



Community Conversation

Ham, Petersham and Richmond Riverside; South Richmond Community Conversation

DATE: 6:30pm – 9pm, Tuesday 25th March 2025

VENUE: Duke Street Church, Quadrant Road Richmond, TW9 1DH

CHAIR: Simon Coupland, Vicar, St Richard's Church Ham

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. Policing and Crime Prevention - Councillor Vassileva 2. Vision for Richmond Town Centre – Councillor Varley 3. Thames Water Abstraction Scheme – Councillor Frieze 4. Ham Close Redevelopment – Councillor Frost



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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:

Ham, Petersham and Richmond Riverside

- Councillor Andrée Frieze
- Councillor Penelope Frost
- Councillor Gareth Richards

South Richmond

- Councillor Chris Varley
- Councillor Paulina Vassileva
- Councillor Chas Warlow

Theme 1	Discussion
Policing and Crime Prevention	<p>Introduction from Councillor Vassileva (South Richmond Councillor and Tenants' Champion)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority of Council to make Richmond the safest borough - in both our Corporate Plan and the Richmond Community Safety Partnership Community Safety Plan 2024-2027. • Since 2020, the Council and Police have worked together on a plan for Richmond Green and Richmond Riverside due to antisocial behaviour • There is more information on Council website as well as ways to report antisocial behaviour: https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/community_safety/antisocial_behaviour • Main times of crime in South Richmond are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Theft



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Violence against the person ○ Vehicle offences ○ Burglary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main problem since October is 12 high value burglaries. This is a live investigation, street briefings have been done, and main point of contact is Inspector Chris Jackson. • Urge residents to follow Neighbourhood Police Teams on WhatsApp: https://www.whatsapp.com/channel/0029VaCwPTfG3R3oENdebs3r <p>Conversation (Comments, Questions and Observations)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question from resident: What is the Council doing to address Metropolitan Police cuts to Parks Police. • Response from Councillor Vassileva: This is a priority on our agenda – we are against police cutbacks and have campaigned against this. Advocating as hard as we can to keep rangers. • Question from resident: Shared concerns about burglaries to local businesses. Not all of them have had follows up from Police, and businesses are struggling to get planning permission for external shutters. • Response from Councillor Vassileva: Offered to follow up and support with specific cases. Police are in touch with shops around Richmond. The Council are working with the police – shoplifting is high on the agenda, and there have been some arrests, and also working on strategies to address wider issues such as security. • Response from Councillor Frieze: Mentioned local police liaison meetings as a route to follow up with policing issues – more information can be found here: https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/community_safety/safer_neighbourhood_groups/police_liaison_groups • Question from resident: Issue with large gatherings of young people on the weekend at the Terrace Gardens. • Response from Councillor Vassileva: Urged residents to report issues every time so that it can be followed up. Working on action plan for summer for how to address issues with large gatherings. • Response from Councillor Frost: Aware of issues and level of vandalism, trying to ensure increase in parks patrols on summer weekends.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question from resident: Asked about potential for police station or sub police station coming into Richmond. • Response from Councillor Vassileva: Agreed this is worth pursuing, but dependent on police resources. • Question from resident: Urged Council to do more to help respond to burglaries, as currently the community feels let down by lack of resource, reflecting that the Police is under-resourced, and communication has been poor. • Response from Councillor Varley: Pressure on police is significant, seen some success in getting more resource because of lobbying. Councillors and the MP would support a police station in Richmond, GLA member is also pushing for this. Hoped for police to attend tonight but they didn't have sufficient resource. • Question from resident: Commented on importance of education and keeping young people in school in addressing antisocial behaviour. • Response from Councillor Frost: Monitor attendance of students very closely, and overall attendance is higher than most London boroughs. • Question from resident: Asked to publicise South Richmond Neighbourhood Watch - street briefing was held at 11am at Duke's Head Pub on 29th March and North Neighbourhood Board on 7th April. More information on Neighbourhood Watch schemes: https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/community_safety/safer_neighbourhood_groups/neighbourhood_watch
Theme 2	Discussion
Vision for Richmond Town Centre	<p>Introduction from Councillor Varley (South Richmond Councillor)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richmond Town Centre work was a key commitment in manifesto, and there is now a lead member for this work, Councillor Katie Mansfield. • Vision kicked off in 2023 with engagement to gather a range of views on future of the town centre, which has culminated in a vision for everyone in the borough, including visitors. • The vision for Richmond Town Centre and further information on the work and engagement can be found here: https://www.richmond.gov.uk/vision_richmond_town_centre#:~:text=It%20will%20serve%20as%20a,Our%20ambition%20is%20simple.



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- Key themes:
 1. Global City Energy Meets Market Town Charm
 2. Space to Breathe: Escapism, Exploration & Enrichment
 3. Natural Leaders: Champions of Environmental Action & Social Value
- Now looking at engagement phase during 2025 to test out if ideas work, as well as an engagement event in September with a range of activities to encourage people to get involved and give thoughts.

