

Queen's Park News

Queen's Park Area Residents' Association

May 2026

CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Alastair Balfour

As a community organisation, we are sustained by the time, care, and commitment of those who step forward to contribute. I would like to recognise several individuals whose impact on QPARA has been both significant and lasting.

We extend our sincere thanks to Robin Sharp, dedicated contributor who has served QPARA across multiple roles and action groups since 1973. Robin stepped back from his full-time responsibilities at the end of last year, though he remains actively involved. We are deeply grateful for his vision, judgement and continuity. His work has helped shape much of what QPARA is today.

It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of Celia Frank, a cherished member of our community. Please read more about her work with QPARA in our tribute on page 2.

We also bid farewell to Barrie Newton, and Jamie Newall - fondly known as the 'voice of Queen's Park' for his tannoy announcements at Queen's Park Day - they are moving away from the area. Their enthusiasm and involvement have been invaluable, and they leave with our sincere thanks and best wishes.

Collectively, we owe them all a profound debt of gratitude for their contribution to our neighbourhood.

Looking ahead, QPARA enters a period of transition as we seek to fill roles long held with distinction. We warmly encourage neighbours - particularly newer members of our community - to get involved.

With exciting plans underway for Queen's Park Day on 13 September, alongside new approaches to how we engage as a membership, this is an energising moment. We welcome your involvement and feedback as we continue to evolve together.

QPARA ON WHATSAPP

QPARA is now sharing updates via a one-way WhatsApp channel (no chat).

Open to everyone in the area to join. Your number isn't visible to others, and messages will be brief. Once you join, make sure notifications are turned on.

[qpark.org.uk/whatsapp](https://www.qpark.org.uk/whatsapp)



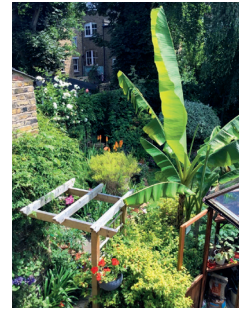
OPEN GARDENS & STUDIOS SUNDAY 14 JUNE 1-6 PM

Andrea Szalanczi



Please put this date in your diary to be inspired with ideas for your own garden or be struck by the artistic creativity that happens in Queen's Park. This is a chance

to step away from all-consuming tech, walk through the neighbourhood, bump into friends and enjoy the gardens and studios listed in our beautifully curated programme. There will be music to enjoy in the park and in some of the gardens and refreshments at St Anne's Church. Tickets will be on sale from Saturday 30 May at Worldly Wicked & Wise, Salusbury Road, Pleroma Flowers by the tube station and Scarlet & Violet, Chamberlayne Road. You can also buy tickets at the Farmers' Market on 31 May, 7 June and 14 June. www.qpark.org.uk



NEIGHBOURS RALLY TO SAVE OUR OLIVE TREES

Mark Norbury QPARA Secretary



Eight of the much-loved planters outside the police station were deliberately smashed in the early hours of Easter Sunday. Installed by QPARA in 2010 as a gift to the neighbourhood, the olive trees have long helped define the street scene along Salusbury Road.

What followed was an immediate and remarkable response from the community. Local residents, volunteers, councillors and the Queen's Park Manager all came together to secure and protect the trees.

A JustGiving appeal organised by QPARA to raise funds for replacement pots reached its £5,000 target in less than 24 hours, thanks to the generosity of local residents and businesses.

The new pots are now in place and the olive trees replanted, with the help of volunteers and Flannery Plant Hire, who provided the heavy lifting. We are hopeful that, with continued care, the trees will recover well.

If you would like to help care for the olive trees over the coming months and support our summer planting, especially with watering, please get in touch: qparamail@gmail.com



This newsletter is produced and delivered to all households and places of business in the area, free of charge, by the Queen's Park Area Residents' Association. QPARA is a non-sectarian, non-political, non-profit making community organisation established to promote a better quality of life in the Queen's Park area.

CELIA FRANK 1953-2025

It was a shock to learn of the untimely death of Celia, who was a fantastic contributor to our community, living in Queen's Park for 45 years. Following a distinguished career in the Civil Service, when she retired she was able to pursue her great passions in life - art and gardening - becoming a volunteer at Kenwood House and with Heath Hands, which she absolutely loved.



