

SEBRA NEWS W2

ISSUE No 108
SUMMER 2023



I wonder where I should park this e-Bike...

(Answers on a postcard to Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg at Westminster City Council)

THIS IS NO JOKE - FIND OUT WHY IN OUR SAFETY VALVE ARTICLE "E-BIKES - WE HAVE A PROBLEM"

PLUS COVERAGE OF ALL THINGS BAYSWATER INCLUDING A CORONATION SPECIAL

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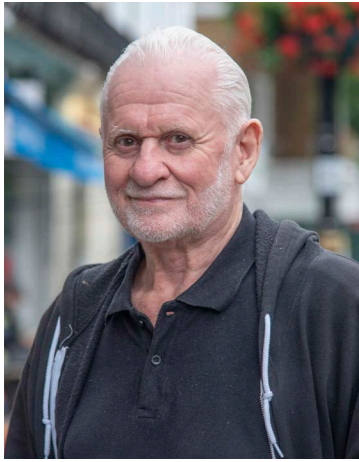
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From the Chairman

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SEBRA Summer Garden Party: Monday 3 July
 SEBRA AGM Monday 20: November

It only seems like yesterday that we published the Spring issue of SEBRA NEWS W2 but time flies, especially when you are having fun walking the streets of Bayswater reporting one thing after another.

This Summer issue is a really good read thanks to our Editor's incredible knack of presenting articles so well, and there is certainly a wide variety of topics, something for everyone.

In *Safety Valve* you will find hard-hitting topics, and in *Around Bayswater* you will find some wonderful reading including articles on keeping fit, eating well, a pair of articles featuring book launches and great information what is happening in and around Hyde Park & Kensington Gardens.

I would certainly recommend reading the latest thought-provoking articles from Christopher Penfold and Dr Allen Zimble to name just two.

Another enjoyable read is our Coronation special, starting with *'The Man who would be King'* and ending with *'His Royal Likeness'*, featuring our very own Ian Lieber.

Also, I would like to thank our Politicians and Councillors, who have taken the time away from their busy schedules to send in articles keeping us updated on what they have been up to on our behalf.

"GOOD NEWS AND SOME NOT SO GOOD NEWS"

This heading comes our first article in *Safety Valve*, from Nicky Hessenberg, a regular contributor who has a knack of *'letting off steam'* on matters that affect us all in one way or another.

So I start with my usual *"Not so good news"* on flyposting and graffiti, where we presently have an epidemic. This is nowhere more obvious than on our four bridges in the SEBRALAND and along Queensway and Westbourne Grove.



We are currently cursed by graffiti.

Veolia do their very best to deal with the numerous reports that come in but the City Council need to be more proactive and invest in more vehicles and more teams to try to eradicate this major problem blighting our area.

My second *"Not so good news"* is the scourge of electric bikes appearing more and more on our streets, and being left everywhere and anywhere. The riders should be more responsible, but in a way who can blame them when they have no dedicated places to park these e-Bikes? (An excellent article on this topic appears on page 14 of *Safety Valve*).

My final (and I could do more), *"Not so good news"* story is the confirmation that the hoped for new *"Gateway to Queensway"* from Kensington Gardens, is not proceeding, as the Labour administration has now confirmed their earlier decision not to fund the gates from monies collected from the developers of Park Modern (See page 28).

My first *"Good News"* to report is that at long last, after many years of SEBRA campaigning, it looks like the new Labour administration is going to address the question of *"Why don't we have City Inspectors on duty when we need them?"* Fingers crossed.

My next *"Good news"* is that the massive Whiteleys development is moving on at pace and by spring next year we should see the completion of the project.

In connection with that we confirmation that the *Everyman* cinema chain will be opening a five screen cinema on the site.

My final *"Good news"* is at the other end of the street, in the Park Modern development fronting Queensway and Bayswater Road. To borrow from Carlsberg's renowned adverts *"Probably the best restaurant in London, if not the UK"*, will hopefully be opening there at the end of the year.

SEBRA SUMMER PARTY



Mark the date in your diary, 3 July.

We are set for the party to be on Monday 3 July in the beautiful garden of Cleveland Square. You should have received a ticket application form recently but if not you can find one on page 101 of magazine.

SEBRA AGM IN NOVEMBER

All being well we have fixed the date of Monday 20 November in the sumptuous Porchester Hall for our AGM. Further details will be sent nearer the time.

I hope you can find the time to read the magazine as a great deal of effort goes into its production. We are very lucky to have our Editor, Steve Olive, and our advertisers to make it all happen.

So *"that's all for now folks"* and I wish you all a very enjoyable Summer.

Best wishes

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Kinleigh Folkard & Hayward



The Editor writes NOTES FROM A SMALL COTTAGE

When moving house there are only two things to do with an old memory foam mattress. The first is to take it to the tip. That's not as much fun as cutting it up and turning it into a replica of a world heritage site though. So here is yours truly, with "Foamhenge".

In the Summer 2022 edition of SEBRA NEWS W2 my article was titled "Notes from a Very Small Island", a nod to Bill Bryson, as I put pen to paper whilst holidaying on the Isle of Arran.

Well here I am a year later, with the unintended sequel in my "Notes from..." series, writing whilst renting a holiday cottage just ten miles from my home town. Truth is, it's a holiday cottage but I'm not on holiday. Mrs Editor and I are in the middle of moving house, having moved out of our old home a few days ago, but still waiting for the legal stuff to happen on the new place.

We haven't found moving house to be stressful, so much as frustrating. Proceedings seem to take place in a legal ether which has no place for mortal man, but I am hopeful that when you read this page we will be in our new home and agreeing that it was all worth it.

MOVING TWO MILES AND TWO DECADES

Back in 1957 the free world trembled as the Russian satellite *Sputnik* orbited the earth. The technology was seen as threatening, but now of course thousands of orbiting satellites are part of our daily lives, providing global communications and much more.



Starlink. Cheers Elon.

Why do I mention this? Because as well as moving two miles to the south, we appear to be moving two decades into

the past, with broadband speeds at the new place firmly rooted in 2003. So step up Mr Elon Musk and take a bow, because your Starlink system is going to have a new subscriber. In 1957 artificial satellites were feared, in 2023 they are going to bring me Netflix.

STILL PAYING BY CASH

We featured a fair bit of commentary on paying by cash in the last edition, and I remain keen to do my bit by using cash as much as is reasonably possible.



Change from a tenner. Paying cash in my new, temporary, local.

Just three days ago I went to a local petrol station (a new and shiny one in Wellington) and a member of staff was at the entrance advising customers that only cash payments could be taken. I had to smile. Cash always works, and to remove it in favour of entirely digital systems would, in my opinion, be a grave error.

THE BOAT AND THE BOOK

A quick update on two topics that I have bored readers with over the last couple of years. The book "Tales from Russet Grange" has had a final major edit and I expect to publish on 31 July. I might even spend some money on marketing it.

And the boat? I appear to have (hopefully) spent the money on a new house instead, which ironically has plenty of room for a boat to live. Current thinking is to sell lots of books to fund the boat. Simple.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO LOOK VERY FAR

I was wondering how to fill the third column of this page and decided that maybe a brace of espresso Martinis might provide inspiration, so off I toddled to the cocktail bar in my adopted home town. Inspiration took no longer than picking up a copy of *The Times* and finding three stories in three pages that I couldn't resist mentioning here.

First up was the headline: "Takeaway apps could drive health revolution by listing salads higher". Yes, you read that right. Personally I find the idea that after an eight pint bender you might hop on to *Just Eat* or *Deliveroo* and choose a nice Caesar Salad instead of a large kebab because it was what you spotted first to be laughable, but who am I to argue with the findings of science?

Next was "Lego cure for exam stress". Yep, that's exactly what it says on the tin. Apparently Cambridge University is offering games of Hide and Seek, along with Lego building sessions and more, to help students cope with the stress of their exams. I can't help but think the real world of work might come as quite a bit of a shock to some people. Having said that, as a house-mover maybe it's time for me to build my Lego Saturn V rocket once again.

Finally there was a picture of a prize bull being vacuum cleaned in preparation for the Royal Devon County show. They take such things very seriously in my neck of the woods, but I never thought I'd see Henry being used to give a little bit of TLC to a 2,000lb bit of beef.

Happy summer everyone!

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SR Bulleid Pacific 4-6-2 No 35018 'British India Line' makes a fine sight as it pulls away from York with 1Z25, the 11.48 York-Scarborough 'Scarborough Spa Express'.

Photograph courtesy of Alan Burkwood



Safety Valve

A few new topics appear in the pages of Safety Valve this time round, including double-page spreads about Lancaster Gate tube station and the ever-increasing problems with e-Bikes being dumped on our streets.

Foreign vehicles being left on Westbourne Grove is revisited and the Chairman asks a good question about terracotta pots.

Thanks are once again due to Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg for his response on many of our items.

But we begin this section, in what is probably a first for Safety Valve, with some good news, courtesy of Nicky Hessenberg. After all, nobody said that you couldn't let off steam about things which please you...

GOOD NEWS AND SOME NOT SO GOOD NEWS

Nicky Hessenberg

Westbourne Park Villas, W2

THE GOOD NEWS: FOOD WASTE BINS

Early this year Westminster City Council finally rolled out for wider areas the introduction of Food Waste Bins, something I have been waiting for and about which I am SO pleased.

I know that this has not claimed complete satisfaction with residents, with complaints that blocks of flats have not been taken into account as far as disposal is concerned. Hopefully by the time this issue of SEBRA NEWS W2 is published that problem will have been solved by the large food bins installed outside the flats I have seen in my street.

I have been so envious of those houses and flats in other Westminster areas which have bins lying out on front steps ready to be filled with smelly bags of rotting fruit or veg and food which has been sitting in the fridge too long, bones and skin from meat etc.



Safely locked to keep vermin away...

I know there have also been complaints online about rats and other wildlife getting into the bins which sit on our front paths and spilling the food waste around.



One bin to rule them all...

But if the bins are locked with their very effective catches, then without human help, these bins stay firmly locked and are collected once a week. So my congratulations go out to WCC for the initiative which works for us all.

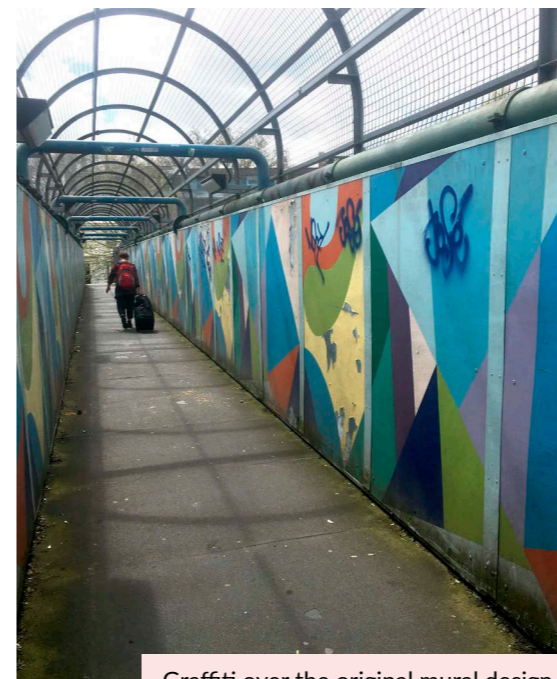


Three bins in a row...

THE BAD NEWS: OUR PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

Something which makes me not so happy is the state of our pedestrian bridge, owned by Network Rail, which crosses the railway line, connecting Westbourne Park Villas to Alfred Road and Harrow Road. It is the escape route for many miscreants as well as the route for nervous (quite rightly) pedestrians on their way to and from Westbourne Grove.

When Crossrail was being planned there were many meetings to discuss the many potential problems pointed out by local residents. Various design elements were proposed to soothe the worries of the residents due to having Crossrail running in front of us.



Graffiti over the original mural design on Hampden Street footbridge.

The footbridge was brought to the surface as being in very bad condition. It is a thoroughly unpleasant metal-sided tube that people have to traverse to reach the other side of the railway tracks.

At the time the new secondary school in Harrow Road was being constructed and a design team suddenly turned up at one of the meetings with an idea which would upgrade our dismal bridge and make everyone crossing it feel happier.

The plan was to give the sixth form art class of the new Academy school a competition to come up with a decorative design. The winner would have his or her image reproduced on the walls of the bridge. It was pointed out to the designers that graffiti played a big part on walls in our area, but we were assured that because the school was involved the pupils would be proud of their efforts and would keep it clean and unmarked.

This seemed to work, until the pupil years concerned left to go in other directions and that left the bridge to the mercy of everybody and anybody else, and sadly what we said would happen has come about.

The bridge is really in a bad way now – the metal sheets holding the sixth form designs are buckling and coming away from the bridge, and the printed images are peeling (or being peeled) from the structure itself. Sadly graffiti is very obvious all the way down both sides, and it is also covering the lights. The flooring is in such a bad state that temporary (?) boards have been laid to keep pedestrians on their feet instead of tripping over the damaged surface.



More graffiti. The bridge is a mess.



"Temporary (?) flooring."

As part of the Crossrail agreement, the company doing the work agreed to build a ramp from the top of the steps, going up to the bridge from the pavement, so that those with prams, bicycles, wheelchairs etc. would find it accessible.

The ramp has not been a great success – it has flat areas which are so badly drained that every time we have rain huge puddles form, which means jumping if one is on foot.

In other words, this bridge needs some real attention. But then of course so does Lord Hill's bridge, now due for some repair work in June 2023. (Ed: See pages 6-7 in our last edition). Unlike Lord Hill's bridge, our pedestrian bridge does not have a mains gas pipe slung underneath it. This I am sure makes it far less of a priority. So I think we can draw the conclusion that the pedestrian bridge, renovated with such enthusiasm, will be left to deteriorate until it becomes physically dangerous and will then be in grave danger of being closed unless we, the residents, fight for it.

Response from Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg Cabinet Member for City Management & Air Quality



The Council will be contacting Network Rail to understand what their intentions are with regard to any future planned work to the footbridge and raise the concerns expressed by the local community with regard to the issues raised in SEBRA NEWS W2.

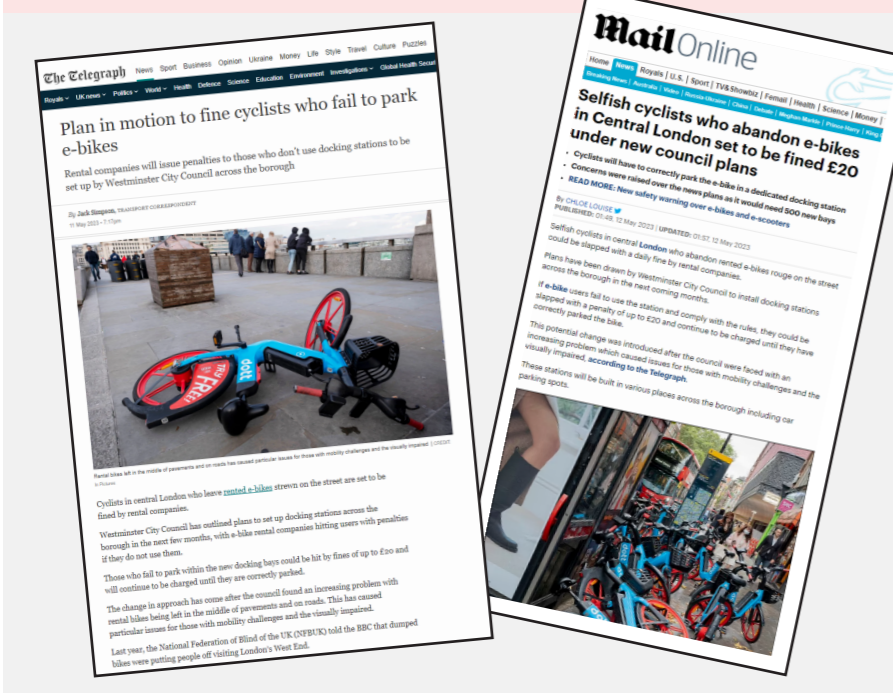
The Council does undertake low level maintenance on the footbridge such as sweeping the walkways, attending to the lighting, removing graffiti etc., however this appears to be on an ad-hoc, informal basis. The Council will seek to work with Network Rail to clearly define respective areas of responsibility and agree service levels.

