



# The Bulletin

January 2021



## The Society looks forward to 2021

One of our members sent me this picture as a sign of hope for the year to come – and hope is what is needed as we learn of rapidly rising numbers of Covid infections in Putney and its surrounding areas. Our thanks are due to all the NHS staff and volunteers that will be involved in making sure that we receive the vaccine over the next few months.

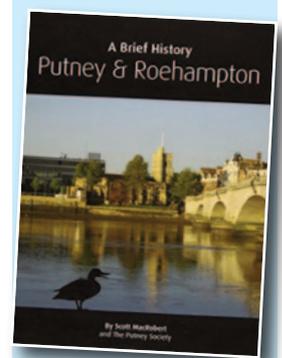
Meanwhile, the Society continues to operate on Zoom and Panel Convenors have noted increasing numbers of member attending their monthly meetings. This is really welcome, but we are also interested to get your views on the timing of these Zoom meetings. Would it make it

easier for you to attend if they were held earlier or later in the day? All our contact details are on page three of the Bulletin so do let us know.

Building on the success of the webinar in November, we are researching other speakers and topics to offer to members over the next few months – do let us know if you have ideas for speakers or topics. We are hoping to arrange a speaker from the South East Rivers Trust in the near future and another on the historic houses of Roehampton. Keep an eye on our website for dates and details.

A firm date in the diary is a hustings for the elections for

the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators, which will take place, probably online, on **Thursday 18 February at 7.30 pm** (See also back page). Also make a date for our AGM which will be online on **22 March** in the evening.



## A chance for new residents to learn about our area.

The Society's Vice-president, Hugh Thompson, has been very active in promoting a book, Putney & Roehampton: A Brief History by Scott MacRobert and the Putney Society to local estate agents. Stocks of the book are now depleted as both Warrens and Allan Fullers have bought the books to hand out to people buying or renting property in our locality. Thanks Hugh, and thanks to Warrens and Allan Fuller for their generosity.

## Disappointing outcome of bid for Future High Streets funding

In late December we learnt that the Wandsworth Council bid to the Future High Streets fund had resulted in an allocation of just over £1m – by far the lowest in London where 15 high streets were awarded a total of £255m.

The Council's bid had been for £5m and involved improving the junction of Putney Bridge, Lower Richmond Road and Putney High Street to facilitate better conditions for pedestrians. The plans also included improved access to Waterman's Green as well as some alterations to the library to provide shared work spaces, a meeting room and a café. There was also a proposal to improve the public realm outside the library in Disraeli Road.

We await an announcement from Wandsworth as to which of these schemes will be given the green light, given the much restricted budget.



# Buildings Panel

Co-convenor: Andrew Catto  
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What a year 2020 turned out to be for your Panel as well as for everyone in Putney and beyond – assuming there is still a beyond, I haven't been there to check.

We learned how to meet on Zoom instead of round my office table, and this looks like continuing for the foreseeable future. Meetings are now online at 6pm on the 1st Wednesday of each month, which seems to have proved popular with 10-12 Society members in attendance each time. The earlier start allows us to finish in time for dinner, so why don't you give us a try now that you can do this from the comfort of your own home.

Wandsworth Council declared a Climate Emergency, and issued a statement on how they would do their bit, then promptly gave planning permission to rebuilding a huge swath of the Alton Estate which would fail to meet any of these objectives, even after their development partner had walked away. Then in the midst of a travel ban they gave consent to a ten storey hotel on Putney High Street. But they didn't manage to adopt the overdue new Local Plan thanks to the Minister for Housing and Planning refusing to agree the new London Plan weeks before the Mayoral elections, which then got postponed until 2021. Almost a year later we're still waiting for adoption of the new London Plan and are still using the one brought in when Boris Johnson (*remember him?*) was Mayor.

The same Minister (amazingly this one has stayed more than a year) then issued a White Paper on major reforms to the planning system which, amongst a lot else, will demand new Local Plans, including for London, be developed and adopted in less than 30 months. Not only would this be a lot quicker, but

consultation at 'plan making' stage would be the only chance for local residents to have a say on what goes where. Except in conservation areas there will be a presumption of consent for schemes that meet the criteria set in the plan. The London Forum's response to this White Paper, to which we contributed, can be found on the Putney Society website.

