



Friends of Richmond Green

NEWSLETTER

CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ON RICHMOND GREEN

Last summer brought **unacceptably high** levels of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and serious crime to Richmond Green. Residents meetings were held and numerous requests submitted to the Council and our MP for help to tackle the ASB and crime on our doorsteps. The Council did increase the level of Park Guard hours, periodically, but at the same time the Police had to balance their resources with a range of wider London responsibilities, meaning they were not always able to be 'on the beat' in our community as we might like.



Did anyone find gold at either end?

Following South Richmond's Police Liaison Group (PLG) meeting in August, the **Richmond Green Working Group (RGWG)** was formed to investigate ASB and serious crime issues. It meets regularly and three members of FoRG's committee sit on the group. The Council's Community Safety Service put a problem-solving process in place and this included a consultation with residents. 84% of residents who responded to the consultation said that crime and ASB was "significantly more" or "more" than in previous years. There is **rising concern** among residents about drug-dealing and use, speeding, criminal damage and of course general ASB, in particular public urination and defecation, litter (often drug-related), graffiti and late-night noise. We are happy to share a more detailed report on the consultation but space here is limited.

With another summer fast approaching, and wanting to avoid a repeat of the events of last summer, we want to see an increase in uniformed presence on The Green, more **targeted police operations** and the use of fines (as opposed to warnings). We hope that the Council will deliver more Park Guard resources, make greater use of CCTV and Rapid Deployment Cameras, and provide portaloos – ideally in the ODP car park. We are also in regular discussions with our local Police team regarding targeted operations specifically on drugs and speeding around the Green, and our local Councillors have been **supportive throughout**. Uniformed Transport Police will be present at Richmond station to deter troublemakers getting off trains and buses, and use of Section 35 Dispersal Orders will continue.

Neighbourhood Watch groups: the events of last summer prompted much greater interest in neighbourhood watch groups as residents looked for ways to support the Police in **keeping our neighbourhood safe**. A two-way cascading pyramid communication system was initiated, by which information is passed down to the community and back up to the police. There are several successful **NWatch** groups already in place and we are happy to **put you in touch** with your nearest group.

OUR AGM: as the virus spread last March, Lockdown prevented us holding our planned 2020 AGM. So it's more important than ever to hold one this year to **report to you** what's been happening, how FoRG's finances stand and to elect a FoRG Executive Committee. Although Lockdown III will be easing, remaining restrictions still mean that this year's FoRG AGM will be held **ONLINE** – a virtual meeting that we hope you'll want to join. Thank heaven for ZOOM!



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021

Wednesday 14th April at 7.30pm

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

How to join us on ZOOM:

Please send David MacKenzie your email address so that, the day before the meeting, he can include you on the emailed ZOOM invitation:

dkmacka79155@outlook.com

FORG's WHATSAPP

In January this year, FoRG launched its own **What's App group**. The primary purpose is to keep residents informed of local incidences of **ASB** and **crime**, and also any other activities and developments that may be of interest.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Fountain working: the restoration of The Green's listed Victorian drinking fountain was **completed** in early 2020, just before the first Lockdown, and we witnessed water flowing again. Sadly COVID-19 put a stop to our plans for a launch event, but when restrictions permit we are ready to turn the water back on. In due course FoRG intends to apply for a Richmond Society Award to recognise this project.

Graffiti: please report disfiguring graffiti to: https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/env/ironment/street_cleaning/graffiti_removal



Old Palace Yard resurfacing: there is still **no date** for the long overdue resurfacing work, but the Crown Agents have organised a drains survey because of recent surface flooding and it's prudent to complete drainage repairs before resurfacing begins. Also, British Gas have cleaned the two 'heritage' gas lamps in the passageway leading from Old Palace Lane. Although this has made some difference, the lighting level is still not sufficient as a whole. The Crown Agents are now seeking a quotation from British Gas for **another lamp**, hopefully to be installed before resurfacing work begins.

Telecomms giant: there have been two planning applications for a telecomms mast on ODP close to the A316 car park. A Cyprus tree-shaped **24m high mast** was refused permission in Sept 2020 on grounds of visual amenity and its relationship to trees close by. A fresh application for a **17.5m high mast** was submitted in January 2021. While we're all reliant on communications, such placement is **inappropriate** for the environment and there are alternative sites which don't impact so directly on local residences and ODP. FoRG objected to the latest application, and we're very grateful to everyone who also objected individually.

