

Friends of Richmond Green

NEWSLETTER

MAY FAIR & BALL ARE BACK!

After four long years, Richmond's much-loved community Fair returns to Richmond Green on **Saturday 13th May 2023**. Visitors can look forward to all the things they love about the **Richmond May Fair** – including children's rides, the Scouts' barbecue, the dog show, the craft marquee, local performers and musicians, and a wealth of stalls hosted by Richmond-based charities – which will take over Richmond Green between 10am and 5pm on Saturday 13th May.

The Richmond May Fair has been a firm fixture on the local calendar for more than 50 years, taking place on the second weekend of May every year since the late 1970s. Three years ago, the town was gearing up to celebrate its golden anniversary – until the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown forced organisers to cancel plans. Now, for 2023, a committee of local volunteers has worked hard to reinstate the Fair, and they aim to take it back to its roots as a true community event. For more details, see www.richmondmayfairweekend.org.uk



Saturday 13th May 2023

And on **Friday 12th May**, the **Richmond May Ball** also returns, to benefit two deserving local charities – Home-Start RKH and Skylarks. Over the years, the Richmond May Ball has raised over a million pounds for around 20 local charities, and looks forward to raising substantial sums again for this year's chosen beneficiaries. For details, see www.richmondmayball.com

CELEBRATE THE CORONATION WITH FRIENDS & NEIGHBOURS



Saturday 6th May 2023
Bring your own picnic

Following the success of our Big Jubilee Picnic last June, we are excited to organise a **Coronation Tea Party** on The Green on **Saturday 6th May** between **3pm-6pm**, to celebrate the historic Coronation of HM King Charles III.

Please join us with your cakes and tea for a jolly tea party, with **Live Jazz** and a chance to catch up and converse with neighbours around The Green. Tables and chairs will line the North Western side of The Green (opposite Pembroke Villas) where you will be allocated your own seat.

RSVP asap to Gem@care4free.net: replies received later than 21st April won't guarantee a seat at the table, so don't delay.

..... **See you there!**



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023

Wednesday 26th April at 7.30pm

- Hear what's happening around The Green
 - Have your say on local issues
 - Wine will be served

Where? The Cricketers pub (upstairs), Richmond Green

Please come and join us

FORG's WHATSAPP

Friends of Richmond Green's **WhatsApp group** connects residents living in the vicinity of The Green, The Little Green and the surrounding areas. Its primary purpose is to keep residents **up to date** about local activities and developments that may be of interest, such as our planned **Coronation Tea Party** on **Saturday 6th June**. To join the FoRG WhatsApp group, please visit our website www.forg.org.uk and download the application form, rules of engagement and data protection information.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Loos: Despite repeated requests by FoRG and the Richmond Society, we didn't get loos on The Green and Riverside in 2022 and the signs are not encouraging for 2023. We contributed to a recent review of the **Community Toilet Scheme (CTS)** pointing out that the current scheme (with only two participants and limited hours) just doesn't work for a vibrant town like Richmond. Last summer saw numerous cases of public urination and defecation on The Green, in the A316 carpark, and on the railway footbridge and in our gardens. We continue to fight for the provision of permanent toilets.

House of Fraser: The target is to complete construction work this year. Exactly when depends on speed of feedback from the Council on a number of matters. We are informed that a number of tenants want to be up and trading ready for the Christmas period. Contrary to rumours, **no restaurant or gym** has signed a contract at the date of going to press for this newsletter.

OLD DEER PARK: projects update

The **Old Deer Park Working Group (ODPWG)**, chaired by **Peter Willan**, comprises representatives of FoRG and other local amenity groups. It aims to make the park better appreciated for outdoor sports & recreation, with better access while sustaining ODP's historic significance and parkland qualities.



Pathway to the river?

Path to the Thames: access from the heart of Richmond involves creating a new path to the riverside. **Stage 1** (from Park Lane through the A316 car park) was completed in 2019; **Stage 2** (leading from the car park to the river, featuring a boardwalk over boggy ground at the riverside end) is about to start, subject to final Crown Estate agreement. The Council's efforts in obtaining Crown support for the joint project with the ODPWG are much appreciated.

Tree Planting: in 2020 ODPWG drafted a review of ODP trees. The first stage of a plan is now taking place, with 29 specimen trees being planted by the Council. These will be next to Pools-on-the-Park, the play area, tennis courts and along the A316. There'll be a mix of species, including trees not commonly found in the borough. Subsequent stages include a 'tree belt' alongside the disused lawn courts, central copse infill and extension, a small wet woodland near Twickenham Bridge and understory planting along the A316.

Wilderness Arcadia: the Thames Landscape Strategy with the ODPWG and Council are opening up vistas to the King's Observatory, the obelisks and the Kew Pagoda and creating a sustainable flood plain. A hydrological study is well advanced. Restored and new signage is work also underway.

