

What Wandsworth Council has approved for Swandon Way



The re-development of the B&Q site was approved by Wandsworth Council's Planning Applications Committee on 25 January by 9 votes to 1

What we shall lose.... Almost 50 mature trees, and a B&Q store among other things, with the redevelopment of the adjoining Homebase site also now in prospect ...



Do we need another 'town centre' location?
Or is this 'over-development'? It was the Council's, not the Mayor of London's, decision this time...

Last exit from B&Q
But there will be 184 new 'affordable' homes & 500 new jobs, says the Council.

Our Executive Committee, Society officers & groups

Our Executive Committee:

Chair: David Kirk, 15 Aspley Road, SW18 2DB (020 8874 9167)

Vice-Chairman (& Planning group lead): Philip Whyte, 49 West Side, SW18 2EE (020 8874 4745)

Secretary: John Dawson, 210 Beechcroft Road, SW17 7DP (020 8772 4282)

Treasurer: Norman Holmes: Flat 7, Tiffany Heights, 59 Standen Road, SW18 5TF (020 8877 9616)

Membership Secretary: Gill Gray, Contact details as for Iain Gray

Iain Gray (Bedside): Studio 8, Royal Victoria Patriotic Building SW18 3SX (020 8870 4567)

Bruce St Julian-Bown (Open Spaces group lead/contact), 39c Heathfield Road, SW18 2PH (020 8874 6966)

Harry Waddingham (Roads & Transport group lead/contact), 61 Magdalen Road, SW18 3NE (020 8874 8784)

Margaret Romanski, 30 Wandle Rd, London, SW17 7DW; mromanski@btinternet.com

Events Team: Caroline Pook (lead), 15 St Ann's Crescent SW18 2ND; caroline@pookfamily.co.uk (020 8870 4958) Other members: Wendy Cater; Gill Gray; David Kirk; Jenny Massey; Libby Spurrier

Communications & Newsletter: Peter Farrow; David Kirk (acting Newsletter editor); **Distribution team**: Sheila & Paschal Allen; Wendy Cater; the Grays; Jennifer & Trevor Grubb; Jan Passey

Society members are welcome to attend, as an observer, meetings of the groups listed above (formally, 'sub-committees' of the 'Exec'), whether or not they wish to join the group. But please advise the group lead in advance (to check date, venue and space available). Guests are also welcome to 'observe' Exec meetings.

Society officers and other Exec members are elected (or re-elected) at our **Annual General Meeting** – this year on Thursday 15 March (see page 8). Please consider whether you might like to

stand for election or encourage another member to do so. (Most candidates will already have been active in the Society, but this is not essential.) Why not talk about the possibilities to a Society officer, Exec member or group lead of one of our sub-committees?

The Exec would welcome new nominations. Our Constitution allows for 11 Exec members (there are currently 9). So do consider whether you might be able to contribute to our work yourself, or would like to nominate someone who could. You can contact the Chair or Secretary or other Exec member (contact details opposite) to discuss what is involved; nominations (which require a proposer and seconder) should preferably be made in advance to the Secretary, but can also be submitted on 15 March. Don't delay!

From the Chair

Change is all around us, as in the rest of London... The redevelopment of Wandsworth Town; massive changes to the skyline; new 'shopping centres'; the continuing decline of smaller businesses and shops... On our Common, not just the potential risks of 'commercialisation', but the hard (not unwelcome) fact that a wonderful open space is increasingly popular as a place to walk, walk the dog, cycle and exercise. Now, at last, a detailed Common management plan is being worked on.

A welcome change over recent years has been the opening up of the River Wandle... There may be different views about some developments on our Thames river bank. Across the borough 'air quality' is an increasing concern (hence our February Society meeting). As we await the new Wandsworth Town 'gyratory', the Council has, commendably, committed itself to an ambitious goal – electric vehicle charging points in all residential streets. As Cllr Cook, the Council's community services chief, has said "The future of motoring is electric". We must hope that careful thought will be given to the appearance of all new 'street furniture'. We are sceptical that enough attention is being given to the development of a new borough 'tree strategy' – and the important role that mature trees can play in improving all our lives. There is as much need as ever for the Society actively to promote of good design and a healthy local environment for us all. We are currently reassessing how we can best discharge that role – more of that at our AGM.

