

West London River Group

Autumn newsletter 2021

Welcome to the autumn newsletter which we hope finds you in good health and heart. The officers hope that you have enjoyed the summer and have been able to take advantage of the greater freedoms available to "get out and about".

We are also encouraged that so much seems to have gone on despite all the problems which many have faced over the last eighteen months.

We have been provided with lots of reports from member groups, thank you all for your very kind contributions (it is great to receive so many reports but inevitably makes life a bit more complicated and the newsletter hopefully not too long!) and would like to encourage others to prepare reports in the future for their own areas or interests as only by collaboration with others, do we feel that the Group can be more effective in pursuing aims which will benefit all.

Zoom meetings

The Group organised a zoom meeting on the 30th June which was well attended and covered many topics which required confirmation and updating. Notes of this meeting have been circulated previously.

The Group's officers participated in a successful zoom meeting on 21st September of the **Thames Strategy Kew to Chelsea (TSKC)** chaired by Cllr Chaudhary of LB Hounslow. The minutes of this meeting will be circulated by others and if any member wishes to receive a copy could they please let the complier know.

One matter which was discussed and agreed at this meeting was the proposal for the setting up of a "workshop" to which the many and varied groups which have interests in the river and adjoining lands would be invited, as it was felt that more could be achieved by a combined approach to problems rather than groups raising these matters individually.

A note from the Chair, Avril Dalgeish.

A wide variety of different groups with concerns for the environment have been involved in 'tidying up' riverside areas, walks and The Thames Path including litter, graffiti and plastic from the river.

The PLA currently have a two man team who have done a great job of removing saplings and have identified trees which need attention on the revetment. They have also been repairing the revetments, using as many stones as possible from the riverbed. On occasion they have even managed to repair a damaged culvert. An example of their work along the bank at Mortlake has created a stunning vista of the Thames. A big thank you to the PLA for this initiative.

Reports from member groups listed alphabetically:

Barnes Tidy Towpath Group

Despite the challenges presented by Covid, Barnes Tidy Towpath has been busy. We are pleased that the increased measures we proposed to Richmond Council to capture towpath litter remain sufficient along the 3+ miles we cover. Nonetheless, there is always tidal and deliberate littering for us to contend with, especially after the 22 Combined Sewage Overflows during this six month period.

Panorama's programme on the health of our rivers really hit home and generated more interest than we could accommodate, with many queries from the public, 4 small corporates/groups and two schools. Since April we have conducted 6 clean ups which aggregated 123 volunteer hours and filled 43 bags; assisted a local school with planning a three tranche clean up of the local reservoir with 64 kids; reported downed trees on numerous occasions, and provided support for Thames21 and Hubbub related press releases.

Additionally, we have taken on three Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award (D of E) candidates and assisted the Friends of Barnes Common in reinstating their Bronze D of E scheme. We advised the D of E borough-wide coordinator on better health and safety guidelines for the candidates undertaking litter picking as part of the Community Service component.

In August we revised and renewed all the necessary Risk Assessments, Method Statements and Covid Compliance Statements, fulfilling our PLA permit and Thames21 insurance requirements to carry on for another year.

Most importantly, we would like to thank Richmond Council, Thames21 and Habitat and Heritage, in particular, for their tremendous support without which we would not exist.

Battersea Society

The Society objected in August to an application **No 2021/3125** for Land on the corner of Wm Henry Walk (Nine Elms) for a substantial illuminated advertisement panel on land donated to the Council by Elm Quay's predecessors in Title, it is understood that this was to ensure an attractive entrance to this section of the Thames Path riverside walk and to remain available for public benefit rather than as a site for an obtrusive advertising panel. See image following.



In addition, the Society provided information on an ambitious summer festival on the Coaling Jetty which included live theatre together with film screenings, the link: <https://batterseapowerstation.co.uk/whats-on/detail/summer-showtime-on-the-coaling-jetty>. Long since finished!

