



Community Conversation

North Richmond; Kew Community Conversation

DATE: 6:30pm – 9pm, Wednesday 2nd April 2025

VENUE: Kew Community Trust, St Luke's, The Avenue, TW9 2AJ

CHAIR: Paul Jennings, CEO, Habitats & Heritage

AGENDA

6.30pm – 7.00pm:	Refreshments and Council information stands
7.00pm – 7.10pm:	Welcome and Introduction to the Community Conversation
7.10pm – 8.10pm:	Priority themes discussion 1. Richmond Town Centre Project - Councillor Mansfield 2. Developments in the wards - Councillor Warren 3. Waste and recycling management - Councillor Vollum 4. The towpath from Kew to Richmond - Councillor Ehmann



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	(Brief introduction of each theme followed by comments, observations, and questions from the audience)
8.10pm – 8.50pm:	Open conversation with the audience
8.50pm - 9.00pm:	Event close

COUNCILLORS IN ATTENDANCE:**Kew**

- Councillor Clare Vollum

North Richmond

- Councillor Nancy Baldwin
- Councillor Richard Warren

Additional Members

- Councillor Katie Mansfield (Lead Member for Richmond Town Centre Project)
- Councillor Alexander Ehmann (Chair of the Transport and Air Quality Services Committee)

APOLOGIES:

- Councillor Richard Pyne
- Councillor Alice Bridges-Westcott
- Councillor Ian Craigie



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Theme 1	Discussion
Richmond Town Centre Project	<p>Introduction from Councillor Mansfield (Lead Member for Richmond Town Centre Project and White Ribbon Champion)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richmond Town Centre is a great town centre but faces its challenges as the needs of high streets are changing – aim of work is to think about future of the town centre. Work has involved lots of engagement – using existing feedback from things like the nighttime strategy and Local Plan and supplementing existing information by speaking to groups we don't usually hear from (such as families, young people). Worked with Hemingway Design as consultants to use feedback and develop vision. Themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global City Energy Meets Market Town Charm – retaining unique culture Space to Breathe: Escapism, Exploration & Enrichment – preserving green and blue space Natural Leaders: Champions of Environmental Action & Social Value – proud of sustainability, environmental, and social inclusion Vision now developed, and looking at what small changes to make in the next year and longer term (5-10 years). Set up working groups looking at things like transport, public buildings, and space. The vision for Richmond Town Centre and further information on the work and engagement can be found here: https://www.richmond.gov.uk/RTC. <p>Conversation (Comments, Questions and Observations)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Question from resident: Asked about plants at Manor Circus roundabout and maintenance of public spaces. Response from Councillor Mansfield: Transport for London (TfL) manage the roundabout at Manor Circus. Committed to feeding back to TfL, and that the Council are committed to sustainability of green space. Question from Councillor Baldwin: Asked about how we are working with other organisations on the work.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response from Councillor Mansfield: The Council are working with a lot of partners to create the space that we want, and collaboration will be key throughout the work. • Questions from residents: Asked about monoculture with coffee shops on high street. • Response from Councillor Mansfield: Plan is to talk to landlords and retailers about how we can broaden the town centre offer. The Council can't make landlords do anything, and this is partly determined by demand and size of units, but the Council can make suggestions and provide information. • Question from resident: Asked about better shared space between vehicles and pedestrians in town centre. • Response from Councillor Mansfield: There are a range of constraints including TfL buses going through the town centre. However, the Council are looking at what is possible, and it is clear from consultation that people want better use of George Street and have raised concerns about air quality. • Questions from residents: Asked about what the Council can do on congestion caused by large lorries doing deliveries at shops. • Response from Councillor Baldwin: There are specific timeframes that the lorries can stop in, and if they are stopping in rush hour, please contact the Council to let us know. • Response from Councillor Mansfield: There is a number to call the enforcement team to report issues. Looking at best options for deliveries in future as a part of town centre plan. Webpage for reporting traffic issues: https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/roads_and_transport/traffic_congestion. • Response from Councillor Ehmann: Resident observations help to feed deployment of officers, and this is a known issue. There is lining and signing across the town centre to inform about delivery times. • Response from Councillor Mansfield: The Council will look at making information on timing for online. • More information on this is available on the Council website: https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/roads_and_transport/vehicles/road_regulations/parking_violations. • Suggestion from resident: We could look at speaking to TfL and bus drivers for support on the issue. • Question from resident: Asked about what changes can be expected in the town centre this year.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response from Councillor Mansfield: Looking at better leisure space at Richmond riverside, and will be doing a few small activations, such as children's playgrounds. Looking at feasibility of projects with capital events and also hoping to run a cultural event in Autumn. The Richmond Town Centre website will be kept updated and the Council will be communicating using this channel. • Question from resident: Asked about provision of public toilets and what the Council will do with the Old Town Hall building. • Response from Councillor Mansfield: Old Town Hall is not an easy building to make changes to due to age, but the Council are looking at options. Public toilets are a high priority, but this building wouldn't necessarily be the right space. • Question from resident: Asked about Richmond Green's inclusion in town centre plan. • Councillor Mansfield: Confirmed Richmond Green is included. • Comment from Councillor Baldwin: Encouraged everyone to sign up to Council newsletters and take part in consultations to share their thoughts on key changes. • Information on ongoing and upcoming consultations can be found here: https://haveyoursay.citizenspace.com/. • It is possible to sign up for Council newsletters here: https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKLBR/subscriber/new.
Theme 2	Discussion
Developments in the wards	Introduction from Councillor Warren (Chair, Policy and Performance Review Board) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advised there are lots of developments coming up locally. • There are updates on 47-49 Lower Mortlake Road – where two buildings collapsed during construction in September 2024. The Council stepped in on the night and made the site safe and gave a notice to the



