



## THE WEST CHISWICK & GUNNERSBURY SOCIETY

*www.westchiswick.org.uk*

### Annual Report for 2015

#### 1. Meetings

Apart from the Annual General Meeting, which was held in February, there were two open meetings for all Members and residents, held in June and November. In addition, there were five meetings of your Management Committee, held in January, March, June, August and November.

#### 2. Activities of the Society

The Society is active in a number of spheres affecting the quality of life of members including planning (building development, advertising and planning policy), and environment (streets, traffic and public transport) and citizen engagement. We respond to Council consultations and/or initiate activities.

The Society is an active participant in bimonthly meetings of the Residents' Association Forum, alongside other members of G15+, an informal grouping of residents' organisations, civic and amenity societies within the Borough. We work with fellow G15+ members on issues of mutual concern. We attend meetings of the Chiswick Area Forum and also participate in specific-issue groups such as the Gunnersbury Station Action Team (GSAT) and the Lionel Road Liaison Group (LRLG) [see items below].

Our Management Committee scrutinises the Council's list of new planning applications and its Pending Decision List week by week and takes action, submitting comments etc. on relevant items. We work with the Council's planning officers, other interested bodies, residents and amenity groups and, when possible, with the developers themselves. The Society is also represented at various meetings of the Hounslow Planning Committee, Inspector's Inquiries, etc. when matters affecting our Members' interests are being decided.

#### 3. Planning Issues

There are a number of very large developments, some still "in progress", others actually approved and in the pipe-line, which could have a profound effect on our lives.

Major planning issues of this type we have been addressing during the year are:  
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- **Lionel Road Football Stadium Scheme**

The Public Inquiry on the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) was held in September; the outcome is not yet known.

An application for Reserved Matters for access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale in relation to Central Eastern, Capital Court and Central Southern sites (648

residential units) was submitted in July 2015. The Society submitted extensive comments in September, demonstrating why we considered the detailed proposals submitted pursuant to the outline element of the hybrid planning permission granted in June 2014 to be unacceptable in many significant respects. We requested that the application be rejected and that the applicant be advised to submit alternative/fresh proposals that are in keeping with the adopted Design Code. At the December meeting of the Planning Committee we spoke on behalf of Brentford Community Council, the Kew Society, Strand on the Green Association and the Society. We pointed out that no significant changes had been made to the design of the scheme, despite all the representations made by resident groups and by Historic England and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. We pointed out that the design proposed failed utterly to minimise the harm to the heritage assets and argued that a little time taken now to protect our heritage was a timeless investment for the future. Despite our pleas to send these plans back to the drawing board, they were approved.

The Society participated in meetings of the Lionel Road Liaison Group in March, May and October 2015 to discuss the impact of aspects of the overall development scheme such as the Construction Management Plan.

- **Empire House**

The application for a major development centred on Empire House in Chiswick High Road was approved by Hounslow's Planning Committee in January 2015, despite the significant, reasoned objections submitted by the Society working in conjunction with three other resident groups. All four groups supported the application by a local resident, Simon Kverndal QC, for a Judicial Review, financed by crowd-funding. Following the Court refusal of the JR application in September, Simon Kverndal has been seeking permission to appeal against the court ruling.

- **Wheatstone House** An appeal was lodged in July, 2014 against LB Hounslow's refusal of this mainly residential (95 units) development. The Society was represented at the Public Inquiry held in February 2015. The Inspector found for the developers. In the Society's view, this will add to the over-development of the area around Chiswick Roundabout and impact negatively on the Wellesley Road Conservation Area.

- **250 Gunnersbury Avenue** The Society supported the application for a seven-storey office building on this site on the corner of Power Road. The application was approved in December 2015 with changes having been made to the southern elevation, as we had requested. Our request for a Condition on PD rights was also covered.

- **309-317 Chiswick High Road (Conduit House)** We objected to the application for a five-storey residential building to replace the current offices above shops. Application refused in December 2015.

- **492-496 Chiswick High Road (above Wickes)** We objected to an application for additional floor; refused in June 2015. New application for slightly modified proposal refused in December 2015.

- **Roundabout Tower**

Following the death of the Octopus project at the beginning of the year, plans were put forward to build a twin-tower 32/25-storey skyscraper on that site at Chiswick Roundabout. The developers made a presentation to the Society's Management Committee in November. While our committee members thought the proposed building design imaginative, they considered it totally inappropriate in terms of height, massing and density for that site. We consider the site unsuitable, in principle for residential development. The application was submitted in late December. The Society will be submitting a detailed objection to the application and is networking with other groups and individuals. The proposals need to be considered alongside those for the Great West Corridor.