David Kirk



Neal's Lodge, Wandsworth Common – an update

This letter was sent on 3 January 2018 to all who had previously expressed an interest. It follows up the Chair's editorial remarks in the October 2017 Newsletter. David Kirk

1. We are writing again to those of you who have received earlier communications from us, and to others who may be interested.
2. Sandy Muir, as most will know, is seeking to persuade the Court of Appeal not to overturn the judgment of the High Court last summer that **Wandsworth Borough Council acted unlawfully in offering a lease for the use of Neal's Lodge as a private fee-paying nursery.** Such use would effectively restrict its availability to all but the more privileged local residents.
3. Legal proceedings of this nature can be costly and protracted. Wandsworth Council applied for permission last August to appeal the High Court's judgment on three grounds.
4. Permission to appeal the judgment on two grounds was granted in November. Permission on the third ground, which was entirely new, was withheld.
5. With a view to minimising his financial exposure, Sandy, a Society member, applied to the Bar Pro Bono Unit for support from a barrister acting on a *pro bono* basis. The unit approved the application and Victoria Wakefield of Brick Court Chambers volunteered to represent Sandy at the Court of Appeal. This has significantly reduced the costs of defending the High Court judgement.
6. The Council's 'skeleton argument' was filed with the Court of Appeal on 5th December. Victoria delivered Sandy's response on 21st December.
7. Sandy has also applied for a Protective Cost Order – which should further reduce costs. The Council has asked that the Court defer a decision on the PCO, pending further representations. A decision is unlikely before February. The appeal hearing itself is likely to be scheduled between April and June.
8. **Sandy has asked that we pass on his thanks to all those who have generously pledged financial support if it is required. He is very grateful and has been hugely encouraged by these pledges.**
9. The *pro bono* representation of Sandy's case will be very helpful in reducing costs. But the Council has deep pockets: it is evidently determined to reverse the High Court's judgment, regardless of the negative impacts on the Common and for local residents, and the potential implications for the use of open spaces owned by local authorities elsewhere.
10. If the judgment is upheld, however, it could prove a 'landmark' judgment, given those wider implications. We will continue to seek assistance, in whatever form it can be given, in mounting a strong defence of what we believe was a sound judgment by the High Court.

11. We shall keep you informed of further developments and very much appreciate your support. If you have any questions, wish to make a new pledge, or increase an existing one, please let us know. You can also write to wandsworthcommonenhancement@hotmail.co.uk

With best wishes for a Happy New Year,

Yours sincerely,

David Kirk, Chair, Wandsworth Society, 020 8874 9167, davidcameronkirk@hotmail.com

George Meakin, Chair, Wandsworth Common Management Advisory Committee (the 'MAC'), 020 8870 1092, George@georgemeakin.co.uk

Happy New Year from the Planning Group

Reflecting on a New Year, we ponder on what we have achieved and where we are heading. As national politicians work towards Brexit, the local planning situation has not changed that much. And some of the rhetoric of London politicians appears more idealistic than realistic.

There is clearly a significant shortfall in low cost housing nationwide, but, if central government cannot help with significantly more funding, it is unrealistic to expect the private sector to do so with enthusiasm! Levies for "affordable housing" in the form of Section 106 obligations really do not get to the heart of the matter.

What has the Planning group been concerned with over the last year?

B&Q site, Swandon Way An application was submitted early in 2017 but, after an initial consultation for a scheme of 14 blocks of mostly residential accommodation, the process went very quiet. We believe the applicants were awaiting the outcome of the application for the adjacent Homebase site. In October revised plans were submitted for a different layout and content. Despite our and many others' strong objections (ours will be available on the Society's website), the application was approved (9 votes to 1).

Homebase, Swandon Way Despite many local objections, including ours, and following the refusal of the proposals twice by the Council (in the second case, the vote was unanimous), the Mayor 'called in' the application. I represented the Society at the hearing in City Hall in October. After listening to the evidence, the Mayor withdrew for

about 30 minutes to consider and then announced that the revised scheme was approved!

