



# The Bulletin

For our members in Putney and Roehampton



April 2023



As the Putney Society starts to prepare for its local Front Garden Award Scheme there is burgeoning evidence about the importance of gardens for wild life - not least for a whole swathe of insects. Those of you that have been watching the BBC's Wild Isles will have learnt that 60% of the British Isles' flying insects have vanished in the past 20 years

The Wildlife Trusts and Royal Horticultural Society have set up Wild About Gardens to celebrate wildlife gardening and to encourage people to use their gardens to take action to help support nature. Many of our common garden visitors – including bumble bees, butterflies, hedgehogs, house sparrows and starlings – are

increasingly under threat. But together we can make a difference by the way we plant and manage our gardens.

If you have a lawn, check out their advice on making it so much more than just a patch of grass. With a bit of care and attention – or even inattention – a lawn can provide a sanctuary for our natural neighbours. Provide a water source for birds and insects – and (this is the challenge) try not to be such a tidy gardener. The difference between weeds and wildflowers is just a matter of perspective – embrace the daisies, dandelions, clovers and other naturally flowering plants. A lawn full of wildflowers provides vital food for bees and butterflies, amongst many other benefits. So, ditch the weedkiller, mow less often, and let the flowers flourish!

You can even create a mini lawn on a balcony. Find out more at <https://www.wildaboutgardens.org.uk/>

## Wandsworth Art

### A weekend of art stalls and creative workshops

On **Sat 1 – Sun 2 April from 1pm-5pm**, Wandsworth Art Markets will pop up across the Borough including at St. Mary's Church Yard (Putney).

The result will be a festival of art and culture for those that live, work and study in Wandsworth and, for artists and makers, an opportunity to show and sell their work, connect with fellow creatives, and develop their practice.

Details of participating artists are here: <https://wandsworthart.com/artists-in-wandsworth/wandsworth-art-markets-2023/>

## Putney supports Ukraine with the Convoy of Hope

With the fantastic generosity, donations and support of residents of Putney and across southwest London, the Convoy of Hope recently set off to deliver to Ukraine six fully refurbished ambulances laden with humanitarian aid.

It began with the Concert of Hope on Sunday, 19th February in St. Margaret's Church, Putney, featuring six talented Ukrainian musicians. Donations in kind followed, including medication, baby food, bandages, syringes, clothes, sleeping bags, rucksacks, sanitary wear, dog food, crutches, wheelchairs, zimmer frames, retractable chairs etc.

The team of 12 drivers left at 5.30am on Sunday, 5th March after a ceremonial send-off in Luttrell Avenue by the Deputy Lieutenant of London amongst many others. They drove 1,485 miles through France,

Belgium, the Netherlands to Germany and Poland, to arrive in Lviv in Ukraine on Tuesday morning.

Two of the four ambulances were handed over there while the remaining four drove a further 410 miles to Kyiv where they were delivered to the Ministry of Health. Photos of the expedition can be found on <https://photos.app.goo.gl/sF27mQqj9FtJMHU88>

This Convoy's mission has been successfully completed, but another one is being prepared for a May or June departure. Aliya Aralbayeva, co-founder of Medical Life Lines Ukraine (see <https://www.medicallifelines.org.uk>) and local residents will continue fundraising to purchase more ambulances and other vehicles specifically needed so badly in Ukraine.

If you would like to support this

fantastic initiative for Ukraine, please contact Sally Strahan at [sallystrahan@outlook.com](mailto:sallystrahan@outlook.com) or make your own donation at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/convoy2023>



## Community Panel

Co-convenors: Victoria Diamond & Val Jones Vickysw15@aol.com & jones.val@gmail.com 07746 022654

Repair Café at St Mary's Church - On 11 March the Repair Café had a very busy morning, with its volunteer 'repairers' working tirelessly on a host of items including radios, toasters, clothes, saucepans and small furniture. That the Café is such a hive of industry on its designated days (usually the second Saturday in the month) suggests increasing recognition of the need for us all to throw less away. 'Repair and re-use' is a worthwhile aim – it gives items a longer useful life, prevents more 'stuff' going to landfill, develops often-lost skills and expertise. If everyone tried to have 'just one thing' repaired this year, be it a kettle (my own repaired successfully for a small donation, with much gratitude and at a fraction of the cost of a new one), a loved item of clothing, a clock ... there would be Less Load on Landfill.

