

THE BELGRAVIA SOCIETY MAGAZINE

ISSUE 80 | JANUARY 2022

THE ONLY
INDEPENDENT
VOICE FOR
BELGRAVIA

STANDING UP FOR LEASEHOLDERS

NICKIE AIKEN MP ANNOUNCES
LIGHT AT THE END OF THE
TUNNEL FOR LEASEHOLDERS

REWRITING HISTORY?

MARY REGNIER-LEIGH
DISCUSSES THE FUTURE
— AND THE HISTORY BEHIND —
OUR STATUES

POST-PANDEMIC

CLLR RACHAEL ROBATHAN LAYS OUT
WHAT'S IN STORE FOR WESTMINSTER
POST-COVID





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Welcome to The Belgravia Society magazine, covering all aspects of village life in Belgravia and beyond.

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www.fredd.co.uk

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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



George Waite
Chairman of
The Belgravia Society
and ESRA

OBJECTIONS TO PLANNING APPLICATIONS, TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE, AND IT IS THE NUMBERS THAT COUNT

This Society recently (15th December 2021) received notice of a planning application for a basement extension and sub-basement at 25 Chester Row (21/07930/FULL, 21/07931/LBC, (sub-basement) 21/07844/FULL, 21/07845/LBC (basement extension). We were subsequently contacted by a group of local residents regarding the application, who had contacted WCC's Planning Officer to enquire if they could attach strict working conditions to the works or preferably stop them entirely.

Their main concern is that they were aware of building and road collapses due to sub-basements (e.g., 5 Chester Row in 2010), added to which the proposed works would involve long work schedules, noise and pollution.

They also asked WCC Planning whether there was time to engage a planning consultant, at their expense, for the sub-basement proposal to raise objections to the development and were advised to make their comments as soon as possible as the application is currently being considered.

This is a classic example of the need to react quickly to planning applications, however, it is also necessary to ensure that objections are on recognised grounds. For example, the impact of construction work is not a valid reason for objection (see the WCC Planning website for 'planning permission grounds for objection'). This Society has submitted a formal objection to this planning application as, I understand, will the Belgravia Neighbourhood Forum. However, it is the number of objections that counts, and it does work.

This Society also objected to the recent application to convert a Grade 1 residential property at 38 Belgrave Square into a Members' Wellness Club (*sui generis*). Local residents had contacted us for advice and help. We advised them all to individually object to the application as well. Local Councillors, Leader of the Council, Cllr Rachael Robathan objected, and Councillor Elisabeth Hitchcock not only objected but spoke at the Planning hearing as did our own representative. WCC rejected the application.

If you would like to comment on the Chester Row planning application, or any other application you can do so preferably online on the WCC website or email to southplanningteam@westminster.gov.uk. Please reference the planning application numbers you are objecting to (Listed Building Consent and FULL validated application for each) and add the name of the WCC Planning Officer in the subject (the Planning Officer for 25 Chester Row is Zulekha Hosenally).

This Society promises to serve the community of Belgravia in all aspects of local life. To celebrate the past, improve the present and engage the future. Thank you for your support. ▲

STANDING UP FOR LEASEHOLDERS

BY NICKIE AIKEN MP

For many leaseholders across the Two Cities, the last four and half years, since the Grenfell Tower tragedy, have been incredibly challenging. Many local people have faced immense uncertainty over safety issues, and spiralling costs through no fault of their own.

Since becoming your MP in 2019, I have met Ministers and colleagues, including Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Levelling Up, and I have spoken in the House of Commons to highlight your concerns, especially how the previous approach placed an unfair burden on leaseholders. It has been incredibly important to me to push for a proposal that protects leaseholders and makes developers or building owners pay. I was, therefore, delighted to hear the building safety announcement by the Secretary of State on Monday 10th January which will do exactly that; protect leaseholders and make developers pay. I believe this to be a major step forward in this sorry saga.

The government has confirmed the proposed loan scheme for leaseholders in 11-18 metre high flats will be scrapped. The industry has been given two months to come forward with a fully-funded plan of action, including remediation of unsafe cladding on buildings, or the government will impose a solution in law. This action guarantees that no leaseholder living in their own flat will pay a penny to fix dangerous cladding.



