Wandsworth Society

Newsletter Autumn 2026

This from The Thames Strategy Kew to Chelsea (TSKC) , who are a …

… a partnership organisation working to guide change and promote the River Thames corridor between Kew Bridge and Battersea. The Strategy is rooted in a 100-year vision first published in 2002, which continues to influence how this stretch of river is planned and managed. In response to accelerating climate change, flood risk and development pressure, the TSKC is now being updated as part of the wider Joint Thames Strategy (JTS) Refresh programme.

The Joint Thames Strategy brings together the existing Thames strategies from Surrey to the Sea, providing joined-up riverside planning and guidance that supports the long-term stewardship of the River Thames. The Refresh is focused on understanding how the river and its surrounding communities are changing, identifying opportunities to strengthen climate resilience, improve access to the river, enhance biodiversity, celebrate heritage and support thriving, attractive and well-connected riverside neighbourhoods.

Within the TSKC area, the refresh involves updating Character Assessments across eight distinct river reaches from Kew Bridge to Battersea. These assessments consider the historic, environmental, cultural and townscape qualities that define each stretch of the river, identifying opportunities, sensitivities and future challenges. Over the past 12 months the project team has been speaking with local interest groups and stakeholders. Local knowledge is essential to this process, ensuring that future guidance reflects the distinctive character of riverside communities while responding to changing environmental conditions and pressures for growth and regeneration.

From September 2026, TSKC will be running a programme of physical and digital community and stakeholder engagement. This will include local events, talks, workshops and opportunities for organisations, interest groups and residents to help shape the future vision for this section of the Thames. We are keen to hear from a wide range of voices, including community groups, environmental organisations, heritage societies, businesses and river users. Your knowledge and perspectives will help inform the Strategy and ensure it reflects shared priorities for the river and its surrounding communities.

The Thames Strategy Partnership is also launching a Commonplace site to host information, questionnaires and surveys.

Further information on the programme can be found at www.jtsrefresh.com, and details of upcoming engagement opportunities will be shared over the coming months via our social media channels. If you would like to be kept informed or discuss how your organisation can get involved, to join the mailing list please contact

alex@habitatsandheritage.org.uk

This is the Newsletter of **The Wandsworth Society** a registered charity no 263737. The Society is concerned with the quality of life and the environment in Wandsworth town centre, Wandsworth Common and adjacent areas.
If you are not already a member and would like to join please contact the Membership Secretary Gill Gray, details opposite. Please address, any comments, or even better contributions, to newsletter@wandsworthsociety.org

Wandsworth Society

Newsletter
Autumn 2026

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Greetings

We have been busy consulting these last few weeks, or more precisely giving our views, on a draft *'robust, up-to-date planning policy framework …against which any future application for development consent would be considered.'* * In this case the future application for development being considered was a third runway at Heathrow airport. You would not be wrong in thinking it took a bit of time and effort.

The increase in the numbers of aircraft taking off and landing (ATMs - Air Traffic Movements in planning vernacular) is massive. (see the Transport Group's report pages 4-7). We believe the adverse effects of noise, pollution and traffic on local areas will be considerable, a view we shared with neighbouring amenity groups, the London Mayor, Wandsworth and eight other neighbouring councils.

Our concerns were not simply parochial - while groups such as ours are ill-qualified to give an informed opinion on the balance of benefits and disbenefits on economic growth or climate change we were persuaded by the arguments of those better qualified who were in opposition to the proposals.

We are currently working on a response to the public consultation on the Draft London Plan. We are considering in particular the sections on tall buildings, a short note on page 7.

* Ministerial foreword to the Draft Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statement: consultation on proposed amendments

Front cover

Artist's impression on the left, reality on the right - is it the full height, or is there more to come ? Church Row is Grade II* listed - officially the new building does not adversely affect its setting, other opinions are availabe …

The Transport Group Reports

Wandsworth Town
How time flies! It was last year that TfL announced that it had cancelled taking any action on the gyratory traffic system having agreed its plans 10 years ago.

Arising from this news was a late Autumn public consultation last year about the town centre which, having published its findings in the Spring this year, appears to have ground to a halt, due firstly to the pending May Council elections and secondly to the changes of its administration. We contacted the new Cabinet Member for Transport, Cllr Daniel Hamilton asking him to meet us to discuss the town centre and his plans for improving the area. Within a month of making a positive contact Cllr Hamilton stood down from his Cabinet post to be succeeded by Cllr Nick Austin with whom we are making contact.

