The Ultra Low Emission Zone is coming to a street* near you

Why are ULEZ (Ultra Low Emissions Zone) and other changes to achieve cleaner air in our area needed, how will they be achieved, and what will be the implications for local residents?

Find the answers and discuss the issues at our meeting

Cleaner Air for Wandsworth
Thursday 12 September
7.45 for 8 pm
at the West Side Church, on the corner of Melody Road and Allfarthing Lane  SW18 2QQ

Leonie Cooper, our principal speaker, a Society member, has been a Wandsworth Councillor since 2006 and has represented Merton and Wandsworth on the London Assembly since 2016. As the Deputy Chair of the Assembly’s Environmental Committee that developed the Mayoral plans for cleaner air, Leonie knows what it is all about and what the local implications are likely to be. We look forward to an informative talk, lots of questions and a lively debate.

* That would be the South Circular, and October 2021.

The mystery of the changing plaque

We put up a plaque in 1994 on the boundary wall of the brewery to identify the site, and give a brief description, of the Surrey Iron Railway. It was removed when works began on the Ram Brewery redevelopment, and was to be re-fixed when a suitable location became available.

There is now a plaque fixed to a wall at the Ram Brewery. It looks like our plaque, but it isn’t.

We suspect when they dug it out with the intention of sticking it up they discovered it was location specific, which shouldn’t have presented an insurmountable problem, but also that it required stone sleepers to be set in the wall below it, by which time they had either lost the sleepers, or thought setting them into the wall below would be too much trouble, or more trouble than causing a new plaque to be made, or they did not care for the wording …

In any event we are a little miffed, and we don’t get a mention … more on this anon.
Our EU elections hustings
Tuesday 14 May  Bruce St-Julian Bown offers a personal view …

Jointly, the Wandsworth and Putney Societies organised an EU Parliament Election hustings at St Anne’s Church, Wandsworth. All eight political parties fielding MEP candidates nationally were invited to take part. All but the Brexit Party turned up.

The church was very nearly filled to capacity. The ‘order of play’ was alphabetical, by party name, each speaker being allowed four minutes to present their case and ten to respond to questions. The event flowed like clockwork, under the masterful eye of Jonathan Calloway (Putney’s Deputy Chair), and his formidable egg timer, with David Kirk introducing and thanking at the end.

It would be impossible to give a resume of each party’s ‘manifesto’, but it was clear that all shades of opinion were represented in the church (but not necessarily in equal measure!). Not all speakers had persuasive oratorical skills, but their key concerns were covered pretty comprehensively.

Of special interest perhaps was Hasseeb Ur-Rehman, representing the newest kids on the block, Change UK. He was asked why they had not teamed up with the Lib Dems since their positions on the EU seemed almost identical. They claimed it was their intention and ‘dialogue’ was under way. (It must be quite hard to find a Lib Dem in the Commons when you need one to ‘hook up’ with.)

The Conservative candidate, Scott Pattenden, thankfully avoided the issue of embarrassing splits in his party, focusing instead on what the EU had done for us – great idea, but perhaps a tad late in the day and better than attempting a ‘fudge’ on imminent party unity.

The question of a second referendum was raised from the floor and generated an almost polite heckler to claim that a confirmatory vote was ‘anti-democratic’. Only a slight murmur was audible across the pews.

The Lib Dems’ candidate, Jonathan Fryer, followed. Their unique position as, theoretically, the only party representing the ‘centre ground’ of British politics had not passed them by. (How many closet ‘centrists’ are there in our midst, I wonder?) Nevertheless, Fryer did make it clear that the Lib Dems were no longer a detail (I use the term in the military sense), but the lead battalion for ‘Remain’.

The Greens, represented by Gulnar Hasnain - God bless them - are the only party with an agenda more important to our future than Brexit: the survival of the species, no less. Although the party adds critical mass to ‘Remain’, it was clear that its potential role in a ‘balance of power’ brings a blush of pink to their shade of forest green, and their halo effect always helps highlight our excesses…

Oh! I haven’t mentioned Labour, represented, in the absence of an available MEP candidate, by Cllr Fleur Anderson. It was a task too far for any Labour speaker to explain where they themselves stood on the party’s policy spectrum, having first outlined what that overall spectrum was, in only four minutes.