Nikki Aiken MP

I am also pleased to report good news on the dreaded External Wall System (EWS) forms, which had previously stopped homeowners from selling their properties, and I know created major problems for a number of you. In the tiny number of buildings where valuers deem the forms necessary, which between April and September 2021 were fewer than 1 in 10 mortgage valuations, an indemnity scheme for building assessors will be introduced and give assessors greater confidence to exercise professional judgement. The government will also begin auditing building assessments to make sure expensive remediation is only being advised where necessary to remove a threat to life.

Amendments will now be brought forward to the Building Safety Bill which will retrospectively extend the legal right of building owners and leaseholders to demand compensation from their building's developer for safety defects up to 30 years old, up from the current 15 years outlined in the Bill, allowing thousands more leaseholders the right to challenge. The last four and half years have been incredibly tough, and I'm very sorry to the thousands of you who have been affected across Belgravia and the Two Cities. This plan guarantees that no leaseholder living in a medium-rise building will pay a penny to fix dangerous cladding and that those responsible will finally be held to account. ▲

A POST PANDEMIC WORLD FOR WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL

**BY CLLR RACHAEL ROBATHAN
LEADER OF WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL**

As you read this, the latest pandemic restrictions are lifting as the country emerges from the shadow of COVID. We will keep supporting the NHS with the vaccination programme across Westminster, but at City Hall, there is a renewed focus on delivering our key priorities – providing residents with excellent services while helping our businesses support jobs for local people.

It is a time of economic uncertainty with pressure on household budgets and the possibility of higher energy bills on the way. The Council is working with experts who can give advice (our website provides more help).

One cost the Council can help to control is the Council Tax. I am committed to ensuring Westminster's Council Tax remains the lowest in the country, as any increase hits those on lower incomes the hardest.

Residents tell me that homelessness, feeling safe and clean streets are particular concerns. One of the most heartbreaking sights in our City are people living on pavements, and we leave no stone unturned in supporting them away from rough sleeping, spending £7m a year on services. We will keep working around the clock to provide accommodation and help with addiction.

Safety is a concern, particularly among women. As the mother of a 22-year-old daughter, it's something I understand. To provide more reassurance, our Soho Angels



scheme is expanding to the busiest parts of Westminster while police are putting extra officers on the streets.

Clean streets remain a priority. Belgravia and Pimlico residents will continue to get three waste collections a week – more than our neighbouring boroughs – along with increased bulky waste pick-ups and an expanded food recycling service, and all for the lowest Council Tax in the UK.

The streets are getting greener. We are adding a further 500 electric vehicle charging points to the 1,000 already operating and green thinking underpins everything we do, for example, at Ebury Bridge estate, where 780 new homes will use 90 per cent less carbon.

These are the priorities we are focused on for 2022 – restoring our City and supporting residents in a post-Pandemic world. ▲