E-BIKES - WE HAVE A PROBLEM

Nicky Hessenberg
Westbourne Park Villas, W2

Nicky Hessenberg is a regular contributor to *Safety Valve*, and whilst this might be her second double-page spread in this section, she makes some very good points and raises an important issue.

It is an issue that has been mentioned to John Zamit on a number of occasions, and having made the national press we are keen to work with Westminster City Council with a view to resolving the problem.



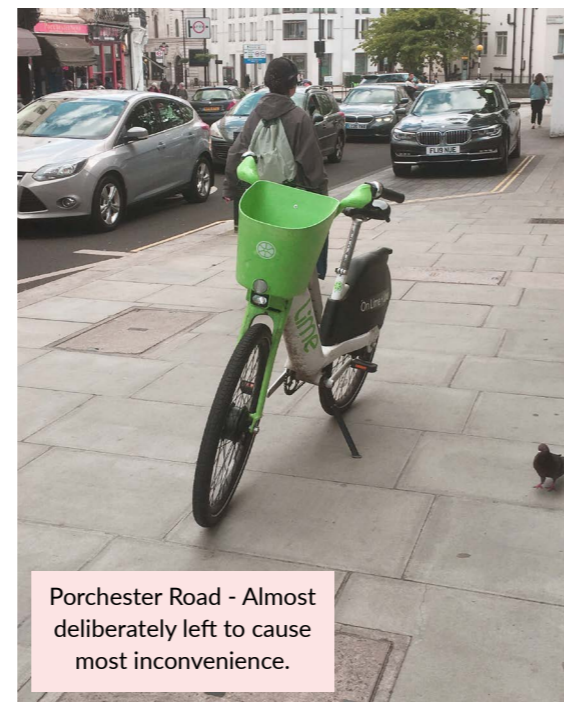
The *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Mail* recently ran stories which highlighted Westminster City Council's plans to set up e-Bike docking stations across the borough, with rental companies hitting users with £20 fines if they are not used.

"Selfish cyclists who abandon e-Bikes in Central London set to be fined £20 under new Council plans" as promised on 15 May 2023.

As a local resident who is walking in the local streets on a daily basis, at last something is going to be done, as promised by Westminster City Council, about the appalling increase in abandoned hire bikes and scooters which get left where they drop from the hands of the riders and drivers.

The companies hiring out these modes of transport must be spending a fortune in trying to discover where their properties are left when the riders and drivers have finished with them.

How many times have we pedestrians had to walk round these machines lying across our paths when walking with heavy shopping or pushing a pram or pushchair? And as for the bicycles, should we attempt to do our civic duty by picking them up and leaning them against the nearest convenient wall?



Porchester Road - Almost deliberately left to cause most inconvenience.

(Which would probably increase the chances of developing a hernia because these machines are so heavy).

And do those who hire these bicycles care about the dangers of leaving their ride of choice in the middle of a pavement, or dumped on the ground?



e-Bikes where they should be.

They really do represent quite a danger to pedestrians, particularly the old and infirm, not to mention wheelchair users or those people who are blind or partially sighted.

I am sure there will be some difficulty for our WCC inspectors in finding appropriate parking areas because inevitably there will be those who do not want racks of these things near to them, but like the big black bin situation, it will be all part of modern city living to have them in residential areas.

And what a relief to have our pavements clear of one more peril so that we can concentrate on not tripping on uneven paving slabs, slipping on dog shit, avoiding Conway's barricades and the various other potential dangers of city walking.



Unbelievably this e-Bike was left in the middle of a signal crossing at Inverness Terrace.

COVER STORY - THE CHAIRMAN'S VIEW

In the cause of research SEBRA Chairman John Zamit sat on one of the many e-Bikes to be hired in Westminster. This photo was taken on Bayswater Road at the junction with Queensway. In the background are docking stations for Santander e-Bikes, but none of the new rental e-Bikes will have docking stations.

John was on one of his "neighbourhood walks", this time accompanied by Martin Sone, Area Planning Officer at WCC.

John reports that he has mixed feelings on the overall idea of e-Bike rentals in London, even when used and parked responsibly. He has expressed concerns about where the necessary parking bays will be located, but agrees that fixed hoops, as can be seen in the photograph on the opposite page, could be part of the parking solution.

"I think e-Bikes are a terrible nuisance where they are 'abandoned' and left with no consideration by users who have no thought or care for pedestrians, especially the elderly."



Response from Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality

We are looking to implement a city-wide network of parking bays for dockless bikes this summer, with the whole of Westminster being geo-fenced as a no parking zone, meaning dockless bike riders can only park bikes in designated bays.

Most bays will be on the carriageway, however, some footway spaces have also been identified to tackle this issue and to ensure all parts of the city have access to dockless bikes and more sustainable travel options.

The location and coverage of bays is vital and so all bays implemented as part of this scheme will be temporary to start off with to provide the flexibility to rethink bay locations if necessary over the months to come.

Ongoing discussions are taking place with operators on how they will help to fund the re-purposing of parking bays and the implementation of new infrastructure for dockless bikes, and the final agreements are still being worked through.

There is a dedicated function on our *Report It* page (bit.ly/bikes-report) for individuals to report irresponsibly parked e-bikes and e-scooters to us, and officers are continuing to investigate complaints and remove any bikes that are causing an obstruction, danger or nuisance in the borough.

As part of the bay network, I have asked the operating companies to have a much greater presence of their staff on our streets to monitor their bikes and ensure they are parked within the bays provided, and I have made it very clear that the onus must be on them to remove any bikes that are blocking the footways and adding to street clutter.



It has been a real whirlwind of a year since I became Leader of the Council in May 2022. That milestone has been the natural point to reflect on what we have achieved so far, with our 'Year of Delivery' report setting out many of the changes we've made so far, both big and small.

It has also been time to look forwards with our new *Fairer Westminster 'Delivery plan'* setting out some of our key objectives for the year ahead, rooted in a vision for our city that wants to see change so that everyone shares in our city's success and has the opportunity to shape it.



Councillor Adam Hug and Cabinet members take residents' questions at the latest *Westminster Together* event.

It is our ambition to make sure that Westminster becomes a Council that combines effective services – delivered at a Council tax frozen for the next year – but which balances that with a commitment to tackling the persistent inequality that has dogged our city.

THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS

That is why it has been hugely important to us to support residents through the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. Over the past year, we have put together a £14m

From the Leader

Councillor Adam Hug
Leader, Westminster City Council

package of support to fund food banks, energy vouchers, additional holidays and activities, along with topping up welfare budgets through the winter.

We have not only ensured that all primary school children now receive free school meals, we have committed to rolling this out further to both nurseries and to secondary schools from September this year to help children aged 3-14, saving families £550 per child per year. We know the cost-of-living crisis is going to be with us for some time to come and we will be doing more to help in the months ahead.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS OF MY FIRST YEAR IN OFFICE

These include the reopening of the Bayswater Children's Centre on Shrewsbury Road, with a new *Stay and Play* early years service downstairs, and a new local housing estate office coming this summer to improve services to local tenants and leaseholders in the area. Then there was the signing of UNISON's Ethical Care Charter that commits the Council to improve standards and support for those helping the elderly and vulnerable; and investing over half a million pounds on mental health provision, and services for residents with learning disabilities.

Additionally we are building more truly affordable housing than Westminster has seen for generations (with over 1,000 new Council homes for social rent coming in the next four years).



Adam Hug at the opening of the Mary Smith's Pantry food bank at its permanent home in Westminster.

We are also taking action to protect tenants by putting energy efficient improvements into more than 500 existing social homes.

TRANSPORT IN WESTMINSTER

On the transport front we have committed to invest £35m in more sustainable transport projects. This includes improving infrastructure and safety for journeys, particularly by public transport, by foot or by bicycle to improve air quality. These measures will enhance the public realm and bring us closer to becoming a carbon neutral city. It has been a busy year - but there is still a lot to do.

WESTMINSTER CHALLENGES

An exciting, ever-changing city like Westminster brings real challenges as well as opportunities, from ASB to planning and licensing issues that our teams work hard to address. A number of these issues have been raised at the Queensway Strategic group, where SEBRA are currently represented alongside the Council officers, the police, landowners, TfL and your local Ward Councillors.

Following those conversations, the Council has listened to concerns raised by SEBRA about the times when City Inspectors are on shift in and around Queensway. Shortly there will be more present when they are needed most, such as in the early evenings.

Similarly following feedback from the group, City Inspectors are working to address issues around nuisance begging, continuing to target problem areas, particularly around Bayswater tube station (which has also been helped by recent changes to local buildings).

The Council's new Engagement Assessment and Triage Service (EATS), launching soon, will help more effectively tackle this type of behaviour, whilst providing support off the street for those in real need, by bringing greater collaboration between the police, mental health services, Council teams, rough sleeping and ASB teams, as well as other stakeholders.

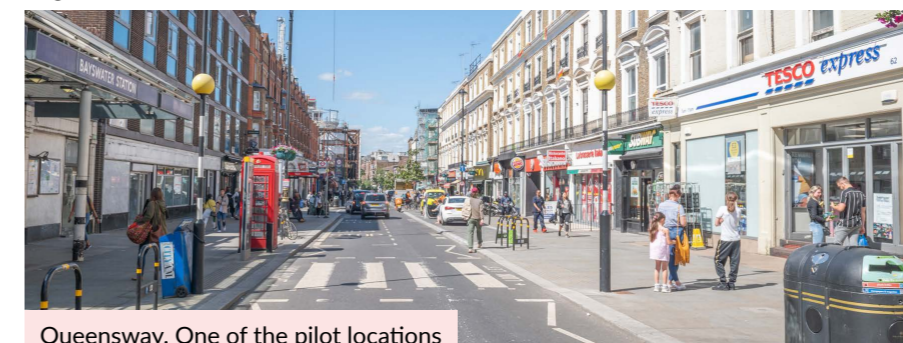
ACTION ON WASTE AND SECURITY

City Inspectors are also enforcing against illegally dumped waste, either by residents or businesses. Earlier this year the Council and Veolia ran a week of action which involved enforcement action against key areas, especially near the big black bins. An average of 21 Penalty Charge Notices were issued by parking marshals every day, with a lot of work being done around delivery riders parking on the pavements. Furthermore, the police have issued warnings to riders who driving mopeds on the pavement. The Council's new security patrols on the Hallfield Estate have been well received and have now been extended over the summer, ahead of a formal consultation with residents about their future.

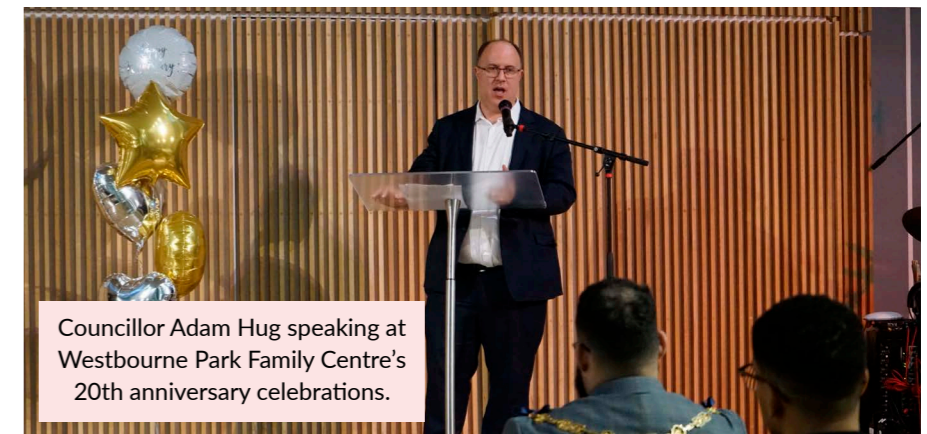
We know these are issues of continual concern so while progress has been made there is still a lot more to do and we will ensure that keep SEBRA members are regularly updated on these issues.

HIGH STREETS PROGRAMME

As *SEBRA NEWS W2* goes to print the City Council will be launching its new *High Streets* programme, a new approach to reviving much-loved high streets and neighbourhoods. It will be piloted in and around SEBRALAND with a focus on Paddington, Queensway, and Edgware Road.



Queensway. One of the pilot locations for the new *Fairer Streets* programme.



Councillor Adam Hug speaking at Westminster City Council's 20th anniversary celebrations.

We will be working with residents (such as yourselves), and traders, to find out more about what they want to see improve in their local area and then make it happen.

You will be able to attend a special pop-up hub between Tuesday 11 and Saturday 15 July to give us your views. In the meantime, have your say by completing our online survey and keep up to date with special events and workshops by visiting our website: bit.ly/WCC-High-Streets - and get in touch with us directly via email at: highstreets@westminster.gov.uk

CONNAUGHT VILLAGE GREEN

Let me update here on one item of interest to readers, Connaught Village Green. The Council is still considering the proposals for the area, having received hundreds of consultation responses, and no decision has yet been taken on the preferred way forward.

My Cabinet colleague Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg has asked for new traffic counts along Kendal Street and for an assessment of the impact on the network of the Cycle 43 proposals.

AND FINALLY

I wish to end by reiterating that working with our communities and increasing resident involvement is a central part of our *Fairer Westminster* approach.

We have some amazing community organisations that do so much for our residents, so it was a great pleasure

to attend the 20th anniversary of the Westminster Family Centre. Now welcoming more than 400 children and adults every week, the Centre is the kind of hub that makes for truly vibrant communities, providing support to people from a wide array of backgrounds, offering opportunities to people as well as ensuring they feel like they belong.

Our administration will always look for new ways to support the Centre and others like it that form the backbone of our local communities.

We have also made a number of changes that should help make residents voices be heard more clearly at the heart of the Council. For example, we have created the new *Consultation Hub* which seeks to bring all the Council's major consultations together in a more easy to access place. Similarly, our late June full Council meeting at Old Marylebone Town Hall will also be the first meeting where residents have the right to address the chamber for the first time.

Our *Fairer Westminster* plan is ambitious – but it's driven by a feeling that things have felt unfair for too many, for too long. And we are doing our best to change that.

We have done a lot in our first year in office – but there is more to do as we work to secure a better future for our people, our environment, and to build that fairer Westminster.

WORTH READING

One Year of Delivering a Fairer Westminster:
bit.ly/WCC-One-Year-Deliver

Building a Fairer Westminster
bit.ly/WCC-Build-Fairer

(Copies of these plans were also displayed at local libraries).

