

# Ward of Walbrook

Alderwoman Jennette Newman  
Deputy James M D Thomson CBE  
Alethea Silk CC



## Walbrook Ward Newsletter – February 2025

2024 was a busy year for your elected members of the Ward of Walbrook.

This newsletter updates you on some of our work over the last 12 months as your local elected representatives and how we are helping to make sure that the Square Mile remains internationally competitive and locally vibrant.

**This edition covers everything from Destination City, to Bank Junction, Black Cabs, keeping the City safe, our open spaces, climate action through to Banksy...**

### Representing you and listening to you

We are here to represent you, and we are always keen to hear your views about what is important and what you would like to see effected or stopped in the City of London. Our contact details are at the end.

### Destination City: supporting a vibrant Square Mile and Walbrook



The City of London is committed to ensuring the Square Mile remains an attractive location for businesses, residents, visitors and workers alike. Attracting domestic and international businesses to locate to the City remains a priority. Underpinning all of this is the City of London's Destination City Strategy.

- **Jennette and Alethea sit on the City's Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee** which has oversight of many important City venues and the City's cultural offer. This includes the Guildhall Art Gallery, Monument and the many events that take place in Guildhall Yard. The City of London Corporation invests over £130 million in capital for culture, supporting world-class cultural and heritage institutions like the Barbican Centre, Tower Bridge and Guildhall School of Music & Drama.
- **James sits on the Destination Advisory City Board** alongside representatives from City businesses, retailers and hospitality operators. He also sits on the Policy and Resources Committee which is the principal Committee of the City of London Corporation and that has oversight for delivery of Destination City.
- **Economic Growth is at the heart of Destination City** and the strategy aims to attract new businesses, particularly in the tech industry, to the Square Mile, driving job growth and economic prosperity. Enhancing the leisure and hospitality offer is also critical to maintaining the City as a great place to work, live, learn or visit and for businesses to choose to locate here.

**There have been a number of recent successes** in attracting investment and office relocation including the HSBC's Head Office moving from Canary Wharf back to the St Paul's area of the City. This relocation is seen as a significant vote of confidence in the City of London as a prime destination for financial services.

- **The number of workers in the Square Mile has rebounded and grown to around 678,000, which is about 25% higher than the pre-pandemic levels of 540,000.**

## **Policing: ensuring that the City remains the safest business district in the World**



**A safe and secure Square Mile remains a high priority for City businesses, workers, residents and visitors.**

**As Deputy Chair of the City of London Police Authority Board (and Chair from 2020 to 2024), James is responsible for oversight of the City of London Police.**

The role of the City Police incorporates both the local police service for the Square Mile as well as the national lead force in policing for UK fraud, economic and cybercrime.

The City's number one policing priority is protecting the Square Mile from terrorism and its other priorities include managing public order and protest in the City, tackling violent crime, ensuring a safe night time economy and reducing anti-social behaviour.

James has supported increasing the City Police's investment in armed response, the establishment of Sector Policing so that all Wards have dedicated police officers, the establishment of a Cycle Team to tackle anti-social cycling and thefts of mobile phones, and in setting the ambition for the City of London Police to be the most inclusive police service in the country – critical to building trust and confidence in policing.

**James was awarded a CBE in the 2025 New Year Honours for policing and inclusion. His recognition for inclusion covers his work across policing, education, philanthropy and affordable housing.**

## **Bank Junction: at the heart of Walbrook Ward**

- ✓ **Significant improvements to safety and public realm**
- ✓ **Bank Underground upgrade completed**
- ✓ **Improving availability of Black Cabs**
- ✓ **Tackling poor cycling and e-scooters**
- ✓ **Improving dockless e-bike parking**



## **All Change at Bank**

The City of London Corporation has made changes to Bank as part of the All Change at Bank project to reduce the number of vehicles passing across the junction to improve public safety and to deliver other benefits for the public realm including improved air quality.