Frasers Property, Phase 3, Building 6B, Riverside Quarter Another application for a significant tower and other buildings at the confluence of the Thames and Wandle Rivers. The previous scheme had been withdrawn but, after some revisions, including a slight improvement in the 'affordable housing' content, the scheme was approved.

Lintons Fuel Site, Osiers Road A proposal by Taylor Wimpey for a very restricted site off Osiers Road, backing onto the rail line; after some revisions, the scheme was approved.

39 - 45 East Hill (former Trinity Cars site) A revised application for a care home was approved. It may have one of the highest air pollution readings on hot windless days in the borough at 5 pm! Demolition work on the site has begun.

Gwynneth Morgan Day Centre, East Hill The rebuilding of this site was approved, but work has not yet started.

Haydon Way, off East Hill An application to redevelop buildings lying to the rear (north) of the St John's Therapy Centre on East Hill. The site was being sold by the Council, and the applicants, Bellway, were guided by Council officers on the submitted scheme. After representations, however, including ours, the scheme was refused - a resounding, but perhaps hollow, victory!

Neal's Lodge, Wandsworth Common The current position is set out in the letter on page 3.

1-9 Church Row, Wandsworth Plain This was an application by the developers of the 'Ram Quarter', following the withdrawal of a previous application, to develop the 'backland' behind the Grade 2* listed buildings on Church Row. We objected strongly to the overdevelopment of this site; the lack of open space for the occupiers, and the height of the buildings overlooking the river; and virtually no workspace (although some was included in the finally approved scheme).

Jaggard Way, off Bellevue Road An application for a thriving, mostly industrial use site (allocated for that purpose in the Local Plan), to be rebuilt - mainly as housing, in buildings up to six floors in height. The site adjoins Wandsworth Common station (which has an access from Jaggard Way) and provides much needed workspace. The

application was with the Council for some months. We believe that the applicants were waiting to submit a revised feasibility statement to justify the relatively low level of affordable housing. We submitted an extensive objection on the grounds of massing, height and loss of employment space. Our objection will be placed on the Society website. 'Refusal' was recommended to the PAC – and it was refused unanimously.

Trees The Society and the Wandsworth Tree Wardens submitted an application for Tree Preservation Orders for all trees on the Swandon Way and Smugglers Way road frontages. After some delay, and no doubt extensive discussion internally, the Council granted TPOs on many of the trees on this stretch of roadway. Unfortunately, this did not take place before the acceptance of the application for the Homebase site but seems to have been largely ignored in respect of the application for the B&Q site.

Local Listing The Society has attended two meetings with the Council to consider additions to the Local List of buildings or artefacts thought worthy of listing.

Thames Tideway Tunnel The Society has attended meetings with Thames Tideway consultants to be advised of progress and address any matters of concern. Members will be aware that work is now underway at both Dormay Street off Armoury Way and in King George's Park where the works will unfortunately involve the felling of some mature trees and the restriction of public access to the north end of the Park for two years.

Wandsworth Gyrotory We have been in contact with the Council. Little public progress appears to have been made but the acquisition of land for the new roadway is, we are told, on the way.

Crossrail 2 There has been no further public consultation in our area over the past year. We understand that funding for the project is making progress, with local sources having to find 50% of the costs. Could the Council tax be going up?!

Society representatives attended two **Planning Forum** meetings with the Council in 2017. Such a forum should be helpful, but too much time at both sessions was taken up by Council briefings.

Quietways. As part of the Mayor's proposals to be implemented by TfL, to improve the safety of cycle paths, the Planning and Road and Transport groups commented on proposals affecting 'our' part of the borough. One consultation resulted in

significant redesign on Magdalen Road, hopefully to the surprise and delight of our R&T group leader.

Electric charging points The Council is now rolling out charging points for electric vehicles. It is likely that there will be great demand in the future. But can you imagine two people arriving head-on to the roadside charge point, with neither giving way as their cars are shortly to lose all charge? The cartoonist Giles would have had a field day!

