June newsletter from the StQW Forum and St Helens RA

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St Helens Residents Association

St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Forum

Open meeting at St Helens Church Hall - Wednesday 8th July 6.30pm

This will be one item meeting and should not be longer than an hour- as the first stage of local consultation on a revised and updated neighbourhood plan for the area. More details are below. The meeting will be followed up by a formal public consultation exercise on a new Draft Neighbourhood Plan for 2026-40. The session is an opportunity to raise issues which should be addressed in a new version of the current plan as adopted by RBKC in 2018.

St Helen's Church celebrates 75 years

As many of you will have heard the church is holding a special service followed by an outdoor community lunch on St Helens Gardens, where everyone is invited to bring and share food together. The service is from 10.30 until 11.20 and the lunch from 12-2pm.

The original church was built by H. Curry in 1881 and dedicated in January 1884. The church was hit by a flying bomb and destroyed during World War II. The current church was rebuilt during 1954-6 and rededicated on 6th July 1956, with its ancillary buildings (the vicarage, church hall, parish room and stores) arranged round the site.

The architect was J.B. Sebastian Comper, and the church has an organ case and stained class by Sir J. Ninian Comper, the architect's father. The pews are by Richard Norman Shaw and were orginally from Holy Trinity,

Latimer Road, Hammersmith. Although the building is not Listed it is well regarded by the 20th Century Society. We are fortunate to have such a large church at the heart of the neighbourhood.

An updated version of our neighbourhood plan

We have been talking about revising and updating the 2018 version of the StQW Neighbourhood Plan for a couple of years. A recent change in the national legislative framework for neighbourhood plans, which took effect at the end of March, has spurred on the management committee to undertake a rewrite of the current version.

The change to the national framework has been to remove one of the original 'basic conditions' for any neighbourhood plan in England. This required that all NP policies must '*generally conform'* with the *'strategic policies'* in the Local Plan for the area. In our case this meant the RBKC Local Plan, the latest version of which was adopted by the Council in 2024.

At the independent examination of our draft plan in 2016, we successfully made the case for several minor variations to Borough-wide planning policies, which the independent examiner accepted as falling within the definition of 'generally' conforming. In those days we had many a battle with council officers on this subject.

The recent removal of this basic condition gives potential scope for some rethinking and rewording of StQW planning policies. The new basic condition, replacing the old, requires that a neighbourhood plan must not deliver less new housing than is proposed in the relevant local plan.
In our case, this should not prove to be a restriction.

Our 2018 neighbourhood plan already allocates the handful of sites where RBKC's Local Plan envisages new housing. The largest of these is in the airspace above Units 1-14 in Latimer Road, as and when these light industrial units are redeveloped over time.

As part of a revised set of policies for Latimer Road, we are proposing to reinstate the height limit which we first discussed at open meetings of the forum back in 2015 – a height of 14m allowing for four storey buildings. The final wording in the 2018 Plan did not set a specific figure, and this NP policy has since been interpreted by RBKC as allowing for five storey buildings. All such applications have proved very unpopular with residents in the street and in Eynham Road.

No redevelopment at five storeys has yet been built in Latimer Road. An appeal on Unit 9 remains outstanding. Our proposed revised policies are also intended to replace the RBKC 2022 Design Code, and

to support simpler facades similar to that at the former Unit 1 (see above). This is seen as the one successful example of a redevelopment, creating 8 flats on upper floors. Our new neighbourhood plan will encourage owners/developers to follow this approach and tp create a more coherent streetscape which leaves relatively open skies to the west (for those parts of the street not already overshadowed by Imperial's White City campus)..

These and other policy changes proposed for an updated 2026-40 St Quintin Neighbourhood Plan will be explained at an open meeting in St Helens Church Hall on Wednesday July 8th at 6.30pm. There are few other significant changes. Retention of Local Green Space deisgnation for our three backland sites will remain part of the revised plan. This meeting will be followed by an eight week 'pre-submission consultation' during which comments and suggestions can be fed back to sthelensassn@aol.com**.** The consultation version of new Draft Plan will be available to download from www.stqw.org by the end of this week. This new version will also drop the redundant '*and Woodlands'* part of the title, as agreed at our 2024 AGM.

In other planning news…

No movement on the **Ballymore/Sainsburys application at Kensal Canalside.** This still awaits referral by RBKC to the Mayor of London. The Mayor then decides whether to endorse RBKC's decision to grant planning consent, to 'call-in' the proposal for a GLA public hearing, or to refuse the application. Active lobbying continues by the informal consortium of local RAs and community groups (including StQW/SHRA) under the banner of Keep Kensal Green.

Application **PP/25/03535 from the St William subsidiary of Berkeley Homes still** awaits a decision by the Council. Berkeley Homes have made very public their view that a combination of construction costs and regulatory requirements has made housebuilding in London unviable.

This major housebuilder has stopped acquiring sites in London. The risk is it will seek to maximise profit from remaining schemes already underway. It seems likely that both Berkeley and Ballymore are already seeking to reduce their S106 contributions to affordable housing, in an effort to 'restore' viability. This has been the pattern for many major housing scemes across London, since the 'emergency measures' were announced by the Mayor of London and MHCLG last autumn and came into effect in March 2026.

The planned start date for Imperial's construction of the **underpass between their Wood Lane campus and Latimer Road** (latter part of 2025, then mid 2026) appears to be slipping once again -- into what could be a very distant future. StQW has been pursuing a formal complaint over the handling of an 'addendum report' to Hammersmith & Fulham's Planning and Development Committee back in Novermber 2018.

The resultant committee decision switched round the trigger date for underpass completion, as written into the 2012 S106 Agreement between Imperial and LBHF. This date changed from the completion of the first three buildings on the site to the last two. The second of these ('Building A' on the corner of Shinfield Street and Wood Lane) has yet to have its planning consent signed off let alone see building works start.

As a result there is no mechanism for LBHF to enforce this part of the S106 Agreement. There is also no evidence that the 2918 committee meeting was told the consequences of an 'addendum' recommendation. We will be pursuing the complaint with the Local Government Ombudsman unless the Council can offer a better explanation of events than has been provided to date.

Meanwhile Imperial College have been copied into this correspondence but are not responding to us with any uopdated news on a start date, nor a re-commitment to see the underpass built.

A new regulatory regime for dockless e-bikes - but not yet

Joe Powell MP has alerted constituents to the measures in the Devolution Act (for which he voted) which will allow for greater control of the use of dockless e-bikes.

The Act received Royal Assent at the end of April, but then the usual process of 'Commencement Orders' will need to follow. The Mayor of London will be drawing up a regualatory regime. Once these steps happen it should mean that all of the e-bike companies:
- must obtain a TfL licence
- must comply with London-wide parking rules
- must meet safety, maintenance, and data-sharing requirements
- can no longer negotiate separate rules with individual boroughs

It looks as though it will be early 2027 before a new regime across London comes into force. Measures in the Crime and Policing Act should also allow tougher enforcement on the use of illegal e-bikes and dangerous riding.

We discussed at our last open meeting those aspects of life in the neighbourhood which have got worse rather than better over the past decade. The impact of e-bikes for pedestrians came high on the list. We have been trying to think of any workable policies on e-bike use which we could include in our updated neighbourhood plan (beyond expressing support for London-wide regulation). But it is hard to devise policies which need to relate directly to *the development and use of land* which could be of any help. Suggestions welcome.

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