



## YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD VOICE

A publication of the Notting Hill East Neighbourhood Forum and the Westbourne Neighbourhood Association

**Autumn/Winter 2021/22**

**Issue 10**

### *Chairman's voice*

Happy New Year to all our members. We have been delayed getting together as a forum once again by the dreaded Covid virus. But we will be arranging both a long overdue general meeting and a very special outdoor spring event.

Your committee has been working hard putting the finishing touches on our proposed Neighbourhood Plan, incorporating your views from the many consultations we had and your feedback from our first draft. We have also been initiating projects, responding to policy proposals, both local and national, and generally trying to protect your interests and respond to your requests.

For many years we have tried to comment on planning applications with the idea of protecting the vital interests of immediate neighbours and the general well being of the area. We are also concerned that planning applications are dealt with within a reasonable time. The planning group have tried to make it as easy as possible to understand what the neighbourhood supports by publishing clear guidance on our website - [nottinghilleast.org.uk](http://nottinghilleast.org.uk), under Planning Guidelines. Anyone wishing to make changes to their homes should look at this document.

We live in one of the pleasantest parts of Westminster and avoid many of the issues and disputes that plague other parts of the city: vagrants, rough sleeping, drugs misuse, new traffic routes, street noise and litter, and we are keen to preserve and enhance the characteristics that make the area so agreeable. The most obvious thing is that the future needs to be greener and our houses need to become less dependent on and soon completely independent of fossil fuels, but at the same time their architectural integrity, and our levels of comfort, need to be preserved. This is a significant design challenge which we must and can meet.

We also need to make the area safer from flooding

by providing plenty of earthed gardens that slow the movement of water into the drainage system. We are currently battling with Westminster to get them to properly enforce national guidance to stop people paving over their front gardens.

Our streets are still crowded with parked cars and we are told the average British car whiles away almost three-quarters (72.6 percent) of its time parked at, or near its owner's home address. Our love affair with personal transport seems as strong as ever as we switch to electric vehicles, but there are those who believe that the wastefulness of leaving cars unused 95% of the time will eventually dawn and we will sooner or later move to much more hiring and public transport. This will yield up road space to more convivial uses. If, as predicted, the volume of private car ownership begins to fall, we will consult on ways we can fill this newly available space, for instance with greenery or seating or sculpture to improve our public realm.

Residents in Northumberland Place have recently been polled about turning the street into a play street in July, August and September from mid afternoon every weekday and all day at the weekends. It is true that there are many children in the street now and NHENF is generally in support of children being able to play in relative safety in the street. I have responded in a personal capacity, suggesting that an hour and a half a day everyday is sufficient as I know many people need to earn their living from their homes and we should have relative peace and quiet up to 5 pm or thereabouts. There is also the issue of traffic diverting to the already congested Chepstow Rd. and adjacent streets.

*Low Traffic Neighbourhoods* are a way of keeping through traffic out of an area altogether and some residents and Westminster tried but failed to do this using Community Infrastructure Levy money in Connaught Village and the Hyde Park Estate. We

believe that in our area it is fairer **to allow through traffic**, which reduces the strain on arterial roads, but drivers must use our spaces **on our terms** such as driving no faster than say 15 miles per hour in the smaller streets. The technology to fit governors to all vehicles to ensure they comply with local speed limits is already here; we just need the political will to activate it.

Your committee tends to agree over most public space issues but we are divided when it comes to rubbish and the provision or otherwise of street refuse bins. As Chairman I am supposed to be neutral but I am someone who welcomes the reduction in the number of street bins and would like to see them go altogether unless a more glamorously designed bin could be provided.

I admire the Swiss and Belgian local authorities who charge heavily for every bag of rubbish collected. I am delighted that the rubbish bins on Artesian Road have been removed, even though we didn't receive notification of this ahead of time. I am old-fashioned and long for the return of local supply networks where fresh meat and fish are wrapped in old newspaper with a piece of protective greaseproof paper, I rejoice in the still available glass milk bottle left on the doorstep early in the morning and buy my fruit and vegetables loose from market stalls. With two regular and one recycling rubbish collections a week I can see very little need for any public bins at all except perhaps for garden waste.

However, we have received some complaints about the removal of bins so I am perhaps in a minority. The problem with the bins was that they were never enough to deal with the amount of waste dumped. So what couldn't be put in a bin was often left on the pavements adjacent to our houses and then explored by vagrants, foxes, squirrels and pigeons leaving a trail of horrible debris. The matter has been exacerbated by the lockdowns and the additional waste generated by home deliveries. On the principle that the polluter should pay, then Amazon etc. should be picking up the bill, but this is unlikely to happen soon. If you have a views about how and where the bins could go and be policed please let us know.