ST BARNABAS CHURCH **A BELGRAVIAN** **TREASURE**

MARY REGNIER-LEIGH

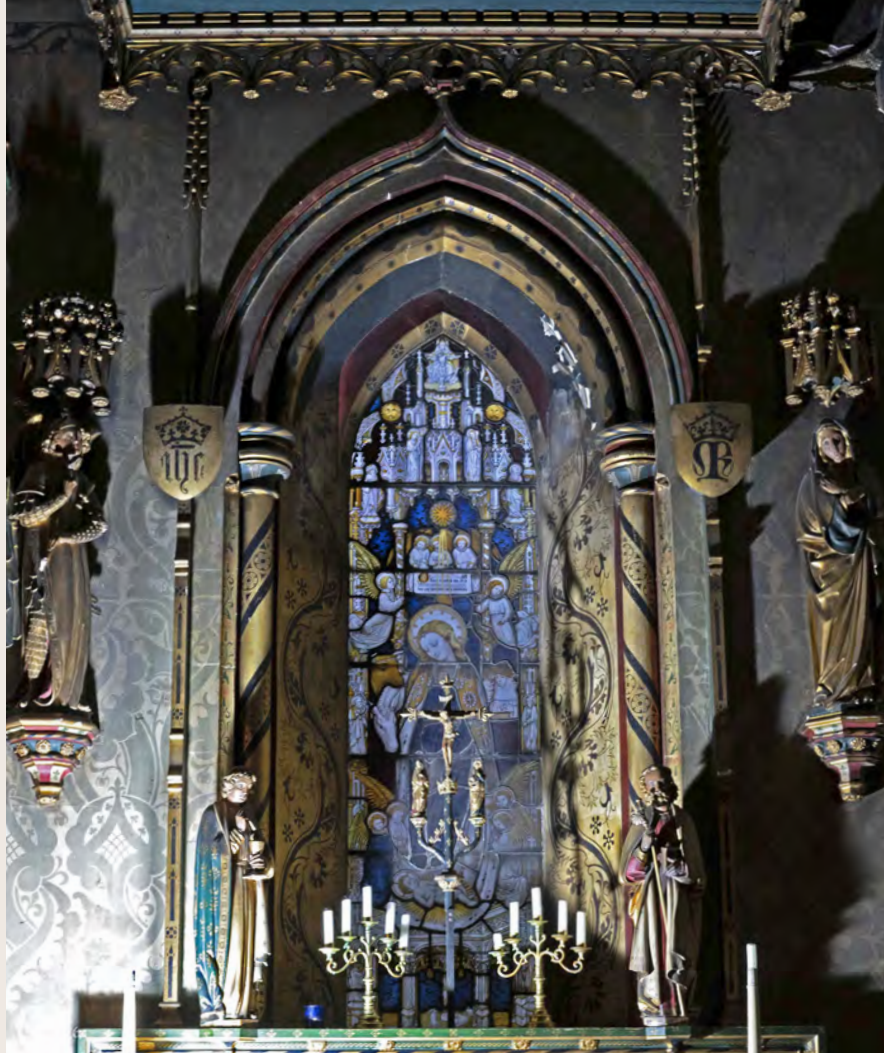
St Barnabas Church is just off the Pimlico Road, and has been serving the people of the district since 1850, having been carved out of the historic parishes of St Paul's Knightsbridge and, prior to that, St George's Hanover Square. As a Grade 1 listed building with historic links with the Oxford Movement, the Church continues to serve the needs of its diverse local community.

This is one of the most beautiful of the 1,000 Anglican churches in London and well deserves its Grade 1 listing. There is a very interesting leaflet guide which is available for visitors.

The interior of the Church is incredibly beautiful. As you enter the Church you will see the memorial to those who died in the Great War and the impressive statue of St Barnabas. St Barnabas was the first church where the ideals and beliefs of what came to be known as the Anglo-Catholic movement were embodied in its architecture and liturgy.

On entering, you can also see the richly carved Roon Screen, designed in 1906 and, at each side, figures of the archangels, Gabriel and Raphael. The finely wrought brass gates are from the original screen of 1850.

To the right is the entrance to the Lady Chapel, regarded as one of the great glories of the Church. It is entirely the work of Sir Ninian Comper and is a memorial to Fr Alfred Gurney (1879-1898) who was the third vicar of St Barnabas.



The Lady Chapel

*Spending an hour or
two at St Barnabas
would add some sense
of awe to your day*

Basil Harwood Howard (1859-1949) was an organist and composer in the English Church music tradition, best known today for his liturgical works. The music was reflected in the teaching of youngsters whose performance and achievements were exceptional. The Church also has its own primary school, which has a very strong belief in the value of music education to the diverse community it serves. Children have achieved music scholarships to Latimer and Godolphin.



Roon Screen



Basil Harwood Howard (1859-1949)

Father John Pearson-Hicks, the Parish Priest, has been telling us about the needs of the Church. “We are now entering a period where we need to raise significant sums to preserve and develop this beautiful building. Our external stonework (except for the spire which was rebuilt in 2006-7) is in desperate need of repairs.”

The fabric of the building and facilities need to be upgraded and or completely replaced, and they have yet to cost the remedial work to the stonework. The organ, a gift to replace a previous organ in 1849 is now in a very poor state. Father John tells us that, at the moment, they are currently using a temporary digital organ. The Church is seeking donations for the relighting/rewiring as well as for the

external stone works and organ. Donations can be made to the Fabric Fund stipulating which project you would like to support.

Spending an hour or two at St Barnabas would add to your knowledge of this remarkable and not very well known Church and be likely to add some sense of awe to your day. ▲

For more information:

www.stbarnabaspimlico.com/church-guide

EDITOR'S NOTE

As part of St Barnabas' efforts to raise funds, a drinks party is to be held, at a date to be fixed, when plans for the restoration of the Church will be presented. This will be a splendid opportunity to see the Church and be able to ask questions about it. Watch out for the date.



