



The Bulletin

For our members in Putney and Roehampton

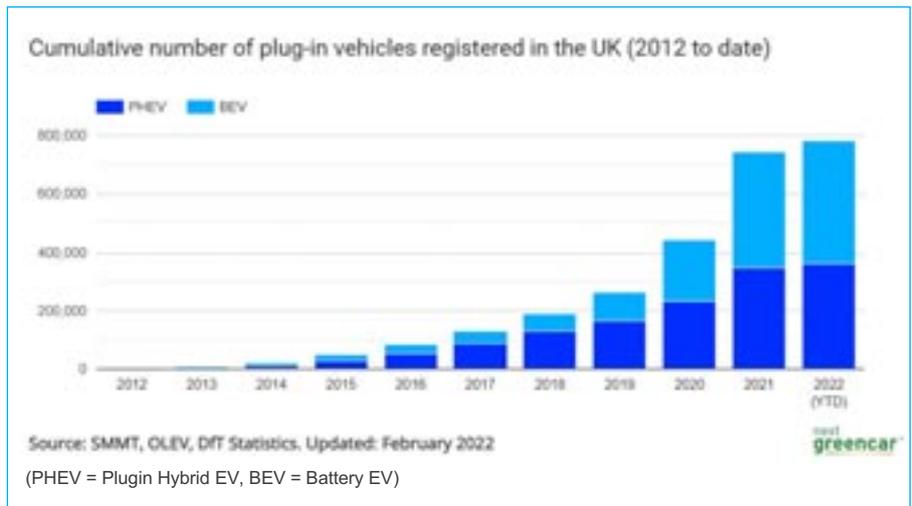


May 2022

Is Putney ready for the rapid growth in electric car ownership?

Find out more about the pros and cons of life with an electric car at the Putney Society meeting on **Monday 22 May, 7.30pm at the Community Church, Werter Road, SW15 2LL.**

Electric cars (EVs) made up 16.1% of all new-car registrations in the UK during March 2022, according to the latest data from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT). A total of 39,315 new EVs hit the country's roads in the course of the month, representing a nearly 79% increase on March 2021.

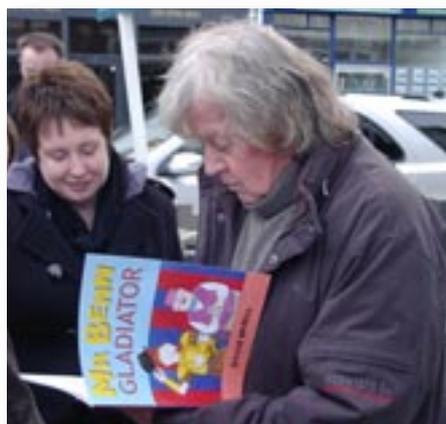


Remembering David McKee

The author and illustrator, who has died aged 87, created some of the most loved and admired children's picture books of the past 40 years, including Mr Benn, based in his then home town of Putney. Phil Evison has reminded us of the following celebration of his work in this extract taken from the January 2010 Putney Society Bulletin.

Big Benn Gathering

A goodly crowd - many in fancy dress - and a couple of TV crews assembled in Festing Road on Saturday 28th November last year for the unveiling of the Mr Benn/David McKee paving stone. The stone, paid for by residents of the road, where author David McKee once lived ("Festive Road"



in the books), was unveiled jointly by Cllr. Jim Maddan and the author himself, who had come over from France for the occasion. David then signed copies of his books, before some of the group repaired to the house of organiser Hugh Thompson for a party.

New Writing Festival



From 4-7 May 2022, Putney Theatre Company will celebrate being back in the theatre with a New Writing Festival.

They are opening our doors to new playwrights seeking to inspire and captivate a great community at Putney, live on stage.

