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St Helens Residents Association St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Forum

Our AGM Monday May 30th at 8.15 pm

This time last year we held our AGM on Zoom. For our next AGM on Monday May 30th we intend to be back in St Helens Church hall. Ideally we would have a 'hybrid' meeting which allowed people to join on Zoom, but the audio equipment at the hall is not up to this. The hall is a large room which will allow for some social distancing and we will keep an eye on Covid figures in North Kensington in the next couple of weeks – and switch to Zoom if we need to.

The meeting will be at 8.15pm and the formal agenda will be short. It will be an opportunity for neighbours to meet up, and please invite anyone you know who has moved into in the area and who may not know about the association/neighbourhood forum. Most of the current committee members will be standing again for re-election. There are spaces for a few new committee members and please email sthelensassn@aol.com if you are interested. There will be a glass of wine and a chance to chat at the end of the meeting.

Another year passes - with slow progress on some local projects

We discussed last May the detailed plans for 'streetscape improvements' at St Helens Gardens and an extra zebra crossing in St Quintin Avenue. Works were due to start earlier this year. RBKC transport planners have been asked for an update.

No firm news on the proposed underpass from the Imperial campus in Wood Lane through to the southern end of Latimer Road (promised by Imperial College a decade ago now). The College says they still intend to proceed with the scheme and will hold a further meeting when remaining legal issues have been resolved. This has been the same story for two years. StQW/SHRA, Westway Trust, and RBKC planners have all chased up Imperial in recent months but without results so far.

Kensal Canalside development

After a RBKC 'development forum' held last November at Barlby Primary School, planning applications were expected early this year from developers Sainsburys/Ballymore and St William. Public opposition to a development with three towers of 35 and 36 storeys has had some effect. The consultation version of the new RBKC Local Plan refers to a need for *some limited taller elements of over 26 storeys* and sets a height range of 6-31 storeys for this Opportunity Area. Trellick Tower has 31 floors.

As a consequence, both developers decided to delay submission of planning applications. Latest word is that Sainsburys/Ballymore may submit in 2022 Q3 (i.e. July to September). There is no sign of more news on the

consultation website at <https://www.projectflourish.co.uk/>

Consultation responses on the RBKC Draft Local Plan

In our March newsletter, we included a summary of the StQW/SHRA response the Council's new draft Local Plan, along with a link to our full proposed submission. Ours was one of 120 responses from residents groups, landowners, developers and individuals across the Borough and these have now been [published](#) online on the RBKC website..

Latimer Road and the future of the RBKC Article 4 Direction on change of use from commercial to residential floorspace

The new Local Plan for Kensington and Chelsea has a long way to go before adoption. There will be a further public consultation on a 'Regulation 19' version this autumn. Meanwhile the Council has to make decisions (before August 2022) on which areas of the Borough should continue to be covered by an Article 4 Direction removing the national Permitted Development right to convert commercial floorspace into residential accommodation.

In 2013 RBKC persuaded the Government that this was needed because of the gulf in value between residential and office floorspace in this part of London, meaning that much office space would disappear. However in February half a dozen inner London Boroughs with similar measures in place were instructed by the Secretary of State to revise and minimise the areas to be covered by such Directions.

The Government sees 'Permitted Development' as an important flexibility in allowing commercial space (office, retail, and other 'E class' uses) to be adapted for other purposes – not least in response to shrinking levels of office demand in London and changing patterns in retailing. The Permitted Development right that would be allowed if there is no Article 4 would apply only to the residential *use* of existing buildings. Proposals for new buildings and for physical alterations to existing buildings would continue to need planning permission.

The StQW Forum has long argued that more 'mixed use' should be allowed in Latimer Road, where four separate parts of the street have been designated since 1997 as part of a Freston/Latimer Employment Zone.

The 2018 StQW Neighbourhood Plan introduced planning policies allowing for a limited level of mixed use at Units 1-14 and was followed up last year by the RBKC Design Code for these buildings (setting parameters on building heights, design and materials). We discussed and voted on these matters at our AGM last May.

RBKC now has a short timescale in which to revise and reduce the areas covered by an Article 4 Direction. It looks as though the Council will limit a new set of boundaries to the main commercial areas (Knightsbridge, Kensington High Street and some others). Public consultation on a new Direction seems unlikely, given compressed timescales.

We have suggested to RBKC planning officers that Latimer Road is left out of a reduced set of areas and that the national position on permitted development should apply. We are ready to listen to any differing views, in our efforts to secure the best overall future for Latimer Road as part of the wider neighbourhood.

Future of the Ariadne Nektar pub at 274 Latimer Road

The pub closed its doors several weeks back. The StQW Forum worked with Dimitri Kotsakis back in 2019 to secure registration of the pub as an Asset of Community Value. We understand that the freeholders

accept that the building should stay as a pub, rather than be sold or converted to only residential use. A new landlord and management is currently being sought.

OPDC Local Plan – near the finishing line

It was back in 2015 when the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation took over planning powers for the large area to our immediate west. OPDC is one of two Mayoral Development Corporations in London. Plans for the new HS2 and Crossrail station at 'Old Oak Common' and the potential for regeneration of large expanses of underused railway land, were the basis for handing over planning functions to a largely unaccountable body at City Hall.

Decisions by OPDC on individual planning applications for high density/high rise development have featured in many of these StQW/SHRA newsletters in recent years. The Draft Local Plan, prepared by OPDC is finally due to be adopted on 22nd June. This is five years later than its original timetable and after an extended 'examination' by Planning Inspector Paul Clark. The Local Plan will document will determine the type of development that is built in Scrubs Lane, north of Wormwood Scrubs, and at east and north Acton.

Our sister body the Old Oak Neighbourhood Forum has followed every step of preparation and examination of the OPDC Local Plan. Sadly, many locals see it as an incoherent spatial plan for 'a new part of London'. Cargiant's decision to abandon its own masterplan with proposals for 6,000 new homes at 'Old Oak Park' dealt OPDC a hammer blow in 2018. Subsequent deletion of new Overground stations reduced levels of public transport access to new developments. North Acton is fast becoming a notorious 'cluster' of buildings of 50 storeys and more, through decisions delegated by OPDC to Ealing Council.

The Planning inspector has had to make 464 'major modifications' to the Draft Plan in order to make it lawful and 'sound'. The final version is very different from that submitted to him in October 2018. An OPDC bid to Government last December for major funding for new infrastructure has not borne fruit to date, and does not fit obviously with the Levelling Up agenda.

Meanwhile sections of the Crossrail line open very soon, but not with a station near our neighbourhood. Planned completion of Old Oak Common Station and its HS2/Crossrail interchange remains a decade away at 2029-32.

Local elections and ward councillors for St Helens and Dalgarno wards.

At the May 5th elections Emma Dent-Coad and Portia Thaxter were elected for St Helens ward with Kasim Ali and Eva Jedut for Dalgarno ward. All are Labour councillors. There was little change in the overall balance on the Council, with the Lib Dems gaining one seat in Earls Court ward.

You can see all the local election results, along with email addresses for all councillors, on the RBKC website at <https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/council-councillors-and-democracy/councillors-and-committee-meetings/councillor-surgeries>

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