**Recycling news:** There is a new Bay 23 at Smuggler's Way Household Waste and Recycling Centre, which will now take rigid plastics, such as plant pots, garden furniture, storage boxes, buckets, bowls, car bumpers etc.

Don't forget you can take any unwanted or old material, fabric or textile to H&M and they will give you a voucher in return. They promise every strand will be recycled or used in some beneficial way.

Specsavers and most Boots Opticians will now take unwanted pairs of glasses and used contact lenses.

**Defibrillator news:** we read that all manned stations run by South Western Railway will now have a defibrillator installed. This includes Putney. We don't know whereabouts it will be, but assume it will be inside the station, and not available once the station closes. Whilst this is good news, we still need defibrillators available 24 hours. JC Decaux's planning applications to instal two communication hubs with defibrillators, one near East Putney Tube Station, and one opposite Putney Station were refused. They have appealed the decisions. We will be writing in support of JC Decaux. When you ring 999 now, they frequently ask if you can access a defibrillator in case the ambulance is delayed in reaching you. Whilst the Putney Society is generally opposed to unnecessary street furniture, in these instances and locations, we feel strongly that access to defibrillators 24 hours a day is more important.



## Transport Panel

Convenor: Stephen Luxford. Stephen.luxford46@gmail.com

Earlier this year the Council announced the creation of a **Citizens Assembly** to discuss local air quality problems and possible solutions. The assembly is comprised of 50 randomly selected residents from across the Borough. There is an oversight panel to ensure the process is unbiased and fair. The assembly met for the first time in February and then again on 11 March and heard from experts and local groups on topics including the causes of air pollution, the impacts on health, the local picture and personal perspectives. To follow the progress of the assembly and to view the presentations made at their meetings please go to <https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/AQCA> You will also find a link to an online platform called Polis where everyone who lives or works in Wandsworth is invited to share their views on tackling air quality in our borough. These views will be fed back into the assembly at the end of April.

**Reliability of the District Line.** I would be interested to hear

your views on the quality of District Line services in our area. I have heard anecdotal reports about regular signal failures and was hit myself by one on Saturday 18 March. Services were suspended between East Putney and Parsons Green but official communications were non-existent. There was no tannoy announcement to explain what was happening; no member of staff anywhere on the station and the 'help' button by the ticket office, where you are advised to seek information, went unanswered. Coinciding with a strike on rail services this left many travellers stranded. Was this a one-off? Please let me know.

Drivers or bus passengers travelling to and from Barnes over the next few months may wish to add a few extra minutes to their journeys. Long term roadworks, reducing traffic to a single lane, have recently begun on Rocks Lane in Barnes and are likely to lead to delays in peak times.

## FUTURE PANEL MEETINGS

New panel members very welcome. Some panel meetings are now being held in person. Please check details below. If you are new to panel meetings, please contact the panel convenor by email if you want to take part in the Zoom meeting and they will send out an invitation.

### COMMUNITY

13 April, 11 May  
by Zoom (18.30)

Co-convenors:  
Vicky Diamond & Val Jones

vickysw15@aol.co.uk,  
jones.val@gmail.com  
T: 07746 022654 (Vicky)  
T: 07780 674114 (Val)

### TRANSPORT

11 April, 9 May  
by Zoom (19.30)

Convenor:  
Stephen Luxford

Stephen.luxford46@gmail.com

### BUILDINGS

5 April, 3  
by Zoom (18.30)

Convenor:  
Andrew Catto

ac@andrewcatto.co.uk  
T: 07831 761327

### OPEN SPACES

6 April in person  
at 38 Disraeli Road,  
4 May by Zoom  
by Zoom (18.30)

Convenor:  
Judith Chegwiddden

judith.chegwiddden@gmail.com  
T: 020 8788 4489

## Open Spaces Panel convenor: Judith Chegwidden [judith.chegwidden@gmail.com](mailto:judith.chegwidden@gmail.com) 020 8788 4489

