



Help stop the scourge of **E-TRANSPORT OBSTRUCTIONS**

E-bikes and scooters left blocking pavements and parking spaces have become a too common sight in our area, creating a hazard for pedestrians. Without proper reporting to the relevant companies, this problem will not be fixed.

If you're adept with a smart phone, you can let the companies know in five minutes. First, take a photo of the misplaced e-bike or scooter and make a note of the address. Then, scan the QR code on the bike or scooter and follow the directions for submitting a complaint and uploading your photo.

Sometimes the QR codes are not 'readable'. You can try a QR code from another device from the same company. Or, if you prefer, you can send details to the appropriate email below. Include the address and a photo if you can.

After hearing complaints, the companies are supposed to send someone to collect the e-bike or scooter and take measures against the party that hired it. The more they hear from us, the more likely they will step up enforcement of their own rules.

Dott: support@ridedott.com *Lime:* london-ops@li.me
Tier: support@tier.app *Forest:* cs@humanforest.co.uk

ONA Garden Party

Once again attendance at our last Garden Party exceeded the previous year's. We continue to be lucky with good weather on the day and hope that luck holds again this year on **12 June**. Apart from our members, we welcome friends, locals and prospective members. Please check emails (if you are a member) and our website ona.org.uk for further details. If you'd like to help on the day, please email onslowna@gmail.com



Above: *Caroline Church (in dark red apron) and her Chop & Chat catering crew in 2023 will be returning in 2024*

Below: *the young, gifted Jacky Woods string quartet performing for us in 2023*



useful *contacts*

To report building material or rubbish blocking the road or pavement:

STREETLINE 020 7361 3001 email: streetline@rbkc.gov.uk
www.rbkc.gov.uk/contact-us/report-problem

To report noise and nuisance – late loud parties, out-of-hours construction work, etc:

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH 020 7361 3002 email: environmentalhealth@rbkc.gov.uk
www.rbkc.gov.uk/global/report-it/noise-or-nuisance

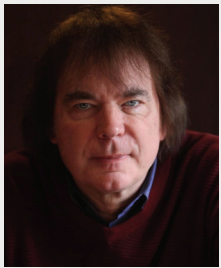
To report anti-social behaviour – aggressive begging, disorderly or disruptive conduct:

MET POLICE 101 or www.met.police.uk and click on **REPORT**. Call 999 to report an emergency

For our latest news, please visit our website: ona.org.uk

photo: © Julian Lloyd Webber

Julian Lloyd Webber, our President, *writes*



'FINGS AIN'T WOT THEY USED TO BE', goes the title song of Lionel Bart's classic '60s musical about 'cockney low-life characters including spivs, prostitutes and corrupt policemen' (from Wikipedia) – none of which could possibly be imagined in genteel

South Kensington! Yet this 'night time economy of national/international importance' (from RBKC's new local plan) is fast losing its former identity as a primarily residential area.

For sure the residents are still here but their 'importance' appears to be on the wane. Take Old Brompton Road for instance – especially the area between Queen's Gate and South Kensington Station. Despite initial appearances, this entire stretch of road is dominated by residential properties (yes, even above Tesco) but little value seems to be attached to the people who live – and pay their council taxes – above the restaurants and the few remaining shops below. Instead these unfortunates are subjected to a daily streetscape similar – and often worse – to these pictures taken recently.

All of us at the ONA remain bitterly disappointed by the decision regarding the bland, generic redevelopment of the area around South Kensington Station, which will change the unique character of this historic area forever. Personally, I wasn't too surprised by the decision as, in the end, 'market forces' proved to be too great a carrot to recognise the wishes of the thousands of residents – and even a unanimous RBKC Council – that opposed it. Incredibly, the redevelopment will not even result in step-free access to the Piccadilly Line, something that was readily available BEFORE 1972 via lifts directly to the platforms!

Nevertheless, ONA will continue to do all that it can to mitigate the worst excesses of this misguided scheme which, given the scale of building works, will result in massive and continuing disruption for many years to come, with huge tailbacks along neighbouring roads and increased levels of pollution.

On a happy note (yes, really!), RBKC Council members have agreed to undertake regular 'walkabouts' with ONA representatives to identify issues of concern and the results of the first one are reported elsewhere in this newsletter.

EDITORIAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED!

The ONA Secretary and Newsletter Editor is retiring after the AGM. If you would like to help the current Committee, please email onslowna@gmail.com.

