densities and better communities could result from human-scale projects rather than skyscrapers. Andrea Lee of Client Earth spoke about the public health dangers of pollution and highlighted how the Chiswick Curve roundabout site and the M4/A4 corridor are amongst the most polluted locations in London. Architect Keith Garner warned of the potential damage from the skyscraper proposal to the UNESCO World Heritage status of Kew Gardens – and nearby Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas. Marie Rabouhans of the West Chiswick & Gunnersbury Society highlighted the lack of infrastructure proposals (schools, medical, public transport etc) within Hounslow to support the Council's piecemeal development approach. Local Hounslow MP Ruth Cadbury prised an admission from Steve Curran, Leader of Hounslow Council, that his officers were now discussing changes to the "Chiswick Curve" with its promoters. The Kew Society continues to monitor this development and its implications outside Hounslow which the new London Mayor may wish to consider.

Following the Secretary of State's granting of Compulsory Purchase Powers to Hounslow, we await further news from the **Brentford Football Stadium** and its enabling developments of a revised programme for implementing their scheme.

Other Community Activities

Richmond Council is starting a project to monitor **ash dieback**. **Can you help?** The aim is to identify whether trees are affected, showing symptoms such as dead sections of canopy or the stem lesions which confirm infection. The Council also very importantly wants to identify trees that are not being affected and could therefore be resistant.

The aim is to create a network of groups and individuals spread across the Borough at identified monitoring sites. Those participating will be given an 'ashtag' pack <https://www.ashtag.org/> which will help to feed into a national database aimed at generating a pool of resistant ash trees from which nurseries can supply for re-planting.

In early Summer, Richmond Council Parks Department plans to hold a presentation/workshop which provides a background to ash dieback, the threat it poses, how it is identified and the aims of the project. This would be followed by groups attaching tags to selected ash trees throughout the Borough. We shall alert members to this event through our website so keep checking www.kewsociety.org.

And so to the North Sheen Recreation Park in Kew on Saturday 14 May for the Kew Park Rangers medal presentation. Kew Park Rangers is a Community Football Club, set up by Jean-Francois Burford and Rob Sheldon. The club is run by parent volunteers who give their time to help with coaching, administration and running the club. It welcomes all children, whatever their skill or fitness level, and currently comprises over 30 teams.



The Kew Society is very happy to sponsor the Fair Play Award at this annual event and in this, the 10th year of our sponsorship, the award was given to the U13 Royals Team. Marie Flanagan, on behalf of The Kew Society, presented the trophy to the Deputy Manager, John Regal. Anyone interested in learning more about the Club should contact Rob Sheldon via the KPR Website.

We were sad to learn that **William Burke** passed away last month. He and his wife Anna Maria ran AE Robbins, the hardware store and ironmongers that was a wonderful feature of Kew Village for so many years. We send our sincere condolences to the family.



Would you like to help someone in Kew who really needs a helping hand? If you have as little as half an hour a month to spare, **Kew Neighbourhood Association (KNA)** can help you do just that. KNA needs more volunteer drivers to take the elderly and infirm of Kew to where they wish or need to go. KNA is also involved in befriending such people, so far mainly in their homes, and is expanding this activity.

People from all walks of life drive for KNA. Some are retired and want to play an active part in Kew's community, others are busy parents of school-age children who want to do something for someone older but are only able to volunteer during term-time. Some KNA volunteer drivers drive once a month, others prefer regular contact with the same person each week. Some befrienders visit once a fortnight, others more frequently. It's entirely up to you. You only want to drive on a Wednesday morning? Not a problem. KNA will only call you if someone needs a lift on a Wednesday morning.

An example: once a week, 90 year-old Penny (a fictional KNA client) is picked up by one of KNA's Drivers and taken to The Avenue Club for a weekly sewing class. Another KNA Driver takes her home. Penny is also visited once a week by one of KNA's Befrienders. Penny is delighted she has regular contact with three different KNA volunteers each week. Sometimes Penny also needs to be driven to and from a medical appointment. Penny is not a unique KNA client. Over 130 Kew residents have contact with a KNA volunteer throughout the year, adding up to over 3,000 trips a year.