WCC Consultations Hub
bit.ly/WCC-Consult-Hub

FROM THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION



Councillor Rachael Robathan
Leader, Westminster Conservative Group

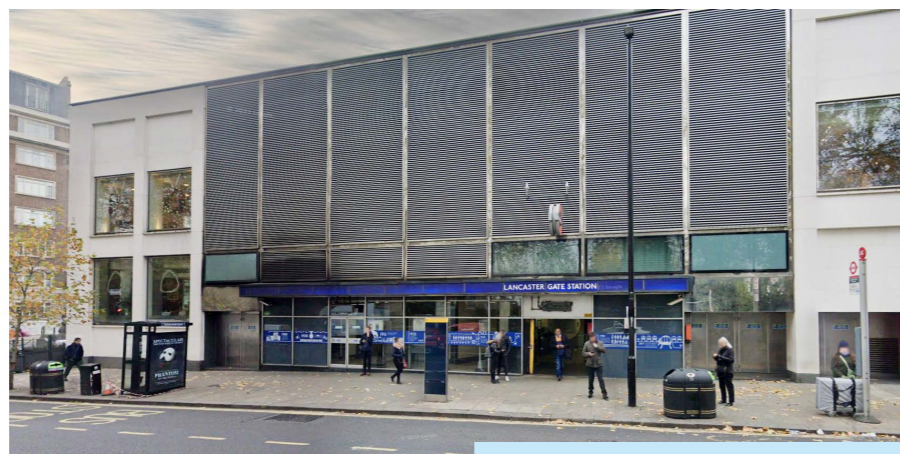
Everyone should agree that we need to make using public transport and active travel as efficient, attractive and easy to use as possible. For some, of course, using cars will be unavoidable, but for most journeys the ability to use an efficient bus or tube service or to cycle or walk safely around the City is paramount.

LANCASTER GATE STATION

The first of these is particularly relevant as we look towards the GLA elections less than a year away and decide who should manage the core of London's public transport. Transport for London, chaired by the Mayor of London, is responsible for all of our bus and tube networks - a vital part of how residents get around. However, a question mark has recently been raised over one of the key underground stations for residents in SEBRALAND, Lancaster Gate.

Too frequently the station is shut as a result of staff shortages and people being redeployed to other stations deemed to be a higher priority, causing massive inconvenience for local residents and others in the area. Indeed, the situation is so concerning that Westminster City Council's Chief Whip, who is also one of the new local Labour Councillors, has even launched a petition *'urging Transport for London to reconsider their approach....to stop prioritising other stations and better forward plan the staffing of their stations.'*

Councillor Ormsby is right. While there is no suggestion that Lancaster Gate is scheduled to close, we echo her call to Sadiq Khan, the Chair of TfL, that this simply isn't good enough. Residents and visitors across London, as well as in SEBRALAND, deserve a better managed public transport system. If the problems at Lancaster Gate and other stations aren't resolved, voters will give their verdict next spring.



Lancaster Gate station.
"Too frequently the station is shut."

DUMPING OF ELECTRIC BIKES

The other transport issue filling our post boxes is that of the dumping of dockless electric bikes. The use of these bikes is increasing across Westminster and represents a real step forward as part of the menu of options available for people to get around the City. However, while they bring the benefits of clean and active travel with them, the lack of parking regulations has led to bikes being strewn across pavements, creating many obstructions and dangerous situations.

For people with visual impairments, in wheelchairs, mobility scooters or with young children in pushchairs these represent a real hazard. We welcome the Council's announcement that controlled parking zones are to be considered in the West End of the City, something for which we as Conservative Councillors have been calling for the last year.



Dumping of dockless electric bikes is becoming a big problem.

But this is taking far too long - other Councils are much further ahead and, indeed, on the other side of the border RBKC has already concluded their consultation for 164 bays across the whole borough. This is something Conservatives would have done last year rather than letting residents suffer through this.

Westminster needs to act on this without further delay and they also need to roll these parking zones out across the whole of the City, rather than in a staggered and costly staged roll out. This is just as much a concern for the residents of SEBRALAND as it is for my own residents in Knightsbridge & Belgravia as it is for those in the West End. This is a problem for which there is a solution. We need the Council to get on and implement it.



THE KING'S CORONATION

To mark the Coronation of King Charles III we present a section of our magazine dedicated to this historic event. Charles was crowned King of the United Kingdom and the fourteen other Commonwealth realms on Saturday 6 May 2023 at Westminster Abbey.

Charles' wife Camilla became Queen Consort on 22 September 2022 following his accession to the throne. She too was crowned on 6 May, becoming Queen Camilla.

Mr Ian Lieber

His Royal Likeness



Left: Ian at his shop at 29 Craven Terrace, accompanied by actress Caroline Bernstein in the role of Queen Camilla. Above, a closer look at the 'Royal couple'. Credit: *The Jewish Chronicle*.

To conclude our Coronation section we present a light-hearted page featuring SEBRA's great royalist, Mr Ian Lieber.

Ian is a familiar face on these pages. His shop displays have appeared here many times when there is a Royal occasion to be commemorated, but his familiarity extends far beyond Craven Terrace where he was, for countless years, mistaken for Prince Charles.

(Ian has met Prince Charles at a couple of charitable events, one of which included an invitation for a personal tour of the gardens at Highgrove House).

Of course this year's Coronation meant that a Prince Charles lookalike became a King Charles lookalike, and with an insatiable media demand for all things Royal, Ian became, in the nicest possible way, a wanted man.

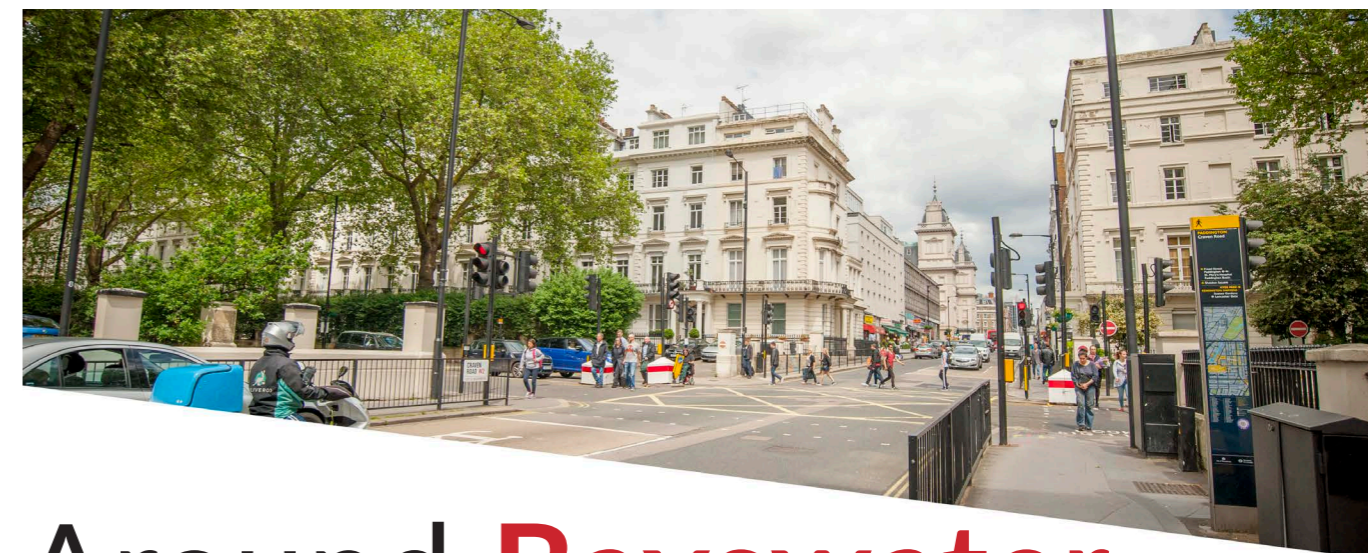
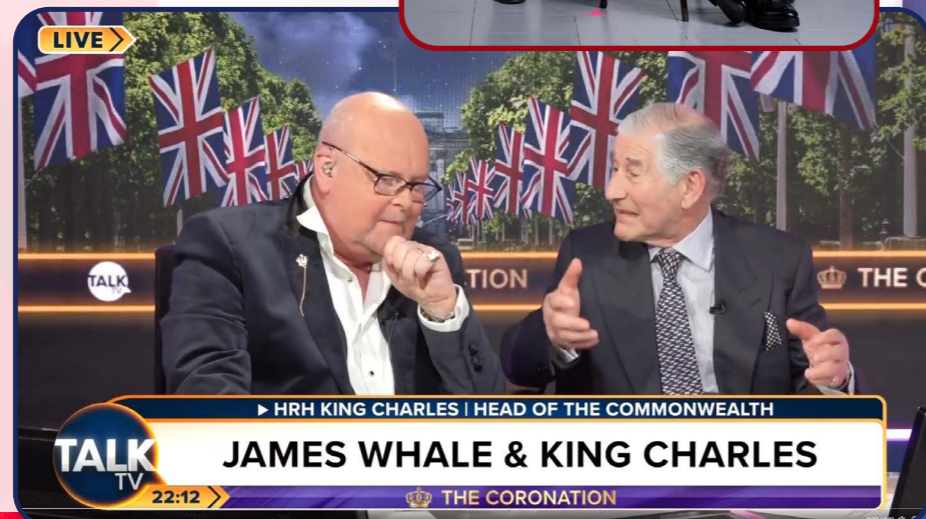
"I have had offers in the past to appear as a Prince Charles lookalike, but I have always declined" says Ian. "but when Caroline introduced me to her agent, and with the Coronation upon us, I was persuaded to take on the Royal role. The photo shoots were fun but I was a little wary of the Talk TV appearance so I insisted that the interview was done respectfully, Heaven forbid I should upset His Majesty!"

If readers hop over to Twitter via bit.ly/TalkTVIan they can see a clip of Ian's interview.

Now all that SEBRA needs is a Prince William lookalike member from the younger generation to keep the Royal connection going...

Right: A photo shoot for the *New York Times*, with fellow King Charles III impersonator Charles Haslett.

Below: Ian appeared as King Charles on Talk TV's Coronation coverage, being interviewed here by presenter James Whale.



Around Bayswater

The main section of our magazine is as packed as ever, the word "diverse" probably does not do it justice. Over the next 67 pages you will find excellent articles from Christopher Penfold, Sofya Court and Professor Lewis Lesley. Another highlight is Dr Allen Zimble's thought-provoking piece about the problems of rising crime and the difficulties that police officers face.

We have our regular coverage of green issues, more on digital currency, community policing news from Lynda King-Taylor, the Chairman updates us on "Queensgate", we raise a glass to The Churchill Arms and there is some fascinating "behind the scenes" Royal content from SEBRA's friends at Veolia. Finally, we again offer a huge "thank you" to our advertisers. Without them there would be no SEBRA NEWS W2.

A NEW LORD MAYOR FOR THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER

Councillor Patricia McAllister was first elected in a by-election in 2009 to represent Queen's Park Ward, one of the most densely populated parts of Westminster. As Councillor, she advocates for residents, represents the local community, and facilitates community cohesion, notably helping set up the North Paddington Food Bank.

Patricia has Chaired the Rating Advisory Panel, Pension Fund Committee, Scrutiny of Climate Action Housing Regeneration & Renters Committee, Scrutiny Commission, Standards Committee and has served on a wide range of other Committees and task groups.

She has also been the Single Point of Access for the referral of victims of modern slavery and served in this role for several years.

Born on the West coast of Scotland, she has lived in Westminster for more than 50 years and has spent her entire working life serving the public.

Prior to her election, she spent 18 months working on the frontline of a busy West London GP Surgery and has been involved with a special needs group for almost 30 years.



"Bathing of the Buddha."

Recent engagements included opening a social enterprise coffee shop; the official opening of St Marylebone CE Bridge School; a visit to the London Fo Guang Shan Temple for the 'Bathing of the Buddha Ceremony'; a topping out ceremony for the 'W1 Place' Development and an event that achieved national profile - the funeral of former Maida Vale resident Flt Sgt Peter Brown, one of the last WW2 "Pilots of the Caribbean".



At the funeral of Flt Sgt Peter Brown.



Councillor Patricia McAllister
The new Lord Mayor of Westminster.

As Lord Mayor, Patricia will be focussing on representing the whole community and championing two charities:

Carers Network - supporting unpaid carers aged 18 and over across the City of Westminster, helping over 6,600 local carers access the support they deserve.

The Passage - providing homeless people across Westminster with support to transform their own lives.

IN PRAISE OF THE MIDDLE

by Christopher Penfold

The middle of the road gets a bad press. In a literal sense it's usually marked by a white line and the phrase warns of danger from oncoming traffic to the left and to the right. The middle of the road is no place of safety.

But the same phrase is used with a contradictory meaning. It's a metaphorical place occupied by individuals reluctant to take a decision, unwilling or unable to come down on one side of a contentious issue or the other. Here, the middle of the road is the central reservation of a dual carriageway where indecisive folk, wary or weary of confrontation or change, are able to sit on the fence (to mix the metaphor) in relative comfort and security. In all probability that will include a majority of folk, a silent majority content in their pursuit of a quiet time.

Most frequently, deployment of the phrase in that sense comes from those to the right or to the left who are so firm in their contradictory opinions that they come together only in mutual sneering at the uncommitted.

Then there is a third sense in which the same phrase is deployed to describe material that is unchallengingly bland, bloodless, colourless and flavourless — like muzak, commercial art, institutional catering or a snooze inducing sermon or speech.

More in keeping with the first usage though is a fourth which describes the mid-point of an individual's road through life — the mid-life crisis when apparent certainties — like marriage or career — become less certain and when individuals can suddenly take a tumble from the fence and veer off into the oncoming traffic causing misery, mayhem and change in the lives of loved ones and colleagues.

So it would seem that the phrase *The Middle of the Road* is a trope for all seasons involving both danger and indifference but none of it good. And nowhere is the phrase more despised than in the chaotic world or our polarised politics — a world where the opposed polarities are not so much North and South as Right and Left.

Words do carry baggage with them — baggage whose etymological origin is difficult to discern but whose influence hides in plain sight. Right, of course, implies correctness: *"Yes is the right answer"*. And you will be exercising your Rights when you protest against your wrongful arrest. Right is not only your legal right but it is all too frequently the case that, in contests between giants and the little people, Right is Might — a dubious concept that Putin is currently testing to destruction in Ukraine.

Left, on the other hand, is sinister and derives from the Latin meaning *'on the left side'* and, as it has made its way down to us through the ages, it has acquired a plethora of subsidiary and shaded meanings which range from unlucky to suspicious to downright evil.

So just how much baggage do well-worn words like Right and Left carry with them into our world of politics? And

what influence does that baggage bring to bear on our silent majority, minding their own business as they sit on the fence in the middle of the road?

The most obvious correlation is that Right is associated with conservative and Left with progressive. As with any rule there are exceptions but psephologically speaking it appears to be the case that the older we get, the more comfortable and the more set in our ways we become and the more inclined we are to identify as conservative. Exactly when that trend becomes apparent in any given individual is variable and difficult to pin down but a fair approximation would suggest the onset of middle age, perhaps it's even a mild symptom of the dreaded mid-life crisis.

So working back from that mid-point to the rite of passage that is the onset of adulthood, now variously set at eighteen or even sixteen, the psephological evidence suggests that in our youth we are more likely to identify as progressive.

In themselves the terms conservative and progressive seem relatively mild and even innocuous. It appears to be a given feature of our human condition that we all have some degree of emotional leaning towards nostalgia. Not many conversations about shared times past get very far before fond memories surface — but with a gloss which tends to render them in technicolour sentimentality.



"Technicolour sentimentality". The author contrasts farming memories with modern reality.

The farm with the hay in the barn, the cow in the byre and the hens, ducks and geese clucking around in the yard may be a fond memory but the idea that traditional cottage farming could ever deliver free range eggs, meat and dairy products to the tables of the millions now living in our major conurbations is obviously a futile fantasy. We all know that much of what we eat is produced in the vile conditions of industrial factory farms under the roofs of the huge warehouse buildings that hum away in otherwise quiet corners of our much loved countryside and we manage to compartmentalise that unsavoury activity out of our daily consciousness.