The high point of the ‘show’, (I use the term advisedly), has to be the last speaker, UKIP’s Freddy Vachha. He was, of all the speakers, the most dynamic, most ‘on the ball’, with credentials suggesting a formidable IQ. He began by proclaiming that the first dozen people he met on joining UKIP were all of foreign origin (something we didn’t know!?). Research clearly done, he had an answer for everything, and hair trigger response times in delivering replies. If that sounds like a lack of journalistic impartiality on my part, it is not. It is simply that he was the clearest, most entertaining speaker and a natural climax to a highly popular, well hosted and good-natured, event.
If you wanted to sum up in two words what the Wandsworth Society is all about, they might be 'local environment' - in all its aspects: streets, buildings and open spaces (and we should now add 'air'?!). Hence the importance to us of decision-making by local and central government (although the Society does not of course do 'party politics') and the environmental 'policies' that concern us locally. Quite a lot of both 'climate change' and 'political change' around these days...

Many enjoy a 'hustings event' such as our EU Parliamentary one this spring. I think all will enjoy Bruce St Julian-Bown's personal (tongue-in-cheek?) account of it. Perhaps unlikely that there will be another event quite like it, but who knows when the next 'hustings' might be? Bruce himself is arranging a Society debate - of a rather different kind - in November, about the quality of local developments in our area (page 8).

Wandsworth Councillors have 'united' in response to the recent Climate Change petition, signed by 12,000 local residents (including Society members who encouraged me to sign), calling for the Council to debate its response to the 'climate emergency', as it did on 17 July. The public gallery was overflowing. Quite a lot of children present, and well behaved, although their presence may have encouraged rather childish behaviour by some adults!

As the Council Leader said at the start, not the least remarkable thing was that Conservatives and the Labour opposition had worked together - to produce an impressive document of plans for action. We welcome the Council’s aim to become the 'greenest' (and 'cleanest') of London. There was no scepticism expressed by Councillors on either side about the reality of an 'emergency'. And there was a real concern to respond to it, in the interests of all. The Council has 'set itself the ambitious target of becoming the 'greenest borough in inner London', the Council Leader has told us. ‘Greener and Cleaner’, he says, will now be the...
Planning News

In recent months there has been some delay in the Council’s processing of planning applications. We understand this is partly due to staff shortages, but also to the number of appeals the Council has been dealing with. An enormous amount of information has to be provided with each planning application, and all of it checked by the Planning department in consultation with others before the responsible officer can prepare a report to the Planning Applications Committee, currently chaired by Cllr Guy Humphries (Southfields).

Applications of significant interest to the Society still with the Planning department include Jaggard Way (2018/5413) and Ferrier Street (2018/5669).

86-96 Garratt Lane (rear of Brocklebank Medical Centre) (2017/0535), a revival of a previous scheme to which many, including the Society, objected. The Society expressed its strong objections, particularly to the height and the local environmental impact. In Wandsworth Town Centre, tall buildings ‘may be appropriate on some sites, subject to the qualifications set out in Council policies’. We believed there were no significant benefits to regeneration, townscape (the building is too tall) or public realm. And the felling of mature trees will do serious damage to the local environment. Despite the concerns (and anger) of many (public gallery at PAC hearing overflowed), the scheme was approved unanimously!

More recent issues include an announcement in May about the Homebase and B&Q sites, Swandon Way. A press statement in May announced that Legal and General Investment funds have exchanged contracts to acquire both sites for a fund that provides Private Rental Schemes (PRS) for housing. We have had an informal meeting with L&G representatives. They expect to start building work on both sites over the next year or so, following essentially the two earlier schemes that have planning approval. We explained the concerns that we have over the future of both sites but will want to find out more details.

Trewint Street (Garratt Mills), off Garratt Lane (2018/1083). Our statement in the last Newsletter that this site included a travellers’ site was incorrect. That site will in fact remain, adjoining the new proposal, if approved. Although the proposed development involves high density and access constrictions and has attracted many objections, we have not ourselves commented.

Spread Eagle, Wandsworth High Street (2019/0858) An application by Young’s Brewery to bring back into permanent use the listed cinema building and land to the rear, currently car parking, and to remodel the upper floors of the existing public house building into a ‘boutique’ hotel. The new construction will provide offices in a ‘mews type setting’, a training centre for Young’s and the hotel accommodation.

We support this proposal, which has now been approved.

Quaker Meeting House, Wandsworth High Street (2019/1030) Application to renew fences around the perimeter of the site that now adjoins the new ‘Wandsworth Exchange’ block in the Old Burial Ground. The Design and Access statement, by the way, includes a most interesting history of the site which dates back to the mid 1600’s - well worth a look. We had no objection to the fences, nor did others. Now approved.