ONA AGM
2024

16 April @ 6pm

Please come to the 51st Annual General Meeting on **Tuesday 16 April** at the Institut Français, 17 Queensberry Place, and bring a neighbour! There will be drinks and nibbles at 6pm and the meeting will start at 6:30pm. An agenda and further details will be posted on ona.org.uk

Save the Date!
the 2024 ONA
Garden
party
12 JUNE
Onslow Square

ANOTHER BUSY YEAR IN PLANNING:

Monitoring Native Land and TfL's Around Station Development, *and more...* by Susanna Trostdorf, ONA Planning Lead

AFTER A LONG CAMPAIGN THAT STARTED IN JUNE 2020, when the planning application for the Around Station Development (ASD) was endorsed by RBKC's planning department, and then rejected in November 2021 by RBKC's planning committee, and then appealed by the developers Native Land and TfL, the Planning Inspectorate issued its decision 12 December 2023.

In her decision, Planning Inspector Zoe Hill allowed permission for the mixed-use commercial ASD. This will result in the loss of almost all of the historic fabric above ground, key protected views and the station's low-scale townscape.

The only heritage fabric that will survive the development are the subway, Leslie Green's Oxblood building, the Station's Sherrin Arcade entrances, its roof and some of its original shop frontages, as well as the façade of 20-34 Thurloe Street – but not its shop fronts, as these will be substituted by a pastiche.

The Inspector acknowledged *'that the heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource which should be afforded considerable importance and weight. In this case the loss of statutorily designed assets fabric that results in heritage harms is predominantly linked to works to provide the SFA (Step-Free Access) and is justified' ... 'providing*

SFA from the key proximate point of arrival by London Underground, in my view, clearly tips the internal heritage balance in the favour of the development.' Finding the balance between the harm to the heritage assets and the public benefits is a subjective judgement and so chances for a successful appeal were assessed by ONA to be too low to pursue.

Despite this disappointing outcome, we need to move on and monitor compliance of the planning conditions and Section 106 obligations (S.106) that we, together with Kensington Society, secured. The key obligation is that the ASD scheme cannot start without 'sufficient funds' being in place for the Station Capacity Upgrade development (SCU).

TfL's SCU's costing will need to be updated from 2018 when RBKC approved the SCU. Because TfL did not need to submit any costing for its SCU application, there is really no public reference for the Council to start from. In addition, TfL's cost for its rail infrastructure works includes specific requirements unique to TfL and therefore impossible to verify even by a professional third-party consultancy. ONA learned this when we tried to guestimate the cost for the lift shaft from the Ticket Hall to the District

Line platform. TfL has to follow specific safety requirements that are material in terms of cost when works take place next to or over tracks that are in operation. The SCU includes a number of these: the reactivation of the northern platform, including a new staircase to the Ticket Hall, the new interchange bridge and the two lift shafts from the Ticket Hall to the two platforms. We hope that the Council will also secure within the notion of 'sufficiency' an allowance for cost overruns typical for this type of project.

The Council will be in charge to establish what 'sufficient funds' are. It will be important to monitor how the Council signs off on these crucial S106 obligations. As we saw in July 2020, if circumstances change and TfL's set of financial project parameters are not being met, TfL's budgetary rules require TfL's board to take the SCU off its budget and reallocate funds to other projects. It is therefore crucial that the Council ensures that this won't happen. We urge the Council to take a firm stance here. There is a simple, tested way where such situations are confronted in financial markets – put the funds into an escrow account with checks in place.

RBKC's planning officers will now need to determine and control these two



Developer's model of their four-storey Bullnose, at the Public Inquiry into the ASD appeal at Kensington Town Hall

and many other important conditions, such as defining the exact SFA Phasing Strategy between the elements of the SCU, the SFA and the ASD. Most developers act responsibly, but incidents of deviation happen. As the Council has limited resources, our legal team advised ONA to urge residents to report to the Council if such deviations become evident. Any failure to comply with the planning conditions and the Section 106 obligation should be recorded (e.g. photo or video evidence) and reported to the Council without delay.

ONA will compose a list of the planning conditions and S106 requirements, which residents will be able to monitor. We will post the list on our website ona.org.uk, including the appropriate contact at the Council.

