

Our Borough

Spring 2024



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

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Welcome to Our Borough

Share your stories

Do you have news you'd like to share with fellow residents across Kensington and Chelsea? Whether you want to promote an event, celebrate a community champion or let others know what's going on in the borough, we would love to hear from you.

If you've got a story to share, email commsteam@rbkc.gov.uk

Let us know what you think

Our Borough is your newsletter and we want it to reflect the issues that matter to you. If you've got any feedback, please let us know at commsteam@rbkc.gov.uk

We're available online

To view this or previous issues of Our Borough online, visit www.rbkc.gov.uk and search 'Our Borough'.

Staying in touch

There are other ways to keep up to date with borough-wide news as well as updates and announcements from Kensington and Chelsea Council.

 @RBKC

 www.facebook.com/royalborough

 www.instagram.com/kensingtonandchelseacouncil

 www.nextdoor.co.uk – search Kensington and Chelsea Council

For updates on Grenfell

 @GrenfellUpdates

 www.rbkc.gov.uk/grenfell

Key workers move into brand new North Kensington homes

Key workers have moved into brand-new homes in the heart of the communities they serve following completion of the first properties under our new homes programme.

Professionals from sectors including healthcare, teaching and the emergency services are now calling Hewer Street home, with the development providing 10 affordable rented homes for key workers and 10 properties at market rent.

The site boasts air-sourced heat pumps, improved insulation and fire safety measures including sprinklers. It was unveiled alongside artwork created by pupils from neighbouring Barlby Primary School celebrating the role of key workers.

Lilly Joseph, an NHS key worker and new resident of Hewer Street, said:

"I am delighted to have been considered to live at Hewer Street. This will be life-changing for me in many ways and allows me to set up home in the borough, providing me with a secure base to continue to serve the people of Kensington and Chelsea."

Kelso Cochrane House, also in North Kensington, is in the final stages of development and will provide 28 social rent flats and 10 properties at intermediate rent for key workers, alongside a medical centre and supermarket.



For more information about Kensington and Chelsea's new homes programme, search 'new homes' at www.rbkc.gov.uk



Council Leader commits to driving through culture change

Kensington and Chelsea Council Leader Cllr Elizabeth Campbell has committed to completing a “fundamental culture change” at the organisation as she paid tribute to the bereaved and survivors of the Grenfell tragedy.

Speaking at a meeting of Full Council on Wednesday 31 January, Cllr Campbell said that although “progress” has been made since 2017, people still need to “feel the changes” on the ground.

It comes after Cllr Campbell, Deputy Leader Cllr Kim Taylor-Smith, Chief Executive Maxine Holdsworth and other Council representatives attended Grenfell Testimony Week, which saw bereaved and survivors speaking directly to representatives from the organisations that many hold responsible for the tragedy.



After praising the dignity and eloquence of those who participated in Testimony Week, Cllr Campbell said:

“The one thing I want to make clear tonight is that it isn't enough to just turn up. It isn't enough to just listen. You have to take action.

“For us, it isn't enough if we don't complete a fundamental culture change across the entire organisation we lead. It isn't just enough to turn up, it's what we take from Testimony Week and what we do with it that counts.”



To watch Cllr Campbell's speech, scan the QR Code or visit <https://youtu.be/5QbavpAPktQ>



Scan Here

Stay With Us – preventing suicide together

We can all play a part in supporting each other to prevent suicide.

You can sign up to free suicide prevention training to help give you a better understanding of the issues and what support is available. The training can be a bitesize one-hour session, up to a half-day session.

Anyone can sign up if you live or work in the borough. We can all play a vital role in saving a life.

Find out more - visit www.rbkc.gov.uk/suicide-prevention



Make sure you have your measles jabs

Measles spreads easily and anyone who is not vaccinated can catch it. At present we are seeing an increase in measles cases across the country, including in London.

Measles can have serious and sometimes fatal consequences, so make sure you're up to date with MMR vaccinations and ask your GP practice about catch up jabs if needed.

