

Introduction

Our 2017 AGM will take place at The Cricketers, Richmond Green, on Wednesday 19th April 2017 at 7.30pm. This newsletter summarises the key events of the last twelve months.

We are always keen to hear from residents who would like to get more involved in the activities of FoRG. With the sad passing of one of our long-standing Committee members, Graham Walker, in October 2016, we need more residents to join us.

Heathrow

FoRG's interests in the live issue of Heathrow expansion are represented by Richmond Heathrow Campaign (RHC), involving the Richmond and Kew Societies that jointly have over 2,000 members. RHC is represented on Heathrow's Community Noise Forum by FoRG committee member and RHC chair, Peter Willan. RHC's substantial research can be viewed at www.richmondheathrowcampaign.org and www.rhcfacts.org.

The Government announced its preference for Heathrow expansion in Oct 2016, with first flights expected in 2025/26 should development proceed. RHC, Richmond Council, the GLA, the Mayor of London, our local MP and many organisations are opposed to a 3rd runway. Heathrow is the most expensive major airport in the world and there are reasons to believe it won't be able to fund the substantial investment without excessive charges to passengers, airlines and tax-payers. Also it may not be able to guarantee air pollution, noise and climate change targets.

There are several stages in the decision process, and over ten consultations, starting with a draft Airports National Policy Statement (NPS) and Airspace Policy – both requiring responses by 25 May. (RHC will place a commentary on its website and FoRG residents are encouraged to respond to this and other consultations as they arise.)

The Govt will finalise the NPS, subject to scrutiny by a parliamentary select committee and a parliamentary vote, probably towards the end of 2017. Meanwhile, Heathrow will submit its development proposals to the planning inspectorate, and ultimately the Secretary of State, for a Development Consent Order. The process is highly flawed; the Govt's preference is based on the Airports Commission's recommendation, which bears little relation to its own evidence. Furthermore, we believe the Govt intends closing down debate on major issues through the NPS, while subsequently issuing consultations later this year on topics such as climate change, air quality and surface access. It is all back to front. How flight-paths will impact on people will not be known for several years.

We do know that Richmond residents will have their respite from arriving aircraft of 8 hours each day cut in half. Also, there may be departure flights over Richmond when the wind is from the east. Plans for a Southern Rail access between Waterloo and Heathrow, via Richmond, could involve serious overcrowding and level crossing delays.

Come to the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2017

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WEDNESDAY 19th APRIL
7.30pm
•

Hear what's happening on The
Green;
Have your say on local issues

•
Wine served
•

The Cricketers (upstairs),
Richmond Green

NEWSLETTER APRIL 2017

Recently the Govt closed its consultation on the next 5-year regime for Night Flights. RHC made the case for a total ban between 11pm and 7am.

Licensing

FoRG's remit does not directly cover Richmond town centre, but nevertheless the FoRG community is impacted by the evening economy, particularly from late-night dispersal and drinking on the Green and along the Riverside.

Alcohol licences have been granted to a new pizza restaurant, Franco Manca in Red Lion Street and a new Danish bakery/cafe, Ole & Steen in George Street and to the two Odeon cinemas. Licence changes have been made to the Richmond Arms, Itsu, Jackson & Rye, Cote, Bacco and All Bar One (about to open on 19 April as The Ivy Café). There are further changes in hand at Ole & Steen, The Ivy, Revolution bar and the Viva nightclub. A new licence is being sought by Holland & Barrett, and 13 Hill Rise has applied for change of use to become a late-night bar. Jamie's Italian is closing and the licensed Yuma Sushi in Brewers Lane appears to have left. Encore in Hill Street lost its licence.

Licence changes for the most part are dealt with by committee member Peter Willan, but on behalf of the Richmond Society.

There is pressure on the town's retail, and increasingly food-led businesses are taking over, as exemplified by the opening of Joe & The Juice, Leon and Ole & Steen in George Street. It will be interesting to see the impact of the £3.2 million raised over the next five years by Richmond town becoming a Business Improvement District. It is already clear the character of the town is changing.

Accounts

FoRG's accounts for the year ended 31st Dec 2016 will be distributed at the AGM, and show total income of £723 (2015: £1,224) and a surplus of £237 (2015: deficit - £81). Total reserves amount to £7,355 (2015: £7,117). The principal source of income was, as for last year, a share of LBRUT film office receipts, although these were considerably reduced in 2016. The main expenditure was a contribution of £250 towards a bench on The Green in memory of Graham Walker, a long-standing committee member of FoRG. Other costs included FoRG's share of costs supporting the Heathrow campaign, and 2016 AGM costs. For the fourth year in succession we made a donation, although reduced in 2015, of £150 (2015: £250) towards Richmond Town Centre's Christmas tree lights.