- **The Local Plan**

The Local Plan was adopted in September 2015 following modifications required by the Inspector during a rigorous examination in public. The Society provided input to and participated in this examination. We were pleased that the Inspector endorsed several of the key changes that we had requested at earlier stages; he considered that these changes were necessary to make the plan sound. Having an adopted Local Plan at last means that we now only have one set of policies to consider. Next steps will include consultation on the proposed partial reviews and on several supplementary planning documents.

- **The Great West Corridor.**

The Council launched its initial consultation on the Great West Corridor partial review in late December 2015 in the form of an Issues paper. We are concerned with many aspects of the Council's vision for regeneration within the corridor, not least that it envisages the corridor extending along the Chiswick High Road as far as the business park. The Society will be responding to the consultation and we are networking with other groups.

**During the year, the Society has been commenting on and, in some cases, objecting to a large number of other planning applications. Most notably:**

- **Chiswick Village** The application to add 15 penthouses on the top of the Art Deco residential buildings was refused by the Planning Committee in July 2014. Disappointingly, it was allowed by the Inspector on appeal in August 2015.
- **70-71 Thorney Hedge Road.** There have been numerous applications for this backland site within the Thorney Hedge Conservation Area. The appeal against refusal of the application for six houses, which included the demolition of the house at 70 Thorney Hedge Road was dismissed in July 2014. After consultations between the Society and the developer, a new application was made with a significantly modified scheme. This application, for six houses of more traditional style and with only partial demolition of 70 Thorney Hedge Road was approved in June 2015. Construction work is expected to begin in early 2016.
- **Clayton (formerly Moran) Hotel Extension)**  
This long-drawn saga ended with the application for an additional 5<sup>th</sup> storey to the extension in Power Road being refused in February 2015. The extension has been completed with four storeys, as in the original permission granted on appeal in 2009.

#### 4. Other Issues

In addition to these major planning issues, the Society was also involved in a number of other issues which affect our Members, in particular:

##### **Gunnensbury Station**

The Gunnensbury Station Action Team (GSAT) did not meet for several months following the loss of its Chairman, Mary Macleod, as MP at the May General Election. The Society continued to liaise with other stakeholders and a GSAT meeting was held in November under the chairmanship of Cllr Peter Thompson.

The Society continued to press for substantive improvements to the station. Improvements to capacity and safety are essential. We believe that reinstatement of a platform on east side of the cutting would provide the best solution. As far as any “enabling development” is concerned, the station is in a sensitive location with surrounding area being residential and a Conservation Area. The existing tower already has multiple negative impacts. Meanwhile, progress on a programme of minor improvements (some of which were agreed in 2011/2112) is painfully slow and complicated by poor co-operation between the parties involved.

- **Footbridge** An associated issue is the construction of a footbridge to take pedestrians from the north end of the business park to Bollo Lane and Chiswick Park Station, thus taking some of the pressure off Gunnensbury Station. After years of indecision, partly because the bridge will have one foot in Hounslow and one in Ealing, Hounslow Council adopted the bridge in July, removing a major obstacle to progress. However, new planning applications were required to be submitted to both boroughs as the permissions granted in June 2012 had expired. Planning permission was approved by Hounslow in December 2015 with final details of Legal Agreement with the applicant and TfL to be negotiated by officers. Our request for phased occupation of Building 7 to be tied to delivery of the bridge was not supported by officers and even a requirement for completion by 1 January 2017 was dropped. Reliance is to be placed instead on holding money needed in an escrow account. TfL is concerned as to the impact on Gunnensbury Station which will require extra funding for TfL staff to manage overcrowding until the bridge is functional.

- **Wheeled Rubbish Bins**

Members will be aware of the huge furore about the introduction of a new system for collecting residual household rubbish by means of wheeled bins. Some of the Society’s predictions about the harm this would cause have been justified. In particular, some streets have been cluttered with bins, especially where there is multi-occupancy of Victorian terrace houses, i.e. in Chiswick. We were pleased to learn of Cabinet’s decision in December that the current weekly kerbside sorted service for recycling will be retained for the foreseeable future. We believe that this is good outcome both for the Council and the borough’s residents. The alternative of requiring all households to use a second large wheeled bin to collect “co-mingled” recycling would have increased the harm to front gardens and the street scene in many parts of the borough.

- **Hounslow Highways (HH)**

Mr Rob Gillespie, Service Director of Hounslow Highways, addressed our public meeting in June. He explained the immense task of maintaining the borough's streets and the organisation required to deliver this. The main comments from the floor were that HH seems remote and uncommunicative to the residents. Mr Gillespie said he would try to improve communications with the public.

- **Speed Limits**

The Society supported the introduction of 20 mph speed limits on all residential roads in the borough. We await the outcome of the consultation.

