

WINTER/SPRING 2024/25

GROUNDS NEWSLETTER



9 MONTHS IN REVIEW

We have been extremely busy and hope you have all begun to see the changes we are making to the gardens. As we near the end of our 1st year working with HD Gardens we can celebrate our accomplishments as the grounds are in a much better condition now than they were at the same time last year. Thanks to all of you who contributed, came on the walkarounds and positively supported the team on site. HDG are now finally ensconced in and around the Rotunda building which has been refurbished to meet their operational and welfare needs.

THE VISION

The aim is to deliver a sustainable, environmentally friendly, time efficient and financially responsible strategy. The grounds need to be 'low maintenance' to ensure their up-keep is manageable to a high standard and financially savvy.

OUR KEY OBJECTIVES

- Ensuring ALL the Kew Riverside grounds are well managed and working in zones on continuous cycle
- Removal of dead and fatigued trees, hedges, shrubs & other plants
- Reintroduction of natural light to enable all plants to thrive which will also allow views to the river
- Extensive tree, hedge, plant & replacement programme
- Initiatives and design to facilitate the enjoyment of the estate grounds and mitigate anti-social behaviour
- Rejuvenation and management of the ponds and water features
- Redesign of significantly neglected areas including: The Sound Garden, English and Mediterranean Gardens



Saturday Walk Arounds

These have been well received by residents and whilst they have been suspended during the winter; there are plans in the spring to recommence the walk arounds and we will let you know dates and times once these have been agreed. We would like our owners to continue to be engaged and for those of you who are not aware, owners are regularly invited to tour the grounds, exchange views, learn about and feedback on new initiatives. Everyone is welcome and we would like to see some new faces join us.

Much of the last 10 months have been devoted to the extensive removal of dead or fatigued hedges, and shrubs. This may have appeared brutal was essential to enable progress to be made. We needed to bring light in many areas to ensure existing and future trees and plants have the conditions to thrive. The HD Gardens team are experienced horticultural professionals; we need to be guided by them and the experts they bring on board. If you have Any questions, just ask, they are here to help.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Ponds and Water Features

The revitalisation of these key area is planned for 2025. Now we have started to reduce the silt the water quality will continue to improve, and we can introduce a solar powered system to agitate the water and increase oxygenation to enable fish and plant life to thrive. We will introduce planting at the side of ponds with the introduction of reeds and irises which will help with filtration and water quality, provide shade for the fish and a habitat for beneficial bugs/invertebrates. We will reinstate the duck house however can we please ask all residents NOT to feed the fish or ducks as it promotes algae as it changes the ph balance of the water.



We have started to implement our strategy at 2 key entry points onto Kew Riverside. You may have seen the team working hard and over the next few warmer months the plants will begin to thrive.



Kew Riverside Entrance

In the first few weeks of 2025, we have already completed the power washing of the front entrance brickwork, pillars, wall, Kew Riverside lettering and sculpture. The design sets the expectation for the whole of Kew Riverside and complements the scheme in Kew Meadows. HD Gardens took this on free of charge to thank KRRC Ltd for the contract.



Trees

One of our obligatory requirements (every 2 -3 years) is to commission a Tree Condition Survey and Risk Assessment Report of all the trees. Fulford-Dobson Associates Ltd carried out this survey in November and the results were largely positive. A total of 520 trees were recorded comprised of 34 different species. The vast majority are in either 'fair' or 'good' condition. A total of 31 trees were highlighted for tree work, but none are urgent, and only 8 were classified as 'priority' needing attention within 6 months. 6 were classified as 'routine' with work needed within 1 year and 17 were classified as 'anticipated', works needed within 3 years. The 2 dead cherry trees on Greenlink taken down last year will be replanted in early 2025.

Kew Meadows Garden

One of our major achievements was the reimagining of one of the focal points of the estate (located by the entrance to Marks & Spencer car park). The objective was to design a garden with the relaxed natural feel of a meadow whilst using evergreen flowering low shrubs and perennials to add structure, formality & barriers to deter inappropriate use. Flowering perennials and grasses retain the appearance of the wildflower meadow, and this combination ensures a statement garden whilst remaining in keeping with Kew Riverside's original design concept. The plans and original designs are displayed on the Apex notice boards.