The Society also participated in Open House for the first time. Walking tours were arranged around "Battersea's Hidden Parks", to include Vicarage Gardens on the Thames Path and Fred Wells Gardens. More details are available: <https://openhouselondon.open-city.org.uk/listings/10145>

Chelsea Society

Progress on the Thames Conservation Area Management Plan

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea is presently updating the **Thames Conservation Area Management Plan (TCAMP)** which provides the strategy for the conservation and protection of the **Thames Conservation Area (TCA)** in Chelsea. This area is located between Chelsea Bridge in the East to Chelsea Creek in the West and includes the entire length of Chelsea Embankment and Cheyne Walk plus a length of Lots Road.

The consultation is underway with associations and organisations that have an interest in this area. **Cheyne Walk Trust (CWT)** is one of the key stakeholders as the TCAMP is within the CWT's area of representation. Many other residents' associations as well as the **Chelsea Society** are also participating.

The TCAMP is required in order to fulfil the Local Authority's statutory duty to formulate a plan for the preservation and enhancement of this historic area. It is designed to provide good guidance for Councillors and Officers of the Royal Borough that are concerned with Planning and Conservation when they make decisions that affect the Thames Conservation Area (TCA) as well as to residents and others with residential or development interests.

There are many sections within the TCA that require careful attention in order to arrive at a report that has both sufficient detail and relevance. Here is a brief overview of several areas within the scope of the Plan...

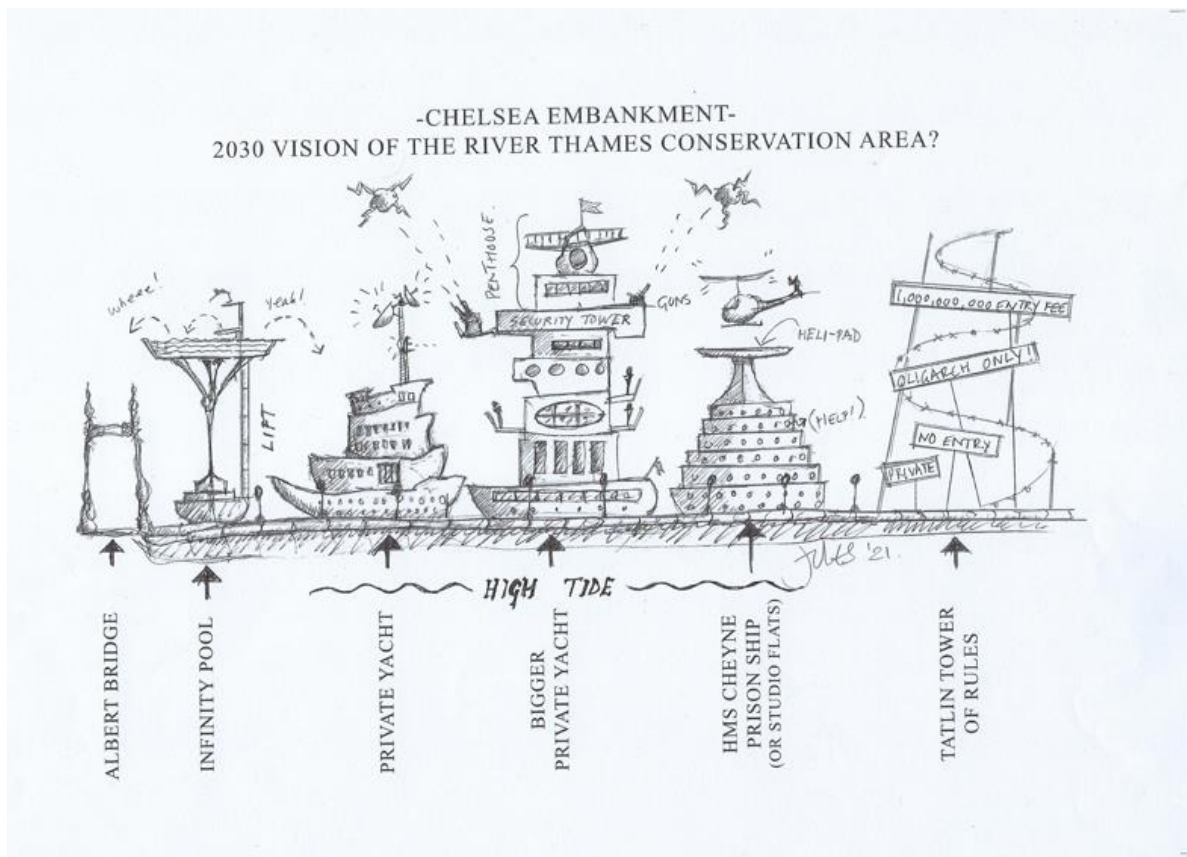
Natural Environment is the key concern. Firstly, the stunning treeline that extends along the Northern riverside from Chelsea Bridge to Cremorne Gardens. The verdant tree line is not the only point of beauty which helps the Chelsea Embankment and Cheyne Walk from resembling just another urban motorway, but it also plays an important environmental role in mitigation of the negative effects of noise and pollution. Green spaces such as Chelsea Embankment Gardens on either side of Albert Bridge are in great need of reinstatement and thereafter, regular maintenance. Small patches of green spaces at the foot of each bridge are also in need of care and attention. The writer can report that the CWT Committee Member Anthea Turner, has successfully worked with TfL and the RBKC Council to reinstate Whistler's Garden for the enjoyment of the many pedestrians and cyclists who stop a while to appreciate the space and views. The Thames Path which follows the riverside is a major amenity enjoyed by thousands of people each year as they admire the views of the river from various points along their way.

