



Signals

Spring 2018 edition

The Chairman's Foreword

Contrary to the doubters and objectors, the introduction of the CPZ occurred with little disruption and indeed it has surprised many of us by the number of vacant spaces thrown up particularly towards Kew Bridge and the side streets. After 12 months the Council will consider amendments to the CPZ and members may register suggestions in the interim at cpz.soga@gmail.com. SoGA will now direct its efforts to supporting its members and residents to the east of Kew Railway Bridge but a new CPZ consultation will first have to be conducted due to the time lapse since the last survey. I do urge members in Zone 3 not to veto its introduction this time round.

The public inquiry for The Curve on land at Chiswick roundabout commences at Brentford Free Church on 12 June 2018 and is scheduled to take place over the following four weeks. At the pre-inquiry meeting I registered SoGA as a Third Party Interest along with other residents' associations. The developer (Starbones Limited) and the objectors including LBH, English Heritage, Kew Botanical Gardens and Kew Society are each represented by QCs. The 5 salient points that will be raised are:

1. *How will the development affect the character of the area?*
2. *What are the Heritage aspects?*
3. *Quantity and quality of affordable housing*
4. *Living conditions, i.e. pollution/access/amenities; and*
5. *Other considerations.*

Some of this will be covered in a Statement of Common Ground agreed by the Third Parties but SoGA will give evidence regarding the likely impact the development will have on the Strand on the Green Conservation Area. Members' and residents' opinions (short please) to a dedicated email thecurve.soga@gmail.com on the factors that are considered to be most important to that argument are sought. Comments should be submitted by the end of May.

The question of 'artistry' or graffiti under its more contentious title in the Strand on the Green Recreation Area produced an unexpected mixed reaction. I strongly believe that

channelling these efforts into the recreation area rather than garage doors or street walls would be a good thing in the same way that it has been directed towards the skateboarding area on the South Bank. It would also be an opportunity to encourage the large network of budding artists in the Strand School to display their talents. Unfortunately the Council views graffiti as a criminal offence which it is on our streets and garden walls – but in the recreation area?

Dog poo continues to be the most contentious subject along Strand on the Green and from personal experience it is joggers and walkers out with their dogs trailing some distance behind them who are the principal offenders. Please turn around, watch your dogs and CLEAR UP after them.

Shortly after this issue of *Signals* appears a new Interpretive Sign is due to be installed at the west end of Strand on the Green footpath. This is a project undertaken by the SoGA Committee who developed the idea, sourced its funding and obtained the agreement of Hounslow Highways for its installation. We have endeavoured to make the best use of the limited space in regards to describing the prominent features along the footpath and in the river.

Allotment life

Things are beginning to stir in the Thames Road allotments, although Spring is having a hard time making itself felt and most of the allotmenters too appear to still be in hibernation. But within the next few weeks the 50 or so plots will become a hive of activity as their enthusiastic tenants prepare for what will surely – and hope springs eternal – be the best year ever for the great variety of vegetables and fruit that is grown. The local foxes too and their cubs will come to assist by digging large holes and leaving unsolicited gifts of old tennis balls, bones and other bits and pieces. And the bees in the two hives tended by a local beekeeper will come to life and start foraging for whatever nectar is on offer.

The story goes that this piece of land which runs alongside the railway line was once the site of a pig farm which has enriched the soil ever since. Whether true or not, the soil is easy to cultivate, but like all forms of 'gardening' it still takes commitment and determination to keep the weeds at bay and the plot manageable. When I first took on my allotment, some twenty or so years ago, there were very few other occupants and most of the plots lay fallow. Mine was an overwhelming confusion of brambles, rubbish and very elderly raspberry canes; however, very luckily in those distant times the Council would provide a man with a rotor blade to come and do the heavy work. Sadly this no longer happens and newcomers sometimes have a hard time getting their plot to a state where cultivation and planting can commence.

Most of the plots, which are measured in rods (a word that dates back to Anglo-Saxon times), are now occupied, but I believe that the Council has a waiting list for those who might be interested in acquiring one. Allotments are now managed for the Council by Greenspace 360 and the allotments team can be contacted by calling 020 8583 2000.

ES

Royal Wedding Day Party

On Saturday 19 May Sue Hearne with help of The Grove Park Group and St Paul's Church is organising a Royal Wedding Day Party to celebrate the marriage of Prince Harry to Meghan. Entry will be free with the aim of encouraging local residents out from behind their TV screens at home to join friends and neighbours for a bit of fun.