Also new are extensions to 'Permitted Development' which for the first time will allow many buildings to be made up to two storeys higher. This won't affect much of Putney because it only applies to buildings dating from after 1947. However, we have seen a taste of what is to come in a still current application for 154-160 Upper Richmond Road. See our objection on the Putney Society website. Along with the right to add flats on top of buildings are new rights to change the use of almost any commercial building. Is this 'goodbye' to the rest of Putney's much depleted office stock, or are Thackeray right to have opted for offices instead of flats above the relocated NatWest on the High Street (replacing WH Smith)? Somehow I don't see this mopping up the unwanted shops on the High Street.

You might have thought that nine months of lock downs and uncertainty would have impacted on the volume of planning applications. For the bigger schemes, despite those noted above, this has been true, but household applications are booming, up some 20% from November 2019 to 2020. We support the desire by homeowners to improve, but the panel remains on watch for those who want to go too far, harming local character. We objected to two overscaled roof extensions in Charlwood Road in December.

# Transport Panel

Convenor: Stephen Luxford  
Stephen.luxford46@gmail.com

The most recent annual rail statistics to the end of March 2020, which were only marginally affected by Covid restrictions, showed that just over 8m passengers began or ended their journeys at Putney station. This is a phenomenal figure. It does, however, indicate a gradual decline in the volume of passenger traffic. The numbers are 800,000 (10%) down on 2017 levels, as the number of local office jobs has fallen and more people work from home. Home working and less rail use is likely to continue post Covid. This calls into question the wisdom of pursuing the expense of a second entrance, possibly £3m or more, when nearby East Putney underground station lacks even a lift.

Putney High Street is now the home of a 'City tree', which its makers claim offers the equivalent benefit of nearly 300 trees in terms of pollution reduction - although there appears to be no independent verification of this. In the meantime, local

traffic has reached pre-Covid levels in part because of an increase in diverted traffic following the long-term closure of Hammersmith Bridge.

The Hammersmith Bridge Taskforce, which is led by a government Peer and includes representatives from TfL and local councils, is looking into proposals for a temporary bridge, involving laying a truss over the existing bridge structure. Meanwhile, there will be limited permission for river users to go under the bridge on Sundays. There may be more information on the condition of the bridge early in the New Year following blast cleaning of the bridges' two western pedestals and a report from consultants commissioned by Hammersmith & Fulham (H&F). A major sticking point remains the government's insistence that H&F pay for the majority of the estimated £140m repair work.

## FUTURE PANEL MEETINGS

For the moment all panel meetings are held on Zoom. We will let you know as soon as the guidance allows us to meet in person. 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

14 January, 11 February  
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

12 January, 9 February  
by Zoom (19.30)

Convenor:  
Stephen Luxford  
Stephen.luxford46@gmail.com

### BUILDINGS

6 January, 3 February  
by Zoom (18.00)

Convenor:  
Andrew Catto  
ac@andrewcatto.co.uk  
T: 07831 761327

### OPEN SPACES

7 January, 4 February  
by Zoom (18.00)

Convenor:  
Judith Chegwidan  
judith.chegwidan@gmail.com  
T: 020 8788 4489

# Community Panel

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

We hope you all managed as good a Christmas as was possible, and that 2021 is better in every way.

The **Urgent Treatment Centre at Queen Mary's Hospital** has re-opened, temporarily apparently. It's not a drop-in centre anymore, and you can only get an appointment by calling either 111 or your GP. They ask people to **PLEASE** leave comment on:

- a) how they managed when the centre was shut, and where they went instead.
- b) if you were referred there for treatment, how did you get on? Were you happy or unhappy with the experience?
- c) What changes would you make?

It's VERY important they get feedback, as this could affect what happens there in the future. You can give your feedback to:

Kalu Obuka, NHS South West London CCG by calling 020 8725 3492 or emailing [complaints.compliments@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:complaints.compliments@stgeorges.nhs.uk) or writing Complaints and

Improvements Department, St George's Hospital, Blackshaw Road London SW17 0QTA

Now that we know that some children will have to continue to **learn online** in January it is more important than ever to make sure that they all have access to a computer. If you have any unused laptops, tablets or desktops which are under 8 years old please donate them to one of the two local organisations that are collecting locally, **Power to Connect** or **The Dons**.