WHAT FUTURE FOR STATUES?

We reported in November that the Christopher Columbus statue in Belgrave Square had been vandalised by red paint being poured over it. The hoarding round the statue has now been removed. At a quick glance it is good to see it restored. However, closer examination, as our photographs disclose, shows red paint is still visible, especially around the head.

No doubt you will have read about the individuals who pulled down the Colston statue in Bristol. Despite their obvious guilt, the jury did not convict them, calling into question issues about whether the idea of juries is outdated. Juries are a bit like Churchill's view of democracy – “a damn bad system but nobody's thought of anything better!” The outcome will inevitably lead to more juries taking a view inconsistent with evidence and the law.

We need to remember: Firstly, slavery has been a societal way of life for as long as mankind has recorded history in all societies. Secondly, we cannot judge Colston by the standards of today. His mores were as a man of his times – as was the common view. Thirdly, we should remember Colston also supported schools, the poor, alms houses, hospitals and the like. He gave to charitable causes in excess of £5½ m in today's money. Fourthly, slavery has never been lawful in the United Kingdom.

The abolition of slavery was the enterprise of the United Kingdom before anyone else. The Abolition of the Slave Trade Act of 1807 made it illegal for British participation in the trade. The effort to stop the trade in human trafficking of other nations such as France, Spain and Portugal was given to the Royal Navy. Vessels were sent to police the

*You cannot rewrite
history with half
truths and simple
ignorance*

West African coast and release enslaved Africans on board those ships. The ships covered the coastline from Sierra Leone to Angola and some 1,600 slavers ships were intercepted by the Royal Navy between 1807 and 1867. It is estimated that the cost of British operations of the West African coast involved up to 2,036 vessels and more than 4,000 men, costing an estimated half of all naval spending – between 1% and 2% of British government expenditure. Some 2,000 British sailors died in the battle to end the trade.

You cannot re-write history by vandalising statues or undermining this country's proud achievements with half truths and simple ignorance. What is it that enables these vandals to find time to damage statues and virtue signal anger at wrongs that cannot be put right, while ignoring of trafficking of



Close up of the head of the statue showing traces of red paint still in evidence

modern slaves, women and children, and neglecting the poor and needy around us?

We need to remember the good done by people who we may condemn today. We all acknowledge that slavery is a vile and evil trade – but it still exists. Shakespeare's quote from Mark Anthony referring to Julius Caesar seems apposite: "The evil that men do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones." ▲



INVITATION TO THE NEXT SOCIETY COMMITTEE MEETING

We would be delighted for you to join our video meeting.
Please let us know by email if you wish to be linked in:

info@thebelgrviasociety.com

We can only accept a limited number, so first come, first served.

Our next video meeting is 8th February 2022



If you have a CAF account, IT is an easy way to donate to the society. Please do help us to maintain our work for belgravia, and our community magazine.

SUPERCAR ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN KNIGHTSBRIDGE & BELGRAVIA WARDS



As many of you know, vehicle-based Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) offences occur frequently in the Kensington and Knightsbridge areas. These include “car meets” where extremes of ASB occur. Spinning wheels and dangerous turns cause loud and disturbing noise, with revving engines and exhaust popping. We can hear similar activities close to and in Ebury Street and other locations but, thankfully, not to the same extent.

After the last large gathering on Boxing Day the Police planned for an operation at the weekend to target potential car meets as well as other vehicle-based ASB offences. This operation involved officers from both the Westminster and RBKC Safer Neighbourhood Teams as well as our colleagues from the Road Transport Policing Command. The Police could not be certain where the “meet” would take place. To ensure the officers were effectively utilised, they also planned a more general stop site at Addison Road in Kensington, as that road has had ongoing issues with cars racing. The Police kept away from Exhibition Road where they expected the mass meet to take place, in order to watch and give them the chance to be caught in the act.

On the Friday evening there was no car meet but, as a result of the stopping in Addison Road they made three arrests, two failed roadside drug tests, and one man was wanted for robbery. Three vehicles were seized, two having no insurance and the third stolen, as well as other traffic offences.

