



COMMUNITY UPDATE: What's happening, what's buzzing, and what's next for Canbury & the riverside dive in

PADDLES, PAGEANTRY and PUBLIC SUPPORT:

High-Octane Action on the Thames



Canbury Gardens sprang to life on Sunday 19th July as thousands gathered for the annual Dragon Boat Races along our stretch of the Thames. Spectators lined the riverbank in the sunshine, cheering on colourful, dragon-headed boats slicing through the water to a thumping drumbeat. Paddlers battled across 250m sprint heats, backed by incredible enthusiasm from

local businesses, school teams, charities, and local civic leaders.

Festival Atmosphere Off the Water:

- **Stalls & Funfair:** A bustling food court, local craft stalls, and family games.
- **Riverside Buzz:** Crowds soaking up the sun around the waterfront and local venues.

It was fantastic to see our park buzzing with community spirit. Thank you to all who supported the event and helped keep our gardens looking their best!

TRIPLE GREEN GLORY FOR CANBURY GARDENS!

Celebrating 3 Consecutive Years of International Excellence

Canbury Gardens has been awarded the prestigious Green Flag Award—the international benchmark of park quality—for a third consecutive year! The dedicated CARA volunteers who help tend our green space are thrilled to have helped secure this recognition.

Want to lend a hand? The friendly volunteer group meets by the children's playground and tennis pavilion at 10:00 am every Saturday. Everyone is given a worthwhile job, sessions run for no more than two hours, and all ages and abilities are warmly welcome.



Do feel free to come along! Just look out for the wheelbarrows, spades—and the big smiles — from Len Cowking and his crew of volunteer gardeners!

In Conversation: Councillor, Coffee & Community

Young local resident and aspiring journalist **Ella Morley** sat down with **newly elected ward councillor and veterinary surgeon Dr Peter Higgins** to discuss his vision for the community, his passion for wildlife, and his surprising breakfast preferences!

Ella: To kick things off, why did you want to become a councillor?

Cllr Higgins: I strongly believe in community power—wherever I've lived, strong communities make successful areas! Active with groups like CARA, Friends of Canbury Gardens, and the North Kingston Police Panel, I was encouraged by friends and neighbours to stand so I could represent our area directly in local government.

What would you say is the main difference between a councillor and an MP?

Councillors are much more hands-on day to day. While our MP, Sarah Olney, does a great job connecting locally alongside her national duties, local councils make the immediate, practical decisions that directly impact residents' daily lives.

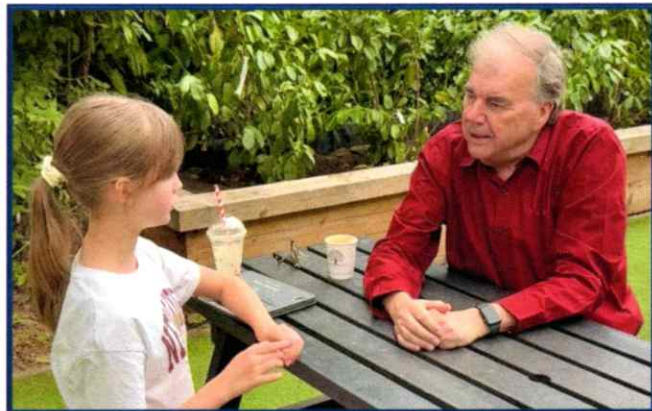
If you could change one thing about how the country is run, what would it be?

Less government control and more power to the people! I trust the common sense of the electorate. Rather than endless regulations, we should let free market choices and personal freedom guide decisions—whether that's how a local café runs or how people choose to spend their money.

Looking closer to home, what main local issues are you hoping to tackle?

First, protecting and improving Canbury Gardens—it's an incredible local jewel, and we need to enhance its amenities for everyone. Kingston-wide, I want to keep our living environment

safe, beautiful, and thriving, ensuring council decisions genuinely serve local residents and workers rather than special interest groups.



Ella chats with Cllr Peter Higgins

Favourite animal to treat? Horses are amazing, dogs make great pets, but my real passion has always been wildlife—from local badgers and swans to kangaroos and zoo animals!

Go-to local restaurant or café? I love them all—between the service and locations, our local spots are truly some of the best in London.

Best way to get in touch? I'd love to hear from all and sundry! Email me at Peter.Higgins@kingston.gov.uk—my door is always open.

Lastly, Marmite or marmalade? Neither—I'm all about Vegemite, spread thick on toast!

LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT : Komoo Café



We caught up with Naz, owner of Richmond Road's popular Café Bar to talk lockdown pickles, Persian flavours and speciality coffees:

Q: Tell us the story behind Komoo! Why choose Richmond Road?