If you aren't up to date on your measles vaccinations you can also simply walk-in to get the MMR jab at:

Brompton Library,
210 Old Brompton Road
SW5 0BS on Monday 26 February
St Luke's Church,
Royal Hospital Road SW3 4SR
on Tuesday 20 February.

Find out more about measles at www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles



Cleaning up

We've been sprucing up the borough with an extra cleaning service which goes beyond the usual day-to-day maintenance of our streets.

Since July 2023 waste and street cleaning crews have focused on a different ward each month to tackle dirty streets, anti-social behaviour, waste and graffiti.

Celebrating 10 years with Suez in September, John Toth has spent more than nine of those years working on waste collection. Recently, he's joined the street washing team and has gone from early mornings to the night shift. He told us that he's had no complaints adapting to his new midnight starts which help the

borough's tourist destinations and busy hot spots start each day looking their best.

"Mostly residents are very understanding and often people will say thanks and tell us that we're doing a good job," said John. "Sometimes people ask why we have to be working at night and we explain.

"With busy streets, there are people walking up and down all day. During the day it would be stop and start. We'd get the work done, but it could take months!

"During the night, we get the odd person walking by, but we get a good six hours of continuous work without being interrupted."



Meet Meryl Sweep and Tony Soaprano

Our new e-buggies are helping our crews get into small streets and spaces to collect waste and jet wash our pavements. Say hello next time you see them!

The nights are not always entirely uninterrupted though. *"Some streets where we have late bars or nightclubs people will ask if they can have a go on the jet washer,"* said John. *"Someone once asked me if I could clean their shoes!"*

Quality kit

New equipment means the team can stay out for hours without having to head back to base, with water mains all over the borough and vehicles and equipment which can be filled up from any fire hydrant.

John can't see himself changing roles any time soon, despite the late hours. He added: *"Even though the work is the same, I get to meet different people, see different areas and experience different situations. I don't know how long I'll do this exactly, at least a couple of years – so far, so good!"*



If you need to report an issue on our streets head to www.rbkc.gov.uk/contact-us/report-problem



Borough youngsters enjoy healthy meals

Over 1,000 children across Kensington and Chelsea enjoyed free healthy meals during the school winter holidays from a pot of Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme funding.

The HAF programme, which is funded by the Department for Education, allows vulnerable children and young people to access enriching activities and healthy food each day they attend their local youth clubs, sports clubs and other events.

Speaking ahead of the Christmas break at the end of 2023, Jagdeep Birdi, Headteacher of Colville Primary School in North Kensington, said:



“This fund fuels bodies, minds, and smiles, particularly with its support for those on free school meals. As a headteacher, I see the impact the rising cost of living is continuing to have on local families. This programme provided peace of mind that pupils will returned to school having enjoyed a fulfilling and active winter break.”

A parent of a child who attended a session over summer 2023 added: *“This is a fantastic opportunity for parents who can’t afford to go on holiday or pay for expensive activity*

camp. My child absolutely loved it! It gave him something to look forward to each day and got him outdoors running around.”

The scheme is set to continue throughout 2024 during the spring, summer and winter school holidays.



To find out about exciting activities for children ahead of a school break, including those providing funded meals, visit ourcity.org.uk



Saving cash and carbon

Did you know more than 80 per cent of the borough’s carbon emissions come from buildings?

We’re aiming to improve the efficiency of all our Council-owned buildings and schools and have already made a strong start.

Avondale Park Primary, St Francis of Assisi Primary School, All Saints Catholic College, Thomas Jones Primary School and Bevington Primary School are all getting the green treatment to help cut pollution, make classrooms comfier and save on their energy bills.

New air source heat pumps are replacing old gas heating systems and new pipework is replacing original Victorian pipes. Large radiators with a bigger

surface area will help the spaces to get warm, without having radiators at very high temperatures, making them safer, more efficient and more environmentally friendly.

At Avondale alone, the changes will save 78 tonnes of carbon emissions every year. Headteacher

Ben McMullen told us that while children have been excited to have big machinery and diggers around, classes haven’t been disturbed as works have taken place mostly outside the school day from 3pm.

Work is due to be finished in the spring and we are already looking at which buildings we can improve next.



