

THE BRIXTON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Difficult Times

Normally we would issue a full edition of our newsletter at this time, to report on what we have been doing, air some local issues, rediscover some local history and flag up coming events. But these are difficult times – even if the printers are still at work, dare we ask our volunteer distributors to come to your door, and a dozen more nearby?

We can communicate with most of our members and kindred groups by e-mail, so this mini-newsletter is only for those without e-mail, and a few more who had provided a contact which no longer works. If you do have a current e-mail address, please tell us via info@brixtonsociety.org.uk

Meetings Programme

Our monthly committee meetings are suspended for the time being, and the Vida Walsh Centre is closed.

We agreed to delay our Annual General Meeting and **Social** to Thursday 9th July, but even that is now in doubt. Already the **Lambeth Country Show**, where we have always had a presence, has been deferred to next year, like the Olympics.

We are more hopeful about the **Lambeth Heritage Festival**, due to run through the whole month of September, but we will try to keep you informed as our plans adapt.



We recently fed comments into the Liveable Streets consultation, focussed on Ferndale Road (above), Railton and Loughborough/Barrington Roads. (January 2019, IMG8974.jpg)

“You’ll never walk alone”

- Now you may have to!

The Coronavirus epidemic blew up just after the Lambeth Local History Forum had published the 2020 local history walks leaflet. It includes all the walks planned by ourselves, other local walks such as the ones run by the Friends of Windmill Gardens, plus very many other interesting walks through the borough and just beyond.

Although you will find a copy enclosed with this newsletter, we must remind you that all these **walks are suspended** until current restrictions are lifted. Dates run through to March next year, and so we expect to pick up part way through the programme once it’s safe to do so. However, for walks provided by other groups, we advise you to check with the organisers first, in case of changes.

By now you may be looking for an opportunity to get some exercise and stave off “cabin fever”. Some years ago, we printed a compilation of **Brixton Heritage Trails**, which still form the basis of some of our walks each summer. The book was intended to provide self-guided routes, so you could wander through some part of Greater Brixton at a time and pace of your own choosing. Perhaps this is the time to take it down from your bookshelf, or to spend a mere £1.50 on a mint copy? Sadly, we can only supply it through our website at present, that is www.brixtonsociety.org.uk

Notes & News

We have been busy...

Although actual meetings are suspended, we continue to respond to Council consultations and local planning applications. It helps that our Planning sub-committee has been used to operating on a virtual basis for several years now. Here are some recent highlights:

Lambeth Local Plan:

Once again we responded with comments on the latest revision of the borough-wide set of planning policies. Lambeth quickly followed up with some more detailed supplementary planning documents (SPDs). We raised no objections to the SPD on **affordable workspace**, or to the latest charging schedule for **CIL** (Community Infrastructure Levy). We are responding to the **Design Code** SPD, particularly on tall buildings and alterations to existing buildings.

Brixton Liveable Neighbourhoods:

We had a useful presentation of the traffic reduction plans at our February meeting, and have sent comments about the 3 initial areas. A further consultation about Brixton Hill and the Town Centre was due in May but now likely to be delayed.

Towers at Loughborough Junction:

We sent detailed objections to proposals for two towers east of the station, with 29 and 20 storeys respectively.

Popes Road plans by Hondo

We criticised the height of designs shown by Hondo Enterprises, owners of the Brixton Village arcade, to expand onto the site now occupied by Sports Direct.

Shakespeare waste site plans:

Our comments on a proposed housing scheme resulted in the new block being reduced in height, but a formal application is awaited.

Brixton Hill hoardings:

Over the past few years we have challenged a series of applications to replace the hoardings flanking the print works at 116-120 by intrusive digital displays. Decaux are obliged now to remove the southern hoarding, with the life of the northern unit limited to 5 years.

Toilets on Windrush Square?

We were notified that Lambeth will once again invite proposals for the underground toilets. We have reminded them that any plans must include the provision of public toilets, which are desperately lacking from the Town Centre.

Brockwell Hall renovation:

We have commented on the draft conservation plan for the hall and stables, in readiness for a Lottery funding bid later this year.

Planning Applications and Appeals:

The number of actual planning applications notified to us has dwindled in the past month, while appeals may be frozen as a result of recent movement restrictions. Nevertheless, if you hear about something objectionable, do share your concerns with us.

Alan Piper.

Key Contacts

Lambeth Council's helpline for coronavirus issues is (020) 7926 2999. Remember that the new Civic Centre is closed for personal visits, as are libraries and leisure centres. Brixton's street market is presently limited to fruit and vegetable stalls.

There is a separate helpline for businesses, including business rates issues, (020) 7926 2344. The Brixton BID is still operating but their staff are working from home: (020) 3417 7373.

Connect Lambeth is a consortium of local charities, offering help to those who are disabled, or with chronic health conditions. Among other things, they are delivering shopping and medication to those who are housebound: call (020) 7346 6800 and select option 6.

If you have internet access, you can contact us at info@brixtonsociety.org.uk or for town planning issues, you can reach all our planning panel at planning@brixtonsociety.org.uk

Otherwise, write to the Secretary, Alan Piper, at 82 Mayall Road, SE24 0PJ or phone him on (020) 7207 0347 – answerphone available but there is no longer any fax facility.