Burntwood Lane telecom facilities (2019/0691) – see April-May Newsletter. ‘Prior approval’ having been refused, there has as yet been no appeal.

Trinity Road/ Burntwood Lane/ Bellevue Road intersection The Planning and Roads and Transport group have been considering the proposals for the change of traffic flows at this junction for some time. A Council officer held a meeting with us last autumn to explain the proposals, which could involve the loss of sections of the Common and open space on Trinity Fields. We have been promised that the Society will be consulted at an early stage in the next round of proposals, to follow further consultants’ reports. We shall continue to
express our great concern about any loss of Common land and other open space.

13 Wandsworth Plain (2019/1337) An application for the Capital Studios site to allow its use for a five year period as a cinema, cafes and other facilities. We welcome this application, bringing the northern part of the site ‘back to life’, albeit on a temporary basis (but you never know what ‘temporary’ may mean!).

Trinity Court Nursing Home, 165-167 Trinity Road We had been concerned by a series of proposals for the expansion of the nursing home. An application for a detached 8-bedroom building was approved in 2018. Cllr Sarah McDermott, as a local Councillor, represented to the Committee the concerns of local residents, drawing particular attention to the objections made by the Society. The owners then made an application for a 10-bedroom building. We objected to this application as too large for the site, with adverse effects on the amenity of the nursing home’s residents, and neighbouring properties. We believed the 8-bedroom building approved in 2018 was itself too large. The later proposal added an additional 20% to the ‘footprint’ and would increase to 60 the number of residents. We were not impressed by the proposals for amenity space and believed that there would be an unacceptable reduction in the open space available for nursing home residents. Happily this application was refused permission in February this year. However, the applicants then submitted a planning appeal. We are pleased to report that this appeal was dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate in July.

Thames Tideway Tunnel ‘Charlotte’ has now finished the journey to King George’s Park, following which ‘she’ has been dismantled and taken back to Dormay Street to continue the journey to Carnworth Road (under the River of course!).

Armoury Way rerouting TfL continues with land acquisition. As regards the Gas Holder site, we are advised that the hazardous/dangerous site restrictions have been lifted and the site can now be brought forward for alternative uses.

Ram Quarter We have been concerned that some of the brewery’s historic artefacts might have been lost or removed from the site. Members of the Planning group paid a visit on 30 May and were reassured to see what is stored in the Stables, and sections of the Surrey Light Railway sleepers piled up nearby. We were also able to inspect the restored Beam engine which is of great historical interest: apart from being one of the first used in an industrial process (beer making of course), it was in use until about 1986. Apparently, it still works, but is not used.

We were also able to inspect the mash tuns in which the beer was made until the site was vacated. We understand that local brewers Sambrooks will soon be brewing beer on the Ram site, and will be opening historic parts of the buildings as a brewing museum.

WBC Planning Forum The Society attends this ‘forum’, along with many other similar local bodies and groups concerned with planning matters. It is chaired by the PAC Chair (now Cllr Humphries) and offers updates by Council officers on local planning processes – and the opportunity to raise local groups’ concerns. We believe that too little attention is paid to the views of those who live and work in the borough. We have written to the Council in support of a paper produced by the Clapham Junction Action Group that seeks greater involvement in the planning process of ‘amenity’ and similar local groups.

If any Society member has a question or requires support on a planning application, please get in touch with me (or another Planning group member - listed on the front cover of our April/ May Newsletter). If we don’t know the answer, we usually know someone who does!

Philip Whyte
philip.whyte@fraserwhyte.co.uk

Copies of our submissions, which are available on the Council’s Planning Applications pages, will soon be placed on the Society’s website.
The Wandsworth Design Awards give recognition to recent local building and landscape projects which make a positive contribution to the local environment and set a good example to others.

Types of development include good access to buildings, extensions, restorations/conversions, small residential and large mixed use buildings, shopfronts, public spaces, landscape projects and sustainable buildings. Full details visit www.wandsworth.gov.uk/designawards

Nominations from local people and amenity societies, architects and developers are encouraged.