But we are all inclined to believe that there are features of our ancestral or even recent past that are worthy of conservation. Environmentalists campaign to conserve the bio-diversity of our planet and democrats work hard to conserve the hard-won institutions that enshrine our democracy and the checks and balances which constrain the abuse of power. Not much wrong, you might think, with the conservatism of this high-minded purpose. But link that conservatism with its frequent extension Right Wing and hackles begin to rise and individuals suddenly find themselves leaning to one side of the fence or the other. We are diverging from the central reservation, we are facing oncoming traffic.

Nor is the term progressive, in itself, contentious. Who doesn't want to see abject poverty relieved and progress made towards a more equal distribution of the myriad pleasures that human life on planet Earth has to offer? Who could object to the replacement of ignorance with the benefits of a good education? But again, link the term progressive with its most frequent extension Left Wing and suddenly there is a stampede for the exit from progressive positions as fearful individuals head for the security of the newspapers we choose to read.

And yet debate depends for any healthy outcome on the input from extremists. Conservatives have their Edmund Burke and their Adam Smith while Progressives have their Jean-Jaques Rousseau and their Karl Marx — and none of them, or others like them, are held with any great affection in the hearts and minds of the silent majority in the middle of the road who tend to abhor *'ideology'* in any shape or form.

For all that the hard Right or the hard Left decry or sneer at the middle of the roaders, they know only too well that in a general election, they need their votes. The democratic process to which our nation first signed up on the island of Runnymede in the Thames in 1215 involves the 'will of the people'. At the time of Magna Carta it didn't involve many people but as the franchise has widened over the years to include all men and women over the age of eighteen, those who now aspire to govern require the electoral support of the majority of the adult population.

So here we are now facing our first general election since 2019 and suddenly the middle of the road has become the centre of attention. With an all too predictable mix of promises, persuasion and patronisation the silent majority will be subjected to a barrage of blandishments by both conservative and progressive politicians from both Right and Left. And the crucial word of the coming campaign will almost certainly be *'change'*.

Because change, historically, doesn't go down well in the middle of the road. We know what we like and we cling to the familiar. There will be contentious issues galore in the manifestos from all sides but it is a simple fact of life that for a majority of people the political process has become a bit of a turn-off. There will be plenty of knocking on doors; there will be bugle calls in the press; there will be party political broadcasts on TV and maybe even televised debates. From the progressive side there will be promises of change for the better and from the conservative side there will be assurances of no change for the worse.

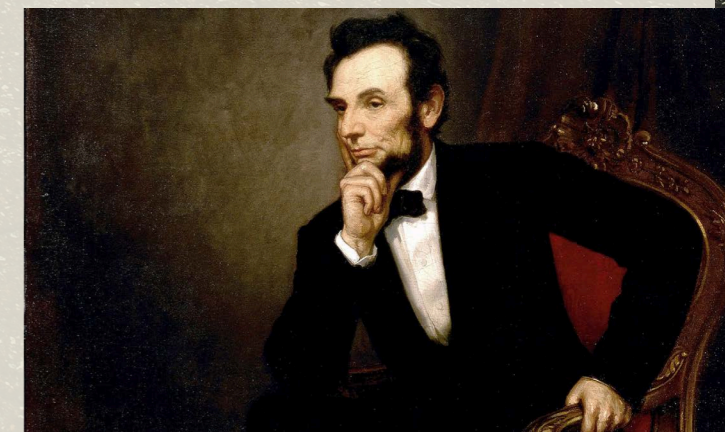


An election looms, and with it *"an all too predictable mix of promises, persuasion and patronisation"*.

So if there is such an individual politician who has a vision of a better future for all mankind — a politician who genuinely believes they are where they are as leader of their party because they have dedicated themselves to the service of the people, how do they go about the business of persuading the uncommitted middle to lean towards their side of the road?

After thirteen years of conservative rule it may be that change will prove a more attractive prospect than usual. On the other hand, this old hulk that has been the cradle of democracy in the modern world is visibly creaking at the seams and may not bear too much rocking of the boat. So maybe change is not so much of the essence; we need to hold on tight to what we know and to what we've got — for fear of something worse — in the hope that turbulent times will pass. We need to navigate to the safe harbour of the old familiar.

But if change does prove to be the key word, just how much change is it politic to profess? As withering fire comes from both Left and Right, visionary leaders would be well advised to keep much of the devilish detail of their vision to themselves for fear of frightening the horses. But they would also be wise to remember the words of Abraham Lincoln: *"You can fool part of the people some of the time, you can fool all of the people some of the time but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time."* The middle of the road is no place of safety. To mix the metaphor yet one more time, it is a tricky row to hoe and it demands sagacity, cast iron integrity, and a lot of courage and conviction to hoe it with success.



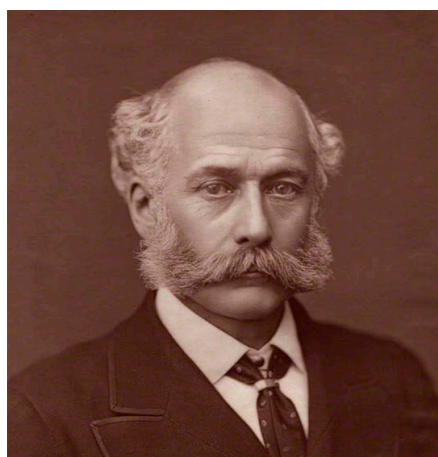
Abraham Lincoln. The 16th US President spoke wise words on wisdom itself.

Water, water everywhere...

Our ever-popular "Blue Plaques" series continues with the fascinating stories of two former residents of NW8, Sir Joseph Bazalgette and Wing Commander Guy Gibson VC. We remain very grateful to Professor Lewis Lesley for his contributions.

Professor Lewis Lesley

When individuals make dramatic changes to people's lives, they become legends, for good or ill. This article looks at the lives of two men who lived around the corner from each other near SEBRALAND but in different centuries and so could never have met. Both in their different ways created profound and lasting changes as a result of their work.



Sir Joseph Bazalgette. 1819 - 1891

SIR JOSEPH BAZALGETTE 17 HAMILTON TERRACE, NW8

Joseph Bazalgette, lived his whole life in the 19th Century, a large part during Queen Victoria's reign. His great achievement was the design and construction of an underground network of tunnels to divert sewage from being discharged into the River Thames. Instead the sewage was transported on the North Bank to Abbey Mills on the River Lea, and Crossness on the Southbank at Erith Marshes. Here untreated sewage was discharged at high and ebbing tides to be taken out to sea and away from London.

The catalyst for this was the "Big Stink" of 1858, when hot weather conspired with low rainfall allowing London's sewage to congregate in the River Thames during July and August. So bad was the stench that the Houses of Parliament nearly



Bazalgette inspecting work on new sewage tunnels.

evacuated to Dublin, Edinburgh or Oxford. Instead chloride soaked blinds draped the windows, reducing the smell, Benjamin Disraeli described it thus: "a Stygian pool, reeking with ineffable and intolerable horrors". Something had to be done and someone had to do it.

The problem was made worse by local cesspits not being emptied consistently by 'night soil' men, for fertilizer. Many private cesspools stagnated. So from 1848 a network of sewers was built directly into the Thames, turning the River in 1858 into a giant cesspool. Apart from the stink, it also led to an outbreak of Cholera in 1849, when over 14,000 Londoners died.



Blue Plaque at No 17 Hamilton Terrace, NW8

Bazalgette was a local man born in Enfield, a rural village, in 1819. His father was the son of a Huguenot, a French Revolution refugee. When Joseph was eight, the family moved into a new house

in Hamilton Terrace, St. John's Wood, a developing suburb of London. His early career was as an apprentice Civil Engineer with Sir John MacNeil, working on railway and land drainage projects, in China, England and Ireland. In 1849 he became the Assistant Engineer in the Metropolitan Commission of Sewers and was promoted to be the Engineer in 1852. Next year another Cholera epidemic killed nearly 11,000 people. The Commission was replaced by a Board of Works in 1856, when he was appointed Chief Engineer at the age of 37, supported by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, another Huguenot descendant.

The Big Stink landed in his lap and he quickly developed a plan to build two major interceptor sewers, in total 82 miles long, across the north and south banks of the River to take the raw sewage away from the Thames. These were supported by 1,100 miles of street sewers. The work started in 1859 and was completed in 16 years. This involved excavating trenches and building brick tunnels with a gentle falling gradient to a low point at Abbey Mills and Crossness, where large steam powered pumps brought the sewage to the surface.

When not working on the details of his engineering schemes, he married in 1845 Maria Kough from Ireland, who outlived him by nine years but not before the two had produced eleven children from 1846 to 1862. Joseph died in 1891 in Wimbledon where they had moved in 1873, and is buried in a grand mausoleum in St. Mary's Parish Churchyard.

Without doubt his scheme was a masterpiece of civil engineering when the population of London was only 3million. Since then the population has grown to nearly 9million. Bazalgette's sewers are only just coping, with raw sewage now spilling into the River during heavy rain. A mega sewer 16miles long, the Tideway, is being built under the Thames at a cost of £4.3billion. The Tideway will intercept Bazalgette's sewers and remove the problem to new sewage works for treatment.



Wing Commander Guy Gibson VC
1918-1944

WING COMMANDER GUY GIBSON VC

33 ABERDEEN PLACE, NW8

Guy Gibson's fame was quite the opposite. Instead of controlling water his squadron unleashed vast volumes in May 1943. As Commanding Officer of 617 Squadron, the Dambusters, he led the attacks on dams on the Ruhr, in the heart of industrial Germany.

The consequences of dams bursting were well understood, with many recorded incidents of dam collapses resulting in widespread destruction of buildings and many casualties. So when the Ruhr Dams were selected as a target, there was no doubt about the results if the raid was successful.

So how to do it? Firstly the choice of Guy Gibson to lead 617 Squadron of Lancaster Bombers was almost an accident, since his track record getting into the RAF was anything but smooth. To start, he was born in Simla, India, in 1918, where his father was in the Imperial Indian Forestry Service. When he was six, he came to England with his mother and siblings after his parents separated.

Originally Gibson lived in Cornwall but his family moved to London and he was sent to boarding school in Folkestone. In 1932 he went to St. Edward's School in Oxford, where he met Douglas Bader, also destined to find fame as a pilot.

His family life worsened though when his mother became an alcoholic behaving erratically and violently. Guy and his brother Alexander were lucky that the school took 'loco parentis' seriously, arranging safe holiday accommodation. He was mediocre at school, developing an interest in music, and subsequently a desire to be a test pilot. His RAF application was rejected because of short legs!

A second application succeeded and he started training at the Bristol Flying School, and he was promoted to acting Flying Officer. He then progressed to No.6 School at RAF Netheravon, gaining his pilot wings in May 1937 aged 19.

Gibson began training on bombers, with stints at RAF Leuchars and RAF Hemswell. This was followed by training at RAF Evanton and a navigation course at Southampton. With war imminent he was commissioned as a Flying Officer and in July 1939 his squadron flew to the South of France. In August he began exercises to defend London.

When war was declared Gibson began a tour of Bomber Command squadrons. He took off on 5 Sept to attack the German Fleet at Wilhelmshaven but bad weather intervened. In Feb 1940 he was seconded to Coastal Command and was sent to attack U-boats but instead bombed a Royal Navy submarine. All involved were heavily censured but this did not prevent him being chosen to fly night fighters and he won a DFC in July 1940. Returning to London on 3 Sept he spotted a German bomber and shot it down.



Blue Plaque at No 32 Aberdeen Place, NW8

After a rest as a Flying Instructor at RAF Cottesmore, he joined No.29 Squadron where he helped to improve operational efficiency, converting from Bristol Blenheims to Beaufighters. He shot down another German bomber on 12 March 1941, followed by two more. German bombing missions over Britain reduced in preparation for the attack of 22 June on the Soviet Union. His final mission as a fighter pilot was on 15 Dec after which he was awarded a Bar for his DFC.

Next Gibson was appointed Wing Commander to 106 Squadron flying twin engine Avro Manchester aircraft, and then Lancasters, he won a DSO medal during his time at the squadron.

After completing 172 missions he was awarded a second bar to his DSO. He went on a mission to Berlin taking

with him Richard Dimbleby, who then broadcast on the BBC Radio. Expecting to retire he was ordered to write a book, a pretext for preparations for the Dambuster's raid. This needed to be done by 19 May 1943, when the Ruhr reservoirs would be fullest.

The 'book' was his appointment as Commanding Officer of the new 617 Squadron where he personally selected the bomber crews and supervised their training, much of which took place in the Peak District.

This raid was possible because Barnes Wallis had developed the famous "bouncing bomb". Wallis talked and Gibson was convinced the mission could succeed. After the evening briefing on 16 May, Gibson climbed into Lancaster ED932 ahead of his crew. Another 18 Lancasters took off after 9.30pm. The Eder and Möhne dams were breached, Gibson was awarded a VC but eight aircraft failed to return.

All the surviving crews attended Buckingham Palace for presentations and Gibson and his wife later also spent a weekend at Chequers, guests of Winston Churchill. A tour of Canada and the USA followed, with more honours bestowed. When asked by an American how many missions over Germany he had flown, he replied "174". At the time USAF airmen retired after 25 missions. There was stunned silence in the room.

Gibson died in Holland returning from a raid on 19 September 1944. The crew remains were recovered and buried in a local cemetery with a simple cross. When Gibson's identity was confirmed a new cross was erected, with his name, rank and decorations inscribed. His achievement was immortalised in the 1955 film 'The Dam Busters', starring Richard Todd and Michael Redgrave.

Two men with legacies connected to water in vastly differing ways. Sir Joseph Bazalgette took 16 years to construct a network of sewers in London, preventing foul water from contaminating the River Thames. His achievement has stood the test of time, during which London's population has trebled to 9 million. On the other hand Guy Gibson led a squadron of Lancaster bombers which destroyed two key dams in the German industrial heartland. It was also a remarkable achievement dislocating German industry for nearly a year but nearly 1,300 died from the flooding.

When called upon to do difficult tasks, we have to be thankful that there are people with the bravery, confidence and ability to do them.



Lynda King Taylor

Author and Consultant on Police and Community Relations

It is sad. Every day in the news we are seeing terrible times where our Police Service have had their resources and reputations ruined. Certainly complex and challenging chaos and difficult days for those who serve in our Police Service and also for those they serve across the Communities. This is why everyone wants to work together for restoring reputation and results for safer neighbourhoods with our Police Service.

After years of declining trust and confidence in Police Officers and policing, measures being introduced by the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, and Countrywide Chief Constables will take time. It may get worse, before it improves. This, as Chief Officers are working flat out to right the wrong of a few bad cops contaminating the rest.

UPDATE FROM POLICE SERGEANT MARTIN NOON

My team consists of PC Lewis Best, PC Harminder Purewal and PCSO Lina Pandi. I have been asked to write an article around what your local policing team has been up to this month, as you can imagine it has been a busy one! It was a great privilege to play a small part of the King's Coronation, which was a spectacular event.

You cannot underestimate the scale of the security plan that was put in place for such an event, which saw World Leaders, and Royal families from around the globe coming to London for the Coronation at Westminster Abbey. Around 29,000 Police Officers from all over the country were on duty on Coronation Day, which enabled the event to take place without incident.



POLICING THE COMMUNITY

It is, however, more than the few rotten apples destroying the rest of the finest fresh fruit officers serving us.

Across our communities, we want to see visible policing on our streets and Estates, to tackle the crimes that matter most to them and us all. Including anti-social behaviour (ASB), burglary, criminal damage, and crimes as mentioned by our policing team over many of our recent features. Consultative groups, are the effective and caring conduit between the public and policing priorities.