Conversation (Comments, Questions and Observations)

- **Question from resident:** Reflected on constraints of Council in addressing key issues (i.e. no control over police force or commercial aspects) and urged Councillors to think about practical steps within the Council's grasp to improve the borough.
- **Question from resident:** Raised concerns about there being nothing to do in Richmond for teenagers.
- **Response from Councillor Warlow:** Agrees that this is an issue, and that the Town Centre plan addresses this.
- **Response from Councillor Frost:** Young people's voices were strong in development of the strategy; the Council want to make sure that Richmond Town Centre has a lot to offer for young people.
- **Question from resident:** Asked about next steps for delivery of strategy.
- **Response from Councillor Richards:** Richmond Town Centre has some of the worst air quality in the borough, and a solution to this would be to eliminate through traffic through the town centre.
- **Question from resident:** Asked for update on study assessing borough traffic.
- **Response from Councillor Richards:** Waiting for consultation results, which is still underway. This can be found here: <https://richmondtransportstrategy.commonplace.is/>
- **Question from resident:** Asked about process to share ideas on Richmond Town Centre.
- **Response from Councillor Varley:** There is a website page on Richmond Town Centre, with option to sign up for updates and contribute ideas:



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	<p>https://www.richmond.gov.uk/vision_richmond_town_centre#:~:text=It%20will%20serve%20as%20a,Our%20ambition%20is%20simple.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question from resident: Asked about whether vision will include better provision for public conveniences. • Response from Councillor Varley: Assured that this is a part of discussions. Plan for redevelopment with provision of facilities has been put on hold due to budgets, but this is on agenda. The community toilets scheme complements this and provides information on toilets that can be used by public: https://www.richmond.gov.uk/toilets • Question from resident: Urged Councillors not to close central roads in Richmond and raised concerns about cyclists. • Response from Councillor Frieze: 110 people were killed on London's roads last year on motor vehicles, one of which was in Richmond. Issue with motor normativity, investment in public transport and reduction in public vehicles is key.
Theme 3	Discussion
Thames Water Abstraction Scheme	<p>Introduction from Councillor Frieze (Ham, Petersham, and Richmond Riverside Councillor and Leader of the Opposition)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main construction work taking place in this borough is the boring of a 3.5m diameter tunnel (20-30m deep) from Mogden Sewage Treatment Works to a new discharge point upstream of Teddington Weir. • In times of drought, water will be extracted from Teddington and piped over to East London. This will be replaced by treated recycled water from Mogden. • Thames Water are doing work to assess quality of land for tunnelling in Ham. • Statutory consultation will take by Thames Water this year. St Richards Church booked for Saturday 12th July for public meeting. Public inquiries will be held in 2026 and 2027, construction would take place from 2029 to 2033. • Save Our Lands and River (SOLAR) are a central point for community who are against the scheme and supporting responses to Thames Water: https://saveourlandsandriver.org.uk/ <p>Conversation (Comments, Questions and Observations)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question from resident: Asked about potential consequences from subsidence, as current plan would dig tunnels under houses in Ham.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response from Councillor Frieze: Council was clear about concerns about quality of sub soil in Ham. Thames Water are currently digging to survey land, to make the ultimate decision. • Response from Councillor Frost: Thames Water think that 20-30m deep will be adequate, and they have been working on soil sampling, which will determine Thames Water's decision as to whether it will be safe to tunnel and if project can continue. • Question from resident: Doesn't see an issue with Thames Water abstraction and reflected that this is not a new thing. • Question from resident: Issue is use of treated sewage in the river and concerns about tunnelling under homes causing a risk of subsidence. • Response from Councillor Frieze: Agreed with issue of treated sewage being dumped in river. Plan for tunnel has been to make it 20-30m underground, and gravel pits do not go down that far, so this may help reduce risk of subsidence. There is still another site to be assessed. Thames Water has committed to leaving land in same condition as before testing - urged residents to get in touch if there are any issues and offered to follow up with Thames Water. • Question from resident: Asked about compulsory purchase of homes and reflected preference on original plan of tunnel going under Ham Lands rather than housing. • Response from Councillor Frieze: In St Margaret's area, route of tunnel has changed to go under fewer homes. Reservoirs that are being dug and could be used instead of the scheme, Thames Water have yet to prove that this is the best value scheme. Plans include some compulsory purchase of land under homes but not homes themselves.
Theme 4	Discussion
Ham Close Redevelopment	<p>Introduction from Councillor Frost (Ham, Petersham and Richmond Riverside Councillor and Chair of the Education and Children's Services Committee)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ham Close is a series of small tower blocks, housing 192 residents, but not fit for purpose due to age and construction. These homes will come down and 452 delivered in their place. • All residents will be offered a new home, and homes provided will be of a higher quality with better accessibility and safety features.