Bridging the digital divide

Did you know that an estimated eight per cent of people in Kensington and Chelsea are digitally excluded? This means they are unable to use the internet safely and confidently to meet their needs.

Nationally, 27 per cent of people don't have core digital skills, like turning on a device or opening an internet browser, and others have had to cancel their home broadband due to cost.

Why does it matter?

Not being able to access the internet can have a huge impact on someone's day-to-day life. It can mean paying extra for energy deals or insurance, as the best prices are often only available online; more than 90 per cent of jobs are exclusively listed online; and being offline can lead to stronger feelings of loneliness and isolation.

What are we doing about it?

If this sounds like you or someone you know, there are a range of measures being introduced in the borough that could help. These include keeping our telephone lines and reception areas open, as well as offering help with accessing Council services digitally using tablet computers in our receptions.

This year, we are increasing the number of public access laptops and tablets in the borough by almost 200 across eight libraries and charity and community locations. We've also recently donated hundreds of devices and are supporting a range of IT courses and drop-ins for digital skills. Look out for more information on these throughout 2024.

We're here to help

If you think digital is "not for you", or if you know someone who needs some help getting online, you can call our new Digital Inclusion Helpline on **020 7361 2080**, from 8.30am until 5.30pm Monday to Friday. You'll receive friendly advice on your digital needs and be signposted to appropriate local support.

If you'd like to work with someone face-to-face, there are sessions and support available at your local library, where staff can help you get started using a computer, tell you about upcoming IT courses and drop ins, and share booklets containing a wealth of support options.

Some of our borough's adult learning providers regularly offer courses for different levels of digital skills. Discover upcoming opportunities by calling **Clement James Centre** - 07470 49578), **Morley College** - 020 7450 1889, **Westway Trust** - 020 8962 5741 or **Nova** - 020 8960 2488.

If you'd like more information about the help available to get people online, search "Getting online" at www.rbkc.gov.uk



Parks spring into life

If you're looking to get out and about to enjoy some fresh air, why not check out some of the upgrades carried out in the borough's parks over the winter months?

In North Kensington, significant work has begun in Kensington Memorial Park where new toilets, including a Changing Place disabled toilet, a new café and refurbished changing rooms are currently being built.

As well as providing great new facilities, the improvements are also good for the environment thanks to the inclusion of a green roof on the changing rooms, solar

panels on the café and an air source heat pump to provide heat. The water play area is also being refurbished and all work is due to be completed by the summer.

In Holland Park, there has been a consultation on refurbishing the outdoor gym and new equipment will be installed in the coming months, together with a refurbished golf practice area.

In the south of borough, we've been working with local residents to improve Chelsea Embankment, which now boasts new planting along with pruning and clearance works to the existing shrub beds (pictured right).



Really useful rentals

Have you visited our Library of Things yet? Based at Kensington Leisure Centre, the self-service library loans out handy occasional items for a small fee.

From sewing machines to steam cleaners, the library offers things that you might need once-in-a-while but don't want to buy outright or have lying around the house all year. It's good for the environment too, cutting down on wasteful one-time purchases

and helping you to repair things at home to save on buying new.

Since October, the most borrowed items have been:

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| 1 | Carpet cleaner |
| 2 | Cordless drill |
| 3 | Dehumidifier |
| 4 | Pressure washer |
| 5 | Cordless jigsaw |

So, it seems the people of Kensington have been busy getting things ship shape at home with DIY and spring cleaning! But that's not all. The library offers 29 products and anyone can use it. Having a movie night? Make your living room into a home cinema and borrow a projector. Found a draughty corner at home? Borrow a thermal imaging camera and see exactly where the draught is coming from.



Enhancing and celebrating our Amazing Spaces

We're taking the lead in enhancing the places where you live, work, play and learn by creating and maintaining amazing spaces across the borough.

In collaboration with residents, businesses, and other key stakeholders, we're developing better facilities, services and attractions which have short-term impact and long-term, sustainable benefits and deliver on our key priorities of creating fair, safe and green spaces.