As we have reported, the Society submitted a detailed paper about improvements we would like to see to the town centre, stressing major routes through to induce pedestrians and cyclists alike to the rivers Wandle and Thames. Also, we highlighted the reuse of the currently redundant Listed Courthouse buildings at the very north end of Garratt Lane as a new community centre, together with a museum run by volunteers. We suggested improvements to roads and streets including signage to assist movement of the public through the area guiding to various attractions, including the river routes and to bus and train transport links. We advised of improvements to ease of cycling in the local town centre streets a number of which prohibit two-way traffic for example.

We are pursuing Cllr Austin to discover what will be his Council's policies in dealing with TfL over traffic issues in the town centre, arising from the public consultation, and other transport matters locally.

Meanwhile, the Wandsworth Town station lift installation and improvements appears to be advancing well, with the exception of the Network Rail building works compound obstructing the travel of westbound cyclists under the bridge by 'no-entry' signage. Cycle Superhighway 8 passes under the bridge for cycling in both east and west directions. We shall raise this issue with the Council.

Buses
The recently introduced electric buses by TfL are to be commended. However their rapid acceleration and sharp braking can be abrupt, and some passengers have drawn this to our attention. We shall contact TfL and ask if these features are because of the function of the electric programming of the engines? They appear to occur on all the fully electric buses and we do not necessarily see this as driver enthusiasm!

Bus Routes
We note that with the current – August – diversion of the 156 and 39 bus routes along Garratt Lane has emphasised the lack of a direct bus route from Earlsfield north up Garrett Lane to Wandsworth Town centre and onto Clapham Junction and back. It has also reminded our Society that there remain no direct routes from Balham to the Wandsworth Town centre, nor from Streatham via Tooting Bec to Wandsworth Bridge along Trinity Road, and on towards the Hammersmith and Fulham north of the Thames.

20 mph limit in Trinity Road
This we have welcomed, and since its inception early in the summer, traffic behaviour on this busy north-south artery seems to have observed the measure, although often to reach 20mph when really busy would be seen as an achievement! We do receive grumbles about the inconsistency of speed restrictions as they can change quickly along roads, as also do the regular complexity of road markings.

Road markings
These important features, in particular recently applied new ones, do now appear to fade very quickly making observation difficult to notice, especially at night under LED lighting and more so when wet. Is this due to heavy tyre wear or perhaps a change to the quality of paint applied? Similarly, many yellow-box markings are very heavily worn and these often carry a penalty for not being correctly observed, which is easily done in heavy traffic.

Burntwood Lane
Now the road works are completed we are concerned about several features; i) the long breaks in the south, down-cycle lane where there it disappears well in advance of the junction with the Springfield Village entrance drive. This ensures that motorists see crossing the junction as their right of way, across the path of downhill cyclists easily not spotted. We judge cyclists should be given priority at this junction as the long cycle lane from the top of the hill enables cyclist to travel safely and at some pace too. The lane should be continuous across the junction. It is cyclists who are vulnerable at this junction and it should be recalled that the road improvements were made to put their interest, and pedestrians too, first. ii) there are no cycle lanes beyond the Aboyne Gardens junction up to Garrett Lane where priority has been given to parking along the length of Burntwood Lane to that of encouraging safe cycling.

Brodrick Road and locality
We have written to Cllr Botting of Trinity Ward in response to concerns raised to her by residents about traffic. We have drawn to her attention that traffic is attracted to this road due to the Trinty Road/Brodrick Road crossing as an attractive cut though to St James's Drive. We pointed out that this crossing is dangerous and has been for the life of this Society as vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians alike attempt to nose through traffic to cross Trinity Road. We have suggested that the crossing should be light controlled to avoid accidents which are waiting to happen.

In the same letter we raised our concerns about the continuously busy Beechcroft Road rat-run, Trinity Road's by-pass for motor traffic. Also, the need to gain access through College Garden's boundary to enable cyclists and pedestrians entry to Springfield Village, to enable visiting Springfield Hospital, Sainsbury's shop and several cafés, the housing and parkland beyond.

Plans for a third runway at Heathrow
A public consultation on the needs and policy framework on which proposals for a third runway at Heathrow will be assessed has just concluded. We submitted a response with our objections to the process, along with many others, including our neighbouring amenity groups, Wandsworth council.

A search for **Draft Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statemen**t will find the government policy statement and overview of the consultation.

The House of Commons Transport Select Committee is (or may have concluded by now) scrutinising the evidence submitted on the expansion plan consultation - a search for **Transport Select Committee** should find the committee website with the evidence submitted to the inquiry.