The piers in Chelsea are striking features of our riverside. The upstream piers, west of Battersea Bridge provide moorings for houseboats that have "anchored" the views of this part of the Thames for about a century. These piers have been designated as "residential" moorings for houseboats and the RBKC has regulated this usage for decades. For example, the regulations include a minimum 60 foot(+/-20m) gap between the two moorings to ensure that there continues to be a point where there is no obstruction of the views across the river. Cadogan Pier which is situated beneath The Albert Bridge is designated for the use of leisure craft and working boats. The Thames River Taxi is located at this pier and, on occasion, cruise boats also use the pier. Both piers are regulated by the Council to ensure that there is no obstruction of the views of the bridges. The importance of maintaining a complementary design style of the craft that are moored at these piers cannot be overstated as they, together with the iconic bridges are dominant on the waterfront.

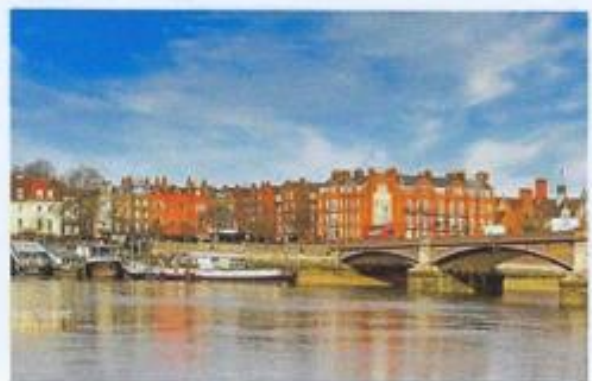
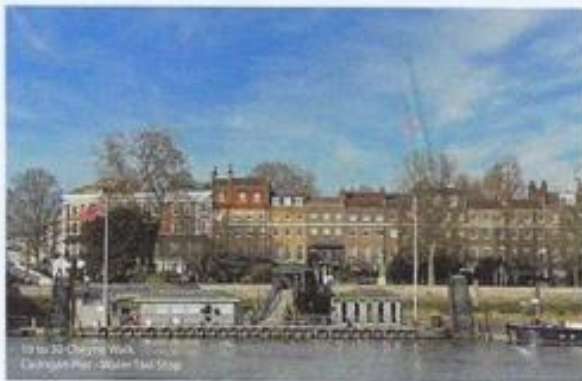
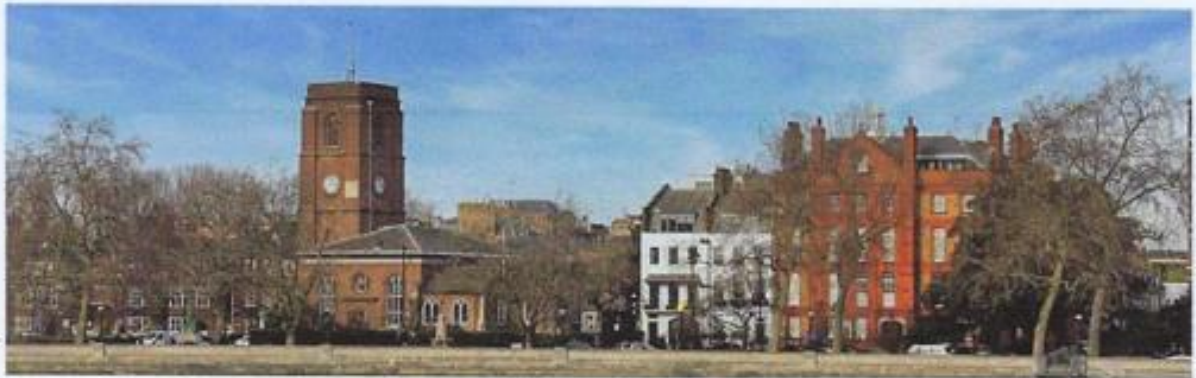
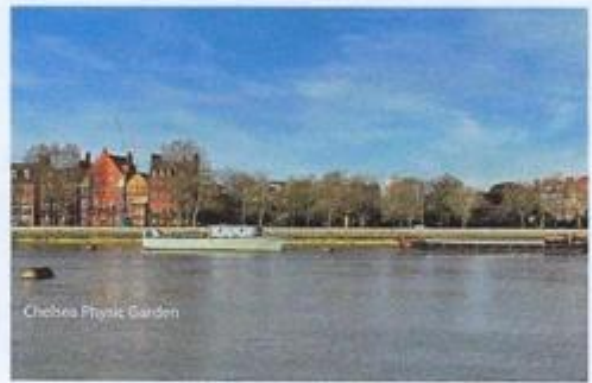
The Three Bridges within this TCA are of the greatest importance in terms of preservation and conservation. These will continue to be maintained at the highest level possible. The bridges are indeed "shared" by the Royal Borough and LB Wandsworth and there has been very good co-operation to ensure that the Bridges remain fit for purpose and remain stunning visual landmarks.

Street furniture and other features require careful planning and maintenance as they provide important amenities in the TCA. Lighting, bollards, railings, benches and waste bins are presently exceptional features that contribute positively to the area. The cabman's shelter will be completely renovated and statues and other prominent features will continue to be protected.

It is important to note that the Thames Conservation Area is not just the "front window" of local residents. It is visited and viewed by hundreds of thousands as they drive, cycle or walk past throughout the year, as well as many on the waterbus and cruise boats. The TCA also attracts thousands of tourists who visit each year. It is vital that the amenity value of the entire TCA must be preserved so that future generations may enjoy this special part of London. To that end, the CWT is in discussion with the Council for RBKC on the vital need to include in the RTCAMP planning guidance that will ensure that the heritage aspects of the riverside, moorings and houseboats are not compromised by potentially unsuitable development that may damage historic views and integrity.