On Saturday evening, they stopped cars in Addison Street. Around 11pm they became aware of vehicles gathering near the London Eye so plain clothed traffic units monitored them. The cars left the location and crossed into Westminster arriving at Exhibition Road just before midnight. The police took no immediate obvious action but put plain clothed officers on foot in Exhibition Road to monitor the activities and importantly gather evidence of the actions of vehicles.

The Police have powers to warn car owners that their cars can be seized if they are caught again, and drivers can be issued Community Protection Notice Warnings. One vehicle had already had a warning and was seized and approximately 36 received warnings. Once the Police look through the videos they took, it may be that they will see from number plates that the cars have had previous warnings and they can therefore be seized. The situation will be monitored in the coming weeks. ▲

MADRAS TO MOTCOMB STREET



Motcomb Street today

BY PETER WYETH

Ernest Race was arguably Britain's best post-war designer, known for the Antelope chair used at the Festival of Britain in 1951, but began his career in Motcomb Street.

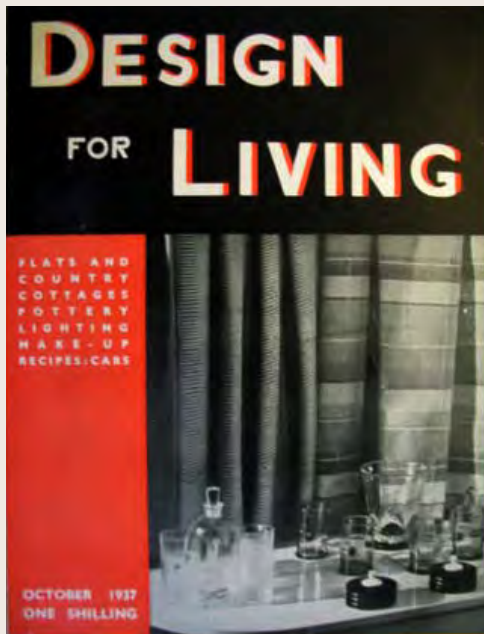
Race's aunt, Blanche Tweddle, a much-loved but 'formidable' missionary in India, made one of her periodic visits home in 1937. The upshot of her visit was that he accompanied her on the trip back to a weaving village near Madras called Ikadu Village Industries, in which she had been involved for many years and Race had grown up with their fabrics in his home.

The purpose of his visit was to source fabrics, and he worked with the traditional weaving methods, adding his own designs and colour combinations to produce abstract patterns, with a variety of textures in sequences and colours.

After four months, he returned to England and opened an interiors shop in Motcomb Street, selling his Ikadu fabrics.

The shop address, 4a, is only a doorway between shops, and the photographs suggest that Race took a back room with a side window rather than a much more costly street frontage for his 'showroom'.

Beside selling his own fabric designs, he also made them available to other retailers as Indian cotton attracted practically no duty due to 'Imperial preference' and could be sold at very competitive prices. Race also had many young architect friends and was able to build up the contract side of the business as well as the retail side. There is a photograph of an exhibition stand: 'The India Exhibition', featuring a name card in the foreground, which survives as artwork.



Design for Living, October 1937



Left: Montage of showroom photograph with logo sketch

Another piece of artwork montages a showroom photograph with a logo sketch (top right).

He also took ads in an interiors magazine – *Design for Living* – that featured Race designs on the Sept and Oct 1937 covers, and featured the fabrics under ‘News of New Designs’ (top left).

Race was all too conscious of the depths to which the British domestic arts had sunk by the mid ‘30s. Heal’s in London, Dunn’s in Bromley, and Gane’s in Bristol were about the only retailers of modern design in Britain; islands in a sea of indifference or hostility towards the modern. Race also stocked avant-garde furniture by Makers of Simple Furniture, whose founder, Gerald Summers, designed the modernist masterpiece one-piece bent-ply chair of 1934.

The fabrics Race produced were taken up by the architects Maxwell Fry and Walter Gropius, whom the former had invited to join his firm after he fled Nazi Germany, and were considered a great find by the avant-



A cushion, covered in one of Race’s original fabrics

garde of the thirties. A cushion, made from one of the original fabrics, survives (above).

The simplicity and emphasis on texture of the cushion shows a similar reserve to Race’s later furniture design, and should be seen in the context of floral and other ‘busy’ designs that were more the norm at that time. In the England of the day, such lack of ornamentation was quite radical, and it all began in 4a. ▲



EXERCISE IN BELGRAVIA

We noticed an item distributed by Grosvenor, highlighting the available places for exercise in Belgravia. It caused us to reflect on the need for exercise and its benefits.

