



THE WEST CHISWICK & GUNNERSBURY SOCIETY

www.westchiswickgs.org.uk

Annual Report for 2017

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 July and November. In addition, there were four meetings of your Management Committee, held in March, May, September and December.

At the meetings held in July and November, Members enjoyed talks given on aspects of local history by Stephen Hine, Honorary Secretary of the Brentford and Chiswick Local History Society and by Chris Sumner, former Chairman of the London Parks and Gardens Trust.

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 and planning policy), and **environment** (streets, traffic and public transport) and **citizen engagement**. We respond to Council consultations and/or initiate activities. We also regularly encourage our Members to get involved in these consultations.

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) concerning the Brentford Community Stadium.

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.

Because our part of the borough is particularly attractive to developers, the Society is kept busy representing residents' interests in a continual stream of major development applications. Nevertheless, the Society is also keen to promote the more positive aspects of life on our patch, such as a sense of place and history and those amenities which make life here more enjoyable.

3. **Planning Issues**

We keep an eye on relatively small developments such as house extensions including basements, shop fronts etc. and respond on those which would have a negative impact on our Conservation Areas or which would affect our Members' interests.

However there are always a number of very large developments which could have a profound effect on all our lives.

Major planning issues of this type we have been addressing during the year are:

- **Brentford Football Stadium**

Following approval in February for ground-sharing with London Irish Rugby Club the developers of the Lionel Road site submitted a revised application for the stadium and for some of the associated residential buildings. This involved a reduction in the size of the stadium with a reduced seating capacity to accommodate a perimeter road and enlarged outside broadcasting facilities. Reorientation of and design changes to the residential blocks on the Central Southern and Central Eastern sites were also proposed.

The Society scrutinised the proposals and decided that the harm that would be caused to the surrounding heritage and residential communities was unlikely to be significantly different from the recognised harm of the original scheme. The new application was approved by Hounslow Council in December and construction has started with a view to completion in time for the 2019-20 football season.

- **Empire House, Chiswick High Road**

Development activity at the site has stopped but no information has been forthcoming despite repeated request from the Society. Meanwhile, we are stuck with unsightly planning blight in the shape of a row of empty shops in Chiswick town centre .

- **396 - 400 Chiswick High Road** A proposal has been put forward for a mixed residential and retail development on the site of the Daniels Beds/ Carpet Right shops east of the empty Empire House shops. As this seems likely to be an improvement on the present building, the Society is at present favourably disposed to the application in terms of scale but we will need to examine the detail as this is a very sensitive site in relation to the Turnham Green CA and the Town Hall and church (both Listed buildings). An application is expected early in 2018

- **Chiswick Roundabout (The "Curve")**

The year opened with a notable victory for us and the other objectors to the 32-storey skyscraper when the Hounslow Planning Committee on 12th January unanimously refused planning permission for both the building and the digital media screen advertisements attached to it. However, that is not the end of the story, because the developers elected to appeal the Council's decision. The appeal will be heard at a Public Inquiry in June, 2018. The Society is working with planning officers to support the Council's case and will be mobilising the Society's Members to attend the Inquiry.

- **Capital Interchange Way**

The application for a new bus garage and 550 residential units in three buildings of 18, 19 and 20 storeys was refused by Hounslow Council in December for several reasons. One major reason was "The proposed buildings, by virtue of their location, scale, and design, would cause serious harm to the significance of a range of

designated heritage assets including listed buildings and conservation areas, as they would appear as overly tall and bulky elements that are discordant additions to the existing high quality townscapes, adversely affecting their setting. It has not been clearly and convincingly demonstrated that there are public benefits that would outweigh the harm caused.”

- **Power Road Studios, 114 Power Road**

An application for the erection of a 5-storey office block as a replacement for studio 5 and erection of an additional floor to studio 1 (the main building) was approved with some modifications by the Planning Committee in April. These modifications included some of those requested by the Society such as keeping the wall and railings at the front and some stepping back of the extra storey on the main building. However, we were disappointed that other modifications we requested were not granted as we considered that the scheme would cause serious harm to the significance of the Studio 1 building, which was currently worthy of local listing and was one of the best examples of Art Deco architecture in Power Road.

The Society strongly supports the retention of the existing employment B1 uses of buildings within the Power Road Industrial Estate; we recognise the importance of the estate and the current mix of SMEs that it contains. If its role as a "creative hub" for SMEs is to be enhanced, we need to celebrate its heritage. Any new development needs to pay full respect to the best of the surrounding buildings,

- **632 Chiswick High Road; Citroen/Peugot Dealership at Chiswick Roundabout**

An application to replace the existing 1 to 2-storey dealership with a 4-storey building was approved by the Planning Committee in September with some modifications. These modifications included some of those requested by the Society such as improvements to design and height along the Chiswick High Road frontage and changes to the Conditions imposed.

- Other major sites for which applications were submitted at the end of 2017 or which are expected in early 2018 include:
Capital Interchange Way, L&Q Citroen site and the B&Q site

Planning policy issues on which the Society has been active include:

- **Local Plan Review: Great West Corridor (GWC) and Brentford East Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

We alerted our Members to the Council’s consultations which ended in December. The Chairman submitted the Society’s responses. It was agreed that major developments should not be permitted unless the provision of the necessary infrastructure, especially public transport, was guaranteed. The proposed policies for the GWC would be the subject of a Public Inquiry and would eventually be incorporated into the Local Plan. The Brentford East SPD was intended to provide interim guidance and was expected to be adopted by the Council in the first half of 2018.

