

Queen's park News

Queen's Park Area Residents' Association

November 2025

CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Alastair Balfour

This year marked my first Queen's Park Day as Chair of QPARA – an occasion that proved both challenging and immensely rewarding. In an age when so much is taken for granted, it was inspiring to witness the dedication of those who give their time and energy to protect, strengthen and celebrate our local community.

At a time when public discourse often feels divided, Queen's Park Day embodies unity and generosity of spirit. Each year, more than 40 local charities and organisations are offered space to raise funds, share information, and engage with residents. The social value of that opportunity is immeasurable.

Behind the scenes, a handful of volunteers plan and deliver every detail of the day. They coordinate marquees, fencing, signage, suppliers, refreshments, and logistics, with support from family members, neighbours, and friends who step forward willingly. Their teamwork, patience, and good humour set the tone for the entire event.

This year's heavy rain at 3pm might easily have dampened spirits, yet as visitors retreated home to a warm cup of tea, the Queen's Park Day team swung into action once more – dismantling and clearing up in cold, wet conditions. Others arrived to lend a hand, and despite the weather, laughter and camaraderie filled the park. What could have been a gloomy end became a shining example of cooperation and resilience.

Reflecting afterwards, I realised that this is what true community looks like. Beyond belonging, kindness and respect lie the quieter virtues that hold us together: selfless service, teamwork, pride and humour in adversity.

I am deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to Queen's Park Day 2025. The event continues to attract thousands of visitors each year and showcases our community at its very best. I warmly encourage all residents to become involved with QPARA, our action groups, or, hopefully, in Queen's Park Day 2026. You will not regret it.

qpark.org.uk

SPLASH PAD FUNDRAISER HITS £12,000

Jennifer Wood, City of London Corporation



DONATE TODAY AND LET'S MAKE A SPLASH TOGETHER

SCAN ME



Help build a Splash Pad in Queen's Park

We're thrilled to share that the Splash Pad fundraising campaign has officially surpassed the £12,000 mark – a fantastic achievement made possible by the generosity and enthusiasm of our local community.

Every contribution has helped bring us closer to our goal of creating a vibrant, inclusive space for children and families to enjoy. The support has been amazing, and we're so grateful to everyone who has helped spread the word and donated so far.

But we're not stopping here! With momentum building, we're now aiming even higher to ensure the Splash Pad is the best it can be. If you haven't yet donated or shared the campaign, there's still time to get involved. Every pound, and every message of support makes a difference.

You can donate to the appeal here:
www.justgiving.com/campaign/makeasplashqueenspark

WELLBEING CAFÉ

Dr Simon Read

I am pleased to report that our weekly project at Lonsdale Medical Centre continues to thrive, with regular performances from local musicians, a DJ, an "open mic" spot for singers, poets and storytellers, and a great line-up of guest speakers. Coming up we have visits from the Chelsea Pensioners, the Royal Palaces, St John Ambulance (for BLS training), and the London Fire Brigade.

We're so lucky to have a team of fantastic volunteers who serve food and drinks, help set up and clear away, and keep everything running smoothly – we couldn't do it without them!

Alongside lovely company, conversation, and music, we now have a weekly fruit hamper from Alfie's Fruit Shed. The Café will soon be evaluated again as part of the Power of Music grant project. We have applied for a community lottery grant with CAD Brent and are continuing to look for other ways to keep the project going. QPARA's support makes a big difference and is hugely appreciated.



QP JUNIOR SINGERS

Queen's Park Junior Singers is a local junior choir for school Years 5-9. The choir provides an exciting opportunity to sing a wide range of music with different ensembles, develop musicianship and music skills and connect with the local community of music makers. They meet most Saturday mornings at St Anne's Salusbury Road.

For more info:

juniors@queensparksingers.uk

This newsletter is produced and delivered to all local households and businesses free of charge by the Queen's Park Area Residents' Association. QPARA is non-sectarian, non-political, non-profit making and has been working for our community since 1973.

QUEEN'S PARK DAY

Carin von Drehle

This was our 48th year, having grown from humble beginnings in 1977 to today's joyful celebration of our local community.



We kicked off with the dog show, and a panoply of furry friends competing for classes like 'Dog With the Waggiest Tail' and 'Dog the Judge Would Most Like to Take Home'. Over in the Competitions Tent thirty-seven versions of cinnamon buns presented a sweet but daunting challenge for the 'Best Adult Baker' judges, who remained enthusiastic to the final bite. A full size 'Made From Cardboard' replica of Taylor Swift's piano was a marvel, although it was pipped to first place by an ingenious money-making machine. Spectacular Ghanaian Acrobats demonstrated feats of human origami – how does that full grown man fold himself into that salad bowl? – delighting young and old. Later, rain threatened the Tug of War but the intrepid teams hove-to with riotous enthusiasm. There were bargains and treasure to be found on the stalls, and 40+ charity and community organisations were there to engage, enlist and fundraise.