More information at <https://www.putneyarts.theatre.org.uk/whatson>

UPDATE

Making Putney Blooming Marvellous

A reminder that the Putney Society is launching our Front Garden Award Scheme – if you live in central Putney* do participate and encourage your neighbours to join in. Walking down a street just to the west of the High Street reveals many types of paving – but barely a touch of green. Let's see if we can get Putney planting and cover up this concrete desert. If we all do our bit to turn our gardens green, together we can encourage wildlife, improve air quality, help to prevent flooding (by letting water drain into the earth and not down the drain) and enhance our health and wellbeing.

We are not just offering encouragement – there will be practical help available at our stalls when we will be giving away plants and providing advice. On Saturday 7 May we will be at the

corner of Burstock Road and Montserrat Road from 10am to 2pm and on Saturday 14 May we will be on the corner of Chelverton Road and Charlwood Road. Please do come along with friends and neighbours in central Putney*. It would be even better if you could contribute some plants - anything suitable for a small front garden or for containers. Some members are growing plants from seed for the stall, others are dividing plants that they can spare from their gardens. Can be flowers, evergreens, herbs – even vegetables.

Contact me (judith.chegwidden@gmail.com, 020 8788 4489 or 07768 982 431) if you can contribute in any way to making Putney greener.



*Burstock Road, Atney Road, Montserrat Road, Werter Road, Disraeli Road (up to Oxford Road), Norroy Road, Chelverton Road, Lacy Road, Felsham Road (up to Charlwood Road), Redgrave Road, Gwalior Road, Mascotte Road, Olivette Street, Lifford Street, Stratford Grove, Quill Lane, Cardinal Place, Charlwood Terrace, Modder Place.

Dear Putney Society

Thank you so much for helping to bring back the bridge on Putney Lower Common by making a generous donation towards its restoration. I am thrilled to be sharing with you that in just two months we have reached our fundraising target of £15,000. It is thanks to your generosity and the donations made by the community who love this special green space that we can now begin the work to restore the bridge. I am new to the Commons team and have been absolutely bowled over by the generosity and support received from our neighbours and visitors. Thank you so much.

This means that the work to restore and reopen the bridge can now happen soon. We are now speaking with the contractor to get the work booked in and I shall keep you updated when we know more. When the bridge is re-opened, we shall be having a celebration on the Common and hope

that you can join us. It would be lovely to meet you and thank you properly.

You're helping to restore a much-loved route over the Beverley Brook and in doing so improving Putney Lower Common for everyone. We're incredibly grateful for your support.

Maggie May

Fundraising Manager
Wimbledon and Putney Commons
The Rangers Office
Registered charity no. 303167



Whilst local amenity societies are often seen as opposing any development, the Buildings Panel is generally supportive of new homes in Putney where these can be achieved unobtrusively. That's why we didn't oppose the extra storeys on Sylva Court (see my article last month). But this month we were concerned by a proposal by Wandsworth Council to convert two adjacent houses they own in west Putney from eighteen bedsit flats into two six-bedroom houses. There are of course families waiting for big houses, but what about the single homeless? They're certainly still in evidence on the High Street. We said this should only be allowed on condition that they remain as council homes as required by the Local Plan.

Despite our suggestions, the new Local Plan due later in the year, presumably whoever wins this month's elections, contains no guidance on potential development sites identified since the last review back in 2014. We have heard that the adjacent Eileen Lecky clinic and RSPCA animal hospital in Clarendon Drive are both closing. Both are largely single storey and a tempting development site for someone. We are urging the planners to set height and scale limits before any sale, but also to remember that these spaces should only be lost if there are no other community uses for them. If you know of a medical or community organisation looking for a home, please alert us (and them).

As well as Sylva Court, above, the March Planning Applications Committee approved the replacement

digital advertising screens at Rosslyn Park, this time with a five-year limit that looks more enforceable than the last. Extra flats on top of Elystan Court however were deferred again.

One surprise this month was an application to convert the Putney Hotel (214 Upper Richmond Road) into flats. The hotel is less than five years old, but claims not to be viable despite a very central location. The building replaced the old Post Office and was originally approved as flats, so we didn't object to another change, but what does this say for the future of hotel plans for the Star and Garter or still disused White Lion?