The MET Police Commissioner, Sir Mark Rowley, is introducing a new policy in dealing with mental health. Controversial? Yes. However, it will bring into focus the void in mental health expertise, and suitable facilities, allowing vital and valuable police hour 'free up'.

Vetting - a far leaner dismissal policy, for when officers break the rules or worse. These also will take time. However there can be no compromise. The faith in the police, and the 'Policing by Consent' mantra introduced by Sir Robert Peel in 1829 is under threat. Chief officers know this, and policing needs to be 'Fit for Purpose' in 2023 and beyond.

These events do take local officers away from their core responsibilities, and that was certainly the case here, but we have still been working hard on the main local issues affecting the Hyde Park area, including anti-social behaviour (ASB) robbery and burglary.

On Wednesday 10 May we organised a joint ASB day of action operation, which included representatives from Immigration, British Transport Police (BTP) and local Business Improvement District (BID) Security Teams. The main focus was to target begging and rough sleeping in the local area, which led to 13 Crime Prevention Warning Letters being issued. Immigration also processed four people for overstaying in the Country.

This is why all across our area, there is a general agreement that the issue of Policing is a priority. As our Councillor, Md Shamsed Chowdhury has said "It is vital to keep our area safe and to regularly bring together police, Councillors and community, to work together for safer neighbourhoods." A big thank you to Shamsed for his kind comments and compliments in the spring issue of SEBRA NEWS W2 'Policing the Community'.

As confirmed in past issues, the policing priority is simple: "Catch, Deliver; Protect our communities; Catch criminals and Deliver an outstanding service. The vast majority of officers and staff join the organisation to do just that."

Given all in this issue and previous, we look forward to our next community and policing major meeting on Monday 10 July. Details of the date and location can be found on the opposite page.

After a complex couple of months, I managed to catch up with our policing team leadership. Please see Police Sergeant Martin Noon's update below.

Finally we all thank our Policing Team for all they are doing through difficult days. We are truly grateful.

We have also arranged Crime Prevention days, with Police volunteers distributing over 1,000 leaflets to businesses and residents about how to keep safe, along with tips on burglary prevention.

We have also completed another bike marking, and 'Coffee with a Cop' events. These take place every month, so please keep an eye out for next month's one. It is a chance to get your bike security marked and placed on the National Bike Register. You can also discuss any issues you are having within your Community with your Local Policing Team. Dates, times and locations of when local events are taking place can be found by calling us. Contact details accompany this article, so please come along and say hello.

CONTRIBUTING TO SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS

Meeting with residents and others across our community is considered vital in contributing to Safer Neighbourhoods, an important objective for Police and all.

At a recent meeting including those attending and in the photograph opposite taken at the Coronation Tree in Connaught Village in May including Olympic Ambassador Baz Swain. Chris Cliffe Building Manager Chelwood House endorsed the importance of community cohesion saying "Strong community is critical because it is an important source of social connections and a sense of belonging. We have a lot of different cultures and it is diverse here in W2 so with the right attitude and values it is an essential part of bringing the community together".

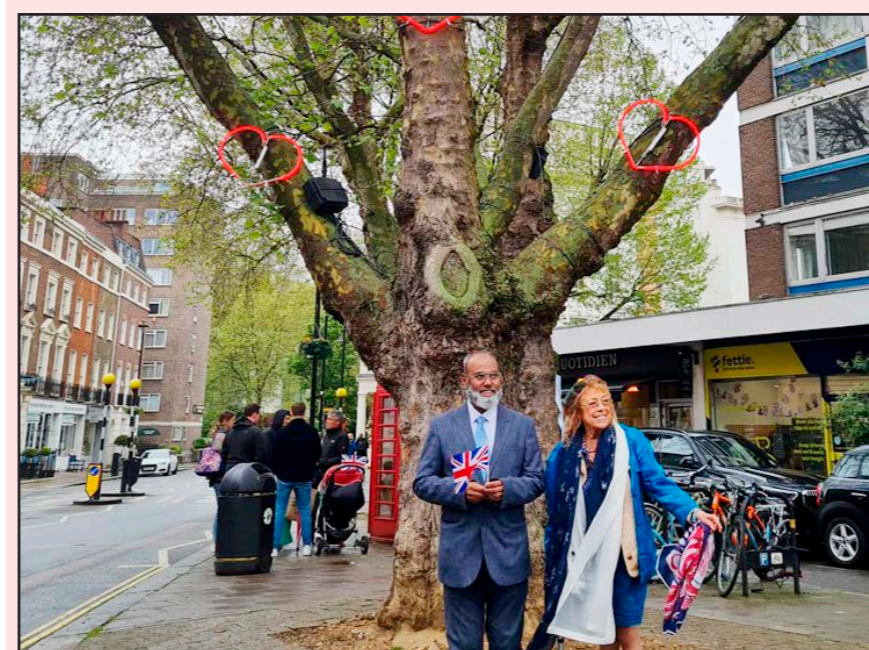
Also in the photograph is Ali, owner of the Duke of Kendal pub, who agrees. He is proud to hold meetings and occasions bringing the importance of community and meetings together.

Andy Beverley, HyPER Chairman, also in the photograph, states "HyPER thanks our local police for all that they do in our community and we look forward to continuing to work and meet with them over the coming months".



Meeting some community leaders at the unique Coronation Tree in Connaught Village.

Our Police Sergeant Martin Noon was grateful for the above feedback, and I am pleased to say that a major meeting, with community leaders, Councillors, residents, and businesses has been planned. It will take place at 6pm on Monday 10 July at St. John's Church, 18 Hyde Park Crescent, W2.



Meeting up with Muhammad Ewaor Uddin, Head of Westminster Multi-cultural Group, at the Coronation Tree outside the Duke of Kendal in Connaught Village.

He endorsed the importance of the community saying: "We all agree to restore faith and trust in our Police Service. We must make meeting with our police, and with those in our community, a priority".

Met Police Websites:

m.facebook.com/metpoliceuk
www.met.police.co.uk
www.actionfraud.police.co.uk

Nearest Police Station
Metropolitan Police Service
Central West BCU (CW) - 80A
Church Street Neighbourhood
Hub London NW8 8ET

Contact Police Sergeant Martin Noon

0207 321 8505
martin.noon@met.pnn.police.uk

Contact your local Ward Officer

Lancaster Gate Ward:
AWMailbox.SNTCW.LancasterGate@met.police.uk

Bayswater Ward:
AWMailbox.SNTCWBayswater@met.police.uk

Hyde Park Ward:
AWMailbox.SNTCWHydePark@met.police.uk

Phone Numbers:

Emergency Only: 999
Non-emergency: 101
Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111
Actionfraud: 0300 123 2040

HYPER NEWS

By Andy Beverley
HyPER Chairman



Exciting initiatives for greening, but reducing traffic remains a key demand



Artist's impression of the proposed Connaught Village Green.

CONNAUGHT VILLAGE GREEN PROPOSALS

Since my last update, the Council has released its proposals for Connaught Village Green. The overall aim – of creating a larger public space and additional greening in the heart of the village – has been broadly welcomed. There has, however, been much discourse over the details of the implementation.

Surprisingly, or perhaps unsurprisingly, the focus of the proposals became almost entirely traffic related. Had these already been addressed, as we have continuously been asking, then the focus of the proposals and discussions could have been about how the best possible public space could be created for the long-term benefit of our community.

The proposals included a short one-way stretch of road on Kendal Street. This had the admirable aim of increasing the available public space; reducing the road crossing width by the Duke of Kendal pub; and mitigating safety concerns relating to vehicles overrunning the pavement. Whilst some residents welcomed this, others (particularly in Connaught Street and Connaught Square) were concerned about the increased traffic that was predicted to re-route to where they live. This was particularly galling for some of those residents, as they had previously been offered proposals which would have significantly reduced traffic in their areas.

Others disliked the proposal to remove the central reservation of the zebra crossing by Abasto, feeling that it would make it more dangerous to cross the road. Others still felt that the

proposals should go much further, and were disappointed that a much larger piazza wasn't proposed, which could be achieved by closing Connaught Street.

Outside of traffic issues, I am aware that some residents raised concerns about the potential of anti-social behaviour (ASB) to take place in the new public space. HyPER, however, didn't have any such concerns raised in the formal feedback that we received. I think I can reliably say that the majority of HyPER members would prefer additional public space at the risk of increased ASB.

It is now for the Council to decide whether to water down the proposals; push ahead with them as proposed; or implement something much more ambitious. In any event, we urge the Council to finally get a grip of the through-traffic, something our Councillors have publicly-committed to doing, and something which residents have been demanding for over 20 years.

PORTSEA MEWS

Another item that has rumbled on for several years has been that of Portsea Mews. Since the previous occupants (Hardman & Collis, said to have been central London's oldest car repair garage) did not have their lease renewed, and since the last residents moved out, the site has laid empty. As such it has become increasingly decrepit and attracting antisocial behaviour. The initial planning application, which proposed adding a mansard roof to the mews properties, was submitted shortly before last year's local elections. With a sense of nervousness, the Conservative administration deferred the planning decision until after the local elections.

Once our new Labour Councillors had been elected, they rejected the proposals, thereby forcing the Church Commissioners to update the plans to exclude the mansard roof.

Although the mansard roof (with the increased business and residential space it would bring) was popular with the broader community, it was rejected by some of the residents living immediately adjacent, whose houses backed onto the development. Without the mansard roof, the overall floorspace was reduced, leading to a choice for the Church Commissioners to either reduce the residential space or new commercial space. The idea of new commercial space to bring in more footfall to Connaught Village was popular, so the Church Commissioners proposed a clever solution to relocate some of the residential units to another nearby area, by converting some existing garages into residential dwellings.



Artist's impression of the new Portsea Mews development.

This then became caught up in its own "nimbyism", with some residents in Devonport objecting to the new location. As such, our Ward Councillors then also objected to that development. As a result the planning application was altered again to have that aspect removed, meaning that in its own right it will reduce the amount of available residential accommodation in the area. This, along with some of the design elements, led to the application being recommended for refusal.

However, I'm pleased to report that the saga has now come to an end: the planning committee overruled the recommendations of the planning officers and gave the go ahead for the project to commence.

GREENING WESTMINSTER FUND - OUR PROPOSALS

On a much more positive note, I am pleased to say that HyPER has applied to Westminster Council's Greening Westminster fund. This excellent scheme enables organisations to apply for grants from the Council, to undertake projects which increase Westminster's green infrastructure and open spaces. Whilst the fund has been available previously, it has undergone a refresh this year to better enable community groups to apply for funding. Grants are awarded based on criteria shaped by the Council's Climate Action Plan and Fairer Westminster vision. This means that proposals are selected both on their proposed contribution to the planet, as well as their contribution to people and communities.

Recognising that community groups do not necessarily have the knowledge and experience to undertake such projects, an enhanced level of support has been available to such organisations. The Council have provided multiple briefing sessions, both online and in person, and have also provided the opportunity to have individual feedback sessions as an application progresses. Speaking from experience, this has greatly facilitated our ability to submit an application.

Nonetheless, deadlines have been tight, and a lot of work and investigation has still been necessary. HyPER is fortunate to have a number of enthusiastic members who are keen to work on greening projects, including some members with the professional skills to curate such applications.

As such, we have submitted two applications. One is for the creation of "parklets" on the estate. These mini-gardens have started springing up in wider London, but have not yet featured in Westminster. They involve turning small areas of road space into community gardens and resting spaces. Whilst the Hyde Park Estate does already have a number of gardens, these are all



An example parklet from elsewhere in London.

private, so this project will create public spaces for the wider community. They will also facilitate walking: a number of Central London walking routes go through the estate. Department for Transport guidance for inclusive mobility, recommends that 50 metres is the maximum distance that mobility impaired people can walk before they need a rest. We therefore hope that in the future these can form a network throughout the estate to help those with reduced mobility to get around. Any installations will only happen with full community engagement.

Our second application is for a permanent "human rights greenhouse" for Westminster, a stunning public artwork to mark the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UDHR, (see the artist's impression), by the horticultural installation artist, Tony Heywood, who is also the former Head Gardener for the Church Commission on the Hyde Park Estate. This carbon neutral work will see key articles from the UDHR laminated on the greenhouse, through whose roof trees will grow, symbolising growth and development. QR codes on signage at the site will link viewers via their mobile phones, to educational materials produced by the UN Human Rights Office about the historical origins of the UDHR and how the UDHR gave rise to many of the rights we take for



The proposed "Human rights greenhouse".

granted. The ambition is that thousands of local schoolchildren will visit the site in the years to come, and, as part of a programme of 'social prescribing', stakeholders in local GP practices and medical institutions will also visit. It's not just glorious artwork, but a vehicle for social outreach and education, greening Westminster and bringing our communities together.

HYDE PARK TO MARYLEBONE NEW CYCLEWAY

Finally, updated proposals have been released for a new cycleway through the estate, from Hyde Park into Marylebone.



Artist's impression of the proposed cycleway at Stanhope Place.

Originally consulted on in 2016 and again in 2021, the proposals have been updated to comply with latest government quality criteria and to fulfil Labour's pledge for residents to have access to a cycle network that is safe and inclusive for all. The proposals include closing Stanhope Place and the creation of "stepped tracks" on George Street.

IN SUMMARY

HyPER continues to be very busy, all the while aiming to make our area better, inline with our motto of being a positive voice for the community.



News from Paddington Library & Paddington Children's Library

We are back with another update on what has been happening at the Paddington Libraries during Spring!

By Ellie Jackson & Sara Ashbourne
Library Officers at Paddington Library

Library Officers

Before we update you on everything that has been going on at the library, we want to introduce Hannah - the newest member of the Paddington Library team!

Hi everyone, I'm Hannah and I started working in Paddington as a Library Officer in March. I've been working in libraries for a few years now, and I moved to Paddington after a stint in Southwark Libraries!

I've been very much welcomed into the community here, and I'm eager to get stuck into things. My background is in English literature and early modern history, and I love bringing that into my work. So, if you have any recommendations for new, unique, and fun books please come and find me at the library!



Coronation Tea Party

We hosted a Coronation tea party for older residents to celebrate King Charles III's crowning moment. Porchester Hall was packed with guests enjoying high tea with plenty of delicious cakes and scones!

Sharon entertained us all with music including a rousing rendition of "God Save the King". Thank you to Sharon and all of our guests for filling the library with joy and laughter.

A special thanks to Souad from Age UK Westminster for helping us to promote our event and to Paddington Staff Hasna and Montse for organising such a wonderful event. Finally, thank you to Sara, Paulo, Ann, Matthew and Jonathan for your decoration and preparation skills.



The Importance of Mental Wellbeing

Stress Awareness Month has been held every April since 1992 to raise awareness of the causes of, and cures for, our modern-day stress epidemic. It encourages us to have open conversations about the impact of stress, decreasing the guilt, shame, and stigma around mental health.

In response, we ran several events here at Paddington Library. Our colleague Montse ran two mindful colouring sessions, creating the opportunity for everyone to get creative and chat to others in a relaxed setting. We also welcomed Community Living Well back to the library to run their Stress

and Worry workshop, which helped participants to understand stress and provided practical tips on how to manage it.

In May we celebrated Mental Health Awareness Week. Westminster Talking Therapies and Good Thinking joined us at the library to run information stalls and chat to our library users about the mental health support that they offer.

We also hosted a six-week CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy) skills course to help participants manage anxiety. Kevin O'Doherty (Forensic Mental Health Specialist and CBT Therapist) shared his expertise,



demonstrating how CBT helps us to understand the link between thoughts, feelings and behaviour, before providing us with the skills to bring about change in the way that we feel.

Children's Library Creative Collective 2023

At the Children's library, we enjoyed hosting an art workshop that encouraged young people to reflect on the Cost of Living crisis, as part of this year's Creative Collective (Westminster City Lions). Artist Camilla inspired lots of children to make inventive sculptures from recycled materials.