A brief summary of the issue of an expansion of Heathrow Airport:
Wandsworth Town is now affected by aircraft approaching Heathrow, as is the remainder of the borough, especially nearby Wandsworth Common south of the town centre where aircraft are on their long landing approach to Heathrow, 15 miles away. Similarly, Southfields and Tooting are affected as flights taking

off climb towards the southeast. Across Putney, the lower landing flight paths have a greater noise impact than on the other areas mentioned above, but, even in those, noise levels remain obvious out-of-doors, especially whilst in our gardens, walking/cycling generally and noticeably on the Common.

From the writer's experience, the noise levels from low flying aircraft much closer to Heathrow at Richmond are bad, at Hounslow very bad indeed. Spreading the noise shadow wider in the future should not be being considered.

To put it in a local context, flight patterns currently change daily at 3pm to relieve pressure on affected neighbourhoods. Whether this break can continue whilst accommodating the extra flights is not known. Nor, whether early morning and late evening flight start and finish times will be shortened or lengthened.

At this stage, we are unaware of what the flight patterns might be. However, in Heathrow's earlier 2019 expansion plan, maps were published indicating critical areas, in which Wandsworth was included, and it stated that here, in these areas

'Aircraft noise may be intrusive. May (have) adverse effect on health and quality of life. Dependent on noise level and population. Mitigate and minimise effects. Dependent on airspace design.'

It is unlikely that the flight patterns will differ much from the earlier 2019 plan as the expanded airport runway's layout will be identical in an updated version.

The government has narrowed down its four tests for the Heathrow expansion, to include with 'noise', issues of 'climate change, air quality and economic growth across the country'. Proposals must meet 'robust' requirements in these areas under scrutiny.

However, by implication, the loss of historic west London villages and homes, c48,000 more parking spaces and access by road to them, no improvements to public transport for additional journeys to the airport, the likely movement of a great many jobs from the Midlands and the North to service the expansion at Heathrow, seem to be considered secondary in planning terms to meeting the tests, of importance as they are. The third runway, if built, would see an increase of 57% in flights rising from a current total of c480,000 to c756,000!

Further important facts, which seem to be overlooked, need to enter the equation, including the following, recently approved, increases in the expansion of other major London airports by recent Governments. These include: -

Gatwick Airport: it had its second runway approved in September 2025, and by the High Court in June 2026 against disputing claims. The extra runway will permit the current 280,000 flights annually to rise to 389,000, accommodating 80 million passengers from the existing 43m.

Stansted Airport: no new runway but an approved increase of passenger numbers from 29.3m to 51m annually. The numbers of existing flights will remain, but larger aircraft will be accommodated on the existing runway.

Luton Airport; no new runway but passenger numbers to rise from 18m to 32m annually, an 80% increase. Currently there are 132,000 flights annually due to rise 50% to 202,000 flights. The total of the above increases: flights - 412,000 to 591,000: 43.5% passenger nos - 124,000 to 162,000: 29% Heathrow, on completion of its expansion, would add an annual total of c756,000 flights to serve c150,000 passengers, thus raising the gross total regional increase to c1,347,000 flights to serve c900,000 passengers annually, encompassing the greater London and central, south-east region. (In addition, there is City Airport, air and ground traffic to be included in the equation).

We query how the currently approved increase in flights and passengers can meet 'climate change concerns, noise and air quality standards, and economic growth across the country', and that is without adding Heathrow's expansion targets. Any increase will draw customers and the air industry staff from across all regions of the UK, at a time when government policy seems likely to encourage 'economic growth' away from the south-east region and the pull of the capital.

We must say NO to the need of the future expansion of Heathrow.

John Dawson

Search for **Draft London Plan 2026** for London City Hall links to the consultation.

The main matters we are considering for this consultation are -

MBUL2 Design requires the optimisation of land for what ever is proposed. This, of course, poses problems as the intensification of sites could produce significantly denser or higher building forms than are acceptable under current policies.

MBUL3 Tall buildings. This section provides hopefully better guidance as to the locations to be identified and heights of buildings which will be considered acceptable over the plan period. We have consistently opposed what appears to have been an arbitrary approach by our council in the past in respect of tall buildings. The attached diagram defines a tall building up to a height of 100m - that's 33.3 storeys.

We get there in the end

In our 2024 autumn newsletter, as you will note now two years past, a request was made for information relating to the boundary treatment of St Anne's church. This followed from our September talk that year to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the consecration of the church. A consecration delayed by debate as to whether the church boundary was to be wall or fence - it was railings.

And - we received a prompt response to that request, which has languished unforgivably (and alone) in the in-tray of the clutter of the newsroom.