Grass and soil treatment

All Plants need good soil conditions if they are to give the best results. Improving the soil with plenty of organic matter in the form of compost helps drainage and aeration. We now store all garden waste on site to ultimately form compost, and we are currently feeding the newly planted areas with bone meal and mulch. There is also a weed and feed programme for the grassed areas.

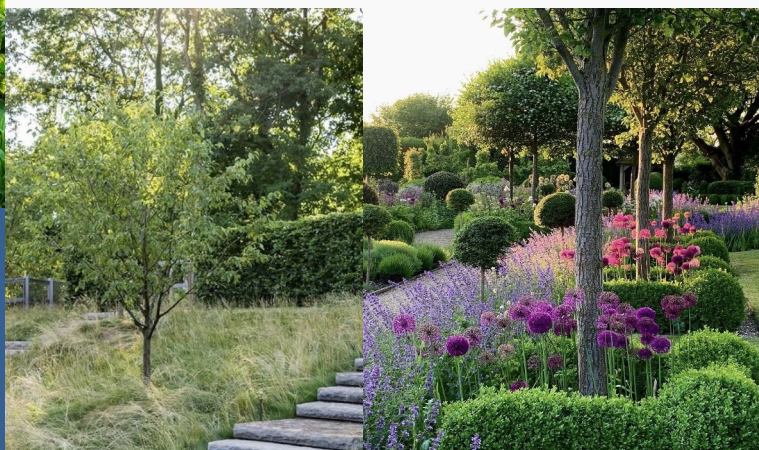


English Gardens

The two segments which comprise these gardens, face 10-16 & 17-22 Kelsall Mews and are some of the most neglected parts of the grounds. Significant work is needed to restore them to the original concept design and return the whole area back to health. Guided by the original planting plans the works required include, the removal of the diseased viburnum, the removal/reallocation of incorrectly planted plants, replanting programme for all fatigued planting, the removal of the diseased Crab Apple trees and potential terracing to the two grassy banks as well as treatment to the hard landscaping areas (hogging paths and cleaning stonework) The works should commence in late spring (May) however in advance of the new planting, there will be a programme of removal and reallocation of existing plants

KEY PROJECTS FOR 2025

Our plans for 2025 are ambitious and already underway. With the removal of dead and fatigued trees, hedges, shrubs and plants almost complete, we can now focus our efforts on returning the grounds to their award-winning best. The costs for the completion of the key areas are included in the 2025 budget and include the English and Mediterranean Gardens, as well as the tree works.



Mediterranean Gardens

The two segments which comprise these gardens, face 10-16 & 17-22 Whitcome Mews have also been badly neglected. These formal gardens are distinctive on Kew Riverside with their white and black stonework all reminiscent of the design and planting styles of a Byzantine era. The rejuvenation plan includes the repair and restoration of the stone patterns, removal/reallocation of incorrectly planted plants and a replanting programme for all fatigued plants and shrubs. The concept is to re-create a Mediterranean garden which typically feature a silvery-green colour palette, drought-tolerant plants and natural materials like stone and gravel; you may have noticed the Phormiums on the bank have already been relocated from Kew Meadows.



Shrubby Woodland clearance

We have already undertaken significant clearance to the overgrown riverside boundaries and owners can once again begin to appreciate the river views. The woodland shrubs may look slightly ungainly at the present time but as the temperature starts to warm up you will see significant new growth on the branches.

Defensive planting to the riverside boundary

Currently there are bare sections along the boundary fence line that separates the estate from the Thames towpath. To deter informal entry from dogs and to counter antisocial behaviour, we plan to increase the existing Hawthorn hedge using inexpensive whip planting (thin juvenile plants) along the boundary. We will then further discuss with the LBRUT the possibility of installing self closing gates to the riverside entrances and move on to get permission to close them down to dusk. The towpath is not lit between the Kew rail bridge and Putney Town rowing club which means it is rarely used for any 'positive purposes' after dark.



We have collected our free tree from the LBRUT plant a tree scheme; it's a very small addition to Kew riverside but we would rather see the number trees increasing than the number of Lime Bikes! Finally, a big thank you for all your contributions and we hope you feel reassured with the work we are doing to slowly but surely return the Kew Riverside grounds to their award-winning best. It is going to take time, money, and careful planning and whilst progress may not seem immediately evident this is a **3 year plan** and significant improvements are already being made on a daily basis.