Many of you will have seen a petition against plans by Fulham Football Club for a riverboat pier opposite Putney Embankment. We investigated and found that no application has gone to either Hammersmith & Fulham Council or the Port of London Authority, who control the river here. We're keeping our powder dry until then, but do let me know your views. It's sometimes hard for the Panels to know what Society members think if you don't tell us or join Panel meetings.

This may look like a list of what we haven't done. But we did oppose a scheme for a large basement under a garden because, although it won't be visible, it will harm biodiversity and add to the stress on our Victorian drainage system. And we continue to oppose the loss of Putney's green character from paving over of front gardens and the misguided desire for high front walls.

Open Spaces Panel Convenor: Judith Chegvidden judith.chegvidden@gmail.com 020 8788 4489

On Monday 4 and Tuesday 5 April, members of the Putney Society together with eight keen volunteers from JCDecaux embarked on a weeding and planting scheme to bring year-round colour and ground cover to the parklet at the corner of Charlwood Road and Upper Richmond Road. Thanks to the generosity of JCDecaux the joint team were able to plant 110 plants spanning 12 varieties. This included several types of climbers installed along the edges of the site (thanks to Charles Gillbe for the professional wiring).

Over the next few weeks two large planters will be installed along the northern fence line and Catherine Lalani has fostered links with the local primary school which will see them involved in additional planting and the installation of bug and bee hotels.

Now we have to make sure that the site is well maintained. Some members have already joined the hoeing rota – but the more people get involved the less of a chore this will be! Do contact me if you can help.

We continue to be concerned about maintenance of the Old Burial Ground, but we have been assured that access

to the site is being negotiated for some vital tree pruning on the eastern side of the site. Contact is being made with the Diocese of Southwark as it may be that they are responsible for the maintenance of the monumental tombs – many of which are in quite poor condition with crumbling mortar and illegible inscriptions.



Did you know there is a thriving centre for young people in Westleigh Avenue?

The Ashburton Youth Centre offers a wide range of activities for 11–19-year-olds, employment opportunities for 16–25-year-olds through the Feel Good Bakery – and much, much more. Its mentoring services support young people to manage their lives and work towards their goals. Trips abroad to Kenya and Romania help them take part in others' lives and learn about community development, fundraising adventures build confidence and teamwork, and local events bring opportunities to know and value their own communities, with family and friends.

The Feel Good Bakery supports, trains and employs local young people facing barriers to employment by offering amazing work opportunities as baristas. Why not go and say hello, and enjoy a feel-good coffee at St Mary's Church, Thames Path, Battersea, Mon-Sat 7.30-5.30, Sundays 8.30-3.30, or Vine Road Recreation Ground, Barnes, Thurs-Sunday 8.30-3.30.

The last decade has seen a sharp decline in the number of facilities and support for young people. This lack of 'things to do' leaves many children and young people with few options for how to fill their free time... and potentially vulnerable. It is well known that mental



health problems among young people have risen in recent years, worsened by the pandemic. Regenerate's Ashburton Youth Centre provides opportunities to develop confidence, trust and self-esteem, in a safe space of mutual respect. Children and young adults get a chance to know themselves, develop skills and interests and have fun taking part in creative arts, sports, music, cooking, trips out - and the chance to volunteer to help others. With well trained and committed teams, places like this play a vital role in supporting their community - more are needed.

See websites for more details, and times – Andy or one of his co-workers will be happy to tell you more:

www.regenerateuk.co.uk and

www.thefeelgoodbakery.com or email

info@regenerateuk.co.uk, phone 020 3195 9607.



Can you help with the work of the Battersea Befriending Network?



The abundant open spaces and riverside in the borough provide a source of inspiration to one group of inhabitants in particular - people who have recently left hospital following a mental illness, or who have a long-term mental health condition.