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	<p>developer to pull them down. This has now happened, and basement excavations have been filled in with rubble from walls. The developer will need to submit a new planning application to continue developing that part of the site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward Councillors have objected to plans from developers for piling, Thames Water and Transport for London also have concerns. A decision is due from the Planning Department on 9th April. • Believes development should not go ahead until Health and Safety Executive's report on causes of collapse is published. <p>Conversation (Comments, Questions and Observations)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question from resident: Asked for planning number of 47-49 Lower Mortlake Road development. • Response from Councillor Warren: Committed to sending this. Information can be found here: https://planning.richmond.gov.uk/richmond/search-applications/results?criteria=%7B%22query%22:%2247%2049%20lower%20mortlake%22%7D&page=1. • Question from resident: Asked for updates on London House and Kew Retail Park developments. • Response from Councillor Warren: Developers decided against developing housing at Kew Retail Park and are now looking at how to improve it as a retail destination. Developers started at London House last summer, but planning enforcement teams had to ask them to pause as they hadn't met planning conditions. This has now restarted as conditions have been met. • Question from resident: Asked about policy on basements, particularly in terraced housing. • Response from Councillor Warren: There is a planning policy, which can be shared, though the Party Wall Act is overriding legislation. • The Council's policy can be found here: https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/planning/basement_developments. • Question from resident: Asked about Homebase site.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response from Councillor Warren: Mayor of London gave planning permission last May, but the developer has not provided a construction plan yet. There has been some buying and selling between investors, and it was reported that Avanton has taken out a loan. Planning permission will be lost if construction hasn't started within 3 years after planning permission was given (May 2027). • Question from resident: Asked for an update about development on Pagoda Avenue, particularly safety. • Response from Councillor Warren: This is now on its third owner, and the name has changed from the Sandycombe Centre to Pagoda Heights. Featherstone Leigh have been marketing 3 of the 20 flats. The Council are asking the developer to pay Council tax on empty properties and following up for updates. There are no remaining issues around safety.
Theme 3	Discussion
Waste and recycling management	<p>Introduction from Councillor Vollum (Dementia Champion and Chair, Thames Strategy Kew to Chelsea)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has installed collection points for small electrical appliances across the borough, and 46 tonnes of electrical recycling has been collected between March and December 2024. • Information on electrical recycling can be found here: https://www.richmond.gov.uk/dispose_of_electrical_items. • This is an important issue for the Council – so a lot is happening regularly, including an eco-fair at Kew Community Trust last week that had repair cafes. • Food waste is a big issue (partly due to weight and gases produced when this is put in general waste). The Council have introduced food recycling into flats, trialling fox-proof boxes. • Proper storage and facilities for waste is a key part of planning for new developments. • The Council has also supported an 'adopt a tree' scheme with community-led group 'Friends of Street Trees': https://www.richmond.gov.uk/news/news_may_2024/help_street_trees_this_summer. • Recently had a successful mega skip day in Kew and there is one coming up in North Richmond on Saturday 5th April at Carrington Road. • Raised questions about possibility of a walk-in facility at Townmead Road Reuse and Recycling Centre, but told this isn't possible at present due to health and safety concerns.