To see the work we made here and lots more amazing artwork by Westminster's young people, check out the virtual exhibition: bit.ly/WCC-Virtual-Gallery. A selection of the artwork will go on to be showcased in a series of public exhibitions, including a final showcase at The Saatchi Gallery!



Upcoming Events

- Give & Take community event on Saturday 8 July 10.30am to 3pm. Book via Eventbrite.
- Dr Bike maintenance session on Saturday 8 July 11am to 3pm. Free drop-in, no booking required.
- Perinatal Wellbeing on Thursday 20 July 2pm to 3pm. Book via Eventbrite.
- Real Nappies for London demonstration Thursday 20 July 1pm to 2pm. Free drop-in, no booking required.

Painting our Emotions Exhibition

Sara has been running a wonderful series of art and wellbeing workshops 'Painting our Emotions', which you may have read about in the last issue.

We are excited to announce that right now we are hosting an exhibition of works created during the sessions.

Inspired by the latest session (Painting our Emotions: Yellow) Sara has written a poem and she would like to share an extract with you:

To read the whole poem, and explore the exhibition, simply drop by the library!

*In my mind,
My anxiety is like Pandora's box,
Damaging patterns occur,
The curiosity inside triggered by passing words,
A whisper calls for me to open it,
It's hypnotic and sweet,
Crazy yellow with swirls of black smoke swarm around me,
An overthinker,
Overwhelmed by dark voices,
Swallowing me whole,
Trapped from within.*

Cost of Living Support

In spring, we hosted a series of interactive "Money Management" sessions run by IGLS and WAES.

The sessions explored the psychology of money, empowering participants to change their attitudes towards money by making informed decisions about savings, investing, and managing their credit to secure their future.

Keep an eye out for upcoming sessions on Eventbrite!

Homework Club

We are delighted to tell you that our homework club is back up and running!

Are your children struggling to focus on their homework? Join us every Wednesday from 3.30pm until 5.15pm to focus on homework in a relaxed environment and get some help from our wonderful volunteers. Drop by Paddington Children's Library to sign up!

PADDINGTON LIBRARIES OPENING HOURS

Paddington Library:
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday - 9:30am-8pm
Wednesday - 10am-8pm
Saturday - 9:30am-5pm
Sunday - 11am-5pm

Paddington Children's Library:
Monday to Friday - 10:30am-5:30pm
Saturday - 10:30-5pm
Sunday - CLOSED



Health & Wellbeing



SEBRA Member Lisa Powell is a Registered Nutritional Therapist (CNHC) and Nutritionist (mBANT), Metabolic Balance Coach and Weight Loss Specialist. She also holds a Diploma in Performance Nutrition and runs corporate nutrition programmes. In this article she explores another important health topic.

NUTRITION FOR HEALTHY BONES

The bones in our bodies are made of living cells that are constantly turning over, building and breaking down old bone tissue.

Until our early 30s, when we reach peak bone mass, we typically build more bone than we break down. After this time, our bones start to break down more quickly than they build, leaving us at risk of weakened bones as we age. Fortunately, nutrition can play a key role in helping maintain bone mass and prevent conditions such as osteoporosis, where bones become weak and break more easily. Most of us know calcium is essential for healthy bones, but there are other important nutrients to consider too.

Calcium Around 99% of the body's calcium is stored in our bones. Calcium helps build and maintain bones but is also required for other bodily functions including heart function, blood clotting and helping muscles contract. If we don't get enough calcium from our diet, our body will tap into the calcium stored in our bones, leaving us at risk for weakened bones. Good sources of calcium include broccoli, cabbage, leafy greens, nuts, dairy products, fortified foods, tofu and fish with edible bones (e.g. canned salmon and sardines).

Vitamin D helps the body absorb and use calcium. In the summer our bodies synthesize vitamin D from the sun, but in the UK this isn't possible during autumn and winter months. Dietary sources of vitamin D include oily fish, dairy, egg yolk, red meat, fortified foods. If you don't see much sun, or eat these foods, you may need to consider supplementing. Speak to a health practitioner for advice.

Vitamin C helps with the synthesis of collagen, the main protein found in bones. Good sources include citrus, red peppers, kiwi, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, parsley and strawberries.

Vitamin K helps activate bone building proteins. There are two types - K1 found in green leafy vegetables, broccoli, cauliflower, asparagus, fruit and cereals and K2, found in fish, meat, eggs, soy, and fermented dairy.

Magnesium aids the absorption of calcium into the bones. Good sources are broccoli, leafy greens, fish, banana, dairy, nuts and seeds. We lose magnesium when we sweat, so it's important to regularly consume magnesium-rich foods.

Boron helps the body use those bone supporting minerals. Good sources are prunes, green leafy vegetables, avocados, nuts, dried fruit, eggs, potatoes and milk.

Protein provides the building blocks for bone. Protein is also essential for building muscle, which in turn supports strong bones. Good protein sources include lean meats, fish, eggs, dairy, nuts and seeds, pulses and beans.



Help prevent osteoporosis by eating a healthy diet.

In addition to eating the above, to really look after your bones you should minimise sugar, salt, sodas and alcohol and avoid smoking, all of which have a negative effect on our bones. Other important lifestyle factors for healthy bones include maintaining an active lifestyle and including regular weight-bearing and muscle-strengthening exercises.

More information on eating for healthy bones is available on my website. Simply use the link below.

Lisa P Nutrition

web: www.lisapnutrition.com
mobile: 07717 706017
twitter: @lisapnutrition2



Anjulie van den Berg is a chartered Physiotherapist at PhysioMotion, which operate three London clinics as well as providing physiotherapy at home. Her fourth article for this magazine asks a very interesting question...

HOT VS COLD THERAPY – WHEN DO WE USE WHAT?



One of the most common questions we get asked by patients, is whether they should use heat or ice for their injury or training – and what the difference is between the two. The truth is, that there have been various changes over the years with use and the evidence still isn't always sure.

INFLAMMATION

Inflammation is the process that happens when tissue damage occurs. It's the process that heals and repairs, and occurs in different stages. Acute inflammation is usually represented by symptoms such as redness, swelling, heat, pain and loss of function. You can influence the inflammatory process during the later stages to enhance recovery with your rehab. This will, for example, help you repair and recover with strong(er) muscles.

There are also forms of 'chronic inflammation', such as rheumatoid arthritis, where the inflammation is unnecessary. Inflammation also occurs as a response to training and performance, which allows for us to adapt and get stronger.

APPLYING HEAT

Heat tends to be seen as 'pro-inflammatory'. Inflammation itself creates 'heat', and you usually don't want to add more heat to fire. Hence adding heat to an acute injury can often aggravate it, but adding heat to stiff and sore muscles to warm them up can help relieve them.

Often 'inflammation' is seen negatively, but actually something that is 'pro-inflammatory' stimulates the inflammatory process, meaning it can also help it move on to the next stage quicker. Exactly how and when to use this still remains debatable.

APPLYING ICE

Ice still tends to be the first thing that we think of when an injury occurs. Swelling and pain often limit movement. Hence icing during this time can be helpful, although research shows that elevation and compression are the factors that really impact swelling reduction. Ice will always help with pain management. Adding ice to stiff muscles will likely only increase that stiffness, using it directly post training may help symptoms of fatigue, but using too much of it post-training may reduce desired anabolic effects.

ICE BATHS AND CRYOTHERAPY

Ice baths and cryotherapy are two ways to apply cold to the body. Science has shown good evidence with full body cold exposure and the effect on your immune system, by increasing your brown fat which supports your metabolism and body temperature regulation.

Cryotherapy can also be used as a way to apply cold during an injury, but the evidence suggests that this is often most beneficial during the early stages following injury. When used post-training, it depends on the goals as described below.

SO WHAT IS THE CONCLUSION?

With an acute injury we probably want to affect some of these acute symptoms to prevent too much effect on movement and reduce pain. However, eventually we

Hot or cold? The answer to inflammation is not a simple one.

also don't want to limit too much of the inflammatory process, as it is needed to heal and get stronger. Potentially heat could then be used during a later stage to enhance further recovery.

For sport and performance – cooling can often be used to limit effects of inflammation post-game and post-performance, when in game mode. This will allow them to continue performing again quicker, as the effects of inflammation may reduce performance (i.e. because of fatigue). In training mode though, when the goal is to increase muscle strength, size and other physical parameters, too much cooling may negatively impact these effects.

The truth is that science is still figuring out the best ways to apply these techniques. One day we may learn how to combine both techniques most effectively.

PhysioMotion

PhysioMotion Ltd

10 Kendrick Mews,
South Kensington, SW7 3HG
www.physiomotionlimited.co.uk
020 3422 6655



THE PORCHESTER CENTRE FACILITATING ACTIVITY AND WELLNESS FOR ALL

The Porchester leisure estate these days comprises the Hall, Spa, Leisure Centre and just five minutes around the corner from us is a new addition, the Academy Sport Centre on Harrow Road.

PORCHESTER CENTRE INTRODUCES NEW CLASS: "REJUVENATE"

by **Noelia Dominguez**
Fitness Manager

The Porchester Centre has introduced a revolutionary new exercise class called *Rejuvenate*.

This class brings mindful movement into the fitness space and helps improve your strength and mobility, providing an active recovery for your muscles.

The main characteristic of this class is the use of trigger point massage balls. The instructor coaches you through where to place the ball to often tight and overused muscles or fascia – the tissue surrounding your muscles. An example of this would be one's tibial band, the sheath that runs down the side of your leg. By slowly moving along the muscle or fascia band to a tight area, one holds the position until the fascia gives, and the muscle then relaxes.

The class instructor then moves onto to other muscle groups which often ache from overuse for example your calves on the back of your lower leg and the muscles under your feet.

The overall effect is a calming of your body and mind enabling you to move better in your next training session.

These sessions are deliberately short duration, a focussed class that is highly recommended after a weight training session, running or any other group



exercise class. You could simply use it as a de-stress after work or a busy week. Top athletes and strength athletes use the techniques from this class all the time to get peak performance from their muscles.

The launch day for EA Rejuvenate class took place on Tuesday 18 April in our Porchester Hall, with very good feedback from all the participants, which was reflected in our Instagram account.

To teach this class we have the very experienced and extremely popular Sonal Patel, who has been personal training and teaching group fitness for the past 19 years. Sonal's skill range includes Les Mills Body Pump, aqua, spin, functional fitness, Reformer Pilates,

Rejuvenate at The Porchester Centre.

and muscle activation techniques. Sonal enjoys sharing her passion for fitness with complete beginners to those who are more advanced to ensure they reach their fitness goals.

The class is once a week on Tuesdays from 20:30 to 21:00 after our back-to-back Body Pump classes and they started on 02/05/2023.

For June this year we are running our free pass campaign for new customers aged 16 and over. Please register for your pass online – see our advert on the page opposite – and you could book for this new class too if you choose Tuesday to redeem your pass.

We hope to see you soon!



Join now at everyoneactive.com/haveadayonus

Porchester Centre

*T&Cs UK residents aged 16+. Entitles the user to free use of the gym, pool and fitness classes at their local participating Everyone Active leisure centre for one day only. Court hire is not included. One pass per person only. Pass must be presented at reception. Those wishing to use the gym must complete an induction (provided free of charge) and complete a Health Commitment Statement. Classes must be booked in advance to avoid disappointment and will be subject to availability. New customers only. All users must have an Everyone Active card (available free from the centre) in order to activate the pass.

News

From the Friends of Hyde Park & Kensington Gardens

Photography:
Paul Shelley
Sue Price
Rob Dowling

Sue Price
Chairman, Friends of Hyde Park & Kensington Gardens

“Sumer is icumen in”*

But before that we have the rest of the spring to enjoy, and it's been magnificent. After a miserably long winter and a pretty grim April, both parks are looking wonderful with, everyone agrees, the best blossom for years.



Cherry blossom has attracted the interest of young Japanese visitors.

whilst also being colourful and attractive. And, of course, there is the blossom and soon the summer flowers which provide a stunning backdrop. It has been interesting to note that this spring, the cherry blossom has been an attraction to young Japanese. It was a delight to see this elegant young woman and her friends taking in the beauty of one of the trees along the walk”.

Since Paul wrote this, late spring flowers are looking gorgeous, foxgloves in pots, iris and early roses, with luscious bright green foliage everywhere.

*From a 13th century English folk song – “The Cuckoo Song”

THE MEDITERRANEAN COMES TO KENSINGTON GARDENS

While you are in the north part of Kensington Gardens (SEBRA land), you may have noticed some earth works going on round the Italian Gardens cafe. Head gardener Russell Stevens and his team are creating a new rock garden. It's a fascinating project, which reflects the trend towards landscaping, which can survive in semi- arid conditions.



A touch of the Mediterranean.

Paul continues...

“Bumping into Russell who was hard at work, he took time to explain the concept of the garden. The initial prompt, to create the change to the planted apron round the front of the cafe from the seating deck down to the pathway, was that the incline was too steep. Soil was gradually encroaching onto the drive. Furthermore, the angle of the slope only enabled grasses to grow. Dogs were running over it and it was becoming rather a sad sight.

Thinking laterally, Russell decided that the best solution was to create something completely different. Firstly, a low fence was installed all-round the area to keep animals and pedestrians out. This has not resulted in any inconvenience because there are gentle access ramps at either end of the cafe.



Head Gardener Russell Stevens.

Rocks were implanted to stabilise the ground, and a soil material of deliberately poor quality was imported from nearby parks. Russell explained that the planting medium should not be too nutrient rich. In fact, the plants to be used thrive in conditions where they are put under a degree of stress. It is impressive that the materials are largely moved from nearby locations.

Finally, a group of olive trees complete the garden which promises to be an attraction to visitors as they pass by, or enjoy sitting in the sun at the café”.



The Friends enjoyed an evening of “Ferry Fronds” and a parting gift.

THE FRIENDS ARE TREATED TO AN EVENING AMONGST THE FERRY FRONDS

Thanks to Manager Rob Dowling, who is celebrating his first anniversary of managing this enormous space, a group of members of the Friends of Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens and guests were given an insight into the workings of this important part of the Royal Parks machine.

We saw tiny seedlings, large rubber plants, tree ferns and tall geraniums, destined for the Palace.

We were shown the scientific approach to benign pest control (not quite so benign for the plant pests though).

Our guests were then invited to choose their going home present from a selection of tall, bright red, Buckingham Palace geraniums.



Royal Parks Nursery Manager Rob Dowling hiding in the bedding plants.

All the bedding plants for Buckingham Palace and the Royal Parks are grown here, and large exotic plants over winter in this old gravel pit, hiding in plain sight, in the middle of Hyde Park surrounded by a belt of woodland.

Rob introduced the members to the story of how this super nursery came about, and then guided us through house after house, each with different levels of temperature, humidity and scents and all a bio secure area.

Plenty of delicious Pimms and nibbles were consumed, before everybody wended their way home across the park. A veritable forest of frothy leaves and bright red splashes of colour moving sedately through the evening light.

continues overleaf...

Serpentine Pavilion 2023 designed by Lina Ghotmeh — Architecture Design render, exterior view Photo © Lina Ghotmeh — Architecture. Courtesy: Serpentine.



Serpentine News

Our regular round-up of events and exhibitions at Serpentine continues, and we open with an aerial view of this year's Pavilion. Designed by French-Lebanese architect Lina Ghotmeh the 2023 Pavilion opened to the public on 9 June, and will remain open until 29 October. Hop over to page 26 of our Spring 2023 issue to read more and view additional images. And so to other Serpentine offerings to be enjoyed this summer...