The Forum and its committee are neighbours who share a common interest in keeping our area beautiful and making it even better. We are all volunteers with an amazing range of skills and backgrounds who are able to spend some of our time and energy promoting good design and a safer future. As a committee, we are in the habit of rotating roles and welcome new committee members willing and able to work in harmony to improve our area. We are also a group of good companions who find great pleasure in working together to make our community more inclusive and its voice more

effective. I hope you will find all of the following interesting, and your letters and contributions for our next edition would be very welcome. Very best wishes for the year ahead.

Richard Perkins  
*Chairman*

## Public Realm

### Shrewsbury Gardens

Many of you put forward your views about the proposed designs for Shrewsbury Gardens during our online workshop back in January of 2021. We've refined the design and it is being priced for us as we issue this newsletter. A draft of the revised design is on the following page, somewhat simplified and reduced from the original plans presented last year. This new scheme does keep the most essential elements: removal of some of the large trees on the south side to allow more sunlight into the garden, renewed turf, a new south facing crescent-shaped seating area, additional benches, and considerable new plantings including climbers along the east brick wall, shrubs across the north boundary and perennial flower beds around the new benches. It will remain a dog friendly space.

Pending any revisions or changes due to costs or WCC concerns, this should be our final design. Our funding required that construction be completed by the end of March, so we look forward to using our much improved space in April. We will need to close the park for a short period of time to do the work, but we'll post a notice of this ahead of time.

An idea has been floated by a NHENF member and frequent park user, which is to turn this space into one with key access only, but unlike private garden squares that require ownership of an adjacent property, anyone in the vicinity could apply for a key. A one time initiation fee would be charged along with an annual membership fee to ensure good maintenance, but if an interested party wasn't able to pay the required fee, they would still be allowed to have a key if they could provide proof of local residence. The goal was twofold - to keep out some of the undesirable activity that occasionally takes place here, but more importantly to give the community a stake in their own green space. Employees of local businesses might receive a discount so they would have a nice place to go during their lunch break. The garden would still be owned by Westminster, and designated so it is protected from development. We don't know if this is possible but we'd like to hear your thoughts.

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For those who have noticed the tent and occupant who have been in the park for some time, we have continued to be in contact with WCC Parks and Streetlink, who are doing what they can to help.

### St. Stephen's Gardens

Another new addition to our neighbourhood is a table tennis table in St. Stephen's Gardens, given to us by Westminster. Maybe a good activity to work off some of the excesses of the holidays?

### Street Paving

Chepstow Road and Northumberland Place received new pavings last year. Sutherland Place is next in line, with new pavings scheduled for 2022.

### Street Furniture / Park Furniture / Public Lighting

We have written to the Leader of Westminster asking to have some input into the quality and design of Westminster's public realm. It is our observation when comparing our street furniture, lighting, etc., to that next door in K&C and to other cities around the world, that the quality of our public realm could be greatly improved with better design choices. The plastic 3-part bins on our streets look awful after a bit of use, are unable to be refurbished like metal ones, and at the end of their lifetime, we wonder if they can even be recycled. The blocky rectangular bicycle storage is an eyesore when compared to lighter models, and our street lighting is harsh and

seems unnecessarily light polluting. The surface mounted, unshielded LED lighting on many housing estates is cold and unwelcoming.

We argued that Westminster is London's public face, and should therefore have one of the highest quality public realms in the world. We also made the point that good design choices don't necessarily cost more than bad ones. A warm white LED bulb costs the same as a cold one.

Other cities around the world are sponsoring design competitions for better and more beautiful rubbish bins, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-12-04/new-york-s-next-trash-can-is-from-betterbin-winner-group-project>, lighting designers are showing the world how to light buildings in a low energy and bright but subtle way, <https://www.burohappold.com/news/lighting-design-award-win-piece-hall/>, lighting manufacturers are introducing state of the art smart street lighting, some of the big estates in London such as Cadogan are embarking on regeneration programs for their tree population, and landscape designers and furniture manufacturers are designing interesting and sculptural benches, drinking fountains, and bicycle storage.

With London's rich heritage and exceptional modernity, and so much world-class design talent on our doorstep, it seems we could do better. We've offered to help in any way we can.



*Bike storage and rubbish bins on our streets.*

## Neighbourhood Plan

Our Neighbourhood Plan revisions were on hold while we awaited the adoption of Westminster’s new City Plan 2019-2040, which occurred during the summer. Since then, we’ve been having weekly meetings to refine our draft policies and we hope to have something ready for your comments before March. We are optimistic that we may be able to host some in-person consultations, if not indoors, then at least under a tent outdoors.