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- Guidance on steps to minimise food waste:
https://www.richmond.gov.uk/news/news_march_2025/food_waste_action_week.

Conversation (Comments, Questions and Observations)

- **Comment from resident:** Current food waste recycling box have locks that can help stop foxes.
- **Question from resident:** Raised issue about cardboard that doesn't fit in blue boxes is not being collected, leading to litter on roads.
- **Response from Councillor Baldwin:** Believes that instruction is that any cardboard near boxes should be collected, committed to checking on this and responding. Councillors are happy to escalate issues but encourages residents to report on the Council website. Guidance on how to present cardboard waste for collection can be found here:
https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/waste_and_recycling/household_recycling/what_to_do_with_your_household_rubbish/waste_from_a_house#:~:text=Please%20place%20all,cardboard%20cereal%20box.
- **Response from Councillor Vollum:** Asked for any issues to be reported on Council website and officers can respond accordingly. Issues can be reported here:
https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/waste_and_recycling/report_a_missed_collection
- **Response from Councillor Ehmann:** Oversized cardboard that hasn't been broken down will be left as it adds extra work to operatives and slows down work.
- **Question from resident:** Raised concern about cars being required to use mega skips. Mentioned scheme in Sydney, Australia where the Council will pick up large items left on street on certain days for free, which also encourages swapping between people of unwanted goods.
- **Response from Councillor Vollum:** The Council does do bulky waste collection, but this is a paid for service. This can be booked here: https://www.richmond.gov.uk/book_a_bulky_item_collection
- **Response from Councillor Baldwin:** Mentioned composting bins in New York where people can drop off their food waste and collect compost. Encouraged any further ideas around waste.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question from resident: Commended Council for provision of large bins on streets but asked to ensure these are collected frequently. • Question from resident: Raised concerns about access to Townmead Road Reuse and Recycling Centre, as this can be accessed by bike but needs to be booked in advance. • Response from Councillor Vollum: Agrees with concerns and has asked about this. There are limitations related to health and safety, but the Council are working on finding a solution. • Response from Councillor Ehmann: Looking to provide special access for bikes and cargo bikes, ideally without the need to book a slot. • Question from resident: Asked about closeable recycling bins to stop litter blowing away. • Response from Councillor Baldwin: Residents can order nets to cover recycling boxes, this is the expectation. Ward Councillors can help residents get them. These can be purchased here: https://www.richmond.gov.uk/buy_net_covers. • Question from resident: Asked how long blue recycling boxes are meant to last. • Response from Councillor Baldwin: Unsure of the answer, but notes that these blue boxes themselves can't currently be recycled and that this is something the Council is looking into. • Response from Councillor Ehmann: It is possible to have boxes replaced free of charge when they're no longer useable. These can be ordered here: https://www.richmond.gov.uk/order_a_recycling_box.
Theme 4	Discussion
The towpath from Kew to Richmond	<p>Introduction from Councillor Ehmann (Chair of the Transport and Air Quality Services Committee)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Towpath began to collapse in October last year due to rain and strong winds. • Engineering weakness evident and lots of investigative work is underway. • The Council has been assessing condition of that piece of towpath, and the area around it to check it can take works required and that there won't be future issues.