Telephone Masts: ODPWG and FoRG opposed two planning applications for imposing telephone masts alongside the A316 – one was invalidated and the other refused. Additionally, ODPWG supported the Council in its refusal of a mast on appeal to the Planning Inspectorate (still awaiting this outcome).

Local Plan: ODPWG responded to Council consultations on Conservation Areas & Views and continues to seek adoption of a 'Statement of Significance' for Pools-on-the-Park and its landscape setting, so as to protect the complex.

NO RAIN ON OUR JUBILEE PARADE

The British weather forecast is not always right, but with warnings of thunderstorms and torrential rain there was a distinct threat there would be no **Platinum Jubilee** celebrations on The Green at all on Sunday 5th June last year. So it was with even greater pleasure – at 12 o'clock, with the bunting up and **Roger Perrin's** superb jazz band playing – that those cloudy skies behaved and **185** neighbours and friends of Richmond Green came together with great cheer, laughter and an altogether happy community feeling. And the rain stayed at bay for the full 5 hours of enjoyment! The **Big Jubilee Picnic lunch**, celebrating 70 years of Her Majesty's service, was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Tables, decked in red, white and blue, stretched through the avenue of trees opposite Pembroke Villas, with cake stands, food fit for a Queen, and flowers adorning tables. Children met each other almost for the first time, playing numerous games, a reminder of what a great area Richmond is. Many thanks to everyone who worked so hard making it such an enjoyable event.



Platinum fun on a grey day



Friends of Richmond Green website

Our thanks to **Habitats & Heritage** 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 CHALLENGE CONTINUES



Richmond Heathrow Campaign, chaired by **Peter Willan**, acts for FoRG and the Richmond and Kew Societies to campaign against, and highlight, the adverse environmental impact of Heathrow on community health and well-being. For more details, please visit www.richmondheathrowcampaign.org

Expansion: Heathrow's departing CEO said 2023 would see a resumption of 3rd runway development: his replacement's view will be crucial. A Climate Change ceiling on growth seems likely, and legal, economic and financial obstacles remain, together with a policy of levelling-up so other airports share in growth. We remain vigilant on 'expansion' by mixed mode (ie. landing on north / south runways at the same time).

Airspace Modernisation (ASM): this is aimed at reducing delays, improving punctuality and resilience, and increasing capacity. But communities are in the dark about whether noise impact will be better or worse. A main feature is **Performance Based Navigation (PBN)**, resulting in very accurate flight-paths, and thereby concentrating noise. RHC argues for dispersal of noise rather than concentration. A re-design of flight-paths uses PBN for departures but less for arrivals, but PBN departures from the north runway to the east, and arrivals from the southeast, could introduce routes directly over Richmond. Much time is spent on this with Heathrow and we're increasingly frustrated by their 'black box' approach and lack of evidence. Flight-paths will likely be pre-determined before a public consultation in 2024.

Carbon Emissions: over-optimistic reliance on future bio-fuels eventually requires a curb in demand for aviation growth. Last year's govt Jet Zero plan was disappointing, and ICAO global growth forecasts failed to address the net zero challenge.

Night Flights: many regard night flight noise as the most acute issue. Re-assessment by the Government is continually delayed and little news is expected before 2024. RHC continues to seek a ban on flights between 11pm and 7am.

Noise Action Plan: Heathrow's plan is being updated and a new national noise study is underway. RHC continues to press for WHO guidance on noise to be given a legal footing (similar to air quality), and for a targeted reduction in noise impact.

Could you help? RHC is in great need of volunteers to join the team of 6 people – to engage with Heathrow on issues and to liaise with the Kew and Richmond community and others. If **you** are interested, then please contact FoRG or RHC.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Old Palace Yard resurfacing: After years of chasing the Crown Estate and their agents, there's little progress to report. The Crown Agents are currently reviewing all previous agreements and costs, and the leaseholders yet again hope to receive some positive news soon.



Friars Lane Car Park: The Council has confirmed it still has plans to make improvements to Friars Lane Car Park. The latest proposal includes re-surfacing, electric vehicle charging points, street lighting and better provision of bins. Details are expected to be finalised in the coming months. Ward councillors, car park users and the adjacent properties, will be informed in advance of the start-date of the works. View the proposals here: <https://haveyoursay.citizenspace.com/richmondecs/friarslane/>

CONSULTATIONS

FoRG responded to Council consultations on **Conservation Areas (CA): Richmond Green, Richmond Central, Richmond Riverside:** FoRG supported the need for refreshed CA Analysis and Management Plans, but became concerned with scope and presentation, and we concluded that we couldn't support the drafts without seeing substantial revisions.

Views: FoRG supported the continuation of the adopted views and a proposed list of new views, and suggested some additional vistas to consider.

Street Trading: among other issues, we sought to avoid commercialisation of Richmond Green and we successfully achieved minimum pavement access of 2m instead of 1.5m.

