

TEDDINGTON SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 2021

Here are the Group Reports that will be presented at the AGM, via Zoom, on 21st April 2021. They will also appear in the summer 2021 edition of *Tidings*, our quarterly magazine for members.

ENVIRONMENT GROUP

There's not a great deal to report for 2020, because with the unusually very wet weather in January and February, followed by the Government's imprecations to "Stay Home" from March onwards due to the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown(s), the majority of the group's usual outdoor activities were well and truly knocked on the head.

However, a socially distanced and carefully managed litterpick was organised to clean and tidy up the environs of the Memorial Hospital frontage and the surrounds of the war memorial. This was immediately prior to the much-reduced Remembrance Day service being filmed for streaming and subsequent viewing. The Elmfield Gardens poppy sculpture, now a Teddington Society responsibility, was kept tidy throughout the year and thoroughly weeded and prepared for Remembrance Sunday.

Whenever necessary I was in contact with Richmond Council concerning fly tipping and overflowing paper and cardboard igloos and co-mingled bins. I previously referred to the latter as 'bottle and can bins', but I've recently become aware of their correct title. One lives and learns!

Several times during the year all the lamp post whiskers, the name given to abandoned plastic ties, along with outdated and tatty posters, were removed from the High Street and Broad Street and some adjacent roads, but within a week or so more appeared in profusion. In a *Tidings* article I likened the task to keeping the Forth Bridge painted.

Geoff Howland

GARDENS GROUP

Like everyone else, we were affected by Covid and had to cancel Teddington In Flower for 2020 but we're planning something very different for 2021 – details will appear in the summer edition of *Tidings*, and on our website. I hope everyone will join in.

During the year we were very sad to hear of the death of Pat Schooling, who chaired the Richmond Borough in Bloom organising committee for 30 years. Throughout her time at the helm, she united residents, local representatives, traders and councillors in creating an enthusiastic Bloom community across the whole borough. She was a born organiser and despite her 92 years and physical infirmity, she had boundless energy. In many respects, she was Richmond in Bloom.

Those of us who have gardens, for which we've been so grateful, have certainly appreciated our good fortune during these long days of lockdown; they've enabled us to get out and about in the fresh air weeding, planting or just relaxing and chatting.

Sadly, the flowers under the black walnut tree we planted in Park Road in memory of the late Joan Freeman was trashed and all the plants destroyed. This mindless vandalism is so upsetting, particularly for Michael Minas who has looked after it since the tree was planted. He also looks after the brick box planter at the end of The Causeway, which will shortly be getting a facelift. Thank you very much, Michael.

Sheena Harold

HISTORY GROUP

The Group remains without a leader, but I hold the emailing reins and try to keep everyone in the loop, except for leading historian Paddy Ching who is not on the internet and requires phone calls or yelling up at her balcony until she appears Juliet-like over a cloud of yellow tete-a-tete mini daffs!

Seriously though, she can still answer many queries non-digitally. She was recently consulted about an interesting boundary marker in Middle Lane, and on a couple of Walks In Teddington which can be found on our website. She wrote the original text for two booklets published by the Society in 1970 and 1990, and is currently working on version 3.

The group of nine is fully subscribed and, when we can, we look forward to meeting again at the Hughes' mansion where Dick and Gilly reign supreme. They have contributed many articles to *Tidings* over the year, not least a montage of pandemic signs in shop windows showing the history of today in our high street. Ken Howe is also contributing articles to *Tidings* – Jack of Teddington in the last issue – and he's still writing monthly for TW Magazines. Hilary Marshall contributed a fascinating article on crested china, which I used to collect from junk shops at 6p each! Ah, those were the days.

Sheena Harold

PLANNING GROUP(TSPG)

TSPG currently consists of 10 members, who meet every five to six weeks to discuss any matters to do with Teddington's built environment. These might be, typically, residential planning applications, but also, for example, major local developments, the emerging London and Local Plans, Udney Park, Strathmore Centre, the old HSBC site, and Elleray Hall.

Members of the group come from many different backgrounds, some of which are property or planning related, but this is by no means a prerequisite. In fact, a broader spectrum of

views is always valuable. The only qualification for group membership is to care for Teddington and how it develops.

During the 12 months to March 2021 we considered 99 planning applications. We submitted comments or objections on 19, out of which six were refused, seven were approved and six are currently undecided.

Typical reasons for an objection or comment might be issues of scale and massing as well as being out of character with either the street scene or a wider conservation area. The majority of applications are from householders for extensions etc, but with the relaxation of Permitted Development rules many proposals do not now require Planning Approval.

Increasingly it is the medium to large projects that have occupied us. Over the past year these have included new developments at 2-4 Udney Park Road (Bagnalls Yard, now rejected), the old HSBC site at 42 High St (now gone to Appeal) and 4-6 Manor Road (refused on Appeal). We submitted objections to all of these.