Celia devoted much time and effort to working with QPARA, sharing her wisdom especially on environmental matters. Alongside Robin Sharp she oversaw our project which explored how older homes in Queen's Park could embrace the government's Net Zero initiatives, assessing the ins and outs of installing air source heat pumps and low-cost insulation measures.

Her forensic technical and editing skills helped produce an informative publication which was available to the whole neighbourhood, and which is still available on QPARA's website.

With characteristic enthusiasm she also joined Guerrilla Gardeners, maintaining roadside planting in the area.

She was a wonderful collaborator, and her sunny, positive and thoughtful contributions will be greatly missed. We send our condolences to her family, especially her husband, Martin Bull.

CHAMBERLAYNE ROAD GUERRILLA GARDENERS

Sue Herbert, QPARA Kempe Road Street Rep

Since last November, Guerrilla Gardeners have been clearing litter and weeds from the planted beds on Chamberlayne Road east side, near Kensal Rise station.

Well-established plants had been trampled and stifled with weeds and locals were frustrated to see the neglect, so it wasn't difficult to call out volunteers!

After clearing the beds, we planted daffodil bulbs in the bald patches, hoping people would notice and stop trampling and dropping litter! We have applied for a 'Love Where You Live' grant to pay for new plants, and in the meantime many people are bringing any they can spare from their own gardens.



Celia, who was so knowledgeable about plants, was central to our initiative and is now greatly missed. The group has planted a red camellia in the Keslake Pocket Park to remember her.

Keeping weeds under control and dealing with possible drought conditions will present challenges in the coming months and we hope dogs will keep off our flower beds!

Guerrilla Gardeners is an informal group made up largely of residents in the streets between Chamberlayne Road and the Park. Anyone interested should just come to Keslake Pocket Park on the last Saturday of the month after 10 am and join in. We have a WhatsApp group chat to keep in touch.



LIBRARY RE-OPENING

Janis Denselow



The re-opening of our Salusbury Road Library (misleadingly named "Kilburn" Library) is a hugely welcome event - reassuring that after such investment, this fabulous resource will be around for a long time. Funded by £783,000 from Brent Council and £231,350 from Arts Council England, the local community now has a brighter, modernised space with an improved, more inviting and colourful children's area, a dedicated IT space, and a refreshed collection of books (same number but minus dog-eared and rarely read titles). There is a new extension available for hire - Studio 42.



Six months ago, the library felt a tired place to visit, the front of the building had cracks, and, though always well used, it was desperately in need of attention. First impressions are now of an airy space - more logically laid out and easy to "read", with the counter re-sited at the front. It seemed slightly short of books (the restock is still being completed) and sadly the garden was closed (the updated fire regulations required a dedicated escape route, though Brent are still looking for ways of increasing garden access to the public). The changes cannot help but please most users and visitors are encouraged to use the suggestion box if they have ideas for further improvement.



QPK AT THE CHAPELS

Tessa Morrison

The dilapidated but beautiful Victorian Gothic Chapels in Paddington Old Cemetery must now be restored by their owners, Brent Council, following an options appraisal by Richard Griffiths Architects. Brent is now inviting Expressions of Interest for their future use, both short-term (minimal repair) and long-term (full renovation), to unlock lottery funding for restoration work.

QPK at the Chapels is a local initiative, with an inclusive, sustainable, long-term vision for the buildings. In consultation with many diverse neighbourhood organisations, our aim is to connect Queen's Park and Kilburn in three welcoming spaces to fulfil our community's needs and aspirations:

A *Learning Chapel* will be a new U3A (www.u3a.org.uk) educational and interest group centre, with a wide range of classes and specialist sessions - including outdoors - for all aged 16+.

An *Events and Memorial Chapel* will be used for remembrance services, and as a hire venue for events, performances, workshops and festivals.

A new *Multi-Purpose Pavilion* will include a restaurant/café with community kitchen, brunch clubs and events catering, plus art gallery and toilets.

To learn more about **QPK at the Chapels**, please join our Open Days - provisional dates: Saturday 16 and Thursday 21 May, 11am to 1pm. qpkatthechapels@gmail.com



COUNT ON YOU?