TOWN CENTRE: PLANNING, LICENSING

The uncertain commercial future of the town centre continues in the face of economic headwinds, online retail competition, and changing demand for office, leisure and residential use. FoRG responds to applications for alcohol sales, for change of use and design and street trading. Last year **Peter Willan**, on behalf of FoRG, dealt with 17 cases of which **13** resulted in satisfactory outcomes. We didn't object to applications by **The Duke, Turks Barge** and **3-4 Friars Lane**. Discussion with applicants resulted in acceptable terms and conditions for **Côte, Megan's, One Kew Road** and **Scott's**. We challenged **Hunters Lodge** development (which didn't proceed) and opposed **two proposed telephone masts** alongside the A316 (rejected by the Council). Our efforts led to refusals at the **Prince's Head, Charcoal Grill**, and **WH Smith** at the railway station. We supported the designation of **Portland Terrace** as a **Building of Townscape Merit**.

Although we objected to plans for the **House of Fraser** redevelopment on the grounds of harm outweighing benefit, we consider the plans *could* be acceptable without the additional upper floor, or with the plant room included in the additional floor, thereby reducing visual harm to the conservation area and listed building setting, and without outdoor use of the top floor. We're also concerned about the conversion of **Pizza Express** from a family restaurant to a bar (capacity for 800 vertical drinkers), and approvals given to **Jojo's Peri Peri** for late night refreshment and **Little Dobbies**. FoRG and the Richmond Society jointly obtained **Legal Advice** from a leading licensing barrister over concerns with Council decisions that don't robustly apply their own Cumulative Impact Policies; we argue that adding alcohol sales and later hours are not sustainable solutions to difficult trading conditions. Additionally, we oppose the trend towards higher buildings, outside leisure use at roof level and changes in planning law that reduce Council control over change of use.

Friends of Richmond Green

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday 26th April 2023 at 7:30pm

(upstairs at The Cricketers pub, Richmond Green)

Minutes of last year's AGM (20th April 2022) are available on FoRG's website: www.forg.org.uk

Your current FoRG Executive Committee: **Vivien Harris** (Chair; 8 Pembroke Villas); **Diana Billingham** (Treasurer; 21a The Green); **Peter Willan** (7 The Green); **Peter Griffiths** (26 Retreat Rd); **Anna Newton Dunn** (29 Old Palace Lane); **David MacKenzie** (4 Pembroke Villas); **Gemma Warrillow** (Old Friars, Old Palace Place);

Co-opted members requiring confirmation at our AGM:

Gemma Fumagalli (6 Pembroke Villas); **Juliet Bramwell** (3 Cholmondeley Walk).

Contact FoRG's Chair – telephone: 020 8948 3384

FoRG's ANNUAL ACCOUNTS the accounts are being finalised, and details will be shared at our AGM

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB)

Crime on The Green decreased in 2022 from the previous two years. ASB was down 15.1% while assaults, drugs and criminal damage fell by around 5%. The period to June saw no significant problems. However, hot weather at the start of July brought significant trouble on Friday nights: several hundred young people from across London gathered on The Green, having seen the location advertised on social media. With this came assaults, graffiti, drug-taking, criminal damage, underage drinking and noise nuisance on a large scale. The lack of Police presence (because of redeployment to regular demonstrations elsewhere, plus the Queen's funeral in September) meant problems escalated despite the presence of Parkguards and the Youth Service Bus. Eventually a reactive **Section 35 Dispersal Order** was authorised on the 14th October, a measure required every weekend for a month to deal with the problem. Police recognised that what they'd thought of as a seasonal gathering was indeed something more serious. This triggered the introduction of the **Safe Space** initiative on Friday and Saturday nights; this will be in operation at Richmond Station throughout the spring and summer this year. Police presence, and awareness of who is travelling to Richmond at night, offers some reassurance. Police have acknowledged that problems last year escalated due to lack of early intervention, and they assure us that this year they intend to be more proactive to prevent similar escalation.

Going into 2023, the Police have asked that residents report every crime and any ASB, however small (call 999). Without reports, they cannot act or request extra resources. The link initiative – where local coordinators write weekly crime and ASB reports for the Community Safety Officer and the Police – will start again in April. All communications will help to keep Richmond Green a safe and welcoming space for everyone to enjoy.

CLIMATE ACTION

Lack of progress towards a sustainable climate leaves a huge urgent task lying ahead to improve the thermal efficiency of housing and to find sustainable replacements for gas used for cooking and heating. Yet there's very little information about what can be done and how best to do it, especially in sizeable listed properties. FoRG has proposed a collective effort – a **Climate & Energy Action Plan for Richmond Green** – to reduce our domestic carbon footprint, by sourcing advice, technical know-how and possible funding solutions. FoRG's dialogue on this with the Richmond & Wandsworth partnership has sparked considerable interest.

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We hope as many of you as possible can join us for our 2023 AGM on Wednesday 26th April at 7.30pm.

Vivien Harris
Chair, FoRG

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We are again grateful to Featherstone Leigh for printing this newsletter