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- Youth centre will be replaced with larger community and youth centre, The Hive, and Maker's Barn will be rebuilt.
- Social value fund has been established by Hill (the developers) and administered by Richmond Housing Partnership (RHP), with oversight from the Council.
- General issue with supply and demand social housing in the borough which the Council are addressing. Since 2018, have quadrupled pipeline of affordable homes and buying back homes lost under Right to Buy to use for temporary accommodation, with £13million set aside for further acquisitions.
- There remain challenges in acquiring land for housing and some delays due to GLA and Planning Inspectorate.
- Information on Ham Close redevelopment can be found here: <https://www.hamclose.co.uk/>

Conversation (Comments, Questions and Observations)

- **Question from resident:** Asked about timeline for project.
- **Response from Councillor Frost:** Some delays in construction, first buildings due to be completed in 2026.
- **Question from resident:** Raised a concern about the discharge of conditions on the planning application for the work.
- **Response from Councillor Frost:** Committed to following up with Planning Department to ensure this happens.
- **Question from resident:** Asked about social value fund and where to find information about it.
- **Response from Councillor Frost:** Some difficulty in administration, Councillors have been putting pressure on RHP to get clear messaging out to the community on the fund and how to access it.
- **Question from resident:** Asked about where accountability lies for spending of the social value fund.
- **Response from Councillor Frost:** Accountability lies with Richmond Housing Partnership, not the Council.
- **Question from resident:** Asked about whether the development will include affordable or social homes.
- **Response from Councillor Frost:** The development will include a mixture of both affordable and social housing.
- **Question from resident:** Asked about how many homes will go to Richmond residents.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response from Councillor Frost: All current residents will have opportunity to be rehoused within the development, and the vast majority of the remainder will be available for rent, with small numbers to buy. There will be opportunities for local families as a priority, but don't have full detail on this, so will follow up and make more information available. • Response from Councillor Frieze: Social rent homes will go to Richmond families on waiting list. • Response from Councillor Vassileva: It is the Council's aim that families on Richmond's social housing list will be given opportunity to be placed in borough, or as close to it as possible. This would be done where possible when aligned with the Council's policy on meeting applicants assessed need and local property supply. Planning applications are granted on condition of agreed figure of social homes, and new applications are needed if numbers within plans change. • Question from resident: Asked about transport infrastructure for Ham Close. • Response from Councillor Frost: Possible to travel in and out of Richmond not using cars, with good infrastructure for cycling and public transport.
	Open Discussion
Lime bikes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions from residents: Raised concerns about Lime Bikes and asked about what the Council is doing to address them, particularly around parking. • Response from Councillor Warlow: Westminster Council have put fines on Lime Bikes. As a Green Group, have pushed for the Council to deal with issues in productive way, without completely removing bikes. Agree they can be managed better. • Response from Councillor Vassileva: Acknowledged that Lime Bikes are a useful transport option for many people, but not tolerating issues. Pushing for changes, working on improving parking of lime bikes, and have negotiation with Lime Bikes to deal with parking on Church Court. Lime Bikes are changing technology to make it more difficult for people to dump bikes. • Response from Councillor Frieze: Acknowledged that this is an issue faced by all London councils, who are collaboratively working with Lime Bikes and other bike companies, TfL, and the GLA to address it. • Response from Councillor Richards: Parking of Lime Bikes isn't an issue everywhere in the borough, so wouldn't be a reason to halt contract. • Response from Councillor Frost: There will be fines for people not leaving their bikes in appropriate places, which is being rolled out nationally and will help.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response from Councillor Baldwin: Urged residents to look at transport papers to see steps Council are taking to address issues. There is no immediate solution as there is a need to balance different needs.
Ham Road Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question from resident: Asked about how long current road works in Ham will take, as they are affecting bus routes. • Response from Councillor Frost: Delays from UKPN and Cadent, but there is nothing the Council can do as they are emergency works. Currently due to be finished on 27th March.
Community Toilet Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question from resident: Asked about provision of public toilets. • Response from Councillor Varley: Community toilet scheme not intended as solution, intended alongside public toilets. There are public toilets in Richmond station. Information on community toilet scheme here: https://www.richmond.gov.uk/toilets <p>Public toilet facilities in & around HPRR and South Richmond:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old Town Hall (Richmond Reference Library) • Cambrian Community Centre • Richmond Gate (Royal Parks) • Ham Library • Buccleuch Gardens • Isabella Plantation (Royal Parks) • Pembroke Lodge (Royal Parks) • East Sheen Cemetery
Old Deer Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question from resident: Raised concerns about success of rejuvenation of access to Old Deer Park, particularly due to flooding. • Response from resident: Lots of work has happened to improve access to the park, which has been a success. Frequency of flooding is an issue, but further works are planned, which will help to address this and further improve access.
Safe spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question from resident: Asked about the Council's ability to open library or Old Town Hall at night to provide toilets, and as a place for police to provide a safe space.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response from Councillor Varley: Agrees that this is a good idea and committed to working with Richmond Society to move along.
Safer roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question from resident: Asked about role of Council in educating drivers. • Response from Councillor Richards: Can encourage people to be multi-modal. Cycling can help drivers change behaviour to be safer for cyclists. • Response from Councillor Vassileva: Committed to help raise awareness campaign.
Unauthorised encampment injunction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question from resident: Asked about injunction and court proceedings against unauthorised encampment on Council land. • Response from Councillor Frost: No further progress on this at present. • Response from Councillor Vassileva: Committed to sending further information: https://www.richmond.gov.uk/news/news_august_2024/update_on_unauthorised_encampment_in_ham
Close	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair: Thanked everyone for their contribution.