Huge thanks to all who helped make the magic happen! It was grand to see so many old and new friends, and gratifying the rain didn't dampen enthusiasm for this special day.

It wasn't only dodgy weather that challenged us this year. Steep new charges for the use of the Park threaten the event. We're in discussion with the CofL, trying to find a compromise which offers the possibility of another 48 years of Queen's Park Days. We hope to see you next year!



PARK NEWS

QPARA Park Liaison, Clare Gillan

As usual the park team has been busy over the summer keeping our park beautifully maintained and running smoothly and events well attended – Shakespeare in the Squares, Kilburn State of Mind and the twice weekly Children's shows in August. Queen's Park also welcomed 3 new goats to the farm: Ivy, Vinnie & Bramble.

Since the end of the bird nesting season (end of September) the team has been trimming the perimeter and tennis court hedges. Work has been done to the older children's playground as parts of the hexagon tyre swing and the zip line have been out of action for some time. The large climbing frame known as the "Timber Tangle" is closed due to rotten timbers. Investigations will establish whether it will be repaired or removed. The bandstand has also had a new lick of paint.

Wildlife monitoring cameras are being regularly set up at night in the Woodland Walk to understand how this habitat is being used and how to enhance it in the future. Areas are being created to reduce footfall and ground compaction and to encourage plants to flourish.

In October applications closed for the Café which has been re-marketed by CofL. We await the outcome.



CHRISTMAS CAROLS

The festive season is fast approaching and a legacy Christmas tree is being planted by the City of London Corporation opposite the café, at the edge of the main field. We look forward to adorning the tree with lights and future generations enjoying it too. Put Saturday 6 December at 3.30pm in your diaries for carol singing in the park outside the café with the Queen's Park Singers. Last year's event was a great success and we look forward to being treated to beautiful carolling again this year. All welcome to join in with the singing. The mulled wine will be flowing!

NEW FUNDING MODEL FOR OUR PARK

Alastair Balfour



The City of London Corporation is undertaking a major reform of how its green space charities – including Queen's Park – are funded, aiming for greater financial resilience, transparency and operational flexibility. This overhaul, known as the Natural Environment Charities Review (NECR), is reshaping the way CofLC supports its parks, woodlands and open spaces across London.

Historically, much of the funding has come from their property investment income, notably through the City's Cash endowment, which underwrites many running costs. Individual charities then supplement their budgets through café rents, room hires, event fees etc. However, rising maintenance costs, inflation and increasing biodiversity demands have placed pressure on this model.

Under the NECR, CofLC is introducing a Grant Funding Model. Instead of automatic "deficit funding" from central resources, charities will receive a defined grant for local operations and will be allowed to retain any surpluses. This approach encourages greater financial autonomy and proactive income generation. From April 2026, Epping Forest and West Ham Park will adopt the new model. It will extend later to the North London open spaces.

Highgate Wood and Queen's Park are managed under a single registered charity. Their annual expenditure is monitored through quarterly reports. A new 5-year business plan will prioritise investment, revenue streams and long-term sustainability.

We are proud that a new splash pad is proposed to replace the disused paddling pool in Queen's Park, and QPARA is supporting the City in their fundraising goals. The budget is estimated to be £380,000 and is being met through local budgets and external funding.

The NECR involves a comprehensive asset audit, a strengthened governance framework, and a sharper focus on fundraising, grant bids and biodiversity-related income such as offset schemes. Consultants have been appointed to help build fundraising capacity, while policies will ensure that commercial activity remains consistent with each charity's mission. Importantly, public access will remain unrestricted.

POLICE

Deborah Unger, QPARA Police Liaison

For the first time in many years the Queen's Park Ward Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) is at full strength. Sgt Ben Shearman has two Police Constables, PC Nelton Scott and PC Ayessha Khann, and two PCSOs, Ferenc (Frank) Turcsanyi and Amandip Kaur.

SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS

LOCAL POLICE, LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

The Ward Panel made up of residents and community representatives meets Officers every quarter to discuss crime hot spots and residents' concerns. Currently the hotspots are Salusbury and Chamberlayne Roads where there is a prevalence of thefts and anti-social behaviour. Interestingly, most crimes are reported on a Monday!