Spider/Web Pavilion 7: Courtesy the artist, photography by Studio Tomás Saraceno.



Tomás Saraceno by Dario J Laganà.

TOMÁS SARACENO IN COLLABORATION *Web(s) of Life*

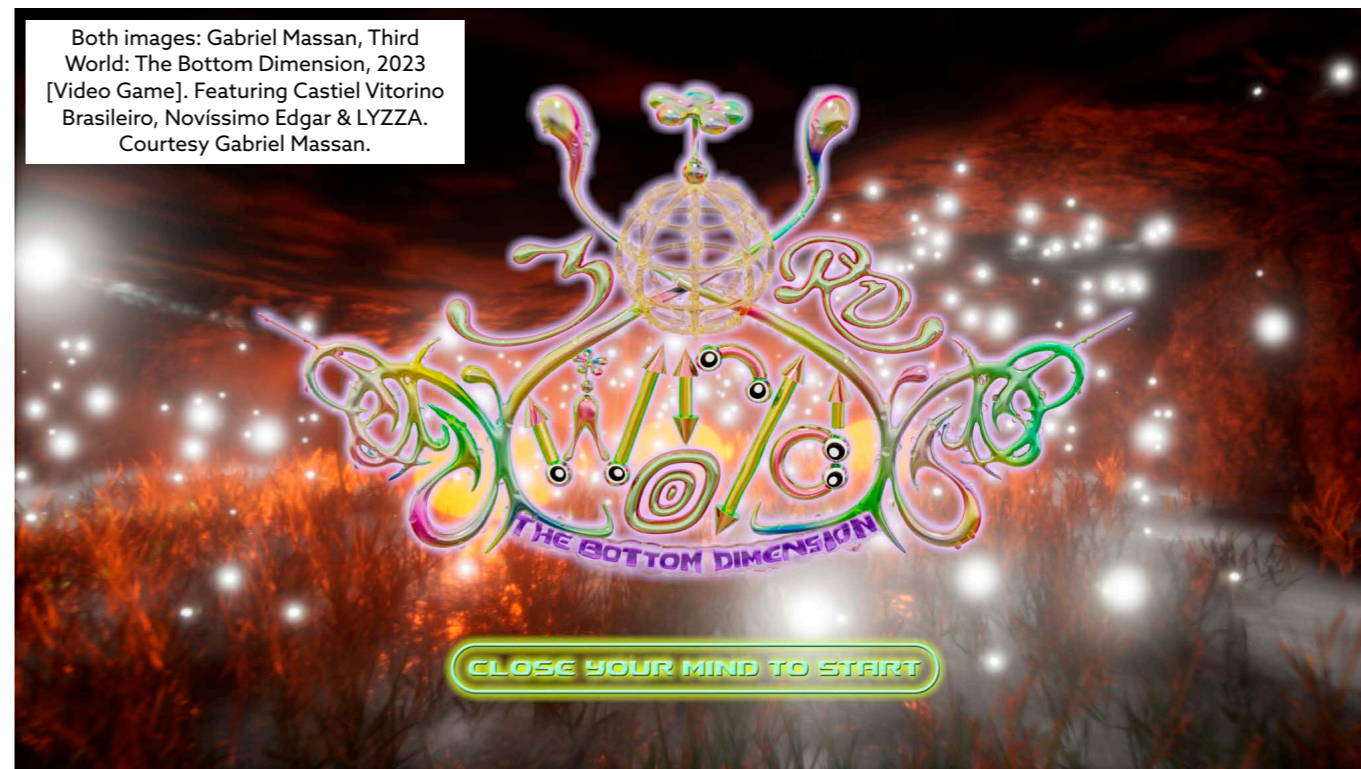
1 June - 10 September 2023
Serpentine South

Tomás Saraceno is an Argentinian-born Berlin-based multimedia artist and researcher. His work draws attention to our role in a complex network of relationships that make up an ecosystem.

He has been the subject of numerous exhibitions throughout the world, but this will be his first major exhibition in the UK.

Visitors will experience a porous environment where Serpentine's building and operations will respond daily to the immediate landscape and park weather conditions. Challenging the ways in which exhibitions are conceived and enacted, *Web(s) of Life* will become a living organism.

Both images: Gabriel Massan, *Third World: The Bottom Dimension*, 2023 [Video Game]. Featuring Castiel Vitorino Brasileiro, Novíssimo Edgar & LYZZA. Courtesy Gabriel Massan.



GABRIEL MASSAN AND COLLABORATORS THIRD WORLD: THE BOTTOM DIMENSION

23 June - 22 October | Serpentine North

Serpentine is thrilled to present *Third World: The Bottom Dimension*, an exhibition, a video game and web3 tokens powered by Tezos.

The project is conceptualised by Brazilian artist Gabriel Massan in collaboration with invited interdisciplinary artists Castiel Vitorino Brasileiro, Novíssimo Edgar, and vocalist and music producer LYZZA.

The exhibition will extend the ideas that have driven the creation and development of the mirroring video game.

It will offer audiences an opportunity to play the game in a communal setting around site-specific set design, sculptures, sound and films.

Third World: The Bottom Dimension emerges from Massan's interest in technological, social and economic



decentralisation. Players can record 'memories' of their own actions as they play the game, and by minting this record (or snapshot) on the blockchain, build a public archive of multiple perspectives and actions.



POLLINATOR PATHMAKER

New edition at Kensington Gardens

A living sculpture made of plants designed to prioritise the needs of endangered pollinating insects, rather than to please humans.

Artist Dr Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg has created an edition of Pollinator Pathmaker which has been planted nearby in Kensington Gardens.

The work is laid out in eleven beds along the North Flower Walk, next to Lancaster Gate.

Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg, Pollinator Pathmaker, Serpentine Edition Garden, 2022. Back to Earth exhibition at Serpentine North.



City Hall, Kamal Chunchie Way, London E16 1ZE.



Tony Devenish AM
GLA Member, West Central
Knightsbridge & Belgravia
Ward Councillor

KEEPING TO THE RIGHT IN CITY HALL

"The year is shooting by..."

You know how fast the year is shooting by when it's time to write another column for SEBRA NEWS W2. A golden opportunity to reflect on what I have achieved for my constituents in recent months and what the Mayor of London Sadiq Khan often has not achieved. For much, much more information, do please spare five minutes to read the content on my social media. (Please see links at the bottom of the opposite page).

TWO 'GOOD NEWS' STORIES

Before I write about my normal agenda of Crime, Environment, Housing / Planning, Transport, in this issue I thought I'd start with two local good news stories which illustrate how special Westminster is to all of us.

I was honoured to be invited by an old friend and her daughter to their Citizenship Ceremony at our town hall in Marylebone. French nationals who have made a conscious decision to make our country and our city their home. If you believed much of the national and international media: Trump, Brexit, the

on/off recession, the war in Ukraine, the "we're all doomed" mood music, but no, as your London Assembly Member and a Westminster City Councillor I am forever meeting people from every corner of the world and the UK who are making our City of Westminster their dream home. My second good news story is of course the King's Coronation weekend. Despite the weather on the Saturday: rain, rain go away: I was delighted to attend a whole series of celebrations from street parties to a senior citizens' tea party in Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea Town Hall, as well as enjoying the huge screens in Hyde Park.



Celebrating the Coronation with Felicity Buchan MP (Kensington).

Thanks are due to Felicity Buchan MP, whose Kensington Constituency will include Bayswater and Lancaster Gate from the next General Election. Felicity and I attended half a dozen community celebrations together. Can anyone other than a few cynics say we don't arrange these historic events better than any other country?

I enjoyed speaking with the media on the good news story of all the jobs, jobs, jobs that the Coronation enriches, after the tough two years many businesses have faced during Covid.

AFTER SEVEN LONG YEARS OF FAILURE LONDON DESERVES MUCH BETTER THAN SADIQ KHAN

I am conscious that my column often reads as one long moan about Mr Khan. On a more positive note, the Conservative Party is finally beginning a truncated process to select the man or woman to challenge Sadiq Khan on 2 May 2024, Mayor /GLA Election.

The winning candidate chosen by the London Conservative Party Members will be announced on 19 July.

Please get in touch with your views on this or anything else.

SKY NEWS : SOFT ON CRIME ARE LABOUR FOR OR AGAINST DECRIMINALISING DRUGS ?

Thanks to Sky News for broadcasting my Mayor question on whether Keir Starmer is against the harm drugs do to society when Mr Khan is busy attempting to decriminalise them.



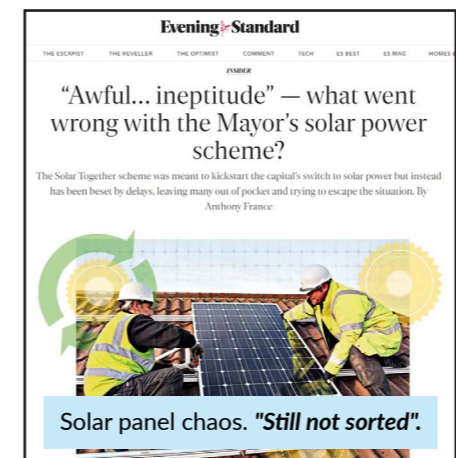
Conservative, London Assembly Member Tony Devenish

"Holding power to account" on Sky News.

One of the toughest parts of holding power to account is when they say different things to different audiences. Often known as hypocrisy.

"INSIDE LONDON'S BIG SOLAR SCANDAL" UPDATE ON EVENING STANDARD FRONT PAGE 8 FEBRUARY

I am sorry to say that the Environment Committee, on which I sit had to hold our second meeting on PV Solar panels

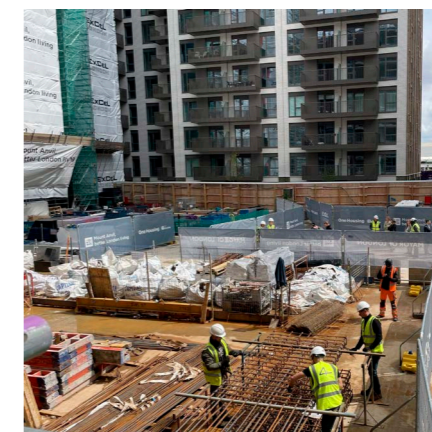


Solar panel chaos. "Still not sorted".

since Christmas because Sadiq Khan has still not sorted out the chaos on his Solar Together scheme, many Londoners are owed thousands of pounds in deposits on what is a relatively simple task to fit panels on roofs.

Local government traditionally delivers better than Central Government, not under Mr Khan.

HOUSING: MORE DODGY FIGURES FROM THE MAYOR



Homebuilding has been "mediocre" under Sadiq Khan's tenure.

The Mayor announced that he has finally met his target to start, note not actually build 116,000 homes that he has had taxpayer's money to complete for nearly

seven years. His poverty of ambition is appalling. He has completed just 58,936 homes. A mediocre average of 8,419 homes per annum, Boris Johnson as Mayor completed 94,001 homes in eight years, an average of 11,750 per year. Keir Starmer announced recently that Labour would build on the green belt if elected to Government something even Sadiq to his credit has rejected. I will continue to hold him to account as a member of the Housing Committee.

HONoured TO BE RESELECTED FOR NEXT YEAR'S LONDON ASSEMBLY ELECTION

I was re-selected by my local Conservative Association Members for a third term as the Conservative candidate the day after the Coronation weekend. A huge honour. Thank you to everyone who has worked with me to make our City an even better place over the last seven years.

I only get to ask Sadiq Khan one or two oral questions a month during a three-hour meeting (there are 25 Assembly members). However, I can ask as many written questions as I like, so please do get in touch ON ANYTHING I CAN BE OF SERVICE. Full contact information can be found below.



"An honour". Reselected as the Conservative candidate for the London Assembly election.

HAVE YOUR SAY - PLEASE DO GET IN TOUCH
MAYOR'S QUESTION TIME
CITY HALL, KAMAL CHUNCHIE WAY, LONDON E16 1EZ
FUTURE DATES: 22 June, 20 July, 14 September and 12 October 2023
You can view these meetings on live Mayoral webcasts which are available to watch at a later date. Visit: bit.ly/Mayoral-Webcasts
For regular updates, follow me on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram. Details opposite.

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Murad Qureshi

Former Westminster City Councillor and former Assembly Member at City Hall

SHOULD THE METROPOLITAN POLICE HAVE BEEN GIVEN ANY MORE POWERS?

The headlines in our local paper, the Westminster Extra, on policing over the Coronation chimes with the devastating conclusion of the Baroness Casey Review of the Met being "institutionally racist, misogynist and homophobic" as it appears to be going from one crisis to another even before the incidents during the day of the King's Coronation.

That is the arrest of nighttime volunteers handing out rape alarms to vulnerable women; locking up republicans for 16 hours for the crime of unloading some placards and detaining a royal "superfan" for 13 hours because she happened to be sat near some protesters.

Since the Coronation, its officers have been filmed shooting two dogs and tasing their owner; admitted keeping crucial evidence relating to the Daniel Morgan murder inquiry locked up for years in a safe near Senior Officers and an Officer been sacked for punching and kicking a 14 year old boy and then lying about it.

Furthermore, Baroness Doreen Lawrence further added that the Met has failed to change some 30 years after the death of her son and the MacPherson Report as well.

So it's quite clear the additional Public Order powers, given days before the Coronation, should not have been given to the Met, in the first place until it sorts itself out under special measures already.

KEEPING TO THE LEFT IN CITY HALL



SCHOOL ROLLS FALLING

As my one of my old primary schools - St Stephen's Primary, Westbourne Park Road (next door to the Cow pub) - closes, it reflects on the families no longer prepared to bring up children in Central London locations like Bayswater.



"Going from one crisis to another."
A quote from Baroness Casey's review of the Metropolitan Police.
The King's Coronation day brought even more problems.

According to London Councils, there is a predicted 7.6% decrease in reception pupil numbers across London from 2022-23 to 2026-27 which translates to a decline of 96,424 to 89,121 pupils over this period.

London's birth rate is the main reason for the decrease in demand for school places. However, there are other factors at play which have also affected the number of applications as boroughs are also experiencing shifts in their local child population as a result of families leaving London during the Covid-19 pandemic and following Brexit.

Let us hope we don't see any other primary schools closing in the City of Westminster.



Is the scaffolding at St Mary's keeping the place up?

ST MARY'S HOSPITAL REFURBISHMENT KICKED INTO THE LONG GRASS?

The government is once again letting down Westminster residents and many others by postponing the rebuilding of St Mary's Hospital to after 2030. The urgency of works at St. Mary's is confirmed by Professor Tim Orchard, CEO of Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust's response to the announcements who states quite clearly "If we wait until 2030 to start building works at St Mary's, it would become impossible to patch up our old facilities, many of which house clinical services. As the provider of London's busiest major trauma centre and host of the NHS's largest biomedical research centre, that would be hugely damaging for the health and healthcare of hundreds of thousands of people." So watch this space in the lead up to the next General Election.

Is the scaffolding on the front of St Mary's Hospital along Praed Street, keeping the place up already?

PADDINGTON STATION FRONTAGE IMPROVEMENTS

Whilst I get used to seeing the Bus Route 16 going up Praed Street, we can clearly see the Cube at Paddington, coming to completion probably by the end of the year. This will vastly improve access to Paddington station and the Bakerloo line from Praed Street.

We should not forget how awful the front of Paddington station has looked for many years, to the extent that the first Paddington Bear movie used the front of Marylebone station instead of Paddington station!

Soon it will be opened up a lot more from the front, and you'll actually be able to see it more clearly from Praed Street as a result. It also confirms the reality that we will be increasingly dependent on developers improving our transport infrastructure in London.