Expenditure Plans

FoRG is keen to enhance the setting of the stone drinking fountain (Grade II listed) at the south-eastern corner of The Green that was last restored in 1977 by private subscription. Preliminary cost from the Council of renovating it had been estimated as £13-£14k, to include cleaning and stone repair (approx. £5k), and replacement of the unsuitable brick surround with York Stone paving (approx. £8k). We continue to investigate sources of funding.

With the success of Valerie Boyes' talk in Dec 2015 (*The History of Richmond Green: the familiar and unfamiliar*), we've asked Valerie for a second talk, ideally in the autumn of 2017, on another interesting aspect of the Green and its history.

We will donate £250 towards the Old Palace Lane project (see below).

Old Palace Lane Project

Old Palace Lane is one of the town's most historic streets, and the Museum of Richmond will be holding an exhibition (*The History of Old Palace Lane, from Medieval to Modern Richmond*) from 6th May to 16th Sept 2017 to celebrate the Lane's past.

The exhibition will tell the story of the Lane using information boards, pictures, maps and artefacts. Over many months, a great deal of research has been undertaken with much fascinating new material having been found.

An accompanying booklet will be produced, as well as an App enabling website visitors to access an audio-visual tour of the Lane's history. An illustrated talk will be held at the Duke Street Baptist Church on Monday 15th May at 8.00pm.

Old Palace Lane, originally called Crane Lane, was once the tradesmen's entrance to Richmond Palace. The jetty at the foot of the Lane was used for unloading river-borne goods. Stretches of wall of the Tudor Palace still stand along the Lane. As well as the appearance of two substantial 18th century houses, Asgill House and Asgill Lodge, the Lane began to fill up with a pub and mixed housing. Classes occupying the Lane ranged from the very rich to the very poorest; some of the modest two-up, two-down cottages housed as many as ten people. Today the Lane contains Georgian, Victorian and some modern housing.

Old Deer Park

The Old Deer Park Working Group, comprising representatives of FoRG and other local amenity groups, published a report on the Park's future conservation, management and enhancement in June 2012, based closely on the Crown Estate's own adopted *Landscape Strategy*. We commented on anomalies in the designated planning boundaries, the poor condition of many parts of the Park and the potential to realise a number of the projects advanced in the *Landscape Strategy*. Since then we have been encouraging the Council to prepare a coherent plan for the Park and to move forward with the projects. The Park embraces the public open spaces to each side of the Twickenham Road, the Pools-on-the-Park complex, the Richmond Athletic Association ground, the Richmond Cricket ground and the Royal Mid-

Surrey Golf Club. We are encouraging projects that provide improved access to and through the Park, that resolve the poor condition of key parts of the Park, and generally enhance the space for outdoor recreation while preserving and enhancing its amenity, open parkland character and heritage significance.

Events

Although the remit of FoRG does not extend to Old Deer Park, the Council generally keeps us informed about proposed events there and we lobby to ensure that suitable arrangements are in place regarding the use of PA systems and amplified sound, the provision of adequate sanitation and the requirement for parking space.

The last year has seen a lot of activity on Old Deer Park. The Fanzone for the 2015 Rugby World Cup caused considerable damage to the grass and although some attempts have been made to repair it, frequent events on the same area of Old Deer Park have not allowed any re-seeding to take effect and considerable areas of bare grass and mud remain. We understand that provision has now been made to make further reparations to the badly-damaged areas of grass, and we will urge LBRUT to ensure that organisers of future events on ODP are required to be mindful of their impact on any newly-repaired ground.

Website

Our website continues to be maintained and updated by SWLEN. If you have the time and skills to help us maintain and enhance our website, we would love to hear from you. Our website address is unchanged: www.forg.org.uk

FoRG expenditure strategy

We've recently reviewed and updated our Use of Funds policy (changes indicated by *italics* below). We're happy to take questions on our policy at the AGM. FoRG funds, primarily from LBRUT film receipts, may be used for the following purposes:-

1. Contribution to the costs of a scheme improving the environs of The Green – particularly if matched funding is available, eg. Civic Pride grants.
2. Costs of lobbying against policies that are considered to be detrimental to residents, eg. pedestrianisation of George Sreet.
3. Costs of commissioning research, (eg. on car parking or anti-social behaviour), particularly if done in tandem with other organisations.
4. Reimbursement of expenses properly incurred in running FoRG, including the preparation of the Newsletter and other forms of communication.
5. *Promotion of activities designed to further the interests of the community of The Green*

Expenditure of funds under £1,000 requires approval by the majority of the Executive Committee, with the exception of any item covered by paragraph 4 above, when the agreement of the Chairman and Treasurer shall suffice *subject to any personal declarations of interest by the Chairman or Treasurer, in which case another member of the Executive Committee would approve the expenditure.* Expenditure in excess of £1,000 on any single project requires a majority of 75% of the Executive.