- [www.powertoconnect.co.uk](http://www.powertoconnect.co.uk) or <https://donslocalaction.org/>

The Dons also run a much in demand foodbank – you've probably seen their table outside Sainsbury's. You can also donate via the above website.

One other foodbank that is providing for many families in Putney and Roehampton is [www.wandsworthfoodbank.org.uk](http://www.wandsworthfoodbank.org.uk)

- If you need help yourself, or you want to donate, but aren't online, you can ring us, and we can try to find you the right numbers for you to ring.

# Open Spaces Panel

Convenor: Judith Chegwidden  
judith.chegwidden@gmail.com 020 8788 4489

Wandsworth Council and Enable have drawn up a Biodiversity Strategy and will be consulting on a Biodiversity Action Plan in the coming months. They have pledged to involve local organisations in its development and the Society will be playing its part. But we would like to know your thoughts on the actions that we need to take in order to conserve and enhance the important habitats and species in our borough. Many species of flora and fauna are in decline, mainly because of factors related to human activities. Key species include bats, hedgehogs, house sparrows, song thrushes and numerous pollinator insects. Decisions we make about planting our gardens or balconies will play a part as will more strategic decisions taken by planners when considering new developments. Do contact me with your ideas.

Enable are already introducing new planting and soil maintenance regimes in the parks that they manage for the council, including Wandsworth Park. This includes

moving away from the use of bedding plants to more sustainable planting – with an emphasis on plants that do not require extensive watering. In Wandsworth Park they are planning to establish a meadow with limited mowing, which will encourage pollinator species.

We are now into tree planting season – so watch out for new street trees being planted in your location so that you can help water them as we move into warmer weather.

At the recent Climate Summit organised by the Council, Emma Broadbent of the South East Rivers Trust reminded us that there are footpaths along the length of Beverley Brook and the Wandle River. The latter is one of the few chalk streams in Britain and a habitat for some very specific flora and fauna including brown trout. My New Year resolution is to explore the Wandle Trail – to find out more: <https://wandlevalleypark.co.uk/map/>

## PUTNEY SOCIETY CONTACTS

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

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# Roehampton Community Week 10-16 May 2021.

Led by the Roehampton Response Network, a group of community leaders created by Citizens Advice Wandsworth the 'My Roehampton' capacity building project has begun developing plans for a week-long series of community activities in May. Themes include:

- Spring Clean – community clean up
- Refurb and refresh communal spaces
- A celebration of local arts and culture

The week is designed as a very inclusive event for people of all ages. The projects will take place across the Roehampton and West Putney wards and local residents, schools, voluntary organisations, businesses and the council will all be involved. Still in the planning



stages, Roehampton Community Week is an exciting venture, working with and for local people including the Putney Society. So save the dates - and get involved! We will be publishing more information nearer the time.

## Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators

**A reminder of the key dates for the Triennial elections**

- Last date for receipt of candidate application packs from candidates who wish to have their names and biographical details included in the ballot papers – **27 January**
- Ballot papers to be dispatched to electors by Scrutineer - week commencing **8 February**
- Latest time by which completed ballot papers must be received by Scrutineer (*either electronically or physically*) – **5pm on Wednesday 10 March**
- Result of election announced – **11 March**

Further information at <https://www.wpcc.org.uk/conservators-election-2021/conservators-election-2021>

## Signing up new members at Positively Putney Christmas Fayre

It was good to have the opportunity to talk to potential new members and existing members (*all of us suitably masked and distanced*) at the Society's stall in the courtyard of Putney Arts Theatre. It was a great opportunity to explain the Society's work to those who had not

heard of us before. If you know of anyone that would like to join us please remind them that it is really easy to join on our website <https://putneysociety.org.uk/membership.html> or by writing to our Membership Secretary – see contacts panel for details.



## Web site changes help you keep in touch with our activities

The Web Editor is now publishing all the letters we write to the planning department about local planning applications. You can find December's letters at <https://putneysociety.org.uk/news-and-issues/buildings-panel-december-comments.html>. Watch out for updates in January.