Members participated in a walk along **Putney Park Lane** on a rather wet Friday morning this March. We welcomed the initiative from Enable to create a pollinator corridor along the lane by planting most of the verges with various wildflower seed mixes. Information boards will soon be available along the Lane to explain the process, which will involve scarifying the grass followed by seed sowing days in the early autumn. Enable is very keen to involve community groups in the seed sowing so do let me know if your group wants to take part.

It is good to see hedgehog highways being created along the Lane (thanks to Falcon School and residents in Granard Avenue). If your house backs on to the Lane, please think of providing a route for hedgehogs – this is one of the few areas in Putney where they occur and they need a plenty of space to source food – more than can be provided in a single garden.

It was sad to learn that one mature tree towards the north end of the Lane was scheduled for felling because of erosion of the bark at a lower level. This is an

important dog walking area, but too much canine urine and the use of trunks as scratching posts can destroy trees.

More benches are scheduled to be placed along the length of the Lane – if you would like to commemorate a local person on one of these benches, let me know and I will pass on your request to the Enable parks Officer.

We will be starting maintenance work in the **JC Decaux Parklet** in the next week or so and working with the company to refresh the planting with more drought resistant species. Meanwhile it is good to see the new bed of miniature daffodils in full bloom at the southern end of the parklet.

Finally, we are preparing for this years **Front Garden Award Scheme** in central Putney which will be judged in mid-June. To help residents in the relevant streets get planting we will be running stalls with free plants and gardening advice on 13 and 21 May. More details on times and location in next month's Bulletin.

## Buildings Panel convenor: Andrew Catto [ac@andrewcatto.co.uk](mailto:ac@andrewcatto.co.uk) 020 8785 0077

Members who have not taken part in one of our Panels Meetings (do - they are open to all; you don't even have to leave home) might be surprised by the range in scale of the things we consider. March's Panel was a case in point with a garden fence at one end of the scale and a 30-storey tower at the other.

The tower and five other 16 storey blocks would be squeezed on to just half the site of the now decommissioned gas holder next to Armoury Way, land with almost no road frontage. We wrote to object to the impact this will have on the view from Putney Bridge and support the Wandsworth Society's wider concerns on density and transport. Particularly worrying here is that this goes directly against a brand-new local planning document for this area, supposedly the Council's considered policy, that wants no more than 10 floors here, and with improved connections to the wider area, conspicuously lacking from the scheme on offer.

Planning 'reform' rumbles on. Amongst the compromises made to get the Levelling Up Bill through Parliament is for specific housing targets to be dropped if they will mean "densities significantly out of character with the existing area". Has this message reached Wandsworth?

That this scheme was apparently given the go-ahead at a 'pre-application' process, despite being so far wide of policy, is a particular concern at a time when we are also responding to consultations about revisions to the new Local Plan, now one year late, about Conservation Area statements and about the Council's initial plans to develop the heart of the Alton estate in Roehampton and to build on spare corners of the Ashburton and Alton estates. If the

policies are ignored, why bother having a plan?

More encouraging is the news that Lambeth Council has abandoned plans to demolish its Central Hill estate, designed by some of the same team as Alton East. The embodied carbon debate is starting to be heard.

On the wider front, the Government is proposing to raise planning application fees by 35% although the Royal Town Planning Institute calculates that local authority spending on planning has dropped by 43% in 10 years, before inflation. But bigger fees won't fill the planning officer vacancies which are causing delay. Also, down by 40% since last year, are housing starts, according to one industry tracking site. The rising cost of construction, taxes and increasing social and biodiversity contributions expected from development in the face of falling house prices looks to have reached a point where only the overdeveloped is now viable.