We are also concerned about the Government's proposals to further relax Permitted Development regulations and have submitted our objections to the consultation.

We welcome the elegant refurbishing of the former Christ Church building on Station Road and we intend to revive our "PATS", a simple certificate to the owners of buildings we think are deserving of some formal recognition.

In December 2020 we submitted on behalf of the Society an application for Park Lane Stables to be granted Asset of Community Value status (ACV). This was successful and gave rise to a very large volume of positive reactions, especially on social media. We are pleased to have been of help to this very worthy cause.

The long-running Udney Park Playing Fields saga continues. In January 2021 the Society submitted an ACV application for this "Local Green Space" site, to run on once the existing five-year ACV expired at the end of March 2021. This has now been approved. In February 2021 Richmond Council was advised by Quantum, the owners of the land, that the site is now on the market. This means that qualified community organisations have a moratorium until August to bid. The Council has been very firm in support of Udney as a protected site. In the meantime the poor fencing is at last being replaced and the tennis courts refurbished, although that may mean the end of informal access which in lockdown has been most welcome by local residents, children and their dogs. We hope a community sports organisation will succeed with a bid, and that organised sport can resume there once lockdown ends.

Current projects under consideration include the Council's draft proposals for a new Elleray Hall community centre on the North Lane East Car Park plus social housing units on the old site. We are broadly in favour of these on planning grounds and on good use of Council-owned sites, although we have some concerns on the density of the housing element and the overall costing. We await the detailed Planning Application, when it is likely we may

submit suggestions for how to ensure the design works as well as possible for its users, occupants and local neighbours.

Work on the footbridge at the southern end of Teddington Station has still not started. We understand the footbridge at Teddington Lock is about to be refurbished, not without time.

The planning application for a pedestrian gate at Bushy Park's Lion Gate was approved in 2019 and we were advised that funding for this, and agreement between Royal Parks and the adjacent hotel developer, had been secured. No work has been done on this yet and Royal Parks say it is not now a priority as funding is tight with so much repair work needing to be done in Bushy Park.

Our website, Buildings of Townscape Merit and its associated Historic Census records 1841-1901, are about to be given higher visibility on the main Society website – www.teddingtonsociety.org.uk

As to the borough, we regularly correspond with councillors and officers of the Planning Department, and we have helpful meetings and exchanges of views. We very much support the efforts of the Council to increase the borough's *genuinely affordable* and social housing.

We very much welcome new members with fresh views to the Planning Group to help with this workload. We all enjoy our get-togethers every few weeks, currently by Zoom, and feel we make a positive difference to the town and its appearance. If you would like to get involved, please speak to one of us or email planning@tedsoc.org.uk

Keith Atkinson

RIVERSIDE AND OPEN SPACES GROUP

In general terms the past year has been one where the benefits of living in Teddington have never been more appreciated by the residents. With people unable to go on holiday for large periods of the past year, the Teddington riverside and open spaces, together with Bushy Park, have been utilised to an extent unlike any period in the recent past.

2020 was also marked by the death of Ann Sayer, who was for so many years the organiser of the Riverside and Open Spaces Group and a true supporter of the Society. Ann and her many achievements were remembered in obituaries in *Tidings*, on our website and in many other media outlets, and we are very grateful to her for leaving a legacy to the Society (see below).

Roundup of main points over the year

Suspension Footbridge

The condition of the Teddington suspension footbridge continues to cause concern. The deck is very obviously corroded and in places there are actual holes in the footway.

Richmond Council have acknowledged that major repair work needs to be done as a capital

project, but as yet the timing of this work is not known. The sums involved could be up to £0.5 million.

Drawdock Litter Picking and General Litter Problems

The litter picking undertaken by the Teddington Society has been suspended during the past six months. However, the area at the end of Ferry Road has been cleaned by Richmond Council staff and fortunately there has not been a major accumulation of large objects in the tidal dock area. The problem of litter on the Ham Bank over the bridges, which our members have commented on in previous years, has improved. We are working with the Council to enable members to report litter problems in their parks and open spaces through a Council website link.

Flood prevention overspill weir

The River Thames Scheme proposed by the Environment Agency and the relevant local authorities is currently under way for upstream projects mainly designed to move potential flood water down the river by means of bypass channels as fast as possible. Upgrades to weirs are also proposed from Sunbury to Teddington. Work proposed at Teddington could change the appearance of the lock ait with the addition of a concrete spillway next to the boat rollers. However the start of any construction is not imminent. The position on this issue will be monitored by the Society.

Thames Landscape Strategy (TLS)

A legacy from Ann Sayer to the Father Thames Trust, the charity arm of the TLS, has kept the scheme to protect the landscape of the Arcadian Thames afloat over the winter period. Of course all TLS volunteer work has been suspended due to the Covid situation.