In the past three months there was an increase in crime across the Ward but this was primarily due to Carnival. There were 49 shoplifting incidents from June-September up from 36 in the same period last year and significantly up from 26 in April-June 2025.

Carnival issues aside, crime rates remain stable, except for car theft. Twenty-two vehicles were stolen in the past three months, almost double the number from the previous three months. Most thefts happen at night when the SNT are not patrolling. Their advice: use strong steering locks and report unusual behaviour. Gangs are scoping the area for up-market cars for parts and resale abroad.

There is a new initiative in London called Met Engage. To contact the SNT team sign up at www.metengage.co.uk. If a crime is in progress call 999. Report a crime at 101 or online at www.met.police.uk

Meet some of the SNT team at the Ward Panel Meeting 27 January 2026, 7.00-8.15pm at ICMP Salusbury Road.



**MET
ENGAGE**
Community crime-fighting

SIGN UP NOW to tell us what matters most to YOU

metengage.co.uk

The poster features a photograph of two police officers in uniform talking to a woman outdoors.

RUSH HOUR TRAFFIC + MORE

QPARA Streetscape Co-ordinators

In May, we reported that consultants MP Smarter Travel had completed their work on traffic through the Queen's Park area for Brent Council. Their proposals did not gain support from either residents or the Council. QPARA's request urging the Council to "call in" the officers' report on MPST was rejected on legal grounds. Subsequently, without prior consultation, Brent combined the areas covered by the first and second Experimental Traffic Orders – southern and northern avenues respectively – into a single new Order.

This revised ETO, which came into effect on 8 May, restricts entry to the avenues from the west and north on weekdays between 7.30-9am. Brent's website states that a final decision on the scheme will be made after 8 November, six months after it began.



Unfortunately, no traffic monitoring was carried out beforehand. Monitoring strips were installed in September, but so far QPARA has not received results despite requests.

Given these uncertainties, we decided to seek members' views urgently. Working with QPARA officers, we designed an impartial survey of Full and Associate Members, conducted via Survey Monkey between 2-8 October. The impressive response rate was 42% from 539 members, higher among Full (resident) members. The overall finding from 224 respondents was that 45% said 'no' to making the ETO permanent with 35% saying 'yes' and 20% undecided, calling for more study. Support was strongest among residents within the designated area. Full results are on the QPARA website. The October QPARA meeting agreed to send the findings to Brent, urging that they be carefully reviewed and that the Council engage meaningfully with QPARA, neighbouring associations, and the wider public to find a broadly acceptable solution.

Meanwhile, QPARA continues to pursue related improvements. With London Assembly Member Krupesh Hirani and Ward councillors we are pressing TfL to introduce a right-turn filter from Harvist into Salusbury Road and over the station bridge. We also await progress on a school street at Chevening Road's east end. In May, councillors and local associations held a walkabout on Chamberlayne Road to review post-'Kensal Corridor Scheme' issues; Brent is now working through the resulting action checklist.

ST ANNE'S BRONDESBURY

Reverend Pete Hopkins



Hello! I'm Rev Pete, the new Priest in Charge at St Anne's Church Brondesbury, on Salusbury Road. Before coming to Queen's Park I was at churches in Tufnell Park and Winchmore Hill in Enfield.

So far my family and I have had a wonderful time getting to know the area and have felt very well received by St Anne's and your wider community. I look forward to continuing the legacy of St Anne's as a church that is involved with and making a positive impact on our neighbours. 'Tea and a chat' runs on the second Friday of every month, from 2-4pm. Please do come and say hello.

Our main service is at 10am every Sunday. If you would like to get in touch please feel free to drop me a line on revpete@st-annes-brondesbury.org.uk and see the Diary on page 4 for details of our Christmas services.

KENSAL RISE REPAIR CAFÉ

Magdalen Evans, Editor

On the first Saturday every month people can take their broken or worn items to St Martin's Church, Mortimer Road where local repairers will help mend them, including small electrical items, so long as they are not dangerous! Volunteers also teach repair skills, or give advice on what can be done with stuff that would otherwise go to landfill. Refreshments are provided and it's free to attend; registration is recommended but walk-ins are warmly welcomed. Visitors pay for any parts and are asked to make a donation to the Repair Café running costs. Any excess funds will be donated to local charities. www.kensalriserepaircafe.com



Cllr Ryan Hack, Mayor of Brent, attends opening of the Repair Café

DIARY DATES

QPARA MONTHLY MEETINGS

AGM **Thur 13 Nov 8pm**. Then **11 Dec** and the second Thursday of every month. We hold hybrid meetings, in-person at ICMP Salusbury Road and on Zoom.