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- Land around the site which collapsed is not wholly owned by the Council, but the Council has decided to take the lead on work.
- Works are planned to start later this month, and reinstatement should be completed by end of summer.
- Complex work as it requires piling, lots of material and expertise is unique, and will need to be brought by boat to the site. The cost of works is in the millions.
- The Council has devoted funds and plan to ensure towpath as a whole is functioning and safe, as well as looking at future improvements.

Conversation (Comments, Questions and Observations)

- **Response from Councillor Vollum:** Chairs Thames Strategy Kew to Chelsea Group, which aims to have a joint consistent approach across boroughs, planning for flood resilience and making improvements along the river. Lots of work happening generally to support the river and its environment.
- **Response from Councillor Baldwin:** There is a Thames Landscape Strategy to ensure the river stays a living river and is resilient. Information can be found here: <https://www.thames-landscape-strategy.org.uk/>.
- **Comments from residents:** Raised idea of adding footpath from the Kew Gardens Lion Gate along Kew Road down to the Thames towpath, alongside Kew Gardens and golf course.
- **Response from Councillor Ehmann:** The Council have considered whether something different should have been done instead of just repairing the existing towpath. Golf club are the landowner and have reservations about this approach. Councillors and the MP are convinced it is a good idea and would like to mobilise support to convince the golf club. The golf course also operates as a floodplain, which helps protect against flooding in the wider area, so wouldn't want to compromise this.
- **Response from Councillor Warren:** There is a lot of support for this, but issue is around persuading the golf club.
- **Suggestions from residents:** Path could go through Kew Gardens, rather than golf course.
- **Question from resident:** Asked about any plans for resurfacing of the towpath, which has deteriorated significantly between Richmond Lock to Hammersmith Bridge.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response from Councillor Ehmann: This was previously a priority, but due to high cost of works to repair the towpath, this is no longer likely in short term due to limited funds. TfL funding is available for roads and pavements, but not towpaths, which is a challenge as this means that the Council would need to fund it directly.
	Open Discussion
Pensford Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question from resident: Asked why has the decision to award the new lease to Dose of Nature not yet been formally made? • Response from Councillor Vollum: Trying to move things on as quickly as possible, but what Council announced previously was the intention to award the lease. Terms of the lease have been discussed at meetings between the Council, Dose of Nature, and the Pensford Field Environmental Trust. There are strict planning requirements, and no large buildings will be developed on the land. Dual use of land for environmental protection and use by a mental health charity could help to protect the land from potential future development. • Question from resident: Asked whether the Council will make the decision to award the lease a 'key decision', meaning the issue will have to go to committee. • Response from Councillor Baldwin: Committed to finding an answer on this. • Response from Councillor Vollum: Originally the decision didn't meet financial threshold to go to committee, and there was no change of use, so change wasn't considered substantial enough. Committed to maintaining integrity of space. • Question from resident: Asked about transparency of decision making from the Council, particularly with regards to Freedom of Information requests. • Response from Councillor Ehmann: Freedom of Information process is governed by national legislation and is managed by officers. If they are rejected, reasons need to be given in compliance with the law. • Response from Councillor Vollum: Publicly acknowledged that the process could have been handled better, but now looking at moving forwards and what is best for the field and best for the community.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question from resident: Asked about what other sites were considered for Dose of Nature, and why park land wasn't considered. • Response from Councillors: None present were involved in decision-making but can follow up on process. • Response from Councillor Baldwin: Park land is owned by Royal Parks, so not owned by the Council but it would be possible to ask them about possibility of using this.
Antisocial behaviour and drug dealing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question from resident: Raised ongoing problem with drug dealing in a Richmond Housing Partnership property in Kew, asked about Council response to this. • Response from Councillor Ehmann: Has contacted police, community safety team, and landlord. Lease could be breached, as well as the law being broken. Encouraged residents to come to the next police liaison group (PLG) meeting in June, as this will be on the agenda for discussion with police, community safety team, and Councillors. Committed to keep putting on pressure in the meantime. Concerned that police have said they are powerless, which will be followed up. • Information on Police Liaison Groups can be found here: https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/community_safety/safer_neighbourhood_groups/police_liaison_groups. • Response from Councillor Mansfield: A similar issue was faced in St Margarets – created working group with police and came to a resolution, so similar approach could be helpful. • Response from resident: There was also a similar issue in Barnes – residents took time stamped photos and shared with police and housing association as evidence which helped resolution.