**On several occasions during the year, the Management Committee invited Members to respond to consultations which required individual responses rather than joint ones through the Society. Our thanks are due to all Members for their interest and support.**

**5. Society Officers and Management Committee**

The Honorary Officers elected at the Annual General Meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2015 were:

Chairman	Marie Rabouhans	(Silver Crescent)
Vice Chairman	Adam O'Neill	(Cambridge Road North)
Treasurer	Gerald Smith	(Burlington Road)
Secretary	Don Osborne	(Arlington Gardens)

The following Members were elected or re-elected to the Management Committee:

Nic Atkinson	(Wellesley Road)
Robert Hare	(Grosvenor Road)
Richard Hoskyns	(Burlington Road)
Chris Jenks	(Thorney Hedge Road)
Anna Rumian	(Sutton Lane North)
Sarah Thorn	(Thorney Hedge Road)
Terry Thorn	(Thorney Hedge Road)

All of the Honorary Officers and Management Committee Members will offer themselves for re-election at the AGM on February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016, except Gerald Smith who is standing down as Treasurer at the AGM and Chris Jenks who resigned in November.

**There are a number of vacancies on the Management Committee. Any Member who would like more information about serving on the committee should approach the Secretary.**

**6. Website**

We are still looking for someone to manage the Society's website. We are looking at ways to make the website easier to maintain and update.

**Membership** A membership drive was conducted in May by means of a leaflet drop to all households in our patch. This produced 35 new Members and 4 re-joining Members. Current active membership stands at 149.

**7. Treasurer**

The Society continues to be solvent

## Treasurer's Annual Statement for 2015

As at 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2015

### DAY TO DAY ACCOUNT

<b>Opening balance (brought forward from 2014):</b>		<b><u>£868.01</u></b>
Income:	Membership subscriptions	£900.00
	CAF grant	£350.00
	Donations from members	£81.00
	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£1,331.00</b>
Expenditure:	Venue hire	£270.00
	Printing & postage	£108.00
	Public meetings (2) refreshments	£ 78.30
	Web site subscription	£ 83.87
	HACAN subscription	£ 00.00
	London Forum subscription	£ 28.00
	Friends of Turnham green donation	£ 30.00
	Recruitment leaflet printing	£360.00
	Transfer to Campaign Fund	£ 60.00
	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£1,018.17</b>
	<b>Surplus of Income over Expenditure</b>	<b>£ 312.83</b>
<b>Closing balance (carried forward to 2015):</b>		<b><u>£1,180.84</u></b>

### CAMPAIGNS AND CONSERVATION ACCOUNT

<b>Opening balance (brought forward from 2014):</b>		<b><u>£269.25</u></b>
Income:	Transfer from Day to Day account	£ 60.00
	Donations from members	£100.00
	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£160.00</b>
Expenditure:	Kew Society	£100.00
	Crowd Justice	£100.00
	<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£200.00</b>
<b>Closing balance (carried forward to 2016)</b>		<b><u>£229.25</u></b>

### No outstanding liabilities

### NOTE ON AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS

The accounts kept by the Treasurer are reconciled against statements issued from time to time by the Society's banker, HSBC, together with other relevant records. The Society's constitution requires that the financial records and the Treasurer's Annual Statement be examined by 2 Members of the Society who shall provide signed statements that they are satisfied as to their accuracy.

Gerald Smith, Honorary Treasurer      January 2016

## **Campaigns & Conservation Account**

At the Public Meeting in November, 2013, it was agreed that a separate account be set up to enable the Society to support any relevant local campaigns and the pursuit of local conservation matters at short notice. The account would be funded by voluntary donations from the membership. In addition, £60 was transferred into this account from the general Day To Day account.

The sum of £100 paid to the Kew Society was a contribution to the costs of professional planning advice provided to the consortium of residents groups in relation to the Football Stadium development.

The sum of £100 paid to Crowd Justice was a contribution to the legal costs of seeking Judicial Review of the planning consent given to the Empire House development.

### **8. Subscriptions**

Subscriptions for 2016 are due by the AGM on **February 8<sup>th</sup> 2016**.

The subs are being held again this year at £10 per annum (£5 for concessions, i.e. over-65's and the unwaged).

Cheques to West Chiswick & Gunnersbury Society (or WCGS) either at the AGM or by post to the Secretary.

Subs can also be paid by Standing Order. Our bank is HSBC Sort Code 40-02-13 Account No. 51399306 The West Chiswick & Gunnersbury Society

To pay during February each year.

Please give your name as the Reference.

However you decide to pay, please fill in the Membership Application Form. This helps us keep track of Members' contact details.

The Secretary WCGS  
18 Arlington Gardens  
London W4 4EY

Marie Rabouhans  
Chairman