As our Chairman mentioned, one of the things we’re trying to address within our policies is the paving over of front gardens. We are all aware of the local flooding this past summer, and with climate change, this is likely to happen again. Legislation from 2008 says that homeowners can no longer pave over their entire front gardens with impermeable pavers without planning permission if these gardens are more than 5 square metres in size. (this is 1 metre x 5 metres, or 2 metres x 2.5 metres). Our front gardens are typically 25 square metres. Despite this requirement, we continue to see residents paving over their front gardens without permission. None of us want to call the council’s enforcement officers, nor put a wrench in someone’s construction works but the negative consequences to our area and the wider environment are too numerous to ignore. Many of the following points are made in the London Assembly’s Environment Committee report- “Crazy Paving, The environmental importance of London’s front gardens”, Sept. 2005.<sup>1</sup>



- The substantial flooding upstream in the Thames valley is to a large extent the result of the rash of hard paving across the capital, of which front gardens are a part.
- The run-off from this hard surfacing places an increased burden on London’s underground drainage system and is also a cause of local flooding.
- Urban run-off contains such substances as engine oil, herbicides, brake dust, medicines, and raw sewage, which then contaminates the rivers.
- The reduced amount of water in the ground and the replacement of vegetation with hard surfaces have an impact on local temperature, causing the ‘heat island’ effect; the local land cannot absorb heat, but intensifies it, resulting in an increased local temperature.
- The loss of water from London clays may also be responsible for the cracking and subsidence that sometimes occurs in our buildings.
- The lack of front gardens and the removal of boundary railings can encourage speeding as it creates the impression of a wider road.
- Front gardens used as parking spaces, though it may be convenient, lack the visual appeal of gardens, and one private drive is wider than a parking space on the street, cumulatively reducing the number of parking spaces for others.
- The loss of planted front gardens removes an important pollution mitigating element, leads to a loss of fauna, and destroys what is one of the most beautiful and unique characteristics of our area.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/gla\\_migrate\\_files\\_destination/archives/assembly-reports-environment-frontgardens.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/gla_migrate_files_destination/archives/assembly-reports-environment-frontgardens.pdf)

- Houses without any landscaping, while easy to lock and leave, reduces the owner's investment of time and money in the area, arguably to the detriment of the community.

We hope that the lockdowns of the past years have helped people see that attractive front gardens are a usable resource as an additional outdoor room. Some neighbours have turned car parking spaces into planted gardens where children can play safely, and more and more residents installed benches and garden chairs to use front gardens as social spaces.

There is a collective benefit to us all when we green our front gardens: fragrance, more birds and birdsong, bees and insects, better drainage during

intense rainstorms, and absorption of our unacceptably high levels of pollution.

Please plant your front gardens, especially along front railings. If you have already paved over your garden or inherited a driveway, think about replacing a portion of the paved areas with plants, at ground level without any curbs that might prevent the water from draining into the planted areas. This will not only benefit you but will be a tremendous gift to the neighbourhood.

See the winner of our Garden Competition on the following pages, and some guidance from the RHS here: <https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/pdf/Gardening-matters-Front-Gardens-urban-greening.pdf>



*Lush Northumberland Place gardens in the 19th century.*

Another policy we've spent a great deal of time on is guidance for our mansards. A double pitched and ridged mansard is considered the original "true" historic mansard. While this is featured in *Westminster's Roofs - A Guide to Alterations and Extensions on Domestic Buildings*, a second profile is also supported - the flat topped mansard, which has a sloping lower section and a flat roof across the top. There is not only a design consideration between the two of these but an environmental one. The original double pitched model can be constructed entirely in FSC (forest stewardship council) certified wood, meaning the timbers have

been sourced from sustainably planted forests. It is relatively lightweight, an important consideration on our not terribly robust brick buildings, and quick to construct. The additional volume from the upper sloping roof provides space for insulation, a water tank, and passive ventilation, keeping things cooler in the summer. Conversely, the flat topped models typically use heavy steel, imposing a heavy load on our buildings, don't have the extra space for passive ventilation so they tend to be hotter in the summer, can take longer to construct and be prone to leaking.

Mortgage and insurance companies are taking notice; some refusing to provide a mortgage if the flat roof area is greater than 25% of the overall roof space, or charging higher insurance premiums for flat roofs. We've pointed out these factors to Westminster who seem to have favoured flat

topped mansards in our area, without considering the earlier existing historic "true" mansards on our streets and current environmental considerations. Once our Plan is adopted, we'll have more control over the design of our buildings and their extensions.



*Double pitched mansards in the foreground, flat topped ones at left in the background.*

## Events



### **Barbecue in Shrewsbury Gardens**

With the renovations to Shrewsbury Gardens scheduled to be completed by the end of March, and thanks to the generous sponsorship of Chesterton Estate Agents who have offered to host an event for the neighbourhood, we are provisionally planning a

#### **Barbecue in the Park**

to take place in April, Covid situation allowing.