The Cheyne Walk Trust has photographed the entire area from various viewpoints on the bridges as well as from across the river. These pictures can be viewed on the test website: <https://chelseathamesconservation.org> this website will be updated in the coming months with a series of additional views of the treelines as well as the bridges and other interesting features. The website will also be updated regularly in order to provide regular comparative snapshots of the TCA over the coming years.



The Council has made great progress in the drafting of the new TCAMP document. We thank Sarah Buckingham for diligently managing this process and also the Ward Councillors and RBKC officers for their outstanding effort and commitment to produce a report, that will enable those Councillors and Officers concerned in their decision-making process to ensure that the Thames Conservation Area remains preserved and enhanced for decades to come.

Coordinators Report TSKC

A full copy of the report to the TSKC is available, a summary follows:

For many years we have been looking at updating the TSKC, however funding is required.

The Thames Estuary Partnership (TEP) have identified potential funding through the **Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee** which is currently being investigated. An

outline proposal with approximate costs will be presented to the main Thames RFCC committee in October and if positive may be submitted as a formal proposal in January 2022.

The PLA (Port of London Authority) have received a complaint from the nearby rowing club about a large willow on the foreshore outside Latymer School. It is the responsibility of the PLA to establish that it does not become a hazard to navigation and safety to river users. In this instance it has become both. The PLA have notified the Tree Officer at the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, it has been agreed that the tree will be pollarded to stump level.

We are still awaiting the Richmond Tree Survey which will identify potential planting locations and species. The Coordinator has offered to make a funding bid once this information has been received, as a successful bid was made for path works of £37,000 along the Richmond Towpath near Chiswick Bridge last year. This also included Elm tree planting in front of the Cemetery. The WLRG is holding funds in their account brought in by the TSKC which potentially could be used for match funding.

Any group with potential projects is asked to contact Ruth Hutton: hutton.ruth@gmail.com

The TSKC have made a number of bids, some of which have been unsuccessful, however we have received the good news that a funding bid of £3,000 has been successful towards funding the TSKC and £2,000 for further works on the Chiswick Eyot. Works proceed at the Eyot during lockdown with fourteen days managed. In August 2021 the TSKC contributed £2,000 to the Old Chiswick Protection Society.

As usual, funding two days a week for the Co-ordinator is an issue, however the coordinator is grateful for the funding received from the PLA, LBRuT and the LBH&F this year.

Fulham Society

Hammersmith Bridge. Pedestrians and cyclists are allowed to cross and boats can travel under it. No news about when it will be considered strong/safe enough to take traffic. The idea of a ferry crossing has been put in abeyance until a final decision has been taken about the bridge.

Work at two large projects, **Fulham Football Club's** new stadium and the **Tideway Tunnel** continues but both sites are quite well contained and the river is being used to deliver materials. FFC is still using a section of Bishops Park.

Fulham Palace is open as usual.

Residents at **Carrara Wharf** have been suffering from antisocial behaviour. The Council has given permission for conical stainless steel studs to be fixed to the top of the river wall

(similar studs have been installed recently on the river wall at Fulham Reach) and demountable planters will be placed in the four alcoves filled with spiky Mediterranean plants! Watch out boys and girls!!

Albert and Swedish Wharves. Consultations are taking place on the development of these two wharves adjacent to Wandsworth Bridge. Neighbouring **Comley's Wharf** presently used by Cemex, and Porcelanosa are not included. It will be a mixed use scheme as Swedish Wharf is safeguarded and still a working site. A planning application is expected soon.

Wandsworth Bridge is still under repair. Wandsworth Bridge Road itself is even busier than usual, with traffic at peak hours at a standstill following the introduction of the South Fulham traffic Reduction Scheme to the east of Wandsworth Bridge. It is proposed to extend the scheme to the roads to the west.

Housing developments. On the Chelsea border, Waterside Reach and Chelsea Creek are nearly complete. Kings Reach is well underway. The former Curry's site to the west (upstream) of Wandsworth Bridge has updated the planning permission and should start soon.