The Battersea Befriending Network (BBN) a charity covering the whole of Wandsworth, helps them build a more satisfying way of life and considers such open spaces a key resource. Volunteers from the charity provide a friendly point of call for people in such vulnerable situations, many of whom have no friends or relatives locally. Their principal role is to act as an intermediary helping

them build social contacts and feel more part of the community using the facilities preferred by the person with the mental illness. This depends on the particular circumstances and diagnosis.

Volunteers are encouraged to provide this assistance over a year or two, although some take part for longer. They are not expected to have professional qualifications in the mental health field but do attend a training course before the first meeting between befriender (volunteer) and their befriended, which can take place at home or outdoors.

A BBN mentoring team supervises volunteers to ensure the relationship is functioning well without putting the volunteer under pressure. Befrienders are partnered carefully with befriendeds and choose how often they visit them. BBN is looking for new volunteers.

If you are interested in taking part, please email info@batterseabefriendingnetwork.org.uk

or phone Sarah Rackham on 07757 638862. Further information at www.batterseabefriendingnetwork.org.uk

Cleaner air has been the focus of recent Transport Panel discussions. As disclosed in last month's edition, we hope that Putney will shortly obtain a Breathe London air monitor which will enable the monitoring of fine particulates, referred to as PM2.5, for the first time as well as NO₂ levels. The Society is in discussion with Council officials as to where it might be located but it will be away from the High Street and in an area with particularly poor quality air. The results of the Breathe monitor will be analysed by Imperial College, London and displayed daily online <https://www.breathelondon.org/>.

If you ever glance at the air quality figures from the air monitors on the High Street (the data can also be accessed via our website) you might be somewhat puzzled by the most recent lower figures. Traffic of late, especially since the closure of Hammersmith Bridge, is usually nose to tail in day time yet recent figures for March suggest pollution levels have fallen. We are grateful to the experts at Imperial College for explaining the likely, and unfortunately temporary, reason for the decline. The most obvious explanation is the weather. There were comparatively more easterly winds in March

which, because of the canyon effect in the High Street, drew the pollution away from the monitors. So, in short, the pollution was still there but not completely picked up by the monitors.

No doubt you will have seen the City Tree in Putney High Street, outside the Preto restaurant and wondered what it is and whether it in fact makes much difference to our poor air? In December 2020, Wandsworth Council installed the City Tree with the aim of filtering "particulate matter and fine dust out of the surrounding air, while simultaneously purifying and cooling the air". It is important to note that it is not designed to have any effect on NO₂ levels. It has subsequently proved hard to independently determine what effect it has had in reducing the high levels of pollution there. There is no peer research available on its impact on particulates. Even the manufacturers concede that within five metres the quantity of particulates it removes falls significantly. So, the effect is good if you sit on the seat by the tree but there is minimal to no effect if you are more than just a few yards away.



The Arts Society South West London
"A Courageous and Skilled Shot"
Montenegro's Photographer Princess,
Ksenia Petrovic-Njegos

Monday 9 May, 8pm,
Community Church, Werter Road

Lecturer: Elizabeth Gowing

The eighth daughter of King Nikola of Montenegro, Ksenia rejected marriage and chose to carve out a place for herself as secretary and advisor to her father. She became the first woman in Montenegro to drive and developed a particular talent for photography.

This lecture shares the photographs Princess Ksenia took during her years in the new Montenegrin Capital of Cetinje, before her exile to France in 1916.

Free to members, donations please from non-members.



Photo of Princess Ksenia used with permission from the Director of the National Museum of Montenegro

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
12 May, 9 June
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
10 May, 14 June
by Zoom (19.30)

Convenor:
Stephen Luxford

Stephen.luxford46@gmail.com

BUILDINGS
4 May, 1 June
by Zoom (18.00)

Convenor:
Andrew Catto

ac@andrewcatto.co.uk
T: 07831 761327

OPEN SPACES
5 May, (June tbc)
by Zoom (18.00)

Convenor:
Judith Chegwiddden

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

Letter to the Editor



Dear Editor

Alton Estate Regeneration

Wandsworth Council's announcement that the Alton Estate Regeneration scheme has finally been approved is welcome news indeed.