# 2021 Front Garden Competition Winner

Delicate flowers, imposing cacti, vigorous flowering shrubs, miniature trees, this garden offers a bit of everything yet remains beautifully balanced. The varying shades, shapes, and colours have been thoughtfully composed but the overall effect remains natural and inviting. A large planting bed overflowing with shrubs and flowers provides a perfect screen against street noise and allows for natural drainage. The many flowering pots leading to the entrance soften the hard surfaces and delight the eye with their painterly composition. A great example of what can be achieved with limited space and thoughtful planning. Congratulations to this year's winner at 20 Artesian Road!





## Membership

Membership is open to both residents and business owners in our area. Our local businesses supply vital goods and services in convenient proximity to all of us and we are keen to support their efforts. We would welcome a local business owner on our steering committee to make sure that our consultation responses and Neighbourhood Plan policies take into account their concerns. If you are a local business owner and would like to get more involved, please send us an email.

### Notting Hill East Neighbourhood Forum Membership

I certify that I live, work, or have a relevant interest in the Notting Hill East Neighbourhood Forum area.

Signed:.....Print Name .....

Address..... tick if business owner or worker ( )

Email..... and/or Phone Number .....

Please fill this in as legibly as possible, and please give us your address or telephone number so we can contact you if we have any problems with your email.

**If you have any special skills that you would be willing to contribute to the group, please note them here:**

.....

**Membership is open to all in our area, and is free. This form can be filled in and left at 1 St. Stephen's Mews or you can email us the information. Donations are entirely voluntary and will help us to continue to do our work for the neighbourhood. Donation cheques (made payable to WNA) or cash may be posted to, or left, as noted above, with Cye Elliot at 1 St. Stephen's Mews, London, W2 5QZ, or brought to our AGM or other events.**

**Donations can also be transferred directly into our account: Sort Code 60-02-08, Account number 7861-4023. If you choose to do this online, please reference your surname, street number and street name, (very important) and please drop us an email to let us know you wish to be a member.**

***[nottinghilleastnf@gmail.com](mailto:nottinghilleastnf@gmail.com)***

## Really Useful List

*Experienced decorator and paper hanger, with degree in interior design. Excellent results.*

Rupert Rutherford - 07982 849706 or 0208 743 1844

*Recommended by Sheila Keating*

### **Plumber**

Alpine Plumbers LTC, Felix Marco 07957 294830 Gas Safe

*Recommended by Suzanne Forte*

### **Garden Builder and also Christmas Trees**

Hew Stevenson, Shoots and Leaves 0208 563 7733 [www.shootsandleaves.co.uk](http://www.shootsandleaves.co.uk)

*Recommended by Suzanne Forte*

### **Window Cleaner**

Marcin Woznica (Martin) 07736-442964

*Recommended by Eleanor Robbins*

### **Plumber**

Elgan Davies 07870 161434

*Recommended by Sarmila Bose*

**Thai Massage. Firm professional approach and wonderful benefits**

Om -14 Chepstow Road

*Recommended by Richard Perkins*

### **Carpenter**

Quart Construction/Robert Krupa  
07922 243229

[robert.s.krupa@gmail.com](mailto:robert.s.krupa@gmail.com)

*Recommended by Teresa Tsakok*

If anyone wishes to recommend a good service provider, please email us at:

[nottinghilleastnf@gmail.com](mailto:nottinghilleastnf@gmail.com)

## Annual General Meeting

*(Once again, our AGM was postponed due to Covid.  
We will contact you all when we have a date for 2022.)*

Would you like to join the steering committee? If so the AGM is the time to put yourself forward for election. You can do so at the meeting, or you can send us an email a little in advance of the meeting expressing your interest - you will need a nominator and seconder. If you are new to the neighbourhood and finding a nominator would be difficult, please email us.

We hope to see you all soon!

[www.nottinghilleast.org.uk](http://www.nottinghilleast.org.uk)  
[nottinghilleastnf@gmail.com](mailto:nottinghilleastnf@gmail.com)



Chairman - Richard Perkins  
Vice-Chairman - Penny Bagnall-Smith  
Secretary - Annabel Noth  
Treasurer - Glenn Taylor  
Website - Steven Clutton

Planning - Andrew Pilkington and David Rea  
Liaison with Westminster Forums - Suzanne Forte  
Membership - Annabel Noth, Jessica Staddon

Planning application reviews - Andrew Pilkington, David Rea,  
Penny Bagnall-Smith

Neighbourhood Plan sub-committee - Richard Perkins,  
Suzanne Forte, Andrew Pilkington, David Rea,  
Steven Clutton and Penny Bagnall-Smith.