

February newsletter from StQW and SHRA

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Date: Saturday, 17 February 2024 at 12:54 GMT

St Helens Residents Association

St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Forum



This February 2024 newsletter includes the date for our next meeting and some of the local issues we will discuss.

- NHS Total Triage System at North Ken Medical Centre
- Why are we experiencing more helicopter noise?
- How our neighbourhood is being surrounded by new high rise development
- More cheerful news on local cultural events
- Current work on the 'greening' content of a revised StQW Neighbourhood Plan
- RBKC's final consultation on its Local Plan
- a 'Safer Neighbourhood' newsletter for Dalgarno ward and Citizens Panel recruitment

Our next open meeting at St Helens Church Hall will be at 8pm on 6th March. All welcome, and please pass on this newsletter to any new neighbours.

NHS Total Triage system

Many of us will have recently received a NHS text from North Kensington Medical Centre. This tells us that from Monday 26th February the surgery *will be moving to a total triage model for appointments. And that this is in line with government policy.*

The text explains how to book routine appointments via the NHS app or the PATCH system now used by the surgery. It seems that it will still be possible to make urgent appointments by ringing or turning up at the surgery but this is not clear. Nor is it clear how those who are not online (or do not use a smartphone) are expected to learn about this change, or to cope with its consequences. RBKC estimate that 8% of the Borough's population are digitally excluded. We will try to find out more before our open meeting.

Helicopter noise over our neighbourhood

Several members have queried why this has increased? Initial requests to the Council's transport team, and to the Police, did not turn up much information.

One of our members kept a record of overflights, and having seen the data RBKC officers looked further into the issue. We have learned that single engine helicopters must use flight paths that avoid built up parts of Central London,

such as the Thames. But double engine helicopters are less restricted as to their routes. Hence commercial overflights are becoming more frequent and widespread.

We will show a couple of slides on this topic at our open meeting and meanwhile would welcome any input from any members with knowledge of this part of the commercial flight business. Email to sthelensassn@aol.com.

Update on Ballymore application for Kensal Canalside development

There are now some 1,300 responses from the public and community groups/residents associations, received by the Council and published on the [RBKC online planning register](#).

The balance between objections and expressions of 'support' has swung to and fro, during and since the initial consultation period ended on January 12th. In the past month, those listed as 'support' have outweighed objections. Any further comments will still need to be taken into account by the Planning Committee until the decision is made (via email planning@rbkc.gov.uk quoting PP/0675/23).

These supportive responses are usually very brief and go little further than saying that London needs more housing especially for young people – an incontrovertible fact. Many of these comments have been solicited by PR teams engaged by the developers.

The objections are usually detailed and set out **concerns over high densities, building heights, transport bottlenecks on Ladbroke Grove, impact on views and risks from decontamination works.**

A decision by the Council's Planning Committee remains many months away. A development of this scale involves the Mayor of London at two stages. The ['Stage 1' report from the GLA has now been published](#). It completely ignores the fact that the claimed 'housing capacity' of the Opportunity Area dates from a period when plans for a new Elizabeth Line station on the site offered the potential of very good access to public transport.

While the Canalside site is some distance from the boundary of the StQW neighbourhood, this mega development will increase our sense of living in a dense urban environment. The skyline of Wormwood Scrubs is increasingly filled with new towers, along with the cranes of those under construction. Mitre Bridge and Scrubs Lane have similar towers emerging, floor by floor. Looking to the north from St Marks Park and to the east from Little Scrubs will have similar high-rise buildings in the background.



For those living near the Canalside site, for example in Barlby Gardens, the impact will be huge (see CGI image above). Hardly what the Government's latest national planning policies describe as '*gentle densification*'.

Revising the 2018 StQW Neighbourhood Plan – greening and sustainability

Following our last open meeting in November, a working group has formed of StQW committee members Kim Evans, Tania Martin, Jenny Harborne and Stephen Duckworth along with three other neighbours interested in drawing up what will be a new chapter of the StQW Neighbourhood Plan. This will cover the wide range of topics in the Borough's New Local Plan, under the heading of Blue Green policies.

These range through biodiversity, flooding, eco retrofitting of homes, our open spaces and many other topics. Our 2018 Neighbourhood Plan includes little material on these subjects and this is an opportunity for some creative thinking on policies and projects tailored to this part of the Borough.