QUEEN'S PARK SINGERS

Sun 30 Nov 6.30pm

Henry Purcell's *King Arthur*
St Martin's Church, Mortimer Road.

Sat 6 Dec 3.30pm

Switching on the tree lights and carol singing around the newly planted Christmas tree, near the café in the Park.

Mon 15 Dec 7.30-9pm

Carol Singing around the Park, east side. Meet at corner of Summerfield and Kingswood Avenues.

Thur 18 Dec 7.30-9pm

Carol singing around the Park, west side. Meet outside 7 Kempe Road.

Bring copies of *Carols for Choirs Vol 1* if you can. Photocopies will be shared too. Collecting for Lawrence's Larder.

www.queensparksingers.uk

ALL SING HARROW ROAD COMMUNITY CHOIR

Tue 9 Dec 7pm

A Seasonal Celebration of Song
St John's Church, 2 Kilburn Lane (corner of Harrow Road) W10 4AA
Free and open to all + refreshments.

allsingchoir.wordpress.com

BRENT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Sat 13 Dec 6pm

Programme includes Bizet & Marquez
St Martin's, Mortimer Road.

www.brentso.org.uk

ST ANNE'S CHURCH

Sun 14 Dec 6pm

Carols by Candlelight

Wed 24 Dec

5pm Crib Service

11pm Midnight Mass

Thur 25 Dec

10am Christmas Day Service

POLICE WARD PANEL

Tue 27 Jan 2026 7pm

ICMP, 76-78 Salusbury Road

QUEEN'S PARK BOOK FESTIVAL

Save the date: **5 + 6 Sep 2026**

queensparkbookfestival.co.uk

KENSAL CANALSIDE

John Haines



The planning application process for the development on the old gasworks site, south of the canal, has reached an important stage. The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea has announced that on 11 November 2025 the planning meeting will consider "Project Flourish" (Ballymore & Sainsbury's) application. The first stage application for the other development, "Kensal Gasworks" (Berkeley, St William) has been submitted.

These are both "Hybrid" applications which means that detail is only provided for the first phase to be built, other parts are only outlined. In the case of the Ballymore application, there is detail only for the new Sainsbury's store itself. Subsequent applications will provide further details, but they may differ from the provisional information.

QPARA has made objections at both stages of the Ballymore application and to the St William application. Our main concern is the effect on traffic locally. The only vehicle access to the site is from Ladbroke Grove, which is already frequently congested. While it is proposed to close the petrol station, the applications show an overall increase in vehicles accessing the site. This single access could be compromised by local roadworks and will complicate emergency access.

We have also raised concerns about heavy lorries during the construction phases, potential release of contaminated materials from the site, the low amount of "affordable housing", the overwhelming visual impact of so many tall buildings clustered together and disruption to the memorial to the 31 victims of the 1999 rail crash.

If permission is granted, construction will take at least 10 years, most likely longer.

More information on QPARA website: www.qpark.org.uk/kensal-canalside and "Keep Kensal Green" website: www.keepkensalgreen.com

RISE

If you'd like to talk about a project, an idea, ask a question, or just want to say hi — drop us a line:

RISEdesignstudio.co.uk

KENSAL GREEN CEMETERY

John Haines

Kensal Green Cemetery, opened in 1832, was the first of the "Magnificent Seven" commercial cemeteries in London which addressed chronic overcrowding in church graveyards. It is the only one of those seven to still be run by the original company, the General Cemetery Company (GCC).

It provides a final resting place for many famous and significant people, as well as royalty, including writers such as Thackeray, Trollope and Wilkie Collins; scientists and engineers Babbage, Marc and Isambard Brunel, Joseph Locke, Charles Siemens and Charles Wheatstone; artists and illustrators such as John Leech, Daniel Maclise and John Tenniel.

The crematorium opened in 1939 and many well-known people have been cremated here including Douglas Bader, Ingrid Bergman, Christine Keeler, Freddie Mercury, Alan Rickman and Mel Smith.

While the crematorium ensures a steady income, it's not enough to maintain the cemetery buildings. In particular the Grade 1 listed Anglican Chapel needs millions of pounds for restoration. It was thought that the Kensal Canalside Development might be a source of money but that has not turned out to be the case. Individual memorials are the responsibility of each family, not the GCC.

As a commercial organisation, the GCC is ineligible for lottery and similar funding and is, under the terms of the 1832 Act of Parliament, unable to transfer ownership, so a bill is currently going through Parliament to enable transfer of ownership of the cemetery to a charity and the first stages of setting up such a charity are underway.

The Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery run regular Sunday tours and special events: www.kensalgreen.co.uk

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www.qpark.org.uk/join-us



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