The sands of time slip by, the mills of the gods grind slowly, but eventually … we publish.

Letters to the editor
October 2024
The St Anne's boundary question

We have a postcard of the area purchased from Ron Elam's stall, sent by Dolly to Miss Agnes Perry in 1910. This shows handsome railings along the St Ann's Crescent perimeter of the church grounds; these were in all probability removed for the ill-conceived munitions drive in the Second World War.

Note the lack of cars, wider pavement and elm trees. St Ann's Hill was the original name of the road, subsequently hived off as St Ann's Crescent

When we bought our house opposite the church in 1980 we overlooked a rundown, rusty, steel chain fence along that boundary, some lying on the ground. The damage to the fence was in all probability partly caused by the felling of the line of elm trees which ran along the northern border of the church grounds, sadly victims in the 1970s of Dutch Elm disease. In the early 1980s the council removed the rusty fence and reinstated the railings to restore the blighted views of the church and in 1986 Wandsworth Council designated the St Anne's Church surroundings as a Conservation Area, some 30 years after the II* listing of the church itself.

With thanks, and apologies, to Caroline Pook

A local outing

A small piece of fascinating heritage is tucked away in a Mortlake churchyard. This is the mausoleum of the Victorian explorer Sir Richard Burton and his wife. The mausoleum, carved in sandstone, and designed by Lady Burton, is shaped like the tent the couple used for their expeditions into the desert. It is decorated with both Islamic and Christian symbols to reflect the couple's range of interests.

You can climb a short metal ladder (if you dare) to peer through a window in the roof at the coffins and various other artefacts.

St Mary Magdalen Catholic Church, in North Worple Way, is a short walk from Mortlake station; access to the quiet churchyard is round the west side of the church.

Caroline Pook

On Riverside Radio our local digital station

RIVERSIDE RADIO

You can find / listen to Riverside Radio at riversideradio.com

So that's what a Radio interview is all about. Don't expect any seismic response!! I was on Saturday evening from about Midnight – 12.40am (that makes it Sunday!) & Sunday evening 10.05 to 10,40 Interspersed by some blues music I was invited to choose. I suspect that if their weekly (audience) reportedly reaches 80,000 then there might have been say 2000 listening and 1000 who heard part of it at most. As far as the Museum is concerned, I covered the story, as told at the Society Talk, interspersed by the Show Host, Andy Bungay's questions I was slightly ponderous in replying but it went quite smoothly. He was flattering & applauding me as a star artist, star ad man, star voluntary worker, all superlatives totally & embarrassingly OTT. The Society was recognised as doing excellent work and indicating the WanSoc website for contact. It would have been hard work to follow the dialogue as his questions (which were relevant but from a slightly different perspective) and the music breaks framed the style of the programme. I have heard some interesting music on the channel since. Overall in this case I trusted their intentions (as you realise how vulnerable a position you are talking on broadcast media) recognise their need to fill hours of airtime 24/7 and keep as much audience on side as poss. I mentioned not everyone liked the MOOF branding idea but Bungay was positive about it because it jarred a bit. The problem was there was no single point when the interview started – I imagine its a pro technique to relax the interviewee and get them blabbing and gain background into who you actually are as a person or in the community. But overall Andy Bungay was sympathique I asked specifically if the interview had started so he said 'well lets start it now' but he'd already taped 20mins of chat about my Corsican heritage – now inevitably linked to the MOOF rationale & Wandsworth history archive??!!. Does this realistically take the Museum case forward? Possible a tiny step but at least its forward not backwards and only if some Councillors were listening and it does go as far as Richmond - I'll ask for a recording. Not sure if I'll accept request to for me to host a blues music aficionados programme!! Hope no one stayed up late to listen!!

Bruce St Julian-Bown

Some good news for the Wandle

The good news is the river Wandle catchment area has been selected by the Mayor to receive funding 0f £650,000 under The Mayor's Clean Rivers and Waterways Plan announced in July.

> **The Mayor's plan sets out a long-term vision for waterways that are cleaner, richer in wildlife, easier to access and better connected to the communities around them.**

The plan for the Wandle catchment is -

> **Restoring the rare chalk stream, and enhancing the river corridor, through a new vision for a Wandle Valley Regional Park; improving access and inclusive engagement; restoring habitats; creating fish superhighways; and exploring opportunities to daylight lost rivers**

Search **Mayor's Clean Rivers Plan** and **Wandle Valley Forum** for more information

Planning News Autumn 2026

Have you installed the air con yet!!! I expect that we will get notification of a lot more applications in the future. One of the problems which has been highlighted is the noise which the units create which will run for hours to be effective.