Kew Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question from resident: Asked about plans for Kew Library. • Response from Councillor Vollum: The redecoration of Kew Library is a priority.
Illegal parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question from resident: Asked about what residents and the Council can do about illegal parking on Kew Road.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response from Councillor Ehmann: Recommended residents report to enforcement teams. If there are specific concentration issues, please raise with ward Councillors so enforcement officers can be deployed to prioritise those areas. • Issues can be reported on the Council website here: https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/roads_and_transport/vehicles/road_regulations/parking_violations.
Kew Green traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question from resident: Raised concerns about gridlock around Kew Green and asked about proposals around access controls. Suggested no entry except for access scheme. • Response from Councillor Ehmann: There has been significant engagement with residents to determine what issues need to be solved and to work up proposals. A solution including camera enforced restriction has been put forward, and while there are delays due to resident objections to signage around Kew Green, we are close to finding a solution and pushing forward with proposals. The Council considered the correct balance between deterrence, enforceability, and minimising impact on residents when looking at solutions. Accepts that there are differing resident views on best solution, but the one being taken forward is the preferred option with residents throughout consultation. No entry except for access was not enforceable.
Electric vehicle charging points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question from resident: About plan for provision of electric vehicle (EV) charging points. • Response from Councillor Ehmann: Richmond has highest number of EV charging points of any outer London borough, though accepts there are some gaps. Options to charge on different streets within parking zone and enabling people to charge off-street. Private sector also has a role to play in providing infrastructure. • Recent EV charge point update: https://www.richmond.gov.uk/news/news_march_2025/next_phase_of_ev_charging_point_transfer. • Question from resident: Raised issues with broken electric vehicle charging. • Response from Councillor Ehmann: Committed to taking away details and following up with providers, whose responsibility it is to do repairs.
Pavements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question from resident: Asked what Council is doing around improving pavements, noting frequently seeing spray painted markings on pavements.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response from Councillor Ehmann: Markings on roads and pavements are from officers marking areas for remedial repairs. The Council has recently decided to commit substantial extra funds (£21million) to roads and pavements, doubling the amount to be spent on pavements, including plans for improvements Cumberland Road and Defoe Avenue in Kew. The Council are also doing analysis into where there is most footfall and the biggest case for better pedestrian infrastructure and will come forward with trial measures to improve these corridors. • Response from Councillor Vollum: Put in a query about when condition and safety of pavements should be prioritised over trees, and championing cases for improvements, including near Kew Gardens Station. • Response from Councillor Baldwin: This is also a live issue in North Richmond, regularly reporting issues for repair. • Question from resident: Asked about Council policy around using consistent materials for repair. • Response from Councillor Ehmann: Where pavements are unsafe and urgent repairs are required, the Council may use different materials but will then make good with appropriate materials. Working towards fixing things well the first time and recently recruited a senior officer who is developing plans in this area.
Public toilets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question from resident: Community Toilet Scheme only works during the day. Asked about possibility of refurbishing previous public toilets under Waitrose. • Response from Councillor Baldwin: Agrees with this. Issue with toilets under Waitrose was accessibility, as they require going downstairs, so priority is ensuring available toilets are truly accessible. Community Toilet Scheme is helping to do this, but there are plans for purpose-built toilets. • Response from Councillor Mansfield: Community Toilet Scheme is an important part of provision and enables there to be publicly accessible toilets in places where it wouldn't be possible to provide them. Looking to find appropriate places for purpose-built public toilets.
Close	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair: Thanked everyone for their contribution.