

# ON SLOW

Neighbourhood  
Association

[ona.org.uk](http://ona.org.uk)

Spring 2018

# News

Please ensure we have your current email so we can keep you up to date on neighbourhood issues. Contact us: [onslowna@gmail.com](mailto:onslowna@gmail.com)



## The ONA now has a website!

Go to [ona.org.uk](http://ona.org.uk) for our latest news, past newsletters and more information about our activities. If you would like to contribute a story idea, please email [onslowna@gmail.com](mailto:onslowna@gmail.com)

Julian Lloyd Webber, our President, *writes*



Many important decisions affecting this unique area of London are about to be taken during 2018. These include proposals to further 'pedestrianise' Exhibition Road and the long overdue redevelopment of South Kensington Station.

Other serious issues concern the extortionate rents being charged to retailers, which have resulted in much-loved local institutions such as the Bangkok and La Brasserie restaurants being forced out of business last year. Even the auctioneers Christie's has had enough – not a good sign! And a careful watch will need to be kept on whatever

planning proposals are submitted for that huge and important space. It would also help if RBKC had either enough manpower – or the inclination – to enforce its own licensing hours as certain 'shops' continue to make a mockery of the law with apparently no fear of repercussion.

All these issues and more will be at the forefront this year and the only way to **make sure** that **you** – or your company – have a say is to **join** the **Onslow Neighbourhood Association**. ONA has devoted over 45 years to looking after the character of this wonderful area. In order to continue doing this effectively we must have the support of local residents and retailers. If you love your community and think you can help us with any of our activities please email [onslowna@gmail.com](mailto:onslowna@gmail.com).

Together we can make a real difference!



The ONA Annual General Meeting will take place in March, exact time and place TBA. Agenda and accounts will be delivered to members. News updates will be posted on the ONA website and also emailed to members (*so please ensure we have your email address*).

## What is a Construction Traffic Management Scheme?

*And does it really help residents?*

FOR THE LAST FIVE OR SO YEARS, every planning application for a basement or a large site development to the RBKC Council has had to be accompanied by a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP).

This plan is essentially the contractor's proposals for dealing with the disruption caused by the work to residents' parking and quality of life, as well as local traffic. A new, updated CTMP may be requested by the Council if



the start of the development is not for a number of months, to deal with any changes to the original application. The original CTMP is included under the 'PP/' application (available to anyone who signs up to the Council's 'Enotify' emails; see below), but the subsequent CTMP (if one is required) is preceded by the prefix 'CON/'. Unfortunately this subsequent CTMP application can easily escape the notice of residents who have not spotted the application because of its 'CON/' prefix.

The CTMP requires the contractor to discuss the CTMP with local residents or resident associations, though failure to do so does not automatically fail the application. But residents have to be vigilant and object to the CTMP if they have not been consulted, and the Council should then advise the applicant to consult with the local residents before the Council will approve the application.

Despite the consultation with local residents, the developer does not have to abide by their suggestions – they only have to 'consult' to comply with the legislation.


Further, it has been found over the past 12 months that some contractors delivering supplies or removing waste

skips from some sites will ignore the CTMP, and act in a threatening manner to local residents who are protesting that access to their own property or movement of their car is blocked by the contractors' vehicles.

Under these circumstances, requests to the RBKC enforcement officers have failed to produce remedial action. The obstruction may occur early in the day, and enforcement does not arrive until later in the afternoon when the obstruction has cleared itself, only to be repeated a few days later. Even when photographs of offences are produced, enforcement action is rare.

The consequence is that the CTMP, originally produced to make the life of residents more bearable during a development, no longer fulfils its objective as the enforcement department is seriously understaffed.

With local ward elections coming along in May, it is important to vote for a councillor who promises to take up the matter of these CTMPs with a view to making them as enforceable as parking restrictions. This would genuinely improve the quality of life of local residents.



... some contractors delivering supplies or removing waste skips from some sites will ignore the CTMP, and act in a threatening manner to local residents...

## Register for RBKC Council email notification service

The Council provides a free weekly email notification service of all planning applications to anyone who registers on their website. You can also apply to be notified about licensing or parking updates.

*For Planning, follow the steps below.*

- 1** Register online at [www.rbkc.gov.uk/MyRBKC/public/Registration.aspx](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/MyRBKC/public/Registration.aspx)
- 2** **Login** to RBKC at [www.rbkc.gov.uk/MyRBKC/Login.aspx](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/MyRBKC/Login.aspx)
- 3** On the left hand column of the Welcome page, select '**Email Notification Service**'.
- 4** On the Email Notification Service page, under '**All Available Services**', find the **Planning Applications** box and click on '**Subscribe**' on right.
- 5** In the new window, under '**Criteria**', click on '**Street**' and then click on '**Next Step**'.
- 6** In the new window, scroll down and '**add**' the streets that interest you. Click on '**Next Step**' and you will arrive at a window that confirms that you have successfully subscribed to the *Planning Applications mailing list*.



