

FOCUS

on Thamesfield

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High Street, Council and Hammersmith Bridge

Hammersmith Bridge reopens!

To cyclists and pedestrians anyway. We need a new bridge – now

Good news — Hammersmith Bridge has finally reopened to cyclists and pedestrians after yet more months of closure and disruption. But while we welcome this small step forward, it's clear that patching up a Victorian bridge is nowhere near enough to meet the needs of our community today.

Shockingly, the Labour-run Wandsworth Council and our local Labour MP, Fleur Anderson, say it could take another ten years to properly reopen. Ten more years of chaos, delays, and congestion.

It just isn't acceptable. And we are deeply disappointed that all four arms of Labour — central government, the Mayor of London's office, our local MP, and the local council — have effectively thrown in the towel and given up on getting Hammersmith Bridge properly reopened for vehicles.

Meanwhile, traffic across Putney remains terrible, and the much-promised "new intelligent traffic light system" (has it been turned on?) seems to be making little to no difference.

The obvious solution is staring us in the face: we need a new bridge. A modern, 21st-century crossing would keep people, cyclists, public transport, and essential vehicles moving, while allowing the old bridge to be preserved as a landmark — perhaps transformed into a pedestrian and cycle route.

We'll learn more during the government's Spending Review in June — but don't hold your breath. The Chancellor is not expected to allocate the funding needed.

We deserve better. Let's build for the future, not just patch up the past.



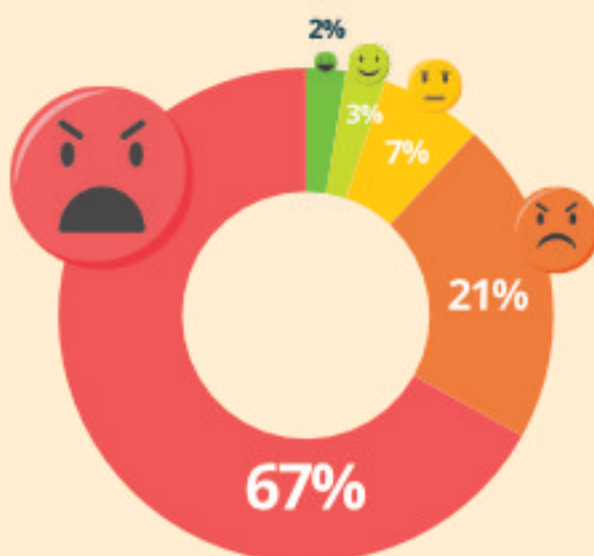
Reopened after more millions have been spent on the dilapidated bridge.

THE IMPACT ON YOU

We surveyed the whole neighbourhood; 344 of you responded. Here's what you told us:

How much were you impacted by the recent roadworks?

1 (Not at all) to 5 (Massively)



What is your level of frustration with traffic in Putney?

1 (Not bothered) to 5 (Extremely frustrated)



More of your responses

85%

Have been late for something – a meeting, event, or pick-up – because of the heavy traffic

44%

Don't believe a bike path on Putney Bridge was a good idea in the first place (a further 29% aren't sure about it)

39%

Blame the Council for the traffic. A further 15% blame local councillors; 14% the London Mayor; 13% TfL.

Wandsworth Council under fire over finances and secrecy

Plunging pension funds, soaring debt, and closed-door decisions result in growing community concern

Wandsworth Council is facing mounting criticism over its handling of public finances and growing concerns about decisions being made behind closed doors.



intensified after a crucial meeting on the pension fund wasn't livestreamed, as per usual. The Council later claimed there had been a "technical failure." If there was, it was a first.

The Council's pension fund has collapsed from a £350 million surplus to a £7.2 million deficit in just a year, raising fears that vital services could be hit.

additional £140 million by 2029/30, pushing total debt close to £1.9 billion. Critics warn the Council's reliance on reserves to balance its budget is unsustainable and risks long-term damage.

The financial problems don't stop there. Wandsworth is planning to borrow an

Concerns about transparency have also

Wandsworth Council's executive was already facing criticism for consolidating power by replacing multiple scrutiny committees with a single General Overview and Scrutiny Committee, reducing opposition representation and limiting oversight.

Saving our historic buildings and parks

Thank you to everyone who signed our petition to protect Putney's historic buildings and parks — it worked!

The Conservation and Heritage Advisory Committee (CHAC) has backed down from controversial changes that would have diluted its focus on protecting Wandsworth's historic buildings, parks, and public spaces.

The original proposals would have forced CHAC to consider broader planning policies, risking its independence. Thanks to

pressure, the Committee has now restored its clear heritage-first mission in changes to be put forward at its next meeting.

Broader planning frameworks can only be referenced "where appropriate," not by default, and the Wandsworth Historical Society is officially added as a member.

This is a major step in defending Wandsworth's unique character at a time when it faces real threats. Thank you again for standing up for our borough's history — and stay tuned, the fight continues!

High Street

Marks & Spencer returns to Putney

Marks & Spencer (M&S) has announced it will reopen its long-vacant store on Putney High Street, seven years after closing it in 2018.

Refurbishment is expected to start later this year, with reopening likely in 2026.



Once a retail anchor in Putney for nearly 90 years, the store will return as a modern food hall, reflecting M&S's focus on fresh food and convenience. Its prolonged vacancy had sparked community frustration and accusations of "land banking," but local traders and residents have welcomed the news as a hopeful sign for revitalising Putney's struggling high street.

New openings

While the High Street still suffers, there are several new openings in the area.

Lil Bake cafe and coffee shop has opened at 209 Upper Richmond Road.

Indian restaurant **Rasoi** has opened where *Calowries* used to be on 178 Lower Richmond Road.

And **Brickwood Cafe** has opened on the old *Flour+Water* site offering Antipodean fare.

How we will drive things forward when it comes to Hammersmith Bridge

- Talk to engineers about better solutions for Hammersmith Bridge.
- Talk to those most impacted by the traffic, including hospitals, ambulance services, taxi drivers and local businesses to build an economic case for action.
- Research and develop solutions to our traffic problems and then heavily promote them in the press.
- Pressure political representatives to use their influence and sign up to effective solutions.
- Run meetings to inform local residents on progress as well as seek your help and advice.

What can you do?

Join the team

You don't have to be a Lib Dem. If you are sick of the traffic and the excuses and want to do something about it, you will find a welcoming team focused on making change.

Attend a meeting

We will be running meetings - small and large - where we will listen to expert voices, come up with pragmatic ideas, and decide what we can do as a community to drive things forward.

Donate to the effort

We need resources to make this happen. If you are fed up but don't have the time to help, give us the money instead. It's just as valuable and we will spend it wisely.