Grosvenor listed three high class hotels with gyms and spa facilities. There is the Light Centre in Eccleston Street which is a destination offering holistic wellness and various therapies and services. Hotpod Yoga can be found in their Eccleston Yards studio, and we understand it is Europe's



Belgrave Square

biggest yoga business. Barry's Gym is also in Eccleston Yards. It is also an import, this time from Los Angeles to London. It offers tough 50-60 minute workout classes. Grosvenor also mentions Re:mind, also in Eccleston Yards, and The Meditation Studio, perfect for calming down at the end of a busy day.

Grosvenor omitted to mention their own outdoor gym facilities in Belgrave Square. Exercising regularly lowers the risk of developing some diseases, including



Home gym

obesity, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and other health problems. Exercise can also help keep your body at a healthy weight, and can keep you well into old age, lowering the risk of early death. The UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines (on GOV.UK) state that adults should try to be active every day and aim to do at least 150 minutes of physical activity over a week, through a variety of activities.

One of the best forms of exercise is walking – and it is free. Where better to walk than in Belgravia? In our beautiful Regency streets we can see the very pinnacle of urban architecture of the 18th and 19th centuries. Most of Belgravia is protected by having many listed buildings and being in conservation areas. We need to enjoy it while we can, as commercial interests are pressing in on the area and could see it change from a peaceful, residential village to one we hardly recognise.

We also have easy access to Hyde Park, St James's Park, Green Park and Kensington Gardens, all within easy reach and wonderful places to walk.

Another way of enjoying the convenience of gym exercise is the one followed by your editor. Being fed up with going to the gym, she repurposed her increasingly little used dining room into a gym. It has a full sized cross-trainer, swiss ball, lifting weights and other sundry gym items. It is used daily (do not overdo it though as you can harm yourself) and was a real boon during lockdown. In addition, it is possible to use your gym for other household purposes.

We can be sure that we do not have any excuse for not being fit and Belgravia is well served. ▲

EVERY LITTLE HELPS – amazon smile

If any of our readers are Amazon customers and have not signed up yet to their charitable "Smile" scheme you should note that The Belgravia Society is now a member. Amazon will contribute 0.5% out of any purchase you make. It may not be a lot on its own, but little sums add up and we need donations to fund our magazine and other activities.

All you need to do to join the scheme is go to Smile.Amazon.co.uk. You can then put our full name – "The Belgravia Society" – in the search box and confirm.

That's all there is to it. When you next go into Amazon type in "Smile.Amazon" instead of just "Amazon", then just carry on as normal. Nothing else is necessary. The donation is automatic on completion of any purchase.

THE NEW HIGHWAY CODE

BY ANDREW GEDDES



Car drivers are facing even more difficulties (bearing in mind that Westminster Council figures show that in 2021 only about 28% of Westminster households actually own a car which is down from 44% 20 years ago).

Given the reduction in car ownership, does it get better for cyclists? The new Highway Code encourages them to ride two-abreast so they are more likely to be seen. Motorists are required to leave 1.5 metres (almost 5 feet) when overtaking. While most would think that, after so much space and money has been devoted to cyclists, they should use a cycle track if it exists, the new Highway Code says they will not be obliged to.

As the AA noted a few weeks ago, only a minority of drivers are aware of the new priorities to be established by a re-vamp of The Highway Code which has been placed before Parliament with a deadline of 29th January. If there are no objections, this will

then be adopted as the new Highway Code. This establishes and reminds drivers that the right-of-way priority will be 1) riders on horseback, 2) Pedestrians, 3) cyclists, and 4) vehicular traffic. This means if a driver is turning off into a side road, he/she will have to give way to a pedestrian who may still be standing on the kerb looking for an opportunity to cross, rather than, as in the past, while they are actually already on the road crossing.