Wellcome Trust's 40 Pelham St and 63-81 Pelham St developments

Wellcome Trust's (WT) two office developments at the Brompton Cross end of Pelham Street have been approved by RBKC. Works are expected to last 18 to 20 months. Before they can start, RBKC has to sign off on the Demolition/Construction and Transport Management Plans (DTMP/CTMPs) provided by WT. ONA has been working tirelessly on this important matter for the last year. Despite continued feedback from Resident Associations, including ONA, to WT and its consultants, big issues remain unresolved. First of all, WT intends to undertake the demolition and construction on both developments at the same time. As none of the plans reflect that two sizable projects opposite from each other are taking place at the same time, it remains unclear if and how Pelham Street will be able to cope with the construction traffic. To make matters worse, WT appointed a different contractor for each development, adding further complexity to the traffic management. After pressure from RAs and our MP, WT withdrew their original CTMPs, and new amended plans will be filed. All traffic will have to enter via Old Brompton Road, turns from Pelham Street into Pelham Place and Thurloe Square Bridge will be discouraged with signage, and no construction

vehicles will be permitted to exit via Sydney Place/Onslow Square. The new CTMPs are expected to propose to reduce Pelham Street to one-way east-bound traffic during the week, when construction is going on, and following residents' suggestions, reopen to two-way traffic on weekends to mitigate the knock-on effects across South Kensington and into Chelsea.

Ongoing attempts to flood the neighbourhood with advertisement screens

Some of you will have noted that the automated public toilet within the heritage style cylindrical advertisement column on South Kensington Station's piazza has gone. Costing the Council £13 per use, the toilet was not value for money. After receiving little objection, the Council did not renew its contract with JCDecaux. On notification last August, JCDecaux instantly filed an application for its latest open access communication hub with a digital ultra-HD advertisement screen, arguing that the heritage-style column already featured an internally illuminated advertisement facade. Resident Associations, including ONA, could not see the public benefit and were appalled by the hub's design. With RBKC's conservation officers raising similar concerns, the application was fortunately turned down.

At the end of 2023, an application appeared for a large advertisement board fitted to the side wall on Exhibition Road of the Grade II listed 13 Thurloe Street terrace. This was a second attempt. In 2017, an application for a large LCD screen had already been rejected after an appeal. In this renewed attempt, the applicant argued that *'there are no residential properties within close proximity'* and that *'upper floors in close proximity are typical aparthotels or hotel properties'*, omitting the fact that most buildings on Exhibition Road are residential, except at street level, even 13 Thurloe Street. Fortunately, the application was rejected by RBKC's planning committee in January 2024. A waste of time and Council money.

RBKC's NEW LOCAL PLAN – renewed consultation on the 'strategic vision' for South Kensington

RBKC's New Local Plan, currently in the making, sets out the vision for the Borough over the coming 20-year period. The New Local Plan Review (NLPR) is in its final consultation at press time and is expected to be adopted later this year. We remain very concerned about the reduced emphasis on the residential character of South Kensington.

One needs only to compare the strategic visions for South Kensington: RBKC's current Local Plan (2019) reads *'South Kensington will maintain two distinctive identities: a cultural destination and a residential neighbourhood of distinction'*.

In the NLPR's first draft in Oct 2022, the Council changed this to *'South Kensington will maintain two distinctive identities: a world class cultural destination and education hub based around the South Kensington Strategic Cultural Area, and the district centre, continuing to provide valued local facilities and services.'* This version omits South Kensington's long-established role as major residential quarter.

ONA objected and then argued in person at the Planning Inspector's examination of the NLPR that omitting the residential aspect in the vision for South Kensington would make the NPL unsound.

Fortunately, the inspector agreed with us. Thus, the current amended version on which the public is currently consulted reads: *'South Kensington will continue to thrive with its multiple roles as a world class cultural destination, an education hub, and as a residential neighbourhood of distinction.'*

Although this is an improvement, the weight of the residential character remains demoted. We will propose alternative language and hope that the inspector will listen to our reasoning.

A neighbourhood tour

with the RBKC

Following a survey of ONA members about the physical state of our high street, the ONA Committee organised a walking tour with RBKC Councillor **Cem Kemahli**, who is in charge of **'planning, waste, licensing, highways and public realm'** for the RBKC. Last December, several ONA Committee members and two local councillors took part (*below*). Among other issues, we pointed out the growing problems of rubbish, both commercial and residential, unsightly shop fronts and houses, and dirty pavements along the Old Brompton Road and surrounding streets.

There have already been some positive outcomes: in January, **Cllr Janet Evans** reported that an RBKC planning enforcement officer visited the untidy site next to the Hummingbird Bakery and sent a warning letter to the leaseholders, freeholders and occupiers of 13 Sumner Place, requesting repair works.