Open to projects that have been completed since 1 January 2017. If you are tempted to nominate a project please do let us know.

wandsworth.society@mac.com

David Kirk
Music for Minds

Wendy Cater reports on our Society Meeting on 9 May

On Tuesday mornings Sheila and Paschal Allen make their way to Wigmore Hall in the West End to join in “Singing with Friends”. This is a choir, run by London’s most prestigious chamber music venue, for those living with dementia, and their families. The therapeutic value of involvement with music, both as listeners and participants, is at last becoming understood, appreciated and put into action - as may have been noticed by viewers of two recent, very moving BBC documentary programmes about a choir instigated by the actress Vickie McClure.

Music helps minds, it’s a fact. It calms, soothes, stimulates. It can revive memories that no questioning can fathom, provide a framework for socialising, opportunities for conviviality… The presence of dementia in our communities, all agree, is increasing, and therefore needs addressing in practical ways. All helpful means need publicising. So the Society’s Events team thought it appropriate to explore the part music can play - as the WS contribution to the 2019 Wandsworth Arts Fringe Festival.

The SW London branch of the Alzheimer’s Society was eager to tell us of its services in Wandsworth. They include advice, information, referrals and support in all fields of health, care needs, benefits, assistive technology and face to face attention. Peter Edwards and Daniel Steiner gave us an engaging account of these activities, including filmed episodes of lively gatherings and structured musical activities. Regular events are held in Tooting, Colliers Wood and Southfields, and “Singing for the Brain” sessions in Balham. Details of these can be found at wandsworth@alzheimers.org.uk or via 020 8687 0922. Individuals can even have their own personal significant musical items stored and made permanently available to them via a “Playlist” service. An ingenious and cheering initiative, an instant comforting and stimulating link to their past!

After the Alzheimer’s Society presentation our two charming and infectiously enthusiastic visitors from Wigmore’s Outreach service, conductor Suzi Saperia and pianist Jonathan Williams, eager proselytisers both for the effectiveness of the “Singing with Friends” programme, turned their magic on us, their audience, as guinea pigs for one of their sessions. We learned the practice steps of a professional singer, from breathing exercises to stretches to relaxing tricks, with wrigglings and wobblings and alarming but liberating unfamiliar vocal utterances. Ultimately and with amazement a usually somewhat staid company found itself resounding with rounds and shanties, descants and all! We got a taste of the stimulation and joy those with dementia find in entering into a communal musical experience.

We needed no more convincing of the benefits of bringing music into everyone’s lives. May it be hoped that programmes such as Wigmore’s become universal in the care of those with dementia. They deserve no less. Warmest thanks to Suzi and Jonathan, Peter and Daniel for bringing it home to us.

And please note the next Society Soirée will be a clarinet recital at Patten Road Sunday 13 October details to be confirmed
Thursday 10 October
7.45pm for 8pm
West Side Church
at the corner of Allfarthing Lane and Melody Road Wandsworth SW18 2QQ

LOTHARINGIA
A Personal History of Europe's Lost Country
A talk by Simon Winder, a Wandsworth resident, part-time historian and part-time publisher, about his latest book on European history. Two talks to the Society on his earlier works were much enjoyed for their wit and style. As one reviewer has written about his latest book, 'He is a master of the art of making history both funny and fun, with never any loss of seriousness. Once again he brings Germany bouncing back to life.'

Monday 16 September
5pm to 7pm
As the Society's contribution to the Wandle Valley Fortnight (which runs from 14 to 29 September), we are organising a stroll to look at different views of the Wandle and the Thames, including a designated vista at the mouth of the Wandle. Meet by The Crane pub, Armoury Way, SW18 1EZ, at the beginning of The Causeway and finish at Putney Bridge Station (with frequent 220 and 270 buses back to Garratt Lane). No booking necessary. Jenny Massey (07711 952218) is organising.

Thursday 14 November
7.45pm for 8pm
West Side Church
at the corner of Allfarthing Lane and Melody Road Wandsworth SW18 2QQ

The Good, the Bad and the Inappropriate - what 'Planning' has done to/for Wandsworth
How successful has the Society been (since its inception in 1971) in pursuing its primary purpose of protecting and enhancing the built environment in our area of interest? A slide presentation and discussion, led by a panel of Society 'experts' – members of the audience will be invited to give their own suggestions about 'successes' and 'failures'. The meeting is also likely to cover 'trends' over the last fifty years (almost!) of the Society’s existence, in planning policies (national and local) and consultation arrangements with local communities and others.

Friday 6 December
The Society's Christmas Party at St Anne's Church Hall, an always eagerly awaited event for Society members and their guests … a date for your diary.