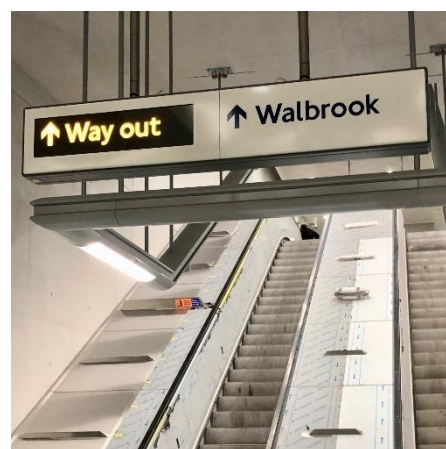
**Jennette, James and Alethea have been representing a wide range of views with regards to these ongoing works and the project has brought significant improvements to Bank Junction.**

These changes at Bank Junction include:

- **Closure to all traffic except buses and cycles during 7.00am to 7.00pm Monday to Friday:** Queen Victoria Street and Threadneedle Street are now closed to all motor vehicles. There are also restrictions on left turns and entries from certain streets, making the area safer for pedestrians and cyclists.
- **Improvement to Safety and Air Quality:** Since the introduction of the Bank on Safety scheme in 2016, there has been an improvement in air quality and a 27% improvement in casualty statistics. Street trees and planters have been added as part of the Climate Action Strategy's Cool Streets and Greening Programme.
- **Enhanced Pedestrian Experience:** The junction layout has been simplified to reduce pedestrian crowding and improve the overall experience.
- **Improvement to Public Realm:** The area is now more pleasant to spend time in, reflecting its historic and iconic surroundings in the heart of the City of London and Walbrook Ward.

## Bank Underground Upgrade

This important project, led by Transport for London (TfL), has recently completed and has significantly enhanced the capacity and accessibility of Bank station addressing long-standing capacity issues and making journeys through Bank safer, easier and quicker for users. Some key improvements:



- ✓ **Increased Capacity:** The upgrade has increased the station's capacity by **40%**, allowing it to handle more passengers efficiently.
- ✓ **New Interchange Route:** A new interchange route between the Northern line and the DLR has been introduced, reducing journey times by up to nine minutes.
- ✓ **Enhanced Accessibility:** The project includes new lifts and escalators, providing step-free access to the Northern line for the first time.
- ✓ **Additional Entrances:** A new station entrance on Cannon Street and a new entrance on Walbrook have been added, improving access to the station.
- ✓ **Improved Facilities:** The station now has 27 escalators and 9 lifts, making it one of the best-equipped stations on the London Underground network.

**There have been challenges as a result of the opening times of the Walbrook entrance and exit. We have made representations to TfL and these have now largely been addressed, although we continue to monitor the situation.**

## Cabs Across Bank

One of the unintended consequences of the traffic restrictions at Bank Junction is on the reduced and sometimes poor availability of Black Cabs available for public hire in and around the Bank area.

**James led a significant campaign supported by Jennette, Alethea and others to have the restrictions on Black Cabs lifted 24/7/365. This is due to be implemented in early 2025 (and no later than June). This was following feedback from many businesses in Walbrook and surrounding Wards.**



CABS ACROSS BANK: SPD meets JAMES THOMSON



Black Cabs are an integral part of London's **public transport** system and lifting restrictions is important to improve availability:

- **For accessibility and equality** – to provide access everywhere for those with mobility challenges: such as those that are elderly, disabled, pregnant or carrying young children.
- **For safety, especially women's and vulnerable users' safety** – to ensure they are available across London all hours especially at night for those working late or enjoying the night-time economy.
- **For tourism and hospitality, for a vibrant Destination City** – Black Cabs are world-renown for being safe and trusted by visitors to London.
- **For businesses, for a competitive City, to support our Vision for Economic Growth** – to support business users who rely on Black Cabs for fast, readily available transport. They are a reason why businesses choose to have offices in the City and Central London.

## Tackling poor cycling and e-scooters

An increase of active travel in London: walking, cycling and e-scooters, means we have seen a significant increase in cycling and e-scooters in the City including dockless bikes and scooters. Some of the behaviours by cyclists and e-scooter users is dangerous and illegal.

The City of London Police has a dedicated Cycle Team which together with other police teams are seeking to tackle this as well as the increase in theft of phones by criminals using these modes of transport to commit crime.



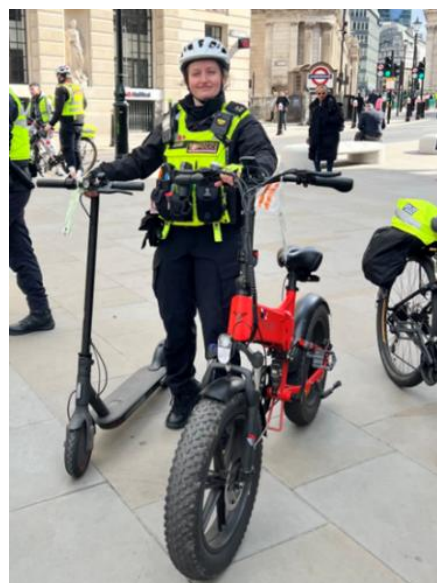
In its first nine months to March 2024 the Cycle Team:

- Spoke to 8,908 cyclists or e-scooter users
- Made 85 arrests
- Reported users for 2,968 offences
- Seized 191 bikes

From April to November 2024, they:

- Spoke to 5,663 cyclists or e-scooter users
- Made 62 arrests
- Reported users for 1,134 offences
- Seized 188 bikes

**Poor cycling and e-scooter behaviour continues to be a focus for the City of London Police and police operations are regularly conducted at hotspots including Bank Junction.**



**The City of London Police and Police Authority are also looking at whether legislation changes are required.**

## Inconsiderate and dangerous parking of dockless e-bikes

E-bikes, and in particular inconsiderate parking, is also a problem and the City of London is engaging with TfL and dockless bicycle operators such as Lime and Forest.

- The City of London has a portal for submitting complaints about parking of dockless bicycles which can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3Cm2Qex>
- The City of London together with TfL, London Councils and London boroughs are continuing development of a co-ordinated contract to manage dockless e-bikes in London to improve walkways for pedestrians, whilst increasing the quality and sustainability of services in London.



## Planning: ensuring sustainable investment and development in Walbrook and the City



### Planning and development in Walbrook

**Jennette sits on the Planning and Transport Committee and both Alethea and James have previously served on the Committee and remain active in examining applications that affect Walbrook.**

Having been through a period of significant new developments in the Ward of Walbrook and on our boundaries in recent history, including: The Walbrook Building, The Bloomberg Building, Rothschilds in St Swithin's Lane and The Ned Hotel; major developments in the Ward are relatively few except for the improvements made to Bank Junction and Bank Underground which are now all but completed.

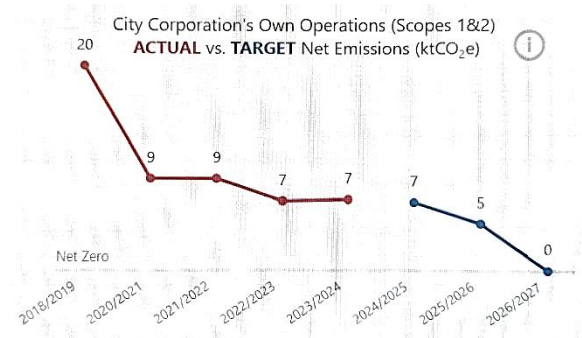
**James sits on the Investment Committee, Capital Buildings Board and City Bridge Foundation, all of which have significant interests in major properties within the Square Mile and outside. The Capital Building Board is in the process of delivering a new Courts Building providing 18 new Courts for His Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service and a new City of London Police Headquarters as part of a £500m investment.**

## Climate Action Strategy

The City of London Corporation has adopted a radical Climate Action Strategy which breaks new ground and sets out how the organisation will achieve net zero, build climate resilience and champion sustainable growth, both in the UK and globally, over the next two decades. By adopting the strategy, the City Corporation has committed to:

- ✓ **Achieve net zero carbon emissions from our own operations by 2027.**
- ✓ **Support the achievement of net zero for the Square Mile by 2040.**
- ✓ **Invest some £70m over to support these goals.**

A key part of this is the City's approach to planning and development, as well as the management of its own land and buildings.





**Alethea sits on the Port Health & Environmental Services Committee and has focussed on both Climate Action and improving the environment across the City, supporting:**

- The development of a New Circular Economy Framework and Action Plan for 2024- 2027 focussed on keeping materials in circulation, avoiding them becoming waste through maintenance, reuse, refurbishment, remanufacture, recycling and composting.
- Walbrook Wharf – ensuring a long-term strategy as the sustainable cleaning waste station serving the City.
- Net Zero through the use of the City’s 11,000 acres of open space outside of the City and the 200 green spaces within the Square Mile managed by the Corporation.
- Improvements in street cleansing.
- The launch of the Air Quality Strategy 2025-2030.
- Enforcing health & safety in areas diverse such as food standards to water coolers in offices across the City.

## Open spaces

**Alethea sits on Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee, all under 4 miles from Central London benefiting both local and national communities.** The City’s recent Natural Capital Audit estimated the annual recreational benefits of Hampstead Heath alone to be worth £48.3 million.

Major improvement works have also been completed at one of the UK’s top athletic venues: Parliament Hill athletics track at Hampstead Heath, safeguarding top level athletics from the surrounding community for the next generation. The track saw Paris Olympic 10,000m trials, and the British Championship, amongst many others.