Graffiti

In addition to the graffiti that appeared on the rec wall, our area (and most of west Chiswick) has been targeted left, right and centre with graffiti. It's everywhere! And even though your committee reports as much as we can, we would encourage all of our members to do likewise – you can report graffiti online to Hounslow Highways at: www.hounslowhighways.org/ The reporting system works quite well. Once reported you will receive an email confirmation with a reference number and then this is followed up by a further email to say the report has been received and the complaint will be actioned. In our experience graffiti is usually removed by a dedicated HH team within a matter of days. So thank you to HH for doing such a good job!

Flytipping

Recently Hounslow Council placed advertisements on rubbish and recycling bins, alerting people that they may be faced with a £400 fine if they flytip. Needless to say this has had little or no effect – as most of our readers will have noticed, there has been a spate of flytipping (anything from bookcases to bed mattresses) in our area, especially around the Brooks Lane and Waldeck Road area.



Hounslow Council advises that anyone with evidence of flytipping should contact them and provide information including a description of the person, vehicle details, plus the time and date of the incident. The relevant department can be emailed at pollution@hounslow.gov.uk or alternatively you can report flytipping via the HH website at: www.hounslowhighways.org/ or telephone them on 020 8583 5555.

Engine idling

We have noticed that more and more motorists are leaving their vehicle's engine running whilst the vehicle is stationary. Sometimes drivers leave their vehicle's engine running for a few minutes whilst they "pop to the shop" and sometimes drivers sit in their vehicles with the

engine running for long periods in order to keep warm. More and more frequently it is becoming the norm to sit in a vehicle with the engine running whilst the driver programs the “sat nav” or checks his or her social media account.

But this is not a Chiswick problem – it is happening everywhere. And the problem isn’t limited to delivery and courier vans with diesel engines. Parents waiting to pick up their children from school will often happily sit in their 4x4 vehicles with the engine running for long periods of time. Engines are left running by young and old alike, morning, noon and night.

Aside from the noise nuisance, engine idling is a very serious contributor to pollution. The Royal College of Physicians estimates 40,000 deaths a year in the UK are linked to air pollution, with engine idling contributing to this. Cutting out engine idling will help for a start.

Some London Councils are trying their best to stamp out the issue and some Councils have decided to raise the penalty charge for engine idling from £20 to £80. However, is this having any effect? Fines for engine idling can only be issued to drivers who refuse to turn their vehicle engine off once asked to do so by an enforcement officer – it doesn’t address the mind set of these drivers. It is clear that enforcement is always going to be a problem.



It is encouraging to see that Strand school has placed a banner on the school railings at Brooks Lane, encouraging parents not to engine idle. Let’s hope the offenders take heed not just in Brooks Lane but also on Thames Road during the chaotic morning and afternoon school runs.

So what can SoGA do? Well, we have written to Sadiq Khan and Ruth Cadbury MP to get their views and to ask them if there is any way they could start an educational program or simply just publicise the problem to educate drivers that engine idling is not only illegal but also

particularly damaging to the fabric of London and the health of everyone who lives here.

Unfortunately the Mayor’s office simply passed our letter onto TfL who unsurprisingly tried to fob us off with a vanilla response. Ruth Cadbury has promised us that she will write to Hounslow to ask them how they intend to deal with the issue. In addition, we have contacted Mark Frost at Hounslow to ask if he will consider placing signs in discrete areas along Thames Road, such as those that have been installed by Ealing Council.



2017 Crime figures for Riverside ward

CRIME	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
THEFT FROM MOTOR VEHICLE	15	9	12	16	5
THEFT OF MOTOR VEHICLE	4	5	1	4	6
CRIMINAL DAMAGE MV	1	3	4	4	4
RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY	9	10	12	11	7
THEFT OF PEDAL CYCLES	6	7	7	9	2
BUSINESS BURGLARY	5	4	0	1	0

On the river

On the morning of the Boat Race, two Venetian style boats on trailers arrived outside my house to use the slipway adjacent to Strand End. I noticed that one bore the name City Barge Club (see www.citybargeclub.org/boats/).



Being intrigued that perhaps our local hostelry had been 'hiding its light under a bushel', I went out to speak to them. Small world that it is, I knew one of the rowers.

It transpires that the club is Oxford-based and includes what they say is probably the largest number of Venetian boats outside Italy and includes a six oared Shallop – yes, new to me as well. Their purpose was to escort *Gloriana* at the beginning of the Boat Race; and to that end *Gloriana* only came as far as Chiswick Bridge from Putney Bridge.

Rowing is done in good gondola-style standing up and I was surprised that none of them were wearing life jackets, visibly at least.

We were fortunate that these two boats and about 10 others of styles various were 'milling about' for an hour so we could see them practising to row in harmony - quite impressive. Our lunch guests were most impressed that we had laid on such an event.