Alongside improvement plans, we're celebrating the individual character and heritage of our spaces and future proofing our environments through climate-resilient measures such as flooding mitigation in problem areas.

Passion shapes Portobello Road

We're proud to be working with the passionate Portobello Road community on a one-of-a-kind engagement programme to



develop proposals to strengthen and enhance the road itself.

Infrastructure improvements, such as better lighting, improved electric points and flood mitigation will strengthen the safety, experience, operations and greening of the road. However, they

are complex, present challenges and provoke strong views.

By designing a collaborative, open and effective method to capture views and opinions, we are better understanding how the community feels so that we can protect the culture and heritage of Portobello and celebrate its diversity and uniqueness.

Our project is also strengthening the resilience of the world-famous street against issues like anti-social behaviour, climate change and dangerous road use.

Ruth August, member of the Portobello Engagement Oversight Panel, said:

"It was important for me to understand the engagement process and plans for this project on Portobello. It's an area that means

All part of the plan

One way we're supporting our high streets is through the development of a series of local action plans, the first one in Notting Hill Gate.

Local action plans are not policy documents or legislation, but flexible documents that can shape for future improvements.

Mark Macleod, member of the Community Working Group, said:

"It has been a wonderful opportunity to work with members of the local community, the team

at RBKC and consultants PDP on this project, the first in a series of local action plans. Many ideas came out of this engagement process.

I am looking forward to the consultation stage to invite further comment and start bringing these plans to life."

A consultation for Notting Hill Gate improvement works is due to open early in the new year, where you can view visuals and make comments on the proposals.



a lot to me and being part of the Engagement Oversight Panel has given me a level of understanding but also involvement in how things will work with the wider community. It's important for this work to make sense for people and to address issues raised."

Keep your eyes out in the coming months for a series of community conversation workshops and exhibitions which will generate proposals ahead of any works taking place. There are many ways you can have your say, with engagement running until summer 2024.

Celebrating Portobello Market

Since launching our Market Action Plan in March 2022, there's been fantastic progress in enhancing Portobello Market for traders and visitors alike, including:

- Opening new markets including the Open Art Fair, Sustainability Fair and New Youthquake which offer benefits such as discounted stall pitches and guaranteed spaces
- Providing more opportunities to trade on Sundays with the Summer and Christmas markets

- Increasing clean-up of graffiti and tagging in the area
- Developing a new Market Traders course with Morley College, including a Key Stage 2 lessons pack to inspire young people into trade
- Establishing new recycling scheme in partnership with TRAUD for second-hand clothing and introducing new zero-emission electric waste collection vehicles.

New Youthquake trader Rita Botanicals said:

"I was looking for an opportunity to start a new business, it was so easy to reach out to the Street Trading office, they helped me set up my first stall on Portobello Road which brings me so much joy!"



A fresh look

You may have spotted the fresh new look for Portobello Market's brand, which was designed by local graphic designer Kieron Kymara and developed in partnership with the Westway Trust and Portobello and Golborne Management Committee.

The campaign encompasses not only your Council-managed market, but also the wider area including Westway's Portobello Green, Acklam Market, Podbello, retail shops and restaurants, and the Portobello and Golborne Road Management Committee, bringing them together in a shared partnership for the first time.

Keiron Kymara, who designed the new logo said:

"I'm so proud of this, it's the best thing I've done in my life. If I could sum up Portobello Market in one word it would be 'community' which reaches out into so many things."



Whether from visitors, businesses, other traders or residents, we want to promote the full experience of a visit to Portobello. Be sure to follow and tag your visits to Portobello Market's Instagram account: [@portobellomarketofficial](https://www.instagram.com/portobellomarketofficial)



Make 2024 a year of culture

This year, if exploring and experiences are your top priority, discover the extraordinary on your doorstep here in Kensington and Chelsea. Get behind the scenes at some of the best museums in the world, learn new crafts and skills and fall in love with your local area in 2024...