# Exhibition Road Redux

THE AREA AROUND THE NATURAL History, Science and Victoria & Albert museums on Exhibition Road is a pioneering instance of a mixed-use urban design approach, where motorised traffic shares space with pedestrians and bicycles. The October 2017 traffic accident at the junction of Exhibition Road and Cromwell Road has revived the idea, promoted by the museums and led by the Exhibition Road Culture Group (ERCG), of pedestrianising all of Exhibition Road.

The closure of this vital north-south artery, home to many residents, is not based on any evidence about road safety,

nor has there been any formal review to justify such a change. It would amount to a 'land grab' by the museums to provide opportunities for more events and more eating places along Exhibition Road. The Council already entitles the museums to six street events and one road closure every year. And measures have already been taken to improve security, in the form of large stone blocks to protect the queues waiting for entry to the museums.

Local associations, including ONA, have called for a proper review to see what further improvements, if any, are necessary for pedestrian safety.

## Ban the Bottle! ...and other single-use plastics

THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM has announced that it will phase out the sale of single-use plastic water bottles at its facilities over the next twelve months. "Our decision reflects growing concern ... about the impact of plastic on the world's oceans – highlighted during the recent fabulous Blue Planet II series. Research from the Museum's own scientists, in collaboration with Royal Holloway, has shown the extent of unseen plastic pollution in the Thames and the presence of plastics in the stomachs of fish in the river. We have already stopped offering plastic straws and are looking into further ways we can reduce the use of plastic on our sites," says Fiona McWilliams, Director of Development and Communications at the NHM.

No one is likely to suffer dehydration as the Museum is planning to provide water fountains; the South Kensington Estate has also promised to install outdoor water fountains along Exhibition Road. The NHM already stopped using plastic bags some years ago. Given the amount of single-use plastic trash on our streets, perhaps local shops will be inspired to make some changes of their own; residents can help by bringing along their own reusable bottles and bags when they go out.

## Uncertain Fate for Christies South Kensington Space

THE CLOSING OF CHRISTIE'S auction rooms on the Old Brompton Road in the late summer of 2017 came like a bolt out of the blue. There has been an auction house on this site for over 40 years, and in recent years CSK has been loyal supporters of this Association by providing a venue for our AGMs, so this move is a disappointment for many – despite the parking problems associated with their removal vans. Their site extends well back behind the Old Brompton Road frontage to the mews behind. Who or what will take over this site is unknown, but it will undoubtedly be retail, and we hope not another cafe or fast food outlet, as the area needs proper retail shops.

## Operator...

RESIDENTS CAN SEE THAT THE telephone boxes in our neighbourhood are in a dreadful state. Not surprisingly, they are rarely used. It's hard to remember the last time we saw someone using a phone box for the purpose for which it was originally erected.

You might think that this would make the suppliers reluctant to maintain these boxes. Unfortunately the telephone box operating companies have realised that the boxes can provide a useful space for advertising, bringing

# Birds of our Gardens *By Pranai Arghabhadra*

OUR SQUARE GARDENS PROVIDE a welcome habitat for wild birds. The robins, voted Britain's favourite bird, and the blackbirds, much loved for their sweet singing, are probably the most often seen. But as there are in the region of a hundred species of trees and 2,000 species of shrubs and herbaceous plants, it is not surprising that numerous varieties of birds abound. Our gardens are tended by eight full-time gardeners, including Deputy Head Gardener Pete Davison.

Great tits, blue tits, long-tailed tits, coal tits, goldfinches, greenfinches, chaffinches, goldcrests and wrens can be found in our gardens year round, says Davison, along with larger species such as crows, magpies and jays.

A tawny owl's hoots have been heard in one of our gardens, although the nest has not been located. Perhaps that is for the best, as this is a bird that causes great excitement among serious bird watchers and could attract large groups of people.

Birds of prey have also visited the gardens from time to time. Kestrels have been known to nest here and a pair of peregrine falcons was once seen making a meal of a pigeon in the middle of the lawn.

Summer visitors include swallows, house martins and swifts. A corncrake, migrating to North Africa for the winter, once made a quick stop, Davison remembers. It was probably lost and grateful to find a good spot to stop and rest before getting back on course.

