

Village Groups Forum
Note of meeting 13 January 2015

Presentations to the meeting have been circulated but can be accessed at these links:

http://www.richmond.gov.uk/vgf_presentation_13_jan_2015.pdf

A number of questions were asked during the presentations. The questions and the answers provided subsequent to the event are listed below.

Question	Response
Planning Policy	
Should the council be actively encouraging communities to apply for Assets of Community Value?	Please see this weblink http://www.richmond.gov.uk/community_right_to_bid
The Change of Use from A4 to B1 uses without planning permission for two years is a disgrace!	The Government has introduced on 30 May 2013 a temporary permitted development consent lasting two years for change of use of up to 150 square metres from A4 to A2, A3 and B1 (interchangeable subject to notification).
How many article 4 requests have been approved in Richmond?	On 30 November 2014, the Article 4 Directions to remove the permitted development rights to change from B1(a) offices to C3 residential came into force. There are 12 areas in the borough to which this Article 4 Direction applies, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richmond town centre • Twickenham town centre • Teddington town centre and Waldgrave Road • National Physical Laboratory, Teddington • Kingsway Business Park, Hampton • Castle Business Village, Station Road and Mount Mews, High Street, Hampton • Hampton Hill Business Park, Hampton Hill • West Twickenham, south of River Crane • St George's Industrial Estate, Twickenham • Old Lodge Place, St Margarets • Tideway Yard and The Old Power Station, Mortlake • Blake Mews Station Avenue, Kew
What is the likelihood of residential use being converted to office use, and how appropriate this would be?	The prior approval permitted development rights only apply to a change of use from B1 offices to C3 residential. If an existing residential use is proposed to be converted to an office, it would require planning permission. Such applications are uncommon as the majority of applications / prior notifications are for changes of use from offices to residential.
Has there been a	Petrol filling stations and shops selling and/or displaying

reduction in the number of petrol stations?	motor vehicles do not fall within any specific use class and are considered 'Sui Generis'. These do not benefit from any permitted development change of use. As such, any changes of use or redevelopments to other uses would need planning permission, which will be assessed against the Local Plan.
A comment made about increasing residential units on the High Street and how this affects the residential-economic mix.	To date the Council has not seen many applications for prior notifications that involve the change of use from shops (A1) to residential (C3). However, the Council is concerned over any future loss of local shops or community uses in town and local centres as a result of existing and proposed greater flexibilities to change shops to banks and other financial services, estate agents etc. without the need for planning permission. The Council's planning policies seek to ensure there is a good balance between uses in town centres. An increasing number of non-retail uses in town and local centres could threaten the viability and vitality of our high streets, especially as the Council will have no control over their location. It could result in the loss of key shops and leave parts of town centres where there is no retail presence, which could make it difficult to attract new retailers in the future. This has implications for the local community, specifically those that rely on local facilities, as well as the negative impacts on the street scene.
Rugby World Cup	
'Dressing up fund' for the event is a separate fund from Civic Pride. Who can apply?	The answer to this question will emerge from the Planning Group and be fed back to the next Forum.
The Fan Zone in Richmond – how will we clear it in time for last trains back to London/other boroughs?	The answer to this question will emerge from the Planning Group and be fed back to the next Forum.
Research, Older people	
What percentage of older people frequent town centres (e.g. Pubs) to keep warm?	We didn't ask this question in the survey and received no additional comments about it. As the question is so specific we cannot provide an answer without speculating. However it is an issue that we will raise with the Public Health team when we discuss the link between town centres and the loneliness and isolation agenda
What is being done to promote disability access?	Duly noted. We did isolate the results from those respondents who considered themselves to have a disability, in general findings were similar to the overall survey results though transport and seating were of increased importance. We have also been in consultation with town centre managers and traders

	associations to obtain their views on disability access in their areas
There is a wide age range within the 'older residents' group and the very end of the scale there are a group of very elderly residents who find it difficult to get out at all. In addition, there are those that have mental capacity issues. The views of these groups should be obtained	These are good points and we will take on board this feedback when progressing with the consultation and further work. We are going to meet with the Public Health team to discuss the link between town centres and the loneliness and isolation agenda this will concentrate on the more vulnerable older residents
Did the survey just look at town centres? Other aspects are important such as railway bridges which are a barrier to some shopping areas for those with mobility issues. These should be looked at in addition to the town centres.	The survey concentrated on town centres but there are alternative provisions for those outside town centres to help them access them. Cllr Fleming commented that the borough enjoys some excellent neighbourhood care groups that assist with transport
There are not enough community toilets and this is something that older residents have more of a requirement for than others. Are you planning to build/provide more toilets?	Building and maintaining new public toilets is very expensive. However the Council plans to review the existing Community Toilet Scheme with a view to increasing membership of the scheme.
Did the survey include responses from older residents outside the borough and did it look at whether older residents are leaving the borough to do their shopping (i.e. into neighbouring boroughs)?	No, the survey was aimed at the boroughs residents and focussed on what people thought about Richmond's town centres. We do however collect economic data on a regular basis to build up a picture of the economic health of our boroughs centres
Cllr Roberts commented that visiting care homes and on the street outreach should have been done to access a representational section of older residents	Cllr Fleming advised that the survey was a piece of work to get some initial thoughts and stimulate ideas. This will be further discussed with Town Centre Managers and Traders' groups at next week's Business & Retail Alliance meeting and it will of course be a factor in the Uplift work we are planning for Hampton Hill High Street. We have also been undertaking a review of the Town Centre Opportunities Fund and have been capturing comments from town centre representatives about the provisions in their centres for elderly residents during interviews with them.