The fixed penalty for using a mobile phone while driving will rise to £200 + 6 penalty points on the licence. One trial of a special new camera designed to catch such infractions apparently caught 15,000 drivers. Suggestions are that such an endorsement might also raise insurance costs. Driving penalties such as running red lights, parking on Red Routes, stopping in a yellow box, will rise from £130 to £160. It seems the long arm of inflation hits fines as well. ▲



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- Advice where possible on planning issues
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online-membership-form](http://www.thebelgrviasociety.com/online-membership-form)**

Please fill in the online form by clicking on the link above. Alternatively, print the application form on page 23 and post your completed form to 63 Belgravia Court, 33 Ebury Street London SW1W 0NY

WANTED!

Writers | Historians | Story tellers

Do you enjoy writing? We would be delighted to receive articles & short stories about Belgravia/our neighbours/London & beyond – all voluntary, of course.

Discuss your ideas with us:
info@belgrviasociety.com

NEWS FROM THE COUNCILLORS AND THE WARDS

OUR COUNCILLORS FROM KNIGHTSBRIDGE & BELGRAVIA AND PIMLICO WARWICK WARDS HAVE BEEN KEEPING US FULLY INFORMED ABOUT WHAT HAS BEEN GOING ON IN WESTMINSTER

KENSINGTON & BELGRAVIA WARD



Elizabeth Hitchcock



Rachael Robathan



Tony Devenish

PIMLICO WARWICK WARD



Christabel Flight



Jacqui Wilkinson



Nickie Aiken

WESTMINSTER COUNCIL ACTION

SUPERCAR AND OTHER CAR ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR



You will have read above about the Police action relating to supercars. WCC acoustic cameras have been installed. They are governed by a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO). This gives powers of prosecution in two areas, which are Waterloo Place and Exhibition Road. Hopefully, they will have a deterrent effect and that in the event of any antisocial behaviour, the cameras can help pick up the numberplates and might lead to warnings or actual confiscation of vehicles. WCC say if you

know of any other areas where vehicle noise is a problem you should let them know. We suggest you should let your Councillors know as well.

ROUGH SLEEPING



There is fantastic work being done by outreach teams in charitable organisations appointed by Westminster City Council. The numbers of people still rough sleeping on the street were low over the Christmas period. Outreach teams successfully helped several rough sleepers into accommodation and reconnected some with their families.

There are still a few areas where those rough sleepers, who are reluctant to accept offers of help, still gather. The offers of support that have been made to them remain in place.

The Council also continues to work with the police for them to act against the criminals, particularly drug dealers, who target this vulnerable population. Tackling rough sleeping, and issues associated with it, remains one of Westminster City Council's top priorities.

KNIGHTSBRIDGE AND BELGRAVIA WARD

PLANNING ENFORCEMENT OFFICER

Great news for the ward. Our ward Councillors have secured funding to hire a planning enforcement officer who will work exclusively in the ward. This now means, when you have a problem with the way builders are behaving, or you see something which you think has not had planning permission, or is not being done in accordance with planning permission, you can instantly report it and get a response to enforce the rules and regulations. The officer is Rei Sangha. She has an excellent understanding of planning enforcement and has previously worked for WCC in the planning department.

STREET INSPECTION



The Councillors were accompanied by senior city inspectors, John Whelan and Paul Kane. This makes sure that problems can be spotted and repairs done.

PIMLICO/WARWICK



Councillor Christabel Flight with volunteer helpers Ed Pitt Ford and Councillor Jim Glen delivered hampers to the over eighties, particularly those who are housebound.

This was an initiative she set up with The Sir Simon Milton Foundation eight years ago and happily, in part due to the impact of COVID, others including Westminster Council are now joining in.

You will remember that Councillor Flight is responsible for the elderly in WCC. Sadly, we understand that she is retiring from the Council.

Christabel said: "In addition to surprising our elderly residents with Christmas hampers, I joined Westminster City Council Officers from the Adults Department in visiting many of Westminster Care Homes where we stood outside serenading residents with a selection of carols. It was much enjoyed by all!" ▲



GREENER & GREENER



After COP26 what about the area which interests most of us, Westminster, which has notoriously poor air quality? The Council is holding an event (partly in person and partly online) on Thursday 27th January from 6.30pm, “Greener and Cleaner”, to discuss what more can be done in our borough.

So far they have been very good at policy statements but we have yet to see more enforcement of the anti-idling campaign, enforcement of the 20 mph limit, better cycle tracks and maybe even a few LTN’s (Low Traffic Neighbourhoods) to cut down on rat-running. However, we can celebrate the recent establishment of 12 Westminster school streets where the street is closed to traffic for one hour in the morning and one in the afternoon.