Beth Silver CEO, Number Champions & local resident

Number Champions is a charity that supports children across London who find maths challenging. We work mainly with children in Years 2 and 3 in state primary schools, including Malorees, right here in Queen's Park. We train volunteers to provide weekly, one-to-one sessions, using games and activities that make learning fun and build confidence.

Why does this matter? Because numeracy is a vital life skill. Children who fall behind in primary school often struggle to catch up: and if they don't pass their maths GCSE, this can limit their opportunities. By giving children the support they need early on, we help improve their confidence, enjoyment and skills in maths so they can reach their full potential.

We are looking for more volunteers to help us. Could you spare a couple of hours a week during term-time, to support a local child? We provide full training, all necessary materials, and ongoing guidance. www.numberchampions.org.uk or email volunteer@numberchampions.org.uk

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF OUR STATION MANAGER

Magdalen Evans, Editor

Tim Cusack is the manager in charge of Queen's Park Station. From his elevated office overlooking the tracks, he describes what it's like to have responsibility for our busy transport hub.



Tim has worked for TFL for 25 years following 10 years in the Marines. Here he is (right) receiving a long service tribute from Jim O'Reilly (left), Governor of our section of the Bakerloo.

A typical day at the Station, first opened in 1879, starts long before dawn. Security contractors patrol along the train sheds just north of the Station - there's room for 8 trains to be stabled overnight - to deter copper cable thieves and graffiti trespassers. The majority of our stock of 1972 seven-carriage trains spend the night in main secure depots at either Stonebridge or Elephant & Castle.

Drivers and staff operate on a 3-shift system: earlys, lates or overnights. Some drivers even sleep in the TFL building at Premier Corner so that they are in the right location to start work. At peak times forty tube trains an hour stop at the Station.

Every trackside operative undertakes a myriad of training sessions, including plans in case Queen's Park ever needs to be evacuated. They all also attend Samaritans' sessions, as the importance of an alert workforce for vulnerable members of the public cannot be overstated.

Tim showed me how the points operate on old-fashioned pneumatic levers, which all need to work perfectly 24/7. The track is vulnerable in places thanks to the Luftwaffe's attack on 3 December 1940. At least seven people were killed that night and the resulting craters under what is now the Lioness tracks have to be monitored to this day with ultrasonic instruments to ensure their smooth running.

Mobility and visually impaired travellers need help throughout the day, as do tourists, especially on Wembley match and concert days. Real time information about TfL services across London are relayed, while Lost Property takes up a lot of time for the staff! Unclaimed items are sold off after 6 months and any profits go to www.railwaychildren.org.uk

Tim's colleagues are the eyes and ears of the controllers based at Baker Street: constantly monitoring CCTV, liaising with teams at other stations and British Transport Police.

Gate staff help ensure data is reliable so that Revenue Inspectors can deal with fraud at the barriers when there are surges.

The last trains depart either side of midnight: night cleaners then jump aboard preparing them for service the next day.

Next time you are waiting at the Station take time to admire the Victorian canopies and look out for the 'ghost platforms' - nos.5 & 6, which may yet come back into use with all the changes literally coming down the track from Old Oak and HS2.

GARDENING AT BRONDESBURY PARK STATION SATURDAY 9 MAY NOON-4 PM

Juan Pablo Lobo-Guerrero Villegas

The Energy Garden is a space for food growing, conservation and community and was established at our Mildmay Line station in 2016. It needs TLC to keep it in great condition. Could you spare some time to join us? Please wear sturdy shoes and appropriate clothing. Sign up via www.energygarden.org.uk or e-mail juanpablo@energygarden.org.uk



DONATE TODAY AND LET'S MAKE A SPLASH TOGETHER



SCAN ME



Help build a Splash Pad in Queen's Park

DIARY DATES

ENERGY GARDEN AT BRONDESBUARY STATION

Saturday 9 May 12-4pm
juanpablo@energygarden.org.uk

OPEN GARDENS & STUDIOS

Sunday 14 June 1-6 pm

For ticket info: www.qpark.org.uk. We are grateful to local estate agents, Lampards, for their sponsorship www.lampards.co.uk

LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOT

Saturday 20 June 2.30 & 7pm
www.shakespeareinthesquares.co.uk

SALUSBUARY PRIMARY SCHOOL SUMMER FAIR

Saturday 27 June (Time TBC)