Every drive helps one of Kew's residents achieve something they want to do, like going to The Avenue Club for a class, or need to do, such as getting to a doctor, dentist or hospital. KNA Volunteers help them stay in their own homes and continue to live independently. Moreover, it has been scientifically proven that volunteers can get something back: a "helpers' high" or a release of endorphins - feelings that reduce stress and improve the health of the helper.

To find out how you can be connected to a Kew resident who needs a helping hand with transport, or just needs some friendly conversation, please contact Abi Palmer, KNA's Co-ordinator on 020 8948 8054 or email mail@kna.org.uk. Just half an hour volunteering a month really does make a huge difference.

Events

Kew Society members and guests celebrated the First Day of Spring with a wonderful party and a bit of added magic! David Weeks, a renowned Magic Circle magician, delighted everyone with his magical surprises throughout the evening, leaving all wondering "how did he do it"! Delicious catering and good company made it a lovely evening.

Mid-March's talk of local interest featured David Allister, Richmond Council Head of Parks and Open spaces for 11 years. He gave an excellent talk to the Kew Society about 'The Frontier of Park Management'. David noted the national trend of cuts and decline in park management but also the continued improvement within Richmond Borough which has seen satisfaction levels rise from 66% (when he joined) to a current high of 94%.

The 300th anniversary of the birth of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown this year proved a great draw with a large audience attending a fascinating talk on 4th May by Chris Sumner and Susan Darling about 'Capability' Brown's links to Kew and



The Kew Society launched a trial 'Thames Towpath Clearance' initiative to kick-start plans to help manage vegetation growth and the build-up of litter along the local towpath 'grot spots'. Members, under the seasoned guidance of Becky Law from The Thames Landscape Strategy, worked valiantly for a few hours to help improve the appearance of the riverside and open up views. They also noted good sites for benches and other improvements that could be easily addressed at future volunteer get-togethers. Look out for our next planned "grotbuster" session – all you need are sturdy shoes, gardening gloves and a sense of adventure: it is great fun !

Coming up

Saturday 18 June is the Kew Midsummer Fete on Kew Green – as always we hope that you will pop along to The Kew Society stand to say hello. We will be presenting prizes to winners of our second annual photographic competition for local schools. The high standard of the entries from children may prove to be a challenging task for our panel of judges. We are very grateful to Kew Society member, Jane Hogan, who oversees this competition on behalf of The Kew Society. This year's photographic theme is "Kew Alive! – People, Animals, Plants".

Take a look at The Kew Society website for outline details of other events including:

- Wednesday 20 July - talk on waste and recycling in the Kew area
- Wednesday 10 August - tour of The Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst and viewing of the popular Commandant's Parade
- Monday 19 September - a walk around the interior of St Anne's Church, Kew Green, with Sue Mason who oversaw the new embroideries, font and carvings for this magnificent, historic building
- Friday 23 September - late summer afternoon non-stop Richmond to Hampton Court (and return!) boat trip with commentary about the river and wildlife along this gorgeous part of the Thames.
- Monday 10 October - the Annual General Meeting of The Kew Society – venue: The National Archives
- Thursday 17 November – an evening with Melvyn Bragg. Kew Gardens venue.
- Wednesday 30 November - a follow-up talk on Trees and Planting Plans for the local area by Craig Ruddick, Arboriculture Manager, Parks and Open Spaces, Richmond Council (with a prior walk round planned).

Syon. 'Capability' undertook major landscaping work at Syon House and was appointed Master Gardener to King George III in 1764 with a remit to redesign Richmond Gardens (which later became part of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew).

On 19 May, we followed up the 'Capability' Brown theme with a most informative tour of Syon House by their guide, Sheree, for 29 Kew Society members. 25 people stayed on for a wonderful afternoon tour by Syon's gardener and landscape expert, Simon Hadleigh-Sparks. He led a three-hour walk around the grounds, including to areas not in the public domain. It gave us a wonderful insight into the workings and beauty of the land around Syon House.



And finally....

Do we have your current email address? If you have not received an email from us in the last month or so, the answer will be no! Email is the fastest and most cost-effective way for us to communicate with you.

Please email our membership secretary if you think you have been missing out: membership@kewsociety.org.

Contact us

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

You can write to us at:

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