Hammersmith & Fulham Historic Buildings Group

Hammersmith Bridge

It was with modified rapture that Hammersmith Bridge was reopened to pedestrians, cyclists and river traffic on the 17th July. It had been closed to road traffic since April 2019 and subsequently to other users in August 2020 by the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (LBHF) following assessments of the safety of the structure.

The first phase of repairs have now been completed, with the government providing £4 million as part of an extraordinary package agreed with Transport for London (TfL) in October 2020. This covered blast cleaning, residual stress analyses and chain knuckle investigations.

The next two phases of repair work are stabilisation- estimated to take 21 months; and strengthening – taking a further 30 months, during which time the bridge may have to be closed at times.

The funding for the outstanding work is the responsibility of LBHF; work will not commence until the Borough has finalised a business case that meets with government approval.

What about the proposed ferry that was promised to be in place at various dates, the latest being September 2021? It has been announced that TfL have agreed that Uber Boat by Thames Clippers will be the operator, however the timing is dependent on necessary approvals from the local authorities on either side of the bridge, the Port of London Authority (PLA) and the Marine Management Organisation. No further date can yet be given for the implementation of regular services.

Meanwhile local residents and other users of the bridge continue to have to make alternative travel arrangements, resulting in lengthy bus journeys and road diversions, which in turn contribute to increased road pollution and time wastage, not to mention putting additional stresses on the other Thames crossings. It will be a long time before the true reopening celebrations can begin.

Hammersmith Bridge today



LBRUT Managing Flood Risk Report link PPRB 27/07/21

A link to this report can be found:

<https://cabnet.richmond.gov.uk/documents/g5200/Public%20reports%20pack%20Tuesday%2027-jul-2021%20Review%20Board.pdf?T=10>

The section in this paper is in Agenda Item 4 Page 13

Old Chiswick Protection Society

There has been little activity on the **Chiswick Eyot** since the spring- just one corporate event organised by Thames21 to uproot Himalayan Balsam. More work will be done on building up the erosion defences over the autumn and spring of next year, when the very lush vegetation on top of the Eyot has died down. OCPS has £2,000(outstanding from money raised by the crowdfunding event) to spend on this work and Ruth Hutton (Coordinator TSKC) has obtained a grant of £3,000 from the Heathrow Community Fund.

We did receive a report from the RSPB, but it was more about what birds might be on the Eyot than on any actually recorded there. We decided to stick to our policy of not putting up signs; footfall was anyway much less this year than during last year's lockdown.

Mortlake Brewery Community Group and Mortlake with East Sheen Society

The Brewery Hearing.

"The wooded towpath from Kew to Putney is one of the glories of West London and a cherished stretch of the River Thames enjoyed by residents, visitors, rowers and walkers on the Thames Path/National Trail alike. It is an introduction to the Arcadian Thames...its unique characteristic which is rural, not urban, has not been clearly understood by the developers."

Words spoken by our Chair Avril at the Mayor's public hearing on the 27th July into the redevelopment of the Mortlake Brewery to provide housing/mixed use and a secondary school(two separate but linked planning applications). She also drew attention to the impact of the tall buildings overshadowing the towpath, the intrusion of light pollution, the need for more trees and the concerns over drainage. She was one of the nine speakers objecting to the planning applications on behalf of the Mortlake Brewery Community Group.

In January of last year, Richmond council had approved both applications, subject to direction from the Mayor. In May the Mayor decided to call in both applications for his own determination and in August the revised plans emerged showing an increase in the housing component from 813 to 1250 units. This included a significant increase in the affordable element to 30% but also, alas an overall increase in height of the development by an average of two storeys.

There was every possibility that Mayor Sadiq Khan would approve this scheme. He had already called in 20 applications throughout London during the past 4 years. All had been, or would have been refused by the London Boroughs concerned; all except one had been approved by the Mayor. This was the only application that had been approved already by the Borough. The GLA officers' recommendation was for approval.