Redwings, migrants from Northern Europe, regularly arrive around October to spend the winter in our gardens. They nest in shrubs and long grass, so the hedges and herbaceous borders are ideal for their needs.

A few years ago, a pheasant showed up, strutted around the lawn for a few days and then took off. He was undoubtedly

happy to get a break from shotgun pellets.

For unknown reasons, the house sparrow population has declined alarmingly in recent years in towns and cities across Europe. These sociable birds, living in large flocks, are now rarely seen in central London. However, a few have been spotted recently in our gardens, a testament that these squares provide a vital, sympathetic environment for bird life.

Davison notes that the gardeners implement a policy of biodiversity in the gardens. Wildlife-friendly, nectar-rich plant species are often planted, and a selection of different varieties provide not only pleasing interest for residents but essential food for birds and insects throughout the year, even in the depth of winter.

Each garden has several fruiting trees and many berry-bearing trees and shrubs. Their spring blossoms attract a riot of insects that help to control pests like aphids and are also food for birds. During the cold months, mahonias, with its spikes of yellow flowers that are followed by deep purple berries, are much loved by birds. Winter-flowering viburnums and cherries give colours as well as scents.

Herbaceous plants are not cut down till the middle of winter. The dried seed heads are a source of much-needed food, and the leaves act as ground cover.

A few nesting boxes are unobtrusively placed in some of the gardens. Robins, wrens and tits have been known to use them. Seeds in proper bird-feeders and fat balls are allowed by the gardeners, but ground-feeding is frowned upon as it encourages mice and rats.

A successful balance has been created in these square gardens for the enjoyment of both residents and wild birds.

*With thanks to Mr. Pete Davison, Deputy Head Gardener*



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## *please hold the line*

in revenue that far outstrips any possible earnings from the telephone service.

Consequently, not only do these obsolete boxes remain, but some new companies are applying to the RBKC planning department to actually install new units, thus adding more street advertising to clutter up our pavements. The ONA, along with other local associations, has written to the Council objecting to any additional phone boxes on our streets, and asking for a reduction in their numbers, due to the fact that mobile phones have rendered them obsolete.

The Council has thankfully turned down these numerous

applications to increase the number of units, or to 'update' some of the existing ones. By 'update,' the telephone company may replace the existing old boxes with a new type of kiosk that can support moving coloured advertising images. However, the telephone companies have appealed, and although their appeal was rejected on a technicality, we fully expect a further application.

The ONA wants a reduction in 'street furniture', which often impedes the natural passage of pedestrians in our busy area, but as this is a source of extremely rich revenue for the telephone companies, you can be sure that this fight isn't over.





## Chugging Along: *South Kensington Station Plans*

IN SEPTEMBER 2017, TfL held a public exhibition of its design for the South Kensington Station at the Ampersand Hotel. More than 90 people attended, and most showed keen support for the proposals.

A month later, TfL submitted a Listed Building Planning application for Stage I of the works, which includes replacement of the disused north side platform with the construction of a widened platform and associated canopy (see picture), the extension and remodelling of the ticket hall and associated works. This application is the culmination of two years of discussion and engagement, in which ONA was actively involved, to ensure a station design that enhances the station's current setting whilst continuing to serve residents as well as our multitude of visitors. The design also safeguards the provision of step-free access which TfL plan to deliver by 2022, to both the District and Circle line platforms and the museum subway.

The application details, which the Planning Department has recommended for approval to the Planning Committee last December, can be viewed here:

<http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/LB/17/06308>

## The ONA Garden Party

Last year's ONA Garden Party in Onslow Square was our largest ever. Members fêted ONA founder Bill Taylor, above, who turned 100 on 27 July 2017. Four young musicians from the Royal Academy of Music Junior program (*below*) – Mio Takahashi and Rama Suphadet, violins, James Murray, viola and Max Todes, cello – played classical pieces as well as a rousing rendition of Happy Birthday.

**The 2018 ONA Garden Party will take place on 27 June.** Save the date for this chance to meet and mingle with friends and neighbours. Details about the event will be sent out closer to the date and will also be posted on [ona.org.uk](http://ona.org.uk)



## Useful Numbers

To report building material or rubbish blocking the road or pavement: **Streetline 020 7361 3001**

To report noise and nuisance – late loud parties, out-of-hours construction work, etc.:  
**Environmental Health 020 7361 3002**

To report anti-social behaviour – aggressive begging, disorderly or disruptive conduct:  
**Met Police 101** and/or Safer Neighbourhood Team **020 7161 8982** or **07768 178 122**

Call **999** for a fast response to a dangerous situation

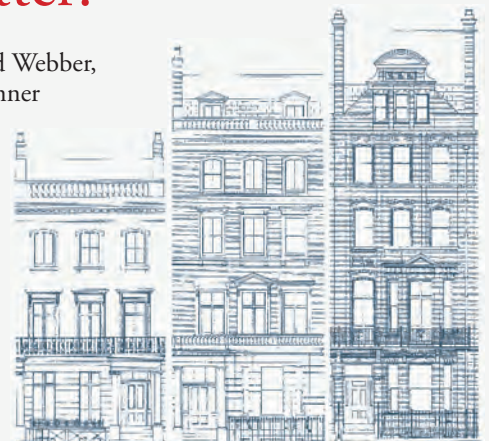
## Would you like to contribute to this newsletter?

