

STORIES FROM THE BALLYMORE NEWSROOM

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CELEBRATING HISTORY AND HERITAGE AS MARY MCALEESE UNVEILS PLAQUE AT EMBASSY GARDENS

Ballymore founder Sean Mulryan was joined by former President of Ireland Mary McAleese for a momentous event at Embassy Gardens in London last month. Head inside for the details.

Read the full story on pages 2 and 3.



“I am proud to be a part of this event”

Ireland’s former President Mary McAleese joined Ballymore Chairman and founder Sean Mulryan to reveal a new commemorative plaque in honour of Anglo-Irish suffragette Charlotte Despard – a pioneering figure in the realms of social activism, suffrage and humanitarianism.

Donated by Ballymore’s founder Sean Mulryan and his wife Bernardine, the plaque was unveiled at a public ceremony at Embassy Gardens in London. The event featured a reading of ‘What has Mrs Despard ever done for us?’ by the poet Hilare, as well as music performances from award-winning music charity World Heart Beat, whose concert hall and academy is based at Embassy Gardens.

Mary McAleese, who served as the eighth President of Ireland from 1997 to 2011 said: “We all owe Charlotte Despard, and it is so important that her name is known, not for its own sake but for the sake of all she championed and all that still remains undone. She led by example – formidable, challenging example. I hope today is a call to action that she would be proud of, and I am very grateful for being allowed to be part of this event, grateful to those who have made it happen and to those who will make it their business to finish what she started.”



Charlotte in Trafalgar Square



Charlotte and Maud at Dublin Horse Show



Performances at the Embassy Gardens event

Sean Mulryan added: “I have always been a passionate advocate of both the important heritage and future potential of Nine Elms, where our Embassy Gardens development has established a new, thriving community. Bernardine and I are proud to play a role in recognising and honouring Charlotte Despard, who contributed so much for people living in Nine Elms, and tirelessly worked for a more fair and equitable society – an important legacy to take forward.”

“We all owe Charlotte Despard, and it is so important that her name is known, not for its own sake but for the sake of all she championed and all that still remains undone.”

Known as “The Mother of Battersea” and one of Nine Elms’ most esteemed historical figures, Charlotte provided welfare facilities for the local community, many of whom were Irish, from her home at 2 Currie Street between 1890 and 1922, where the landmark development Embassy Gardens stands today. Despard defied societal expectations of her time by dedicating her life to advocating for social justice and equality; the unveiling of a special plaque is testament to her contribution to the local community.

Charlotte married Maximilian Carden Despard, an Anglo-Irish businessman and banker who was heavily involved in the early days of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (now known as HSBC) from 1865. When her

husband died in 1890, Charlotte decided to dedicate the rest of her life to helping the poor, moving to Nine Elms where she offered welfare support to the local community. She spent a great deal of time in Ireland and in 1908 joined Hanna Sheehy Skeffington to form the Irish Women’s Franchise League, settling in Dublin after World War I.

In 1920 Despard toured Ireland as a member of the Labour Party Commission of Inquiry, and during the Irish War of Independence, together with Irish republican revolutionary, suffragette and actress, Maud Gonne, she collected first-hand evidence of army and police atrocities in Cork and Kerry. The two women also formed the Women’s Prisoners’ Defence League to support Republican prisoners and in 1921, Despard shared a house with Maud Gonne, who was also well known for being the muse and long-time love interest of Irish poet W. B. Yeats.

What the press said about the plaque unveiling

“Embassy Gardens is one of London’s most ambitious and affluent property developments... It was also the site of the London home of Charlotte Despard from which she provided welfare facilities for the local community.”

Irish World

The unveiling ceremony was attended by Irish Ambassador to the UK, Martin Fraser, broadcaster Ryan Tubridy, Mayor of Wandsworth Councillor Sana Jafri, and Lady Lucy French OBE, Despard’s great-niece, who said: “Growing up and listening to tales of my great aunt Lottie, I was always filled with immense awe. She was a woman so ahead of her time: a visionary in her support of the vulnerable, and

the cause of women’s rights. I could not be more proud to see her recognised in Nine Elms, a fitting tribute to the Mother of Battersea.”

The installation of the plaque represents the ongoing commitment of Sean Mulryan and Ballymore to honouring the historical significance of Nine Elms, and those who have lived, worked and contributed to the local community.



(Left to right) Ryan Tubridy, Mary McAleese, Bernardine Mulryan and Sean Mulryan

Breathing life into Bray

Ballymore has a proven track record of revitalising neighbourhoods by partnering with creatives, makers, performers, and community organisations.

After successfully transforming areas of London, the Ballymore team has brought their expertise to Ireland, most notably at Sea Gardens in Bray, where an exciting placemaking programme is helping locals enjoy a series of activations this summer.



Ballymore has launched a pioneering placemaking programme in Bray, featuring a series of events designed to showcase the vibrant and emerging coastal community at Sea Gardens.

The initiative aims to highlight the unique charm and potential of Sea Gardens – a 1,200-home neighbourhood located just north of the River Dargle, offering stunning views of the Irish Sea and the Wicklow Mountains.

Ballymore's impressive activation programme has been strategically crafted to immerse locals and prospective residents of all ages in the burgeoning community. As Hayleigh O'Farrell, Ballymore's head of brand and communications, explained: "From interactive workshops and cultural performances to family-friendly activities and community gatherings, Ballymore's placemaking programme is creating a dynamic and engaging environment that fosters community spirit in Bray while celebrating the area's creativity and outstanding natural beauty."

"We've long offered such activations in the UK, and I'm thrilled to see us applying our expertise and bringing this successful blueprint to Bray, uniting the community and fostering a sense of togetherness."