CH

Gunnensbury station

Most of us would agree that Gunnensbury station is not fit for purpose. Aside from being one of the ugliest stations on the London network, it is unpleasantly (if not dangerously) overcrowded in the mornings and early evenings. Locals are often prevented from accessing the platforms because of overcrowding on the staircase.

A few months ago we ask members of the SoGA Facebook group for their views about Gunnensbury station. We have never received such an enthusiastic response. In light of this, we contacted the station manager who eventually put us in touch with the relevant person at TfL and we addressed our concerns to him.

We have been informed that station staff have been retrained and improvements to the station fabric will start soon, e.g. repositioning of the waiting room and removal of some of the unnecessary or redundant station furniture in a attempt to prevent such overcrowding by the staircase. Further, the station platforms will be resurfaced by the end of this year.

Ruth Cadbury has also announced that she intends to revive the Gunnensbury Station Action Team, a project that was initially started by Mary Macleod some time ago. SoGA will join this action group so if you have any comments

or suggestions then please email us at info@strandonthegreen.org.uk.

CPZ update

For most of us, the introduction of the Zone 1 CPZ has been an absolute god send. As with any new scheme, there have been a few teething problems. For instance, a lot of the signs at the Thames Road end of the side streets were originally placed very high so that some motorists (claimed they) were unaware of the parking restrictions. This has now been remedied. There has also been an issue with some non-disabled motorists parking in the designated disabled bay (which actually operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week) outside 56 Thames Road. SoGA asked for the disabled sign to be lowered and for a disabled sign to be painted on the road – we are glad to report that both have now been completed. We hope that the combination of lowering of the sign and the road marking will discourage able-bodied drivers from parking in this bay.

Currently there are only three pay and display bays outside the row of shops on Thames Road. We have been approached by a number of residents complaining that the free 30 minute scheme is being abused by some non-residents. We have reported this to the relevant department at Hounslow and hopefully enforcement action will be taken to prevent this selfish behaviour in the future.

As we mentioned previously, SoGA has introduced a dedicated email address (cpz.soga@gmail.com) to receive suggestions or comments about the CPZ scheme generally. Please do let us know what you have to say.

Rec update

The SoGA committee has been re-investigating the possibility of bringing our recreation ground up to Green Flag status. Historically we have been disappointed with the rec despite having made many attempts to bring it up to scratch. We raised £50,000 towards renovating the play and rec area, but in 2014 no-one was bowled over by the results. We all appreciate and use the rec as a valuable green space, however, some more bug bears have come to light and we feel there is real room for improvement.

We have had some very useful suggestions from Strand on the Green residents.

With the demise of Carillion the care of the rec has now been handed to Greenspace 360 who are a part of LBH. We have had a meeting with the Greenspace representatives, and they have assured us that there is now a budget for the area. There is also the possibility of a crowd funding project, if we all want to bring it up to super spec, then whatever money we raise, the council will match.

SoGA recently attended a meeting organised by LBH to encourage communities to start these crowd funding projects. They have the money to give us, up to £5,000. So why not take it? So it is our proposal to start a crowd funding initiative similar to that recently successfully implemented by the Grove Park Residents' group for their piazza development. If you would like to learn more about this new approach to getting money out of the council then please go to the Spacehive website at <https://www.spacehive.com>.

In the meantime, we have been promised a few things by the council, namely: that we will see the removal of the temporary fencing around the new planted area near the allotments. The wall (popular with graffiti taggers) will have its planting gaps filled in by the wall along the east side, in order to discourage graffiti. The fencing around the dog area will be fixed, as will the fencing near the flats, as currently there is a big gap for small dogs to get through, causing both residents and dog owners alike distress.

Our suggestions for improvement so far include:

- Re-condition and maintain existing equipment to include painting of the little wooden walkway;
- Add outdoor gym equipment;
- Paint the picnic tables;
- Add a covered area for children and adults alike to enjoy the space in inclement weather;
- Fix the dog exercise area fencing and plant the perimeter;
- Organise better signage to discourage people from taking their dogs into the playground area;
- Regular maintenance of the grass;
- Addition of concrete table tennis table;

- Sand pit;
- Covered picnic area; and
- Water feature

Please do email us your comments and suggestions at info@strandonthegreen.org.uk. Your rec needs you!

Then and now...

We have been adding lots of old images of Strand on the Green to our website. We realize that some members may not have access to the website so we thought we'd start including some "then and now" images in editions of *Signals*.



62-66 Thames Road in 1978



62-66 Thames Road in 2018



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