West London River Group The writer is the Society's representative on the WLRG. It is concerned with the protection of views, the repair and use of the riverbanks and pathways; and it is being consulted on the Mayor's new London Plan and Thames Strategy (Kew to Chelsea). It receives funding from a number of riparian boroughs, but not, unfortunately, Wandsworth.

New pier at Riverside Quarter. An application was approved in December for a new ferry pier that will enable ferries to operate for longer periods; access will be possible at most states of the tide.

Springfield NHS Hospital An application is with the Council for the development of the first phase of new clinical facilities. A joint venture between Sir Robert McAlpine and Kajima has been chosen to take forward the proposals at both Springfield and Tolworth. The Society has supported the Trust during a long and complicated planning process.

More generally, we keep a close (but selective!) eye on local planning applications across the board. **If anyone wishes to bring a new application to our notice,** please do so as soon as possible. Society members are always welcome to attend our monthly meetings as a guest (see page 2) and, if interest continues, to become a member of the Planning group. With my grateful thanks to all the group's members who have attended, aided and abetted over the year.

Yours aye, Philip Whyte

Anyone still have a Wandsworth bus pass?

Sir, In Florence last year I found the easiest way for a British visitor of a certain age to gain free access to the Uffizi and every other monument was to show a Wandsworth bus pass. Yours faithfully, JOHN CURTIS

(Letter to the Times dated 12 July 1999)

Wandsworth Prison, a Changing Institution – a conversation with Jeanne Bryant, its Governor

On 9 November, we were privileged to take part in a discussion with Jeanne Bryant, the first female Governor of Wandsworth Prison. The meeting, attended by about 80 members and guests, was organised by Libby Spurrier who writes this report.

Her Majesty's Prison Wandsworth (HMPW) was built in 1851. It is still one of the largest prisons in the UK and a 'Category B' prison. Although it has been modernised, the residential areas remain in the original buildings (in an ideal world, prisons should be modern buildings). It has held some 'high profile' prisoners – Oscar Wilde, Ronnie Biggs (who escaped in 1965) and, more recently, Chris Huhne, Julian Assange, Max Clifford, Rolf Harris and Gary Glitter, to name but a few. 'Lord Haw Haw' was executed there in 1946; it was the site of one of the UK's last executions in 1961.

Jeanne joined the prison service in 1992, working first in HMP Brixton, 'to try and make a difference'. She was appointed as Wandsworth's Governor last summer, having served for a period as Deputy Governor, and intends to stay for a three year term – after which, she feels, one's ability to see required improvements deteriorates.

She believes that prisoners should be treated with respect and helped on their way to release. One third of HMPW's inmates are on remand, having failed to get bail. In the main, prisoners begin their sentences at Wandsworth; go off to a training prison, to do courses in how to cope with life after prison; and then return to Wandsworth to prepare for release. The most challenging issue about release in London at present is housing. If rehabilitation and resettlement after prison are to be effective, the most important aspects are reintegration with family; gaining employment or education and training; housing and finance/debt, with substance addiction and mental health support important for many too. It's all about getting the right people in to help prepare for life after prison – one current plan is for Halfords to teach bike maintenance, with a view to prisoners' future employment.

A major current challenge is staff shortages. It means that prisoners get locked up for too long; waiting times for visits are too long, and so on. Prisons are complex places: sharing a cell with someone you've never met is difficult and

stressful. Jeanne has worked in a private prison, where the prisoners were looked after extremely well, with a smaller ratio of staff to prisoners. In the public sector, the issue is about will and energy to change the situation. It's all about recruiting the right people. There have been major staff losses, with experienced officers taking voluntary redundancy; but in 2018 more resources should be available to recruit at least 2,000 more officers.

Staff recruitment is made harder by the time it takes to complete security vetting (over which Jeanne has no control). Last November there were 38 officers waiting to complete vetting and training. Staff retention can also be hard. It is good news that the equivalent of a 'Teach First' scheme has been started – Jeanne was thrilled that eight enthusiastic young officers from the scheme had begun a 2-year training programme in September.