What is new? The simple answer is once again not a lot.

Riverside Quarter
We have been alerted to a new proposal at Riverside House, Riverside Quarter which will involve the demolition of a 1980s building, refurbished in the early 2000s which was designed for office purposes but in the past few years has been predominately vacant as there appears to be little demand for office space.

The proposal will involve rebuilding a series of interlinked residential blocks, possibly up to ten floors in part, which will provide both open market and affordable housing. The plans are some way from application submission but the project managers Aberdeen Investments(they do not own the building but act as managers) are hopeful that the pre application discussions with the Council will lead to an acceptable scheme.

Royal National Lifeboat Institution.
The new RNLI station is expected to open during September/October following completion of the works required to adapt the existing building facing the pontoon and bridge link to the Uber Thames Clipper

Riverside House

terminal. The station will be moving from Chiswick Pier where it has been based for many years to a more centralised location for the upper tidal section of the river.

RNLI station

The base will be using pontoons on the landward side of the existing pier so that riverboat services are not disrupted. The response times for 'calls/shouts' will be improved and it is hoped that members will welcome the new arrival by supporting any activities which the RNLI organise at their new base. The station commander of Chiswick base gave a most interesting talk to the Society a year or so ago.

Wimbledon Park
Save Wimbledon Park issued a press release

Morie Street existing
View of current building from Swandon Way

Morie Street proposed

on 22 July in which the Court of Appeal stated 'The Appeal [has] a real prospect of success'. The Court had just granted Save Wimbledon Park Ltd permission to challenge the previous High Court decision that the former golf course in Wimbledon Park is not covered by a statutory public trust.

A subsequent information sheet was issued on 12 September which we attach as a separate item in this newsletter. The Society continues to support the aims of SWP as the implications for, not only the Park but other green spaces countrywide, could be affected by the Appeal decision.

Morie Street Studios.
The planning group received an invitation to meet with the developers of the Morie Street studios site, Ferrier Street in mid-July to consider the proposals for the redevelopment of the existing buildings which we were advised had reached the end of their useful life. Much of the space is vacant as studios/office accommodation is no longer economic to provide with little demand.

The proposals are for the construction of three connected buildings stepping down from the north by the railway towards Old York Road and the Tonsleys. The uses will be predominately residential split between social rent to the south in one block, with the other two buildings used as 'co-living' accommodation. Co-living can best be described as 'bed sits with self contained facilities', with the block providing communal cooking, recreation and laundry facilities. An overall management organisation will provide day to day requirements, not unlike a housing association management.

Blue badge parking only will be provided with significant cycle storage in each block.

On the ground floor there will be commercial uses with a pedestrian/cycle link through to Swandon Way with possibly a pedestrian controlled crossing to enable easy access to the gas holder site and the Wandle beyond.

It is expected that the roofs of two of the blocks will be 'greened'(BNG biodiversity net gain) providing access for the occupiers.

The Society has written to the developers setting out our initial views, we are broadly in favour of the scheme proposed but the heights of the individual blocks are somewhat taller than considered reasonable/necessary with the resultant massing and occupational use likely to put significant strain on transport and healthcare facilities.

Happy days, please get in touch with anyone in the planning group or another member of the Society who will probably know who to contact if help is needed on the planning front.

Philip Whyte

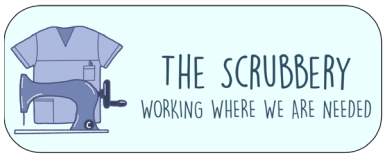
The Society talks …

Our meetings are usually at 8:00pm on the last Wednesday of the month held at West Side Church, on the corner of Melody Road, Allfarthing Lane and Heathfield Road - unless indicated otherwise

Wednesday 21 October

The Scrubbery

They started making scrubs during the covid pandemic - come to the talk and find out what they are doing now



Wednesday 25 November

Royal Academy of Dance

A talk about the history of the RAD and its move to Battersea

Friday 4 December

The Christmas Party

A date for your diary - more details nearer the time

An update on biodiversity in Wandsworth

The council consulted on its Biodiversity Strategy in 2025 and early this year approved Wild Wandsworth the council's Biodiversity Action Plan for the next five years.

The plan's purpose is to focus

on protecting and improving priority habitats and species across the borough, including parks, commons, rivers, wetlands and urban green spaces. It also recognises the role of the built environment in supporting biodiversity

It's well worth a read, search for Biodiversity on the Wandsworth council website.