## Supporting education and social mobility

**City Junior School:** Recently the City of London School and City of London Girls’ School, supported by the City of London Corporation, opened a new junior school, the City Junior School, at Gray’s Inn. It was successfully opened in December 2023. It currently provides around 200 places for pupils aged 7 to 11.

**James is committed to educational provision across the City schools and is a governor of the City Junior School of the City of London School and its immediate past Chair. Whilst James was Chair** the school won a Sunday Times award for being a leading London school recognised in particular for its diversity and as part of that its focus on social mobility.



## Raising awareness of Colitis and living with a stoma bag

Alethea was diagnosed with ulcerative colitis in 2023 and in 2024 faced life changing and lifesaving surgery, undergoing 3 operations in the last 12 months.



Post Ileostomy



Now

Alethea is currently recovering from her final surgery, which took place at the end of January. She now has a permanent stoma, which she has affectionately named Bertie. Throughout her journey, Alethea has been open about her experience, particularly in sharing how she continues to live as close to her normal life as possible despite the challenges. Her resilience, positivity and determination have been truly remarkable, ensuring that her condition will not impact her professional or personal life.

**Team Walbrook is very proud of Alethea.**

## And in other news...

### From Bank to Banksy and the origins of the City of London Police sentry boxes

On 11 August 2024, a City of London Police sentry box on Ludgate Hill was attacked by a graffiti artist. The graffiti artwork depicted piranha fish underwater which was spray painted onto the glazing of the sentry box.



- Following a thorough investigation, it was confirmed to be by the artist Banksy. This was the seventh Banksy artwork of nine that were revealed across London in as many days.
- Given the considerable public interest in the Banksy which was situated in the middle of a busy road, both on safety grounds and to protect the artwork, it was moved to Guildhall Yard and now into Guildhall itself pending a permanent home for it. It raised all sorts of questions from “when is graffiti art” to “can art be criminal damage” and “was it in the public interest to seek and prosecute a named person for the offence”.
- The City of London Police sentry boxes were put in place, along with narrower roads and CCTV cameras, as a response to the IRA threats to the City of London from the 1970s through to the 1990s. This initiative became known as the 'Ring of Steel' and the boxes date to around 1993.
- Protecting the City is not new, and we can look back some 2,000 years to when the Romans constructed a wall, many parts of which are still visible, to defend early Londinium from invasion.

### The City of London Police’s latest recruit – Police Horse Thomson – formerly “Andy”

When Andy was spotted by Eloise, the City of London Police Stable Manager, he was in a poor physical state as seen in the photo to the right.

However, Eloise could see his potential and he successfully completed the demanding training required of a police horse.



Following completion of his training, Trainee Police Horse Andy was transformed and passed out on 1 July 2024 and, in accordance with tradition, he was given a police name: PH Thomson.

You can follow him and the Mounted Branch @CityHorses on Twitter/X #followthefeathers

As a result of the condition of his forelegs, he retains his “feathers” – his big hairy feet - and is the only police horse in the country to do so, making him instantly recognisable on the streets of the Square Mile and further afield.

Having worked with the City Police for 22 years, the first 12 years as a Special Constable, and then retiring in May 2024 as Chair of the City of London Police Authority Board (after completing his maximum four-year term), James was honoured that the latest recruit was given his name. He

was equally surprised to be quoted in Horse and Hound...

**Whilst James has stepped back as Chair of Police, there is clearly still life in the old horse yet....**

## Supporting and representing you: how to contact us and further information

**We are proud to serve as your Elected Members for the Ward of Walbrook:** If you would like to discuss your views on what is important to you within the City or any issues affecting the Ward of Walbrook, or if you would like to arrange a meeting for you or your business – in person or by Teams – please contact us using the details at the bottom of this letter.

Further information can be found on the Walbrook Ward website: [Walbrook - the Heart of the City - Walbrook Ward](http://www.walbrookward.org.uk) – [www.walbrookward.org.uk](http://www.walbrookward.org.uk)

## City-wide Councillor elections – March 2025

In March 2025 the City-wide elections for the Court of Common Council will take place to elect Councillors for a term of 4 years. This is an important moment for you – as a City worker or resident – to help shape the future direction of the City. The election of Aldermanic seats operates on a separate six-year cycle.

James and Alethea, your existing Common Councillors for the Ward, are planning to stand together in the March 2025 elections – “Team Walbrook” - to continue to represent the Ward of Walbrook.

Both James and Alethea hope, that with your support, they will continue to serve you for the next four years.

## Thank you for your support



**Jennette Newman**

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennette".

**Jennette Newman**



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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James".

**James Thomson**



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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alethea".

**Alethea Silk**

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