4. During the year, several other issues have engaged the Society's attention:

- **Air Quality**

The Society is deeply concerned about the poor air quality in our area and has objected to siting residential developments along the major road network (A4/M4)

- **CS9 (Cycle Super Highway):**

The proposal to build a cycle track down part of Chiswick High Road aroused a lot of comment and debate within the Chiswick community. In the light of divided opinion amongst Members on earlier traffic-calming proposals for Wellesley Road and Stile Hall Gardens, no Society response was submitted to TfL on CS9. The result of the official consultation is awaited; any modified proposals will be brought to Members' attention.

- **Gunnensbury Station**

The Society continued to campaign for the improvement of the station. While some improvements to the entrance had been carried out by the Chiswick Tower owners, work to declutter the platform (moving the waiting room etc) which had been expected to be carried out during the summer, had not been progressed by TfL/Network Rail. The serious problem of overcrowding, especially during morning peak is still our major concern. At least, construction of the footbridge to provide easier access from the business park to Chiswick Park station is finally in progress, which it is hoped will take some of the pressure off Gunnensbury station. The footbridge is expected to be completed by the end of 2018. A new, longer bus shelter had been installed for west-bound buses.

- **Locally Listed Buildings**

The Council is asking us to nominate buildings and other structures in our area that we consider worthy of local listing. A preliminary view by the WCGS committee indicates that there are many such buildings in our area. We shall need to provide details and justification for each nomination. This will require research. The Chairman called upon Members to volunteer for this important work and suggested forming an informal working group of volunteers early in 2018.

5. Green Up Gunnensbury Campaign

The Society is launching a campaign to encourage residents and businesses to take pride in their neighbourhood and become more actively involved in making Gunnensbury a greener, healthier place to live and work. Activity in this campaign will start in 2018 and will cover the following aspects:

- Persuading residents to green up their front gardens with planting, window boxes etc. and where possible to make their drives and forecourts more permeable to water, thus decreasing rainwater run-off.
- Encouraging local businesses to green-up their frontages.
- Working with the Council, Hounslow Highways and other organisations on greening and improvement of the public realm, e.g. trees and street planters.
- A garden competition with prizes for the best entries, including one for children and young people, donated by Terry and Sally Thorn.
- Members are invited to put forward ideas for greening up our neighbourhood.

6. Social Activities

Although the WCGS is primarily a residents' association concerned with planning, development and general social amenity, it has been our custom to have time for some socialising at our summer public meeting and at the AGM. Noting how popular this has been with our Members, we organised an informal social evening at the Gunnersbury pub. Despite the dark and dreary December evening, sufficient Members turned up to encourage us to continue with this initiative in 2018. Notice will be given of forthcoming events.

7. Society Officers and Management Committee

The Honorary Officers elected at the Annual General Meeting on 6th February, 2017 were:

Chairman	Marie Rabouhans	(Silver Crescent)
Vice Chairman	Adam O'Neill	(Cambridge Road North)
Treasurer	Charlotte Aldridge	(Thorney Hedge 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)
Anna Rumian	(Sutton Lane North)
Sarah Thorn	(Thorney Hedge Road)
Terry Thorn	(Thorney Hedge Road)

During the year, Veronica Hunt-Lewis and Bud Murryweather were co-opted onto the committee and may stand for election at the AGM.

All of the current Honorary Officers and Management Committee Members except Nic Atkinson will offer themselves for re-election at the AGM on February 5th, 2018. Our thanks go to Nic for his services to the Society.

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. We are especially eager to bring younger people onto the Committee.

8. Website

Robert Hare- continued to develop the website and we were delighted to be able to include a range of photos commissioned from local photographer, Jon Perry to illustrate features of our area. We urge Members to make regular use of this informative and interesting facility: <http://www.westchiswickgs.org.uk>

9. Membership

Membership is holding steady at 141, despite some turnover of people leaving or arriving in our area. The Committee is considering ways of increasing membership.

10. Treasurer

The Society continues to be solvent. Subscription income was down slightly from last year's (£705.00), and general donations remained steady. Hall hire costs have increased in 2017 from £25.00 and £40.00 to £25.00 and £44.00 respectively.

We will shortly hear the outcome of our 2017 bid for £6,000 of CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funding to support our Green Up Gunnersbury campaign via street planting and the front garden competition.

Treasurer's Annual Statement for 2017 As at 31st December, 2017

DAY-TO-DAY ACCOUNT

Opening balance (brought forward from 2016): **£1,256.41**

INCOME

Membership subscriptions 650.00

Donations from members 77.00

Total Income **747.00**

EXPENDITURE

Venue Hire 169.00

Refreshments (2 meetings) 80.00

Printing 96.00

Postage 109.00

Website costs (photography) 250.00

London Forum subscription 28.00

Heritage Guides 50.00

Brentford and Chiswick Local History 50.00

Total Expenditure **832.00**

Closing balance (carried forward to 2018): **£1,191.41**

Note: Two outstanding payments have been made against this account within the year but not yet banked by payees:

- £137.00 Website (Wordpress)
- £50.00 London Parks and Gardens Trust

CAMPAIGNS + CONSERVATION ACCOUNT

Opening balance (brought forward from 2016): **£459.25**

INCOME

Members' campaign donations 65.00

Total Income **65.00**

EXPENDITURE

HACAN subscription 35.00

Printing costs (Curve meeting@Town Hall) 40.00

Total Expenditure **75.00**

Closing balance carried forward to 2018: **£419.25**

NOTE ON AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS

The accounts kept by the Treasurer are reconciled against monthly statements issued 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. We are grateful to WCGS members Richard Vinter and Chris Jenks for carrying out this duty.

Charlotte Aldridge, Honorary Treasurer January 2018

Subscriptions

Subscriptions for 2018 are due by the AGM on **February 5th 2018**.

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. Cash will also be accepted.

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.

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.

The Secretary WCGS
18 Arlington Gardens
London W4 4EY