Cllr Kemahli told us that the Council is setting up **Street Enforcement Teams** and assigning areas designated **Street Enforcement Officers (SEO)** to contact for reporting fly-tipping, dirty streets, anti-social behaviour and other issues as they occur. ONA has just learned that the SEOs for Courtfield Ward are **Ade Laditan** and **John-Paul Ramsey** and those for Brompton and Hans Town Ward are **Sherna Manet** and **Alex Cabrera**. **Neil Bates (Neil.Bates@rbkc.gov.uk)** is the senior supervisor for our area of the borough and can forward issues to the SEOs.

On the walk, it was agreed that the proliferation of takeaways and cafes has created an urgent need for more bins along Old Brompton Road. ONA reached out to **Matthew Lawrence (Matthew.Lawrence@rbkc.gov.uk)**, who deals with **waste issues**, to request additional bins outside Pret A Manger, Ole & Steen, and the southeast



corner of the Old Brompton Road and Queensgate. ONA is pleased to report that three new bins have since been installed in these locations and are being well used.

Regarding commercial rubbish, Lawrence told ONA that the Council *'will be seeking to introduce time-banded collections for businesses'*, where specific time windows will be introduced when waste can be put out for collection. Any time outside of these windows would be an offence, but this policy will take some months to roll out. For now, *'the Street Enforcement Team can serve notices on businesses that are causing problems, including a stipulation that waste should not sit on the street for longer than two hours.'*

Household waste/environmental issues can be reported to **Streetline (streetline@rbkc.gov.uk)** but also to **Tracy Umney (Tracy.Umney@rbkc.gov.uk)**, the **Street Enforcement Team manager**.

Dilapidated facades and shopfronts can be reported to Planning Enforcement at this address: <https://myrbkc.rbkc.gov.uk/forms/report-problem/planning-breach/>

Crumbling facades, where dangerous, should be reported to Building Control. The Council's team of dangerous structure surveyors are on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. If you have any concerns about a dangerous building or structure, call **020 7361 3838** between 8.30am and 5:30pm Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays, or call **020 7361 3000** between 5:30pm and 8.30am Monday to Friday, weekends and public holidays.




Left to right:
Mark Goodwin (ONA);
Julian Lloyd Webber (ONA);
Cllr Walaa Idris (Brompton & Hans Town Ward);
Cllr Janet Evans (Courtfield Ward);
Cllr Cem Kemahli (RBKC);
Lara Mazzoni (ONA)



Clockwise from top: *More enforcement is needed; sharing the pavement with Tesco; side elevation of 13 Summer Place on the Old Brompton Road, next to the Hummingbird Cafe; a rubbish view in Glendower Place*



photos: Laura Mosecaide & Julian Lloyd Webber

 ONA expects to arrange future street walks with the Street Enforcement Team and our councillors on a regular basis going forward. Please let us know if you are interested helping with efforts to improve our neighbourhood streetscape. Email onslowna@gmail.com



Latest from the Natural History Museum



ONA committee member Malcolm Ransom attended a Resident Association meeting at the Natural History Museum last November. Among others, Dr John Tweddle, Head of the Centre for UK Nature/Biodiversity, presented on the ongoing NHM refurbishment programme, including the new Urban Nature Project.

Jennifer Cormack, Director of Development, underlined the museum's ambition of 'bringing science alive' for its 5 million annual visitors.

The capital works updates included:

- Hall of Human Biology for completion spring 2024
- Palaeontology Building north façade re-cladding, from February to December 2024
- Waterhouse façade restoration, from January 2024 to March 2025
- The Urban Nature Project, opening summer 2024. This five-acre site in front of the museum will offer a transformed outdoor space. Visitors will travel 'through time' as they walk east to west across the front garden, through immersive planting and geological landscapes, ending at the urban garden at the western side of the Museum. The site will feature a 'living laboratory' of UK habitats, site-wide, step-free access and two new buildings – the Garden Kitchen and the Nature Activity Centre. The Urban Nature Project will conduct long-term urban biodiversity research and will become the most studied urban site in the UK, with programmes offered to children and adults.

Works in progress outside the NHM: from eastern end to western end, site of the new Urban Garden, March 2024



The NHM is keen to see their urban garden in the context of other local green spaces. The ONA gardens are ideally positioned to be part of a 'nature corridor' with the NHM green spaces, along with other garden squares in our area.