Step back in time at Leighton House

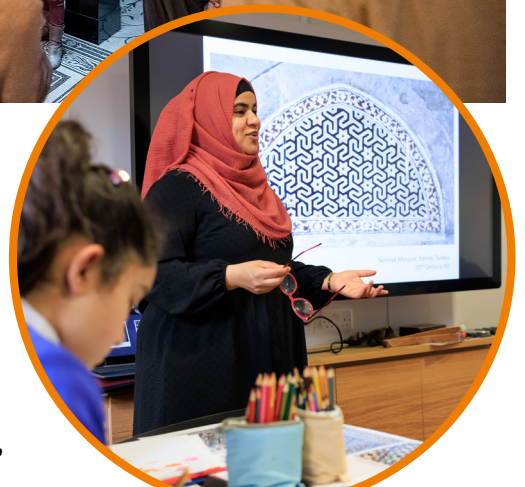
At Leighton House, why not join our free stitching circles? Taking place once a month, these guided sessions are for enthusiasts and beginners alike to bring their own project or make use of the materials provided. A perfect way to relax on Sunday mornings, these are held in collaboration with The Arab British Centre. Search 'stitching circle' at www.rbkc.gov.uk to find out more.

The museum has a few free-to-visit areas and on the first Monday of each month from 10am to 1pm (excluding Bank Holidays) you can 'pay what you want' to visit the whole museum. Glimpse the



stunning Arab Hall and the studio-home which artist Lord Leighton transformed to reflect his love of the Middle East. Search 'Leighton House' on our website at www.rbkc.gov.uk and click 'Plan Your Visit' for further information.

If you'd like to see more behind-the-scenes action, Leighton House, and its sister museum Sambourne House are seeking Visitor Assistant Volunteers. Volunteers welcome visitors to our museums, answer questions and help people enjoy their visit. Training is provided.



For more information contact: Tracey Lazarus, Tour & Volunteer Coordinator, at tracey.lazarus@rbkc.gov.uk



Down in South Kensington, you can get up close to the collections with a number of talks and free guides which run every week. Learn something new with free tours at the V&A and Science Museum, or the Royal College of Music. Expert guides will take you through the magic and mystery of over 500 years of music, to the far edges of space and time as you find out what it means to be an astronaut and discover a new perspective with the 'Historical and hidden Caribbean: a view of life through art and design' tour.

Find out more at www.discoversouthken.com

Big things for Big Local

A community group supporting residents in and around the World's End Estate is reaching even more people following a Council-supported move to larger premises.

Set up in 2015, World's End and Lots Road (WELR) Big Local organises a regular line-up of free exercise, skills and activity sessions for people of all ages in the south of the borough.

The group has proved so popular that it needed a bigger base – and it found the solution in Council-owned premises right next door to its previous home.

The extra space, which allows Big Local to host double the number of people at in-person sessions, has been offered on a social investment lease which provides favourable terms and means a Council asset is used to improve the prosperity and wellbeing of residents.

Vanessa Kelly, Programme Manager at WELR Big Local, said:

“This is a much nicer space and because of the extra room we have effectively been able to double our capacity. We run a Christmas party which we could usually have around 20 people at, but last year we had room for 45. We’re also able to hold classes here rather than renting external rooms and can use the money we save to run extra services.

“What’s so important is that this is in the heart of the community. We’re here, we’re right on people’s



doorsteps and I think that encourages more people to come along and get involved.”

WELR Big Local's annual programme of activities provides something everyone. Youngsters can enrol in boxing training or art classes, families can enjoy trips to the seaside or theme parks and older residents can stay active with seated mobility sessions.

As well as offering the social investment lease, the Council supports the project by running a monthly employability workshop to help residents looking for work.

Further sessions are developed based on feedback gathered directly from residents by Vanessa, Support Assistant Ella and Outreach Officer Ashraf. The team all grew up in the area and use their local knowledge and contacts to deliver a truly impactful service.

Ella said:

“We know our partners and our residents, we have grown up with them and that makes what we do much more meaningful.”

Ashraf said:

“This place is a Godsend and it’s good to see people who might not otherwise get out or engage coming here and joining in.”

Vanessa added:

“I was born in Chelsea and I’ve lived here all my life, so for me we’re not just here as a project. We’re friends and we just want to make a difference to people’s lives.