The government has announced new funding for the national project for walking and cycling, strongly supported by 1992 Barcelona Olympic gold cyclist Chris Boardman. Interestingly £300,000 of this is to be earmarked for e-cargobikes. E-cargobikes has seen an explosion in use in the last two years. This fund is usually managed by the Energy Saving Trust (EST) and, as reported in a previous Belgravia Society Magazine, was so over-

subscribed in the last round that they had to close applications within four weeks of the opening. At the time of going to press, this funding was not yet showing on the EST website but according to EST will be announced on 24th January 2022.

There is another possibility for greener travel. New eco-friendly Thames river buses are set to begin operating this year from Battersea. Uber Boat by Thames Clippers is building the UK’s first hybrid high speed passenger ferries which are set to launch this autumn and in the spring of next year. The hybrid design will allow their two new vessels to operate solely on battery power while transporting commuters and sightseers between Tower and Battersea Power Station piers – and recharge while using bio-fuel power outside their central London route.

Thames Clippers say, “As a business, we are continuing to embrace the emerging technological advances that will see us continue to develop our fleet and infrastructure, thereby supporting a sustainable future in our industry.”

Given the open air and the guaranteed travel time this may indeed be a good and safe way to travel from Westminster to the City. ▲



COUNCILLORS' SURGERIES AND CONTACT DETAILS

KNIGHTSBRIDGE & BELGRAVIA WARD

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Cllr Rachel Robathan (Con) | leader@westminster.gov.uk |
| Cllr Tony Devenish (Con) | tony.devenish@london.gov.uk |
| Cllr Elizabeth Hitchcock (Con) | ehitchcock@westminster.gov.uk |
| Tel no for all | 020 7641 3411 |

Surgeries by telephone only for the time being. Please telephone 020 7641 3411.

WARWICK WARD

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Cllr Christabel Flight (Con) | cflight@westminster.gov.uk |
| Cllr Nickie Aiken (Con) | nickie.aiken.mp@parliament.uk |
| Cllr Jacqui Wilkinson (Con) | jwilkinson@westminster.gov.uk |
| Tel no for Cllr Aiken | 020 7641 3255 |
| Tel no for Cllrs Flight and Wilkinson | 020 7641 3411 |

Surgeries by telephone only until further notice. For the time being, please use telephone number 020 7641 5377.

CHURCHILL WARD

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|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Cllr Murad Gassanly (Con) | mgassanly@westminster.gov.uk |
| Tel no | 020 7641 5377 |

If you require help and/or support with a problem, email Councillor Gassanly or call at the above telephone number. Councillor Gassanly's monthly drop-in advice surgeries (City of Westminster Housing South Area Advice Centre, 137 Lupus Street, London SW1V 3HE) are currently on hold. Call or email for information.

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|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Cllr Shamim Talukder (Lab) | stalukder@westminster.gov.uk |
| Tel no | 020 7641 4299 |

Surgeries, usually held on the second Thursday of the month, 7-8pm, are currently on hold. Please call or email for updates.

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| Postal address for all Councillors: | Westminster City Hall 64 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6QP |
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Registered Charity No: 1168619
An amenity society recognised by the City of Westminster

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Membership is open to residents and non-residents and is free

Name email

Second name (if any) email

Address.....

.....

Telephone: Home..... Work

Mobile Date

By signing this Application I CONSENT and AGREE to The Belgravia Society sending emails to me until I unsubscribe or resign from the Society.

Signature(s):

Please let us know if you have any special interests, concerns or queries:

PLEASE RETURN THIS APPLICATION FORM TO THE PERSON WHO GAVE IT TO YOU OR EMAIL TO: info@thebelgraviasociety.com
OR POST TO: 63 BELGRAVIA COURT 33 EBURY STREET LONDON SW1W 0NY

Gift Aid declaration – for past, present and future

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts made:

Please tick all boxes you wish to apply.

- Today In the past 4 years In the future



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Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate. Gift Aid is reclaimed by the Charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

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ADDRESS

Please notify the charity or CASC if you:

- Want to cancel this declaration Change your name or home address No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

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OR POST TO: 63 BELGRAVIA COURT 33 EBURY STREET LONDON SW1W 0NY



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