Any ONA member interested in sharing the responsibility of liaising with our local museums should contact onslowna@gmail.com

photo: Laura Mosedale

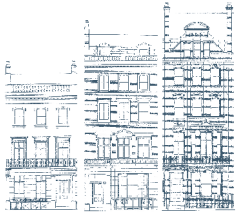
Carols in Onslow Square

With the help of ONA and the Wellcome Trust, TLC Estate Agents held a Christmas Carol Concert on 13 December that many members and locals enjoyed.

TLC's Summer Concert will take place on Thursday 11 July.



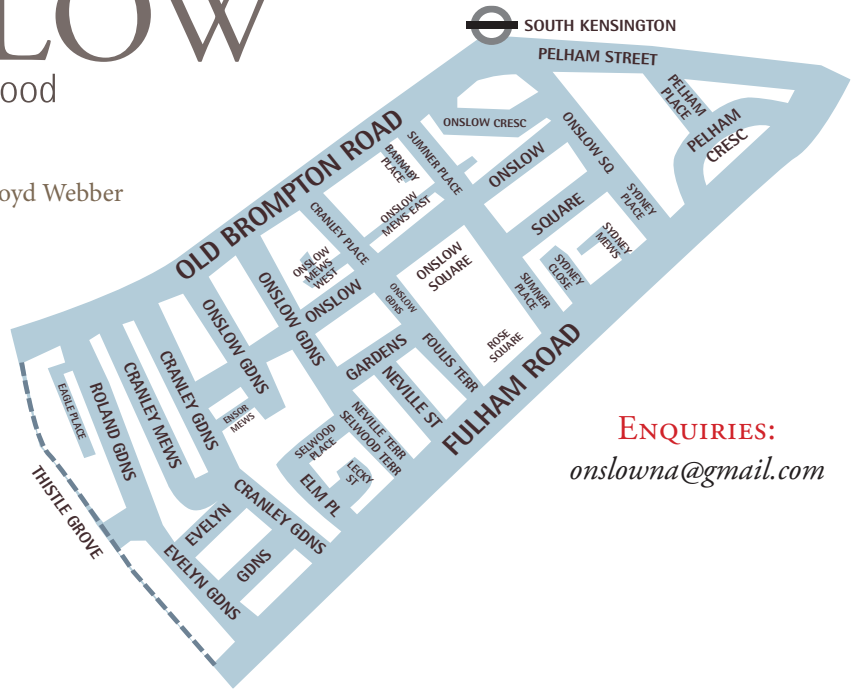
photo: Matt Horgan



ONSLOW

Neighbourhood Association

President Julian Lloyd Webber



The ONA was formed in 1972 to protect and enhance the residential and environmental quality of much of the western part of the Wellcome Trust estate in South Kensington (see map). We keep in touch with this annual newsletter and regular email updates. We host the only garden party permitted in Onslow Square – a unique opportunity to meet your neighbours, councillors and representatives of other local associations. Household membership is only £20 a year.

ENQUIRIES:
onslowna@gmail.com

The objectives of the ONA are:

- To encourage high standards of architecture and town planning
- To stimulate 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 steps to protect and advance the interests of persons living within the neighbourhood

Join us!

1 Make your online payment of £20 to our bank account:
 Account name: Onslow Neighbourhood Association
 Account number: 61011723
 Sort code: 40-05-14
 Reference: your name

2 Set up a Standing Order for the payment of your annual membership fee on or before 5th January every year

3 Fill in and sign the form below and post to Cynthia Parker, ONA Hon Treasurer, Flat 6, 29 Evelyn Gardens, SW7 3BE



I would like to join the ONA and I have paid my subscription fee of £20 into the ONA bank account

Your name

Home address

Email

Phone number (home/mobile)

By signing this form, you are confirming that you are consenting to ONA holding and processing your personal data in order to keep you informed about news, events and activities and to manage your membership and your annual subscription. ONA will never share your information with a third party. I consent to ONA contacting me by post email telephone

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate. Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer. In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick this box:

Yes, I want the Onslow Neighbourhood Association to claim Gift Aid on my donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Please notify the charity if you:

want to cancel this declaration; change your name or home address or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

PLEASE COMPLETE & SIGN THIS FORM & SEND TO:

Signature date ____ / ____ / ____

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Cynthia Parker, Hon Treasurer, ONA, Flat 6, 29 Evelyn Gardens, SW7 3BE

ONA is a Registered Charity. Charity Number: 264 296