Another problem is smuggling of drugs and smart phones. "Spice" (synthetic cannabis) comes in via letters, sprayed on to paper which can be rolled up and smoked. The effects vary and are impossible to predict but can lead to extreme violence and illness. Mobile phones are smuggled in (often in prisoner visits); and staff corruption is an issue, as in all prisons. Some prisoners are experienced in "grooming" staff (you first ask a small favour, then gradually increase requests). Without severe invasive searching of staff on entry to the prison, it is difficult to stop such behaviour entirely, but the prison does regular 'pop up' searching.

Wandsworth has a large number of foreign national prisoners. It is the main prison in the country from which extradition to other countries take place. There are major culture and language challenges. And it's tough being far from home, unable to communicate, sometimes unable to phone because of time differences. It helps to have a translation service and a chaplaincy support team, including an Imam. The need for equality of treatment of prisoners is taken seriously.

Mentoring is important – there are well established groups mentoring and listening to other prisoners. Jeanne would like more – it's good to give the right people the chance to help fellow prisoners in a crisis. A 'listener' group of prisoners is trained by the Samaritans. It can be hard to identify mental health problems if prisoners are locked up for 23 hours a day. There are many forms of personality disorder, ADHD, OCD and Aspergers syndrome; some sufferers should not be in prison and are moved to mental health facilities.

If they have committed a crime, they have to be put somewhere safe; there is often no time after sentencing to make other arrangements. Those with ADHD are most likely to get into trouble. Some older male prisoners are sex offenders; the prison works closely with St George's Hospital and social services to care for them.

Extremist indoctrination is a well understood risk. A close eye is kept on prisoners guilty of terrorist offences. A strong Imam is important; there is a large attendance at Friday prayers.

There will be a smoking ban in all London prisons this year – the last area to roll out the ban. Initial fears about its impact have been eased by the introduction of 'vaping' (which should be helpful).

Jeanne is hugely appreciative of many voluntary organisations who contribute to prison life – local groups who teach English and reading, a group who visit foreign nationals, and the Liberty choir. It's "wonderful" to have so many caring visitors. Jeanne ended our conversation by emphasising the need for prisoners to be treated decently and with respect. A prison sentence is about rehabilitation and help. Prisoners see the best and worst of human nature, but a prison should be about hope above all.

We are most grateful to Jeanne for sharing her thoughts with us. She didn't shy away from difficult truths and was positive and enthusiastic about the future. If anyone can single-handedly recruit more good young prison officers, she will! She sets a fine example.

PS We hope to organize a visit to the Prison (and its recently re-opened Museum) in the near future.

A party for Shirley

At the funeral last May of our much loved President, Shirley Passmore, our Secretary, John Dawson, announced that we were hoping to hold a 'do' to celebrate her life. And so we did, on 20 October at *Le Gothique* in the Royal Victoria Patriotic Building, Wandsworth Common.

The RVPB, built as an 'asylum' for orphans of the Crimean War is, as John described it, a "listed masterpiece of Scottish Baronial Gothic architecture" – Shirley had a hand in saving it in the 1970s. Now it buzzes with a variety of residents and activities, including the restaurant where we assembled – almost 50 people, including Gordon Passmore and six other family members.

Your Chairman was called on to 'host' the event not the easiest task, I found. It was clear that Gordon's wheelchair would not make it up the narrow stairs to the 'upper deck', where excellent food was laid and tables set out. So the family sat below, with all others marshalled above them ('tho 'marshalling' is not a word I associate with the Society). So I had to speak (or shout) from the balcony, looking 'backwards' as well as 'forwards', as it were. I am told that we could all be heard!

Reminiscences were told, and tributes paid, by a range of Society members and other friends of Shirley. Among other things, there was a reading from the excellent short history of Wandsworth Common that Shirley wrote over 20 years ago (and which deserves to be published, I am sure), and some pungent comments from a 'middle of the night' e-mail that summed up the legal position on Neal's Lodge in two crisp sentences. We were all happy to be sharing memories of a very special person. It was, I believe, the sort of occasion that Shirley would herself have enjoyed – no doubt, quickly but gently, correcting us if she thought that anyone's memory was at fault!