At the end of the hearing Mayor Khan made a five minute summing-up speech in which he indicated that the benefits and harms were finely balanced. The main benefit was the increase in affordable housing; the main harm was the impact of the tall buildings on the arcadian setting and the heritage of the area. "But the benefits do not outweigh the harms" he said. You could have heard a pin drop! He thereby refused both applications and the audience erupted into wild applause.

One key point arising from this hearing was the use of the word "arcadian". It has been used hitherto for the Thames between Kew Bridge and Hampton Court but now more recently in the GLA study of the Green Grid (2016) for the longer stretch between Putney and Hampton Court.

We congratulate our Chair for her important contribution to this hearing and the Mayor on his outstanding decision.



Viewpoint 5: Existing view from the Thames Path (north) adjacent to the car parking area on Star House Drive, looking southward across the River Thames towards the Stag Brewery component of the Site.



Viewpoint 5: Proposed view from the Thames Path (north) adjacent to the car parking area on Star House Drive, looking southward across the River Thames towards the Stag Brewery component of the Site.



Viewpoint 5: Proposed view from the Thames Path (north) adjacent to the car parking area on Star House Drive, looking southward across the River Thames towards the Stag Brewery component of the Site.

Captions:

1. The site as existing
2. The scheme approved by Richmond Council in January 2020
3. The scheme at the Mayor's Public Hearing in July 2021

Port of London Authority Harbour Revision Order Ref HRO/2020/00005

In mid August the group were advised by the PLA of an application under Section 14 of the Harbours Act 1964 to review the terms of reference of the PLA which includes: licencing for riverworks, dredging, and the licencing for moorings. A link to the website containing information is: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/port-of-london-authority-harbour-revision-order>. The PLA website is: www.pla.co.uk/HRO

Putney Society

Putney Tidy Towpath Group restarted group outings in April this year following the relaxation of Covid restrictions and have managed to run 8 litter clear-ups to date. They

have collected 105 bags of litter with the help of 155 volunteers- a total of 310 "man- hours" of volunteering. Volunteers include two Duke of Edinburgh gold award students. They have received replacement gloves and extra litter sticks from Thames21. The foreshore has not improved and it is unlikely to do so until Tideway Tunnel opens in 2022/25- with more fatbergs along the waters-edge and on the foreshore.

Tideway Tunnel: Although the timeline has slipped slightly due to Covid, the bulk of the work at Putney Embankment foreshore and Barn Elms should be completed by 2025. The CSO connection under Putney Bridge has been carried out and work continues on the electrical kiosk on Watermans Green, as does the work on architecture and landscape design. We are awaiting the next Community Liaison and update in early October.

Rowing Clubs: Rowing activity on the embankment has revived since Covid restrictions have been lifted. With the reopening of passage under Hammersmith Bridge it is hoped that the Boat Race will take place next year as usual.

Wandsworth Society

The principle concern of the Society in respect of the River Thames and the River Wandle is the **Wandle Delta Masterplan** which, as of the 28th September has been approved. The plan provides an overriding view for the development of the lands within the Delta Masterplan area. The difficulty with any plan of this nature is that individual sites can come forward in advance of other matters which are outside the control of the Council as planning authority. We are aware that this may happen in respect of the former gasworks site, which forms the biggest single landholding in the area.

Inevitably there are many other complications including the realignment of the road network, which is outside the Council's or the landowner's control, the agreement for environmental protection, flooding considerations and many others. A link to the Council's website may be of interest: [wandsworth.gov.uk/news/news-february-2021/help-shape-new-vision-for-wandle-delta](https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/news/news-february-2021/help-shape-new-vision-for-wandle-delta) and for the SPD approval: Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance-Wandsworth Borough Council

Compiled by Philip Whyte
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WLRG/Oct 2021