Memorial Bench

The Teddington Society has decided to spend some of Ann Sayer's legacy on a memorial bench for public use, to be sited in Manor Road open space facing the river. This is near where she lived. Other projects are also being considered to improve the area that Ann strived for so long to protect and improve.

Other Matters

The closure of Hammersmith Bridge effectively means the end of river traffic through to central London, including the trip boats. It has already resulted in the relocation of the University Boat Races to Ely and a drop in through river traffic at Teddington Lock.

Andy Weston

Roads and Transport Group

30 parking spaces empty every day outside Library still undermine High Street Shops

When the last North Teddington CPZ Review took place under the Conservatives, the short section of Waldegrave Road outside and opposite the Library was a standard 0830-1030 Zone, which allowed numerous shoppers and library users to park throughout the rest of the day, generating about 130 High Street trips per day. This stopped overnight when the CPZ team decided that the hours should be changed to 10am to 4.30pm – the most popular shopping hours. We saw no evidence that a majority of residents had voted for or needed that change, but accepting the situation, we asked for these 30 empty spaces to be made either free one-hour turnover or Pay & Display spaces.

This request was rejected. I then explained to the Cabinet Member for Parking that it would be disastrous for High Street businesses, but he would not intervene, and the consequences were indeed disastrous. Four banks closed down, as did numerous shops, plus Carluccio's (which, in addition, was having serious financial problems of its own). When the Lib Dems came to power, they also refused to install turnover parking. Those empty parking spaces are still empty every weekday, in spite of a request to the Council Leader who wanted evidence that the empty spaces were directly linked to the closure of High Street businesses. Then, on top of this, COVID -19 arrived.

It is critical that we all support our local shops, and we will again ask for turnover parking to be installed outside the Library to encourage visiting and local shoppers to come along and enjoy what Teddington has to offer.

Teddington's Family Cycle Routes ABCD

Teddington's four ABCD cycle routes between Teddington Lock and Bushy Park were put in place in about 2002/3 to encourage families to get on their bikes, which they have since done in droves. The Council has refused to update and reprint its last cycling map issued over 10 years ago. Our website has a written description of each route with a temporary map; these will be reviewed and updated, with a completely new map showing each route very clearly, plus links to London Cycle Network routes. It is just possible that some time in the future, a video version could be produced for the website, using headcam footage.

Unfortunately, without any form of consultation, 60 metres of Route B from the Bushy Park Clapperstile Gate which went behind the cricket pavilion has been dug up and replaced by a new Teddington Cricket Club/Radnor House School/Teddington Rugby Club car park. This is in direct contravention of the policy agreed with the Heritage Lottery Fund that all Sports Club car parking should not be visible to park users. We are trying to find out more, and to negotiate some gaps in the fence encircling the whole playing field so that anyone with any form of disability can easily enter the field and watch the activities. Route B is still accessible but only via two gates, and the surface is uneven and we will be asking for the original Route B surfacing to be installed. Unfortunately this car park is an eyesore, so quite a few changes are required.

20mph Zones: impact on existing speeds and air quality

The Council has published reports on the affects of the blanket 20mph zone which covers all the Borough with the exception of major roads controlled by Transport for London, such as the A316, and a limited number of busy through roads. These reports show that overall, there has been a reduction in average speeds by a mile or two, and that 24mph is the new peak speed for 20mph zones. Whether there has been a reduction in accidents is not known at present, and Covid-19 restrictions have reduced the volume of traffic, so a reduction is expected both in number and severity. As far as air quality is concerned, the usual hot spots remain, but any improvement or deterioration overall is marginal.

The main threat to air quality in Teddington and Hampton Wick is from traffic from South and South-west London rat-running across Kingston Bridge to and from Heathrow – plus, of course, aircraft passing above. The only way to significantly reduce this traffic-induced air pollution is to start Crossrail 2 at Heathrow and connect to all South and South-west London’s rail stations via a tunnel to the Loopline station at Fulwell. This would be the major modal change that the various professors say is necessary to achieve a reduction in air pollution when 20 mph zones are put in place. A switch to all electric vehicles alone is not the answer, as we are told by those professors that their extra weight creates many more brake and tyre mini particles in the air than conventional vehicles. So better and more frequent rail services are the best solution – one we have been advocating for the last decade.

The last CPZ consultation carried out mainly under Covid 19 should be done again

The last consultation was very unsatisfactory, with a disappointingly low response rate, and the questionable nature of some of the statements made – particularly the inclusion of new questions designed to encourage residents to vote for a CPZ whether they needed one or not. The most surprising omission was the failure to ask whether residents drove to work and left the kerb empty all day – a basic piece of knowledge when planning for parking needs.

Brian A Holder