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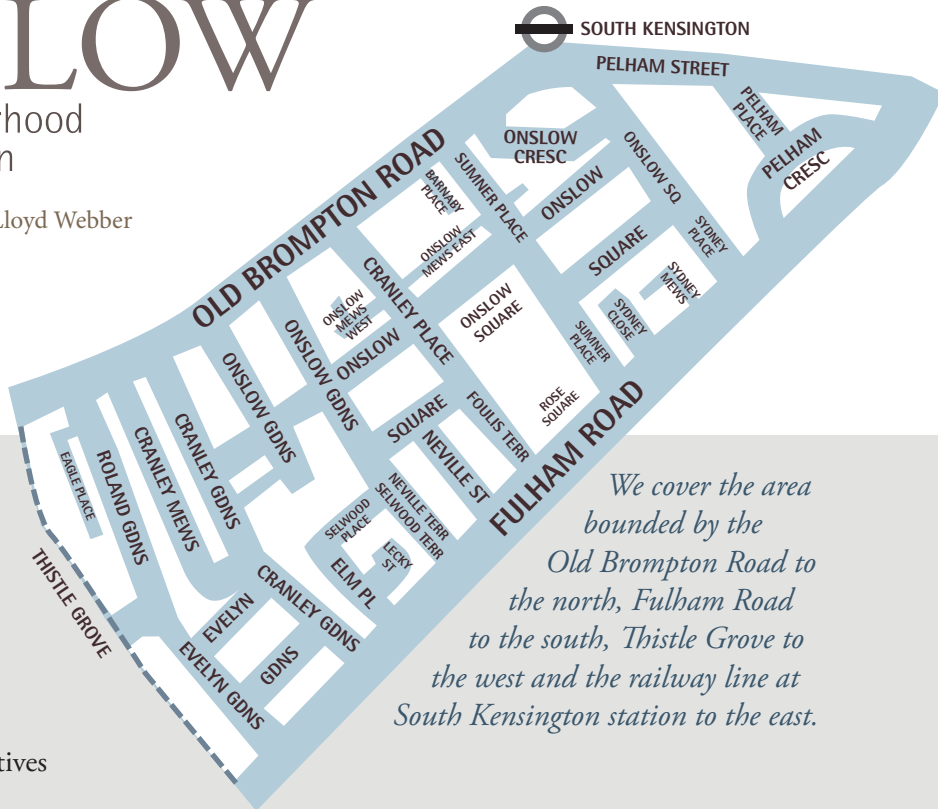
# ONSLOW

Neighbourhood Association

President Julian Lloyd Webber

## Join us!

The Onslow Neighbourhood Association was formed in 1973 to protect and enhance the residential and environmental quality of much of the western part of the Wellcome Trust estate in South Kensington. We keep in touch with this annual newsletter and regular email updates. We host the only garden party permitted in Onslow Square, which is a unique opportunity to meet your neighbours, councillors and representatives of other local associations.



We cover the area bounded by the Old Brompton Road to the north, Fulham Road to the south, Thistle Grove to the west and the railway line at South Kensington station to the east.

### The objectives of Onslow Neighbourhood Association are:



- To encourage high standards of architecture and town planning
- To stimulate public interest in and care for the beauty, history and character of the neighbourhood
- To encourage the preservation, development and improvement of features of general public amenity or historic interest
- To take all other steps to protect and advance the interests of persons living within the neighbourhood



**PAYMENT BY STANDING ORDER** To: The Manager, ..... (name of your bank)  
address of your bank ..... postcode .....

On receipt of this request and on each subsequent 5th January until further notice, please pay to the HSBC Bank Ltd, 40-05-14, Gloucester Road Branch, 95 Gloucester Rd, London SW7 4SX, the sum of £15 for the credit account of the Onslow Neighbourhood Association (Account No. 6101 1723)

from my account No. .... sort code .....

OR: **PAYMENT BY CHEQUE** I enclose a cheque for £15

Please print your name ..... address .....  
..... email .....



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