



St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Forum

Newsletter June 2018

Grenfell Memorial service and silent walk

The memorial service held at St Helens Church on the anniversary of the Grenfell fire was a moving event, combining music, readings, and a powerful sermon from vicar Steve Divall.

Televised in full by the BBC (and available on IPlayer as a BBC News documentary) the event was also a huge organisational feat for the church.



The scene outside St Helens Church after the service

Following a series of services and gatherings at other places in the area, the evening's silent walk from Maxilla to St Marks Park involved 5,000 people.



Amongst the many television programmes on Grenfell in recent weeks, there was one called *Before Grenfell* which gives an interesting account of the social history of this part of North Kensington, from the late 19th century to today. The area is back where it started in terms of income inequality and a rich/poor divide.

The programme includes accounts from residents who have lived at the Lancaster West Estate since it was built. They describe how what were then seen as dream homes fell into neglect and disrepair over time – culminating in a refurbishment that cost so many lives.

This programme is also available on BBC IPlayer. The Grenfell Public Inquiry resumes on Monday with presentations from experts commissioned to examine the causes and reasons for spread of the fire.

Plans for Old Oak published for further consultation

Since last September, planning officers at the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation have been reviewing their Draft Local Plan.

Substantial changes have had to be made to the Plan. As a result an unusual third round of public consultation is now taking place, running until 30th July.

We will hold an open meeting in mid July to discuss the changes and the content of a further StQW response. The main issues are:

- ◆ Original proposals for a major business centre above and around the HS2 station (due to be completed 2026) have been 're-phased' beyond the 'plan period' of 2018-38.
- ◆ This is because the land used by the various rail depots involved will not be available until then.
- ◆ OPDC still intend to build 25,000 new homes at Old Oak, despite this rethink of the original 'vision' for this new part of London.
- ◆ The latest document again gives little specifics on housing densities and building heights, but admits that *average* densities will be 450 homes/hectare.
- ◆ This is above the current London Plan maximum, even for highly connected locations.
- ◆ It is uncertain whether a new Overground station will be built at Hythe Road. No funds are secured.

Given all these changes, Cargiant/London & Regional Properties last autumn put on hold their own masterplan for development at 'Old Oak Park'. We remain in touch with their planning consultants.

As covered in previous newsletters, the OPDC last year granted planning permission for three tall residential towers on sites along Scrubs Lane.

- ◆ On the 22 storey tower at 'North Kensington Gate' S106 negotiations are not yet concluded.
- ◆ The same applies to the proposed 20 storey tower at 2 Scrubs Lane (the City Mission church)
- ◆ At 'Mitre Yard' the S106 agreement is signed off but no work has started on site.

This suggests that these developers may well be reconsidering the financial viability of their schemes. They may be trying to renegotiate downwards the amount of affordable housing to be provided, in light of a static or falling housing market in West London.

All these schemes were granted permission on the basis that Scrubs Lane would soon have high levels of public transport access. This now seems increasingly uncertain. As ever, this has become a planning process led by developers, and not by sound planning principles.