PHONE BOXES SAVED

For years FoRG has been keen to preserve the two iconic red K6 telephone kiosks near Paved Court. Designed by **Sir Giles Scott** and **Grade II listed**, they were disposed of by BT's 'Adopt a Kiosk' scheme several years ago and the telephone kit inside was removed. The kiosk nearest Paved Court was acquired by a local resident in December 2020, and FoRG is now acquiring the other kiosk from Richmond Council. They have links with Sir Richard Attenborough, a former resident of The Green, and we believe one or both could benefit the community through non-commercial use: for example, housing a defibrillator, as an information point or involving sculpture. FoRG believes these kiosks and their location are not fit for commercial use. Suggestions from residents on the kiosks' potential future use are welcome.



FORG ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2020-21

FoRG accounts for the year ending 31st December 2020 will be shown at our virtual AGM. In summary, we recorded a total income for the year of **£8,205** (cf. 2019: £25,969), with a deficit for the year of £21,823. Total reserves at 31st December 2020 amounted to **£13,228** (cf. 2019: £35,051).

During 2020, in completing the restoration of the listed Drinking Fountain on The Green, FoRG made payments totalling **£29,789** for works by different skilled artisans. This led to a cash deficit, but despite the substantial payment, we nevertheless ended the year with a healthy surplus of £13,228.

Grants and personal donations of £7,000 were received in 2020 towards the restoration of the fountain, bringing total donations to £19,000. In contrast to 2019, the pandemic had the effect of cancelling filming activities on The Green from February 2020 onwards; as a result, film companies' donations for the year came in at just £1,200.

In summary, as a committee FoRG continues to actively seek uses for its cash surplus and welcomes suggestions from residents about good use of funds.

OLD DEER PARK

The **Old Deer Park Working Group (ODPWG)** aims to make Old Deer Park better appreciated for outdoor sport and recreation. Improvements are sought while sustaining the Park's historic significance and parkland qualities. Soon, ODPWG and the Council aim to begin phase 2 of improving access to the Thames and park from the heart of Richmond. This involves a **new pathway** leading from the A316 car-park to the river, and includes a **boardwalk** constructed at the boggy riverside end. Phase 1 involving an upgrade of the ODP car park and its entrance was completed in 2019.



ODPWG and council are considering other projects including restoration of the riverside and a **tree-planting** project across the Park.

The Old Deer Park Working Group (ODPWG) comprises representatives of FoRG and other local amenity groups and is chaired by **Peter Willan**.

Friends of Richmond Green website

Our thanks to **Habitats & Heritage** (incorporating SWLEN) for maintaining our website. If you have time and skills to help us with it, we would love to hear from you... please email us on: mail@FORG.org.uk



HEATHROW – THE BATTLE CONTINUES



During 2020 **Richmond Heathrow campaign (RHC)** responded to 13 consultations and participated in 5 meetings with Heathrow, our MP and others. The consultations covered Heathrow's economic regulation and plans for airspace modernisation. The DfT's March 2021 consultation proposed leaving Heathrow's **night-flight** regime unchanged for 2022-24, a dispensation historically allowing around 80 flights in an

8-hour night. Resulting noise affects the sleep and health of over 2 million people, yet there's no economic loss to the UK from re-scheduling night-flights to the daytime after 7am. RHC proposed a staggered introduction of a night-flight ban by 2024 and meanwhile no increase on the reduced number of night-flights in 2020.

A **Supreme Court decision** in December 2020 **upheld** the Transport Secretary's decision in 2018 to progress Heathrow's expansion plans; those plans can therefore now recommence. However, a 3rd runway is at least 10 years away and many obstacles remain, not least the need to constrain aviation's carbon emissions (and hence the number of flights) as spelled out by the Climate Change Committee. Further financial challenges face the industry owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. A 3rd runway would be substantially negative for the UK economy.

Airspace Modernisation is a much more pressing issue, with the industry introducing performance-based navigation (like a Satnav) that concentrates flight-paths and facilitates aircraft turns. This potentially brings arrivals and departures directly over Richmond Park and would produce **more noise** over Richmond Green.

FoRG's interest in Heathrow continues to be represented by **RHC**, along with the Richmond and Kew Societies that together have over 2,000 members. RHC is represented on Heathrow's Community Noise Forum by FoRG committee member and chair of RHC, **Peter Willan**.

To view RHC's substantial body of research and evidence on Heathrow, please visit www.richmondheathrowcampaign.org

NEWS IN BRIEF

Benches and their surrounds: we're aware that the number of paving slabs underlying benches around The Green varies and as a result bare earth and muddy puddles develop in front of those most used. We're working with the Council to standardise paving for new and replacement benches, and in some cases we'll argue for increasing the size of the base surrounds.