“Everything we do is to bring the community together, to give them skills and to make them smile.”



Vanessa Kelly, World's End and Lots Road Big Local Programme Manager

Find out more about
WELR Big Local at
www.welr.org.uk



Useful Council numbers and contact information

We know that when you have a question or a concern, you need to speak to the right person or find the right information quickly. Here's a list of our key contacts and information points:

Benefits

- 📞 020 7361 3006
- @ benefits@rbkc.gov.uk

Council tax

Note - all transaction related requests including claiming Housing Benefits or paying council tax can now be done quickly and easily through the relaunched MyRBKC.

- 📞 020 7361 3005
- 🌐 www.rbkc.gov.uk/myrbkc

Environmental Health

This team is able to assist with animal and pest control services, public health, general health and safety and food safety matters.

- 📞 020 7361 3002
- @ environmentalhealth@rbkc.gov.uk

Any emergency calls outside of working hours are transferred to an out-of-hours service.

Housing

Information and advice to help you find suitable accommodation, advice on keeping your home, and homelessness.

- 📞 020 7361 3008
- @ housing@rbkc.gov.uk

Emergency calls to the Homelessness Placement Unit outside of 9am-5pm Monday to Friday are transferred to an out-of-hours service.

Housing Management

On 1 March 2018, the Council took over the management of its homes from Kensington & Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation (KCTMO). This includes day-to-day services such as repairs, cleaning and looking after your estate.

- 📞 0800 137 111
or the mobile friendly number
020 3617 7080
- @ HM-CustomerServices@rbkc.gov.uk

There is a faster, easier and mobile-friendly **MyRBKC** now at your disposal. Check it out for yourself at www.rbkc.gov.uk/myrbkc and once registered, you can:

- better manage transactions like paying Council Tax or claiming Housing Benefit.
- sign-up for email notifications about the Council decisions you are most interested in. From planning to governance, choose

what you want to hear about and how frequently.

- report issues online and get them resolved quicker.
- The 15 new online Report-It forms can be used anytime, anywhere to tell us about everything from noise issues, fly-tipping or broken streetlights to health and safety concerns at a restaurant or business. www.rbkc.gov.uk/global/report-it/report-problem

Arts and leisure

Information on cultural activities in the borough.

- 📞 020 7361 3003
- @ artsandleisure@rbkc.gov.uk
- ✂ @RBKCCulture
- f @RBKCCulture

Education

The team can assist with information on our schools, access to education, support services for special educational needs and disabilities, Adult Learning and Employment opportunities and safeguarding, looked after children and leaving care.

- 📞 020 7361 3009
- @ educationline@rbkc.gov.uk

Family Information Service

A free, impartial information service for parents and carers of children and young people aged up to 19 (up to 25 for those with additional needs), including Tax-Free Childcare.

- 📞 020 7361 3302
- @ fis@rbkc.gov.uk

Libraries

Call or email to find or join a library or learn about borrowing and charges, home library services, special events for adults and children, job seekers and careers advice and much more.

- 📞 020 7361 3010
- @ information@rbkc.gov.uk
- ✂ @RBKCLibraries
- f @rbkclibraries

Parking

General parking enquiries

- 📞 020 7361 3004
- @ enquiries@rbkcpcparking.com

Rough sleeping

If you see someone sleeping rough in the borough, you can call the Street Population Outreach Team on:

- 📞 020 7341 5210 or
020 7361 3008

9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

You can also report a rough sleeper via the national website Streetlink or by calling:

- 📞 0300 500 0914
- ✂ @Tell_Streetlink
(for national website and helpline)

Streetline

Streetline cover everything relating to street-and city-spaces within the borough.

- @ streetline@rbkc.gov.uk

Social Services

- 📞 020 7361 3013
 - @ socialservices@rbkc.gov.uk
- Any emergency calls outside of working hours are transferred to an out-of-hours service.

Help for those affected by the Grenfell tragedy:

- 📞 0800 0234 650
(NHS helpline for those seeking mental health or emotional support)

Grenfell Health and Wellbeing Service:

- 🌐 www.grenfellwellbeing.com