"Ballymore's placemaking programme is creating a dynamic and engaging environment that fosters community spirit in Bray while celebrating the area's creativity and outstanding natural beauty."

Among the activation themes are health and wellbeing, with events including a 5km run organised by the local running group Happy Feet. Runners enjoyed scenic views and a sea breeze as they meandered around the Sea Gardens neighbourhood. Post-run treats from local bakery Glovers capped off the event, with Happy Feet organisers calling it a "huge success" and praising Sea Gardens as the "perfect route for a 5km run".

The sporting events were followed by a dedicated family fun day in July – a celebration showcasing all that Sea Gardens will

offer to the families moving in and local people living nearby. This fundraising event successfully raised money for the nearby Wicklow Animal Welfare charity and featured a range of attractions, including food from Pitt Bros BBQ, coffee, and treats. There was also face painting, balloon animals, arts and crafts, a magic show, a disco, and a science show, ensuring fun for all ages.

Ballymore also highlighted the exceptional designs of Sea Gardens, with interiors crafted by Sara Cosgrove of Grove & Co., one of Country and Town House Magazine's top 50 designers.



Happy Feet runners gather at Sea Gardens

All kinds of guests were welcomed to Bray this summer



Guest speakers at the interiors event at Sea Gardens

Sara visited Sea Gardens to share her expertise, hosting an "Art of Interior Design" event alongside influencer and fashion designer Jodie Wood, co-founder of Minima, a baby wrap and accessories brand.

Sinead Corcoran, fashion director and owner of bridal brand The One Couture, also joined the event and said: "Sea Gardens is beautifully situated by the sea. Each house has its distinct colour palette, and I was delighted to see so many faces at the event, discussing my own interior style."

Hayleigh added: "This series of events has allowed us to put Sea Gardens on the map – giving local people and future residents a true feel of the community we are nurturing here – the atmosphere, the community, and the setting – with homes enveloped by the beautiful surroundings in spaces thoughtfully designed and finished to impeccably high standards."

"I'm really proud to have seen so many people visit in recent weeks, allowing us to show our vision for this stunning part of Bray."

Ballymore is now planning further events at Sea Gardens throughout 2024 – this includes yoga and sauna events. All are welcome and interested parties can click the QR code to follow our seagardens_bray Instagram account which also highlights things to do in the local area.



Influential voices descended on the new neighbourhood in recent months

"This series of events has allowed us to put Sea Gardens on the map – giving local people and future residents a true feel of the community we are nurturing here."



Event ready at Sea Gardens



Children were treated to face painting and other entertainment at July's family event



Entertainers helping guests on the day



Ballymore joins forces with Fingal County Council to create affordable homes in Rush



This CGI shows what the homes will look like inside

Ballymore is moving into the creation of homes for all in a bid to tackle the increasing affordability issue faced by so many across Ireland. Working with Fingal County Council, the 18.5 acre site at Aster Park, north of Rush was secured by Ballymore in November 2023 in a quick turnaround which saw a commencement on site in February.

The development, comprising 159 homes in a mixed tenure scheme, will offer mostly affordable homes for private sale to families and some social homes for people registered on the housing application list with Fingal County Council. The council provides equity loans as part of the Affordable Purchase Scheme meaning people on moderate incomes can buy houses presenting them with the opportunity to be a homeowner.

As David Power at Ballymore explains: “Our relationship with Fingal County Council was cemented through a social housing scheme we carried out with them in Portmarnock last year. So when the opportunity came up in another part of Fingal to develop homes which enabled people ordinarily priced out of the private market to own a property, we grabbed it.

“Affordability is a rising issue for buyers in Ireland and these schemes are critical in helping to bridge the gap, making homes affordable for all. We were keen to build momentum following the

success of Portmarnock, and with Fingal Council partnering with us, we were able to acquire the Rush site incredibly quickly and obtain it with the benefit of planning permission.”

“Affordability is a rising issue for buyers in Ireland and these schemes are critical in helping to bridge the gap, making homes affordable for all.”



Rush offers an idyllic setting by the sea



Rush offers an idyllic setting by the sea with a community park and gardens also planned for the scheme.

Commenting on the partnership, Aoife Lawler, senior executive officer for Fingal Council said: “Fingal has worked with Ballymore on several social housing schemes and welcomes this collaboration on a mixed tenure scheme in Fingal to bring private homes to the market at an affordable price to meet the needs of middle-income families.”

As David adds: “This is just the start for Ballymore who are committed to providing more affordable and social housing options, to help make a dent in the housing crisis.

“We are exploring more and more opportunities and are currently in talks with other local authorities to further impact the housing market in a positive way. Working with authorities in this context gives us market certainty that allows us to fully commit to a project knowing all units will be sold – enabling us to stretch further and create even more new affordable homes. It’s wonderful to be represented in Rush and we look forward to reaching even more new places as we help people get on the property ladder in this difficult economic climate.”

The affordable homes will be sold by Ballymore with private buyers who meet the Affordable Purchase Scheme criteria coming through Fingal Council and are scheduled to be completed by the end of 2025.



To learn more about Aster Park, scan the adjacent QR code.

Planning secured for Stratford Waterfront

Ballymore, and our partners the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC), have secured detailed planning consent for 700 new homes neighbouring East Bank, the new cultural quarter for innovation, creativity and learning in Stratford.

Designed by our long-time friends and architects Howells – alongside O’Donnell+Tuomey and LDA Design – Stratford Waterfront comprises a family of four residential-led buildings of up to 27 storeys, to be set within Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. The plans also include approximately 1,750 sq m of commercial space at ground level, as well as over 4,000 sq m of public open space that will prioritise biodiversity and play.

In all, 35% of the homes will be affordable, with a total of 50% affordable homes planned when combined with Bridgwater Triangle, a second site to be delivered by the partnership, together with Pudding Mill