KEEP IN TOUCH

Sign up to my monthly e-newsletter: bit.ly/Murad-Newsletter
Find me on Twitter: [@MuradQureshiLDN](https://twitter.com/MuradQureshiLDN)
Visit my website: www.muradqureshi.com

SO WHICH IS THE BEST MALAYSIAN RESTAURANT IN SEBRALAND?

The streets of SEBRALAND have some excellent Malaysian restaurants as a result of historically many Malaysian students residing in W2 whilst studying abroad in London. So they have a captive market!

We have a new one that has popped up along Queensway, Putera Puteri, which is again attended by many Malaysian people, which is always a good sign. *{Ed: Putera Puteri has been open for a little while now, see my review on page 52 of the Autumn 2022 edition}*. But my favourite is still the Tukdin along Craven Road, W2 with dishes like Mee Goreng and Nasi Lemak, the best 'meals in one' that I can recommend.

"Tukdin" at No. 41 Craven Road, W2. Still Murad's favourite Malaysian restaurant in SEBRALAND.

LINKS FROM THIS ARTICLE

Police Responsibilities: bit.ly/MURAD-Police
School Closing: bit.ly/MURAD-St-Stephens
St Mary's Refurbishment: bit.ly/MURAD-St-Marys



The Property Market

MARKET REPORT FROM CHESTERTONS

The property market in and around W2 has enjoyed an exceptionally strong start to the year with high volumes of buyers and tenants looking for properties in the area. Many of the house hunters who had previously paused their search at the end of last year, amid economic uncertainty, are now getting impatient to move and are no longer prepared to wait.

While demand for rental properties remained strong throughout April, the number of new buyers entering the market that month reduced slightly. This was mainly due to the disruption caused by the Easter holidays, bank holidays and Ramadan but higher interest rates and increased cost of living also led to a number of prospective buyers adjusting their plans.

Overall, the property market in W2 remains strong, however, and with more attractive mortgage rates becoming available and 100% mortgages making a reappearance, we foresee the number of buyer enquiries to pick up again over the next few weeks.

FEWER WINDOW SHOPPERS

In the meantime, some savvy buyers and tenants used the quieter period over the Easter holidays to continue their search in a bid to beat the competition. As a result, our branches saw fewer window shoppers and more serious tenants eager to arrange a viewing or make an offer as soon as possible as well as committed buyers, some of which were chain-free.

MORE SELLERS RETURNING TO MARKET

Spring is one of the busiest times of the year for London's property market and this year proved no exception as we have seen an increase in the number of owners putting their property on the market in April with the hope of selling before the summer. With more properties to choose from, buyers have been in a stronger position to negotiate prices, particularly for properties below £1.5 million.

However, there is an ongoing shortage of two-bed flats and three- and four-bedroom houses, so sellers of these types of properties continue to have the upper hand and prices have remained stable.

CORPORATE TENANTS AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS FUEL LETTINGS MARKET

Tenants looking to rent in the Bayswater and wider W2 area continue to face a highly competitive market. Comparing May 2023 to the same month last year, there has been a 43% increase in tenant enquiries, which has contributed to more competitiveness among prospective tenants. This is currently being boosted further by corporate tenants but also international students who began enquiring as early as March and April in order to find a property for July or August.

In an attempt to stand out and secure a rental property, some tenants don't shy away from offering landlords a year's rent in advance or from proposing a higher rent altogether.



RENTAL MARKET FURTHER BOOSTED BY DEMAND FOR LARGER HOMES

While apartments remain sought-after among renters, we have also registered an uplift in rental enquiries for larger family homes with a minimum of three bedrooms. These properties are particularly popular at this time of year as parents try to secure a suitable property before the start of the next school year, which starts in September.

This segment of the property market is made even more competitive by the presence of corporate tenants who often require larger homes on a short-term basis.

Just as the sales market, the local lettings market is in continuous need of suitable properties to meet demand. Due to the highly competitive nature of the market, buyers and tenants are advised to remain in regular contact with their chosen agent to ensure they don't miss any opportunities to view suitable properties.

Chestertons Hyde Park
 Keep up to date with the London property market by visiting: [chestertons.co.uk/en-gb/news](https://www.chestertons.co.uk/en-gb/news) or by contacting Chestertons Hyde Park: hydepark@chestertons.com or calling 020 7298 5900.



As the weather warms up, the property outlook looks bright in Prime Central London. New developments and regeneration in W2 are bringing with them an air of excitement and positivity.

Summer in the city. Think al fresco dining, open air theatre in Regent's Park and lazing in Hyde Park. The buzzing W2 postcode comes alive in summer. This year, the property market's brightening up too. New developments like The Whiteley and Park Modern, and Paddington's revitalisation, are bringing renewed vibrancy and interest to the area.

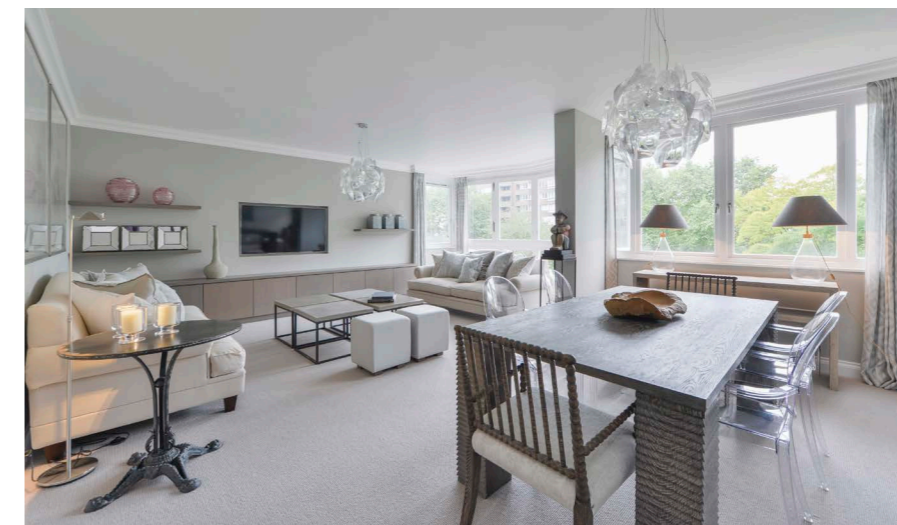
After months, if not years, of uncertainty and volatility in the property market, the outlook for 2023 is calmer. Figures to April indicate this year will be the most predictable for five years.

"The further we get from last year's poorly-received mini-Budget the brighter the outlook has become for the prime London sales market," says Tom Bill, Head of UK Residential Research at Knight Frank.

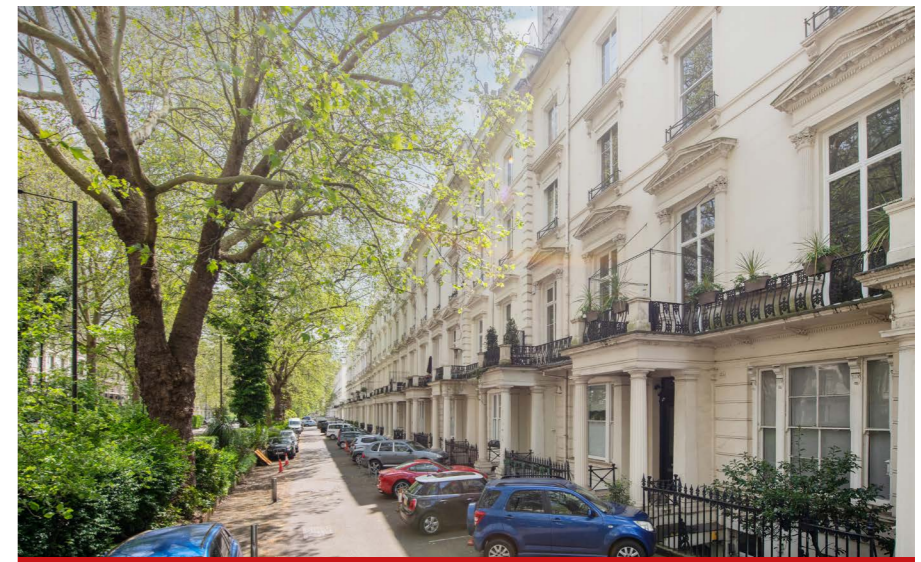
In the first quarter of 2023, new prospective buyers registering above £10 million rose by 15%. Properties coming to the market for sale increased by 11%. Both demand and supply in this prime London market is strong, showing the sought-after sector's resilience.

Laura Dam Villena, Head of Hyde Park Sales says:

"We're certainly feeling more activity at the top end of the market than in the past two years. Properties from £5-10 million



TO LET: Norfolk Crescent, W2
 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, reception room. Guide price £1,500 per week.



FOR SALE: Westbourne Terrace, W2
 4-5 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, 2 reception rooms. Guide price £3,450,000.

are getting high volumes of good offers. That said, vendors still have ambitious expectations."

"There's plenty of interest in properties to £3 million too. Presentation is key here, with turnkey properties proving super popular. We're seeing parents buying for their children. Workers who left London are looking for smart pied-a-terres for their working week."

"It's great to see the excitement and belief in W2 as a new growth area. We're experiencing increased interest from overseas buyers - a level of international activity that we've not seen in over three years. This is largely down to our global network and its incredible reach."

In the rental market, the demand versus supply imbalance is improving, albeit slowly. Rental prices are, on average, 50% higher than two years ago in Prime Central London, pushed up by low stock levels.

Sofia Lira Salas, Head of Hyde Park Lettings notes:

"We're seeing more stock coming to market, gradually. But we're nowhere near the levels of a few years ago. Rents are generally levelling off. Importantly, desirable, high quality properties are going for, or over, asking price currently."

"The last few weeks have given us a snapshot of summer - our busy period. Demand for student properties is rising. We're also seeing international corporate relocations through collaborations with our global colleagues."

If you are selling or letting your home, you can rely on us - your partners in property - to provide informed market advice.

We would love to help you. Please call us on 020 3944 3534 to find out more.

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Your Letters

We welcome your letters on any subject that might be of interest to the readers of SEBRA NEWS W2. Send your contributions to: editor@sebra.org.uk or by post to John Zamit, Chairman (address on page 2). Note that contributions may be subject to minor editorial changes. Please include your full contact details. The writer of the "Star Letter" will receive six bottles of wine.

'TAKEN ABACK' BY ARTICLE IN SPRING 2023 EDITION

I was taken aback to read Andy Beverley's (Westminster Healthy Streets) diatribe against those of us who commented negatively on Westminster's Vision for Soho and in particular on the Soho Society.

Apparently we are '...the noisy minority' who were and are thwarting what Mr Beverley regards as an excellent scheme. It's amazing how many Soho experts there are who don't actually live in Soho and yet are determined to impose their fashionable templates on areas whose functioning they don't understand.

These proposals would have seen Soho carved into three areas with limited vehicular access between, and much on-street parking removed, such as Soho Square. How our local economy could operate with many hundreds of daily restaurant deliveries wasn't quite clear given the multiplicity of demands on limited kerbside space.

The Covid al-fresco experiment demonstrated that having roads covered with tables and chairs creates noise levels

which were unsustainable for upper floor users, led to a considerable increase in anti-social behaviour and made movement for those with disabilities impossible. Is this what Mr Beverley means by 'healthy streets'? In fact it would have made pedestrian movement more difficult.

Is commercialising the public domain to provide dirt cheap space for businesses a good idea? The current pavement license legislation leads to widened footways getting covered in tables and chairs rather than being available for the increasing mass of people using the West End, and is likely to be made permanent. Mr Beverley states that the consultation was excellent and had a high level of response. In fact consultation for our Neighbourhood Plan was far greater and cycling was near the bottom of the consultation priority list.

Understanding the West End and the high density mixed use streets of Soho and other neighbourhoods off Oxford Street, requires a degree of finesse which appears to elude a campaign group with apparently fixed templates. Having lived in the West End for 51 years I, and many others, don't want to see Soho turned into a form of theme park losing its grittiness and urban eccentricities. Far better to upgrade the very worn footways of Soho, encourage more tree planting, widen footways where pedestrian movement is very high and de-clutter where possible etc. To contribute I have created an on-street orchard in Dean Street with apple, pear, plum, apricot and nectarine trees. A lot of plums and apricots this year (so far).

David Bieda
Soho, W1



Andy Beverley's article from our Spring 2023 edition.

NATIONAL EXPRESS COACHES RETURN TO WESTBOURNE TERRACE - TWO LETTERS FROM SEBRA MEMBERS

For many years, the local community campaigned for National Express coaches to use commercial Eastbourne Terrace instead of residential Westbourne Terrace.

A couple of years ago the campaign was finally successful. Unfortunately, over the past couple of weeks, National Express coaches have started to use Westbourne Terrace once again (My photo, *ed: shown opposite*, taken at 4:30pm shows an A5 coach).

When the coaches originally appeared an email address was given to residents to alert the Council and National Express to highlight any coaches deviating from their mandated route. Unfortunately, this address appears not to be working anymore.

It would be great if the Council could remind National Express that their coaches are to use Eastbourne Terrace.

Sylvia Whitehouse
SEBRA Member, W2



National Express coaches have returned to Westbourne Terrace.

I thought that after many years, National Express had finally got the message that it should use Eastbourne Terrace instead of making life miserable shaking everyone up and down Westbourne Terrace.

Unfortunately I had underestimated National Express' passionate love affair with Westbourne Terrace. As soon as the Stansted service was reinstated a couple of weeks ago, it immediately started again sending all of its absolutely gigantic train-like coaches along Westbourne Terrace.

This is such a dispiriting state of affairs. Can anything possibly be done for the

message to get through to National Express that it is much more sensible for it to avoid residential streets when a perfect alternative exists?

Richard Michaels
SEBRA Member, W2

Chairman's comment

Thank you for update on National Express coaches using Westbourne Terrace, I am pleased to report that our Labour Lancaster Gate Ward Councillors have already taken the matter up with TfL so hopefully this problem can once again be addressed.

CRIME - "THIS AREA HAS NEVER BEEN WORSE"

This is a photo I took of a local criminal gang who have started to operate from and occupy the bus stop at Inverness Terrace.

There are now people sleeping here but more worryingly they trade in stolen goods, drink and take drugs all night.



They seem based in a local hotel currently hosting Council 'tenants'. Yesterday morning they were brazenly looking through bags for valuables in front of local residents.

Since the Council moved so many homeless addicts and criminals to the area during lock down and afterwards this area has never been worse. They have abandoned these people on us, do nothing to help and where are the Police? Do they exist? They do nothing about street crime at all. I am a taxpaying resident of 10+ years with a young family.

Thanks to the Council it is now getting dangerous and it is a disgrace all round.

Tim Ogden
SEBRA Member, W2

"REMOVE THE SHELTER, REMOVE THE PROBLEM"

Is there a way we can get rid of the bus shelter at Inverness Terrace and simply have a bus post like we always did?

We residents would really like the shelter removed as it has clearly become the place to be if you wish to smoke

crack cocaine or trade stolen goods. Westminster City Council don't seem to give a damn and it is so frustrating.

Removing the bus shelter would stop these criminals congregating most nights and days under the shelter. It's a meeting point. Remove the shelter, remove the problem.

One could argue that the seating area is needed for elderly people to sit and wait for the bus but there are walls that could be used to sit on whilst waiting for the No. 70 bus to arrive.

Steve Kalogroulis
Inverness Mews, W2

Chairman's comment

These are serious issues and they were highlighted by SEBRA member Steve Kalogroulis in our Autumn 2022 "Safety Valve" section. I thank him, and Mr Ogden, for keeping these issue in SEBRA's spotlight.

The City Council and police are well aware of the high levels of crime we are experiencing in these locations, but I will raise the problems again.