Re-affirming the three Local Green Space (LGS) designations in our Plan will be part of this work. These 'backland' sites at Nursery Lane, off Kelfield Mews, and at the West London Bowling Club are important as 'green lungs' and in maintaining air quality.

As part of revising the neighbourhood plan, we are talking to RBKC (and the landowners) about how community use of all three green spaces might be widened.

Thanks to a Local Green Space designation, two attempts by developers to join up with the landowners of the Nursery Lane site have failed to gain planning consent. Developers Northcare (Scotland) Ltd and their planning consultants Savills were very confident back in early 2023 that their proposals for a 72 bed luxury care home would be successful.

Many of our members and the StQW committee made clear to the Council the extent of local opposition to a scheme which would not have met local needs, and clearly conflicted with LGS designation. RBKC refused the application last July. **It is good news that the six-month period for any appeal by these developers to the Planning Inspectorate expired in late January and the site seems safe again for the time being.**

Part of updating the Neighbourhood Plan will be discussions with the Council on the long-term future of the land at Nursery Lane. Meanwhile Mark Enright's garden business has extended its lease on the site.

The final consultation on the Council's New Draft Local Plan

This [RBKC consultation](#) runs until 12th March. Responses are limited to the changes to wording of 'Main Modifications' to the Draft Plan, as recommended by Planning Inspector Louise Nurser. Her Examination in Public of the draft document took place last summer. The StQW website [includes the input](#) we made to this process under previous items of 'News'.

The [RBKC web page](#) gives a firm message that *This is not an opportunity to re-state previous representations, to raise new objections to matters not covered by the Main Modifications, or to seek further changes to the Publication draft of the New Local Plan Review.*

On Kensal Canalside, the Inspector's proposed modifications are minimal and change nothing on the development capacity or future housing density of the Opportunity Area, nor its inadequate transport links. **We will liaise with the Kensington Society on a final effort to improve the Draft Local Plan before its formal adoption in the coming months.**

Our neighbourhood and its cultural assets

Hammersmith & Fulham is bidding to become London's Borough of Culture in 2025. The *On London* blog has been extolling Camden as a 'global cultural hotspot'. The cultural assets in our area of North Kensington deserve to be better known.

The [Playground Theatre](#) in Latimer Road is running a five-week season of the work of multi-award winning playwright Gail Louw, presenting three world premieres along with an acclaimed international production of her best-known work *Blonde Poison*. This play won the Argus Angel award for Artistic Excellence at the Brighton Festival.

For details of all four productions in the season, see the theatre's website at the link above. Having survived lockdown, the high-quality productions at this venue need our support as neighbours as well that from theatre goers across London.

[Ladbroke Hall](#) in Barby Road continues with its programme of exhibitions and live events, including Jazz Nights on Fridays. A recent concert by young musicians from [Nucleo](#) was a very successful evening (pictured below). This charity has been celebrating its first decade and now has 22 teachers working with over 400 children and young people locally. The project provides instruments and delivers all its activities for free, widening the opportunity for a musical education.



Safer Neighbourhood newsletter for Dalgarno ward

This useful newsletter from the Police [can be read on the StQW website](#). It gives an update on what the Met Police Safer Neighbourhood Team have been doing in Dalgarno ward, along with local trends on crime and antisocial behaviour.

A similar newsletter will be circulated for St Helens ward shortly, and we have invited a member of the Team to come along to our March 6th meeting at the church hall for a brief Q&A session.

RBKC Citizens Panel

If you have a knock on your door from a market research firm [SMSR](#), this will be part of the Council's current recruitment of new members for its [Citizens Panel](#). The Panel is made up of 2,000 residents, broadly representative of the demography of the Borough. It is used for surveys and consultations on the Borough's priorities.

RBKC undertake an annual exercise to top up the Panel's membership, which is why SMSR are knocking on doors.

Finally, grateful thanks to those of our members who made contributions to our running costs, following our last two open meetings. We don't have any external funding, and the annual subscriptions to maintain websites for both SHRA and StQW, and now for MailChimp are our main outgoings.

This year's [RBKC bidding round for NCIL funds](#) include an allocation of a modest £2,632 for the StQW neighbourhood

(separately from the larger ward allocations for St Helens and Dalgarno),

We will put in a bid to use these funds for the costs of updating the neighbourhood plan (consultation materials, websites, room hire). The position on all bids in the two wards will be an item at **our open meeting on March 6th**.
Deadline for bids is March 12th.

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