Our journey began during lockdown when our homemade cucumber pickles unexpectedly took off with local supermarkets. That success inspired us to create a permanent home for our food and coffee. Richmond Road was ideal—we loved the strong community feel and

wanted to offer local residents specialty coffee and fresh food on their doorstep without having to trek into the town centre. That's how Komoo Café Bar was born!

Q: What can first-time visitors expect from the experience? A warm, relaxed neighbourhood vibe where you feel at home—whether for morning coffee or brunch with friends. Our menu blends familiar café favourites with authentic Persian flavours; all made with fresh ingredients and genuine hospitality.

Q: What are the absolute must-try menu highlights? There are quite a few! Our **Saffron & Pistachio Latte** and **Persian Signature Tea** are firm favourites, and specialty coffees are huge hits! For food, try our Persian omelette with fresh Sangak bread, or perhaps **Komoo's Signature Chicken Sandwich or Sosis Bandari**. Don't skip our homemade pickles, they're where our whole food journey started during lockdown, so there's a bit of Komoo history in every single jar!

Q: What's been the most rewarding part of joining the community? The people! Seeing familiar faces return, knowing customers by name, and seeing strangers become friends over coffee, and feeling such strong local support has been the highlight of our entire journey.

Komoo Café 135 Richmond Road, Kingston Upon Thames

PRIORITIES IN THE GARDENS: Revitalising Our Green Space

Playground & MUGA Repairs: Repairs to the small children's playground, including the roundabout, are complete. Work to replace the outdated Multi Use Games Area pitch surface is now underway after specialist advice and sourcing materials.

Borough-First Recycling Scheme: Canbury Gardens will now host the borough's first dedicated park recycling bin (shown right), sponsored by local community groups including CARA. Thank you to Trevor Willis and volunteers for making this happen.



Let There Be Light: Outdated path lighting will be replaced soon with modern, energy-efficient fixtures to address dark spots in the gardens.

Long-Term Focus Areas: The CARA committee continues to press the council on key items: public toilets & entrances need updating; lease reviews for Boaters Inn, the Rowing Club and the Little Boat Club are imminent, and we are lobbying for a user-friendly security entrance at the North Gate to prevent unauthorised vehicle access (see photo right); plans to revamp the older kids' playground remain under review.



🚲 COMMUNITY ALERT: Tackling Wayward E-Bikes We have received an increasing number of complaints regarding carelessly ridden e-bikes endangering pedestrians, wheelchair users, and parents with buggies along the riverside towpath.

The Legal Reality: Current rules limit e-bikes to 15.5 mph and restrict them to roads and cycle paths; faster machines must be registered and taxed as motorbikes. Footpath law origins date back to 1835.

Action Being Taken: MPs Sarah Olney and Ed Davey have raised the issue with the Minister for Roads. Despite local police resourcing challenges, the committee will raise enforcement at the next Police Panel and is lobbying the council for clear signage to direct through-cycling to Lower Ham Road rather than the towpath.

CARA Late Summer Barbecue

Sunday 27th September 2026 | Doors Open at 1pm, serving from 1:15pm

Join us for a fantastic neighbourhood gathering!

Bring your family and friends along for an afternoon of great food and community spirit.

- **Location:** Kingston Riverside Tennis Club, Lower Ham Road, KT2 5AJ
- **Food & Drink:** Quality meats freshly supplied by **Bevan's Butchers**, plus delicious vegetarian options and puddings. The Tennis Club bar will be open to purchase drinks.
- **Seating & Parking:** Plenty of seating is available! Parking is limited on a first-come, first-served basis, so walking or cycling is encouraged where possible.
- **Ticket Prices:** Adults: **£9** | Children (Under 13): **£5**

How to Book Your Tickets

Step 1: Email your booking :-

Send an email to cara.kingston@gmail.com with:

- Your **Name** and **Address**
- Number of **Adult tickets** (specify Meat or Veg)
- Number of **Child tickets** (specify Meat or Veg)

Step 2: Bank Transfer

- **Account Name:** CANBURY AND RIVERSIDE ASSOCIATION (CARA)
- **Sort Code:** 20-46-73 | **Account No:** 13558584
- Please Reference your **House/Flat Number** and **Street Name** (e.g. 42 Chestnut Road).



Entrance from Lower Ham Road

Other Local Events :-

Tues 25th August Bat Walk: The Thames Landscape Strategy team will lead a bat walk, starting at the Hawker Centre at 7.45pm (until 9.15pm). To join this event book your (free) place using this QR code.



May 15th - Sept 6th: Canbury Gardens Bandstand Concerts. Scheduled on Sundays 3-5pm (except August bank holiday) organized by CARA and Friends of Canbury Bandstand.

Oct 8th at 19:00 CARA AGM Canbury Pavillion including a talk and free drinks will be served

Oct 23rd : CARA Cheese and Wine event, Canbury Pavillion more details nearer the date.

Canbury and Riverside Association (CARA) Committee: -

www.carakingston.org

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