Our Christmas party: 'Instant Sunshine'



St Anne's Church Hall was happily packed on the evening of 8 December. Simply put, our Christmas party was hugely enjoyable. Grateful thanks were expressed all round – to our 'three gentlemen in dinner jackets' who made their names on the BBC's Radio 4 as witty and tuneful commentators on the modern world. But our thanks too, to our home-grown cooks (serving excellent *tagines*), bar attendants, decorators, washers-up and sweeps.

Other recent events

Our March Newsletter will include reports and comment on the Society's recent talk with Sir David Henshaw (former Interim Chair of St George's hospital), and on our January talks about three local Open Spaces (Trinity Fields, Springfield Park and Wandsworth Common). *David Kirk* 7

Wandsworth Society Calendar

www.wandsworthsociety.org.uk

Events

Our meetings (usually held on the second Thursday of the month) are **open to all** and free of charge (but we hope newcomers will join the Society). Our usual venue is **West Side Church, corner of Melody Road and Allfarthing Lane, SW18 2QQ**. Refreshments are available at the start of meetings. *Soirées and outings, however, are open only to Society members and their guests.*

Thursday 8 February

7.45pm, West Side Church

Air quality - why it matters and what we should do to improve it

Talk and discussion with **Dr Ian Mudway** Lecturer in Respiratory Toxicology, Environmental Research Group, King's College, London - and a panel of other speakers. *This is not a boring subject; it should matter to us all; and Dr Mudway is a lively speaker!*



The return of 'fog'?

Wednesday 7 March, 7.30 for 8pm

14 Patten Road, SW18 3RH

(home of the Byrons)

Musical soirée Our first soirée this year will be a recital by the admired pianist, **Lutchmayer**. He (and speaking Beethoven, Bartok and Schulz-cost £12 (to with Peter Farrow at internationally **Karl** will be playing about) works by Chopin, Liszt, Evler. Booking include a first glass of wine or soft drink) must be made in advance, with Peter Farrow at



wandsworth.society@mac.com or 020 8874 3274.
Book now to avoid disappointment.

Thursday 15 March

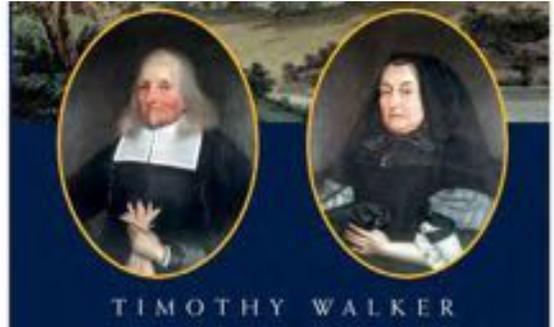
7 for 7.15pm (NB), West Side Church

The Society's Annual General Meeting

(see also page 2 – open to all, but only Society members may vote), **and then**

8.15pm (after an interval for further refreshments)

The First Clapham Saints: A London Village 1600-1720



A talk by local historian Tim Walker

Friday 16 March

Visit to the Painted Hall, Greenwich

Join other members **going up 60 feet** to see Britain's largest painted ceiling. Conservation work now in train will allow the public to view the painting 'up close', a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to view this masterpiece from just a couple of feet. We plan a morning tour of around 50 minutes; depending on the time slot, we may add a short walk, modest lunch together and a boat trip back to Vauxhall (all optional extras). The cost is £10 (£5 for Art Pass-holders). Register your interest by e-mailing eventbookingsws@gmail.com (Caroline Pook) or on 020 8870 4958 (leave a message) **by 24 February**. You will then be contacted with details and options before you are asked to pay.

Thursday 12 April

7.45pm for 8pm, West Side Church

A Council election hustings is being planned.

The Council elections take place on Thursday 3 May.

About Subscriptions & Joining the Society
Should you have renewed your annual subscription on or before 1 January)? – it is still excellent VFM. To renew or join, contact our Membership Secretary (see page 2) – or speak to another Society officer at our next event.