QUEEN'S PARK SINGERS

Sunday 28 June 6.30pm

A Circle of Songs, music by Schumann and Brahms, Saint Martin's Church, Mortimer Rd NW10 5SN

www.queensparksingers.uk

ALL SING COMMUNITY CHOIR

Saturday 4 July 3.15pm

FREE summer concert
St. John's Church, 2 Kilburn Lane, W10 4AA
Popular, world and traditional music

QUEEN'S PARK BOOK FESTIVAL

Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 September
www.queensparkbookfestival.co.uk

QUEEN'S PARK DAY

Sunday 13 September 11am-4.30pm

HS2 COMING OUR WAY

John Haines, QPARA Transport & Streetscape Group



The section of tunnel for HS2 from Old Oak Common to Euston has been approved. Two tunnels are being dug, one for each track direction. The first Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) started on 27 January, the second on 16 March.

The route passes from the Old Oak Common site (near North Acton Station), under Kensal Green Cemetery from the southwest corner to near the junction of Harrow Road and Berens Road. It then goes just north of The William pub, under the Moberly Sports Centre and just south of Queen's Park Station. From there it runs towards Swiss Cottage and then swings south towards Euston Station.

The tunnels will finish just north of Euston Station as the actual HS2 station will be in a large cavern excavated without TBMs. In our area the tunnels will be about 30m below ground level.

Progress is anticipated to be about 150m per week, and the entire drive will take about 15 months.

The first TBM will probably reach Chamberlayne Road in June.

Surface movement is expected to be low, and not very different to normal seasonal movement. There may be some barely perceptible vibration as the TBM passes. Measures have been taken to safeguard vulnerable monuments in Kensal Green Cemetery. Elsewhere, property surveys were carried out in 2023 to establish a baseline from which any claimed damage can be assessed.

A consequence of the tunnels passing below Brent is that the area can apply for grants from HS2 for social improvements. One such application, initiated and developed by QPARA, is funding for the Splash Pad in Queen's Park, complementary to support from the City of London Corporation.



STREET FURNITURE

QPARA Streetscape Co-ordinators

QPARA is strongly focused on improving the local environment including the 'streetscape' in our Conservation Area. Over the last decade we have contributed to design of Brent-led schemes for re-paving and new trees on Salusbury Road, for creating planted borders on Chamberlayne Road and for re-shaping Keskake Pocket Park. Our members also monitor the condition of pavements and roads and alert the Council to residents' concerns, and support getting improvements. Our Street Tree Team actively surveys existing trees and campaigns for new plantings.

Woven into all this we keep a watchful eye on street clutter. While recognising that the Council and utilities have a vital job to do, we wonder if the visual impact of some interventions could be less. For example, while food waste disposal for flats above shops needs a solution, are Brent's new jumbo bins on high streets the only answer?

We all want good broadband connections, but are Virgin's striking new cabinets in hi-vis locations their best option?



 LOCAL PEACE TALKS

MONTHLY QUEEN'S PARK WOMEN'S PEACE WALK ON THE LAST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH.

Meet in front of the cafe at 10am.
Join other local women of all faiths and none.
Walk and talk together with open and peaceful hearts.
For more info contact localpeacetalks@gmail.com



POLICE ACTION IN QUEEN'S PARK

Deborah Unger, QPARA Police Liaison

Police action on April 9 in Queen's Park and Kilburn resulted in 45 arrests, for offences including possession of offensive weapons, possession with intent to supply class A drugs, and shoplifting. 74 illegal e-bikes were seized, as were 1,161 stolen mobile phones (mostly from a premises on Kilburn High Road). Police also issued penalty charges to delivery drivers on illegally souped-up electric bikes.

In quieter news, the Queen's Park Safer Neighbourhood team regularly hosts community engagement sessions to hear residents' views on ward policing and to gather information. There are special monthly Violence Against Women and Girls sessions, now held regularly at the Hearth on Lonsdale Road.

Everyone is encouraged to sign up to www.metengage.co.uk to find out more. Also, come to our quarterly Queen's Park Ward Panel meetings to meet your local police officers. Please contact me if you wish to attend: debwise@gmail.com

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