Bollards: we're very grateful to **Good Gym** for their cleaning of the bollards around The Green and roadside.

Pot-holes: there remains concern with pot-holes left un-repaired in the road around The Green. Please **report** the worst instances to the Council. Here's an easy-to-use link for doing so: https://www.richmond.gov.uk/report_potholes

Filming: there's been little filming activity during lockdown, but as restrictions ease there's likely to be more. A reminder, therefore, that **guidelines** for companies applying to film locally – arising from FoRG's work with the Council's Film Office, covering filming times, parking, catering, litter, noise, lighting and communications – can be viewed on the Council's 'filmrichmond' webpage: www.richmond.gov.uk/filmrichmond

PLANNING, LICENSING AND TRAFFIC

The Richmond-upon-Thames Local Plan, adopted in 2020, would normally provide policy for the next 15 years but the Council felt it needed to begin an early revision with consultation in March 2020 on the Direction of Travel. FoRG supported the comprehensive response from residents **Peter Willan** and **Paul Velluet** and others who continue to engage with the Council in developing proposals to enhance the town and surrounding area.

A case was made that Central Richmond, The Green and the Riverside each have very different characters and use and it's this diversity, side by side in a relatively small area, that's so **valuable**. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts and it is essential the characteristics of these three areas are maintained, not only to provide Richmond with a viable future but to sustain the quality and historic significance of the Riverside and The Green for future generations.

The consultation focused on several themes including climate change, affordable homes for all, town centre retail, jobs and business growth, protecting heritage, culture and green open land, building and place design, support for community infrastructure (eg. schools), and creating safe, healthy and inclusive communities. Other proposals include reduction of through traffic, the introduction of a clean air zone (CAZ), cycle routes and parking. **Be Richmond** is preparing a Vision for public realm improvements and this is likely to become the subject of a public consultation in early summer.

Significant alterations are already occurring in the town with Planning '**changes of use**' being sought, eg. residential use above the former Top Shop and other George Street buildings, and use of the Pizza Express in Red Lion Street as a bar. The Council approved the House of Fraser redevelopment application in 2020: retail will be replaced by offices on upper floors and reduced in Paved Court. FoRG opposed the height increase and other design features. Recent Government Policy consolidating planning uses means uses such as retail can now morph into food takeaway and other uses with only **limited Council control** thus risking the character and quality of the high street.

Last year saw few applications for new or varied alcohol licences, but of great concern is whether or not the Council will re-introduce the **Cumulative Impact Zone** for Richmond that for 15 years has protected town, Green and Riverside from alcohol-related ASB and crime. There's a risk that, following recovery from Covid, a trend will develop of greater alcohol supply during the evening economy. This would add to the risks the town already faces from loss of retail during daytime. While some of these issues do not directly impact FoRG, they do indirectly and FoRG continues its involvement with the council and police.

FRIENDS OF RICHMOND GREEN

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday 14th April 2021 at 7:30pm

HOW TO JOIN IN

If you'd like to join us for our online AGM we need to be able to email you the ZOOM-link the day before. So please send David MacKenzie your email address so he can include you: dkmacka79155@outlook.com
Or, if you prefer, let a committee member know and they'll ensure you're included on the ZOOM invitation.

AGENDA

Apologies

Minutes of last AGM (10th April 2019 – copy on FoRG website: www.forg.org.uk)

Matters Arising

Report of the Executive

Financial Report and Adoption of Accounts for 2019 and 2020

Election of Officers – those standing are:-

Chairman	Vivien Harris	8 Pembroke Villas
Secretary	<i>Vacancy</i>	
Treasurer	Diana Billingham	21a The Green

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

Peter Willan	7 The Green
Peter Griffiths	26 Retreat Road
Anna Newton Dunn	29 Old Palace Lane
David MacKenzie	4 Pembroke Villas
Gemma Warrilow	Old Friars, Old Palace Place

Any Other Business

Contact FoRG's Chair on telephone: 020 8948 3384

New Committee members: We're very grateful to **Gemma Warrilow**, **Lisa Marlowe** and **Nick Saunders** who worked with us as co-opted members of the Committee during 2020. And if **you** have time and the interest to join our Committee to help with FoRG activities, we're always keen to hear from residents who'd like to help. Email us at: mail@FoRG.org.uk

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We hope as many of you as possible can join us online for our 2021 AGM on Wednesday 14th April at 7.30pm.

Vivien Harris
Chair, FoRG