As regards the vital question of which of our buildings should be retained, and which demolished, may I – as a long-term local resident – suggest (a) that our twelve storey tower blocks are in every way excellent and deserve retention, while (b) the shoddy and seriously substandard rows of maisonettes lining our streets need to be wholly replaced by dwellings of the quality seen, for instance, in the Council's recently opened McKinney House in Bessborough Road.

But that brings us to the all-important issue of townscape. It is a sad fact that – unlike the traditional buildings which characterise, for instance, Putney or Wimbledon – stark cubic blocks like McKinney House, however excellent they may be in themselves, do not easily combine into charming streets and neighbourhoods.

My suggestion therefore is that, in addition to the usual criteria used by the Council in selecting developers, it should in this case also evaluate bidders' past record in creating friendly and even delightful modern-style neighbourhoods. For a successful local example in this regard, I would suggest Queen Mary's Place in Roehampton Lane, but there may be others. Do your readers have any suggestions?

Maritz Vandenberg

Dear Maritz

I don't think any member of the Putney Society would argue against well designed buildings or delightful townscape, but a great many would question your assumption that buildings 60 years young 'are now overdue for demolition and replacement'. The majority of houses in SW15 are still providing serviceable and much-loved homes after 120-160 years.

What all kinds of homes need is maintenance, something the council singularly failed to do around Danebury Avenue. As taxpayers we should be holding them to account for this. The Climate Emergency requires concentrating on upgrading our existing homes, not wasting tens of thousands of tons of embodied carbon by pulling them down.

The process that Wandsworth Council are now starting is not construction, but the hunt for a replacement development partner. Sadly Berkeley, who built Queen Mary's Place (the houses at the back are better than the flats in my view) are very unlikely to want this. Whoever they find will no doubt want to change the design to get the minimum 15 storeys now deemed viable.

Andrew Catto AADip ACArch

Andrew Catto Architects

President - Association of Consultant Architects

The Friends of Wandsworth Park present May Tree Festival Remixed!

Saturday 14 May 11am – 4pm

Join the Friends of Wandsworth Park to celebrate the May Tree Festival, which will form part of the Urban Tree Festival for 2022. This event has been created as a revival of traditional May Day tree festival activities for all park users. The audience will be encouraged to participate in the traditional May time activities centred around trees, including mindfulness, traditional dance, folk music, tree dressing and

maypole dancing. It will allow the audience to engage with new activities and experience the mental and physical health benefits they offer.

The **Mindfulness** session will be facilitated by actress and psychologist, Clare Cooper, who will help participants think about the qualities of the trees around us.

Tree Dressing and Decorating - children from Brandlehow School are making a crown, which will be placed

high up in a tree as part of the traditional practice of decorating and dressing a birch tree.

Folk Dance Remixed (who appeared as part of the Putney Festival last August) will be back to perform a dance around a selected tree. They will also set up a Maypole to dance around and run workshops.



PUTNEY SOCIETY CONTACTS

See website for full details:
www.putneysociety.org.uk

Chair: Robert Arguille
020 8788 4554 chair@putneysociety.org.uk
Secretary: Carolyn McMillan
38 Disraeli Road, SW15 2DS 020 8789 6692
secretary@putneysociety.org.uk
Website Editor: Robert Arguille
webeditor@putneysociety.org.uk

Bulletin Editor: Judith Chegwidan
020 8788 4489 judith.chegwidan@gmail.com
Membership: Chris Orriss
020 8785 7115 membership@putneysociety.org.uk
22 Pentlow Street, London SW15 1LX
Treasurer: Andrew Nichol
07894 982 020 nicol.andrewjd@gmail.com