AOB

At our last AGM, we were asked to investigate a number of issues:-

- The installation of a mirror on the blind corner where Friars Lane meets King Street and The Green. The Council no longer permits use of mirrors at junctions. As we wish to avoid any additional street furniture, and are not aware of any accidents at this corner, we plan to take no further action.
- One lamp-post opposite Maids of Honour Row appears to be under-coated but not gloss-finished; there are in fact three lamp-posts requiring attention, and a fourth with just a base and no lamp at all; the Council has promised to investigate and undertake the necessary reparation to at least the first three of these lamp-posts.

The Council has also agreed to order replacement light-bulbs required for the Gateway lights and we continue to chase for these, with that corner of The Green being very poorly lit.

- We were asked to check the number of daily commercial refuse vehicles operating around The Green. This is ongoing.
- Local Safer Neighbourhood Police phone numbers are now on our website: 020 8247 8319 / mobile: 07843 291 152. (The central Met number is 101, and of course emergencies are 999.)
- The future of the twin, listed BT phone-boxes on the edge of The Green, whose material condition has deteriorated, is moving forward. As a unique pair in the Borough, they cannot be removed and we await next steps.
- We've made no further progress with the Council on the pruning of the plane trees on Greenside.
- Regarding plans to re-surface Old Palace Yard, the Crown Agents anticipate the work will be undertaken this summer.

On the subject of litter collection on The Green, the shift patterns and personnel involved have changed with the change of contractor from Veolia to Continental Landscapes. In our opinion – and we would be very interested to hear your views – the litter collection is certainly not as early as it was, and there have been several occasions when we had to prompt Continental re grass-cutting, or specific aspects of uncollected litter, although when contacted, the team has been responsive.

Richmond Council Parks Department invited “Friends” groups to develop Vision Plans for their parks or green spaces to enable plans and goals to be drawn up with ideas and aims for 1, 5 and 20 years hence. SWLEN designed a guidance document and a ‘vision plan’ template to assist groups in their plans. We have submitted a draft plan for The Green that envisages no significant changes over the next 5 to 10 years, but draws attention to issues of concern, namely

increasing low-level anti-social behaviour and under-age drinking; litter; tree maintenance; rough-sleepers; the state of the grass verges on adjacent roads; proliferation of commercial delivery bikes; and excessive usage of The Green by personal trainers.

In Sept 2016 LBRUT published a consultation document (*Electric Vehicle Recharging Strategy 2016-2026*) and FoRG was invited to comment. We submitted our view that, since demand for electric car-charging is likely to increase, adequate charging points should be provided in all publicly and privately-run car parks. While recognising that some additional street furniture would be required, we urged the Council to consider lamp-post charging points wherever possible.

As far as the development of Friars Lane car park is concerned, the Council's Planning department says there are no site plans/proposals to share. A plan would need to be brought forward by the Council's land and property section, and, as far as the Planning department is aware, no plans have yet progressed through any initial feasibility work. At this stage there are no dates for consultation with local residents.

AGM

We hope to see as many of you as possible at our AGM upstairs at The Cricketers on Wednesday 19th April 2017 at 7.30pm, and hope that you will stay and join us for a complimentary glass of wine at the end of the meeting.

Vivien Harris
Chair, FoRG

We are again very grateful to Featherstone Leigh for printing this newsletter.

FRIENDS OF RICHMOND GREEN

Contact details: Chairman – tel: 020 8948 3384

Email: mail@FoRG.org.uk

The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held on

Wednesday 19th April 2017 at 7:30pm

in the upstairs room at The Cricketers pub, Richmond Green

AGENDA

Apologies

Minutes of last meeting

Matters Arising

Report of the Executive

Financial Report and Adoption of Accounts

Election of Officers – those standing are:-

Chairman	Vivien Harris	8 Pembroke Villas
Secretary	Vacancy	
Treasurer	Mark Sebba	9 Pembroke Villas

Election of other Members of the Executive – those standing are:-

Peter Willan	7 The Green
Peter Griffiths	26 The Retreat
Anna Newton Dunn	29 Old Palace Lane
Linda Christmas	16 Queensberry House

Any Other Business