Trees	
How do we 'value' trees?	We do not have a comprehensive monetary value that has been applied to our tree stock. We do currently value trees where they are implicated in insurance claims and the method has been used in justifying Tree Preservation Orders. The system that has been used previously is the Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees.
Can responsibility for trees be clarified?	Royal Parks are responsible for Richmond Park and Bushy Park. Hampton Court falls under the management of the Crown Estate
Can the new tree policy be explained?	<p>The main focus of the new policy is to communicate the importance and value of the Borough's trees, to outline the Council's statutory responsibilities and to make clear the policies that are in place to a) uphold our statutory duties and b) to sustain the tree resource. We want to put across a positive message relating to tree management.</p> <p>Consultation with all Councillors took place as they were sent a draft of the proposed policy and were invited to attend a briefing session which took place on the 4th December 2014.</p> <p>The policy is due to be presented to Cabinet next month and if accepted will replace the existing policy (adopted 2008).</p>
How will budget cuts will affect tree management programmes?	<p>There have been no cuts to the budget for trees..</p> <p>The Council has limited planting this year to give us the opportunity to investigate and improve the process. We are currently in consultation with colleagues in Highways. Any trees that were planned for planting this season (in the majority replacements for those that have been removed) have been deferred for planting during the next. (The planting season typically runs from October through to March).</p>
Someone commented that the sculpting of a dead tree was a very welcome addition to Kneller Gardens.	The comment related to a sculpture that had been carved into the stump of a tree that had to be removed on safety grounds. This has been well received by users of the park and continues a link to and interest in the former tree. This was carried out in consultation with the Friends of Kneller Gardens.
Could the tree warden scheme be restarted?	This possibility is to be investigated.

The names of those present are listed below.

Organisation	Name
Friends of Barnes Common	Mike Hildesley
The Kew Society	Caroline Brock
Richmond Society - Chair, Planning Committee	Charles Pineles
Richmond Society	Peter Willan
Richmond Society	Paul Street
Teddington Society	Sheena Harold
York House Society	Bridget Miller
Friends of Murray Park	Nigel Hawken
Ham and Petersham Neighbourhood Forum	Andy Rogers
Ham and Petersham Neighbourhood Forum	Justine Glynn
Ham and Petersham Association	Geoff Bond
Barnes Community Association Environment Group	Ben Mackworth-Praed
East Sheen Business and Retail Association	Jackie Duncan
East Sheen Business and Retail Association	Jackie Upton
Heatham Residents Association	Philip Morgan
Kew Neighbourhood Association	Abi Palmer
St Margarets Estate Residents Association	Gehard Schellberg
St Margarets Estate Residents Association	Barry Hawkins
Twickenham Advisory Panel	Paul Leonard
York House Society	Geoffrey Melling
East Sheen Village	Jacque Duncan
Morley and Alexandra Road Residents Association	Catherine Elliot
East Teddington Villages	Michael Phillips
Teddington Together	Jackie Langella
Barnes Business Community	Steven Mindell
East Twickenham Traders Association	Perminder Tamana
Hampton Hill Traders Association	Isolde O'Kane
Hampton Village Traders Association	Caroline Badgery
Hampton Village Traders Association	Michael Badgery
Twickenham Traders	Gerry Barwick
Richmond Business and Retail Association	Con O'Brien
St Margarets Traders	Adam Tocock
St Margarets Traders	Stephen Gardiner
Hounslow Gurudwara	Gurpreet Singh
St John's Hampton Wick	Wayne Englishby
Hampton Wick Baptist Church	Paul Jacobs
Cabinet Member	Cllr Pamela Fleming
Cabinet Member	Cllr Stephen Speak
Community Links	John Addicott

Community Links	Mamta Khanna
Community Links	Bill Reed
Assistant Director, Environment	Jon Freer
Planning Policy Manager	Andrea Kitzberger
Arboriculture Manager	Craig Ruddick
Inward Investment Manager	Susan Shaw
Councillor	Cllr Gareth Roberts
Councillor	Cllr Alexander Ehmann

Footnote

On 1 April 2015 we will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the creation of the London borough of Richmond Upon Thames.

Formed on 1 April 1965 at the same time as Greater London by the London Government Act 1963, 12 boroughs were designated as inner London boroughs and 20 as outer London boroughs and they shape the way we live today. The Municipal Boroughs of Twickenham, Richmond and Barnes were joined – creating Richmond upon Thames. Throughout 2015, there will be a number of opportunities to explore and reflect on the last 50 years of our borough.

Richmond Council would love any photos you have from this period (1963-1966) that tell a story, or record a celebration of the new borough. Please send them to Fiona Kay (Fiona.Kay@richmond.gov.uk).

Details of the next meeting:

This will be held on Wednesday 3rd June 2015 at Clarendon Hall, Twickenham.