That fence? It fronts a house in a conservation area where once modest cottages now sell for seven figures. New owners buy for the village feel, then want to make it 'smarter'. Please don't. At least these owners didn't want to pave a front garden for parking, which makes the problem worse by knocking out a kerb side space in the process.

**STOP PRESS:** The March Planning Applications Committee refused consent for a proposed extension of the existing floating pontoon on Putney Pier. But they approved a scheme for a brand new pier for the Thames Clipper service to be sited between the existing pier and Putney Bridge. However, this still needs a licence from the PLA before construction can start.



# Call for Volunteers to help with the Wandsworth Museum Collection Catalogue

The Wandsworth Museum Action Group (MAG) has been asked to provide volunteers for the vital task of transposing written records of the Wandsworth Museum Collection to a database.

The computer catalogue which holds the catalogue information was damaged in the 2016 Battersea Arts Centre fire and it has proved impossible to retrieve the relevant files. Written records have been scanned into PDFs. The task for volunteers will be to type them up on to a simple Excel database. This can be done at home. All you will need is email, an internet connection and some basic grasp of Excel spreadsheets.

If you would like to help, please submit your email contact details to Sheila

Allen at MAG on  
sheilamacallen@gmail.com

Sara O'Donnell, Head of Arts and Culture, at Wandsworth Council will then send you the relevant scanned files to transcribe and return.

MAG volunteers will be supported by a team from Roehampton University who are preparing a series of mini-museum exhibitions to be displayed in the new Town Centre Library and other suitable venues. This work requires a comprehensive catalogue and the database is the essential first step in getting the Wandsworth Museum collection more available for public display.

If you have any queries, please contact Sheila, or Philip Bradley on  
southlondoner23@gmail.com.

## Letter to the Editor



For several years my wife's singing group, Japonica Singers, benefitted from a banner on the railings of St Mary's Church inviting interested singers to come along to a Thursday evening rehearsal in the church, and consider joining the group. But then in December 2021 Wandsworth Council directed St Mary's to remove all such banners from the railings, presumably to improve the visual amenity of the area.

As a result, not only singing groups such as Japonica Singers but a host of social gatherings were effectively discouraged by an over-zealous council.

Knowing the importance the Putney Society attaches to fostering a lively civic community, may I suggest this is a matter that the Society takes up with Wandsworth Council.

Yours sincerely

*Michael F Ridd*

## Wandsworth Historical Society

The front cover of the latest issue of the Wandsworth Historian joins the run-up to King Charles's crowning in May by carrying a fragile memento of Wandsworth's official celebration for Edward VII's coronation in 1902.

The main articles in the magazine itself explore growing up in post-war Roehampton, the story behind those amazing carved stone historic freezes on the southern side of Wandsworth Town Hall, and the varied fortunes of six pharmacy shops in our area.

The **Wandsworth Historian** is published by the **Wandsworth Historical Society**, and copies are available price £3.00 plus £2.00 for postage and packing from:

WHS, 119 Heythorpe Street,  
London SW18 5BT

or by emailing 020neil119@gmail.com.  
Cheques payable to 'Wandsworth Historical Society', please, though on-line payment is much preferred.



The cardboard badge worn by nine-year-old Reginald Baker in Wandsworth High Street on 3 July 1902.



By **Lucy Kirkwood**, Directed by **Kim Dyas**  
Assistant Director - **Veronika Wilson**

**Tuesday 25 - Saturday 29 April 2023,**  
**7.45pm Main Stage**

A murderer's fate lies in the hands of 12 women. Sally has committed the wickedest of crimes but her claims of pregnancy, perhaps, demand clemency. A panel of Suffolk matrons, pulled from their everyday into the machinations of 1760s justice, must assess if she's telling the truth.

Will she escape a hanging, be transported, or will the mob tear her to pieces? Village midwife, Lizzy, might be all that stands in the way of Sally's execution. Female wisdom and strange portents spin Kirkwood's incendiary play into a darkly comic theatrical tapestry.

## PUTNEY SOCIETY CONTACTS

See website for full details:  
[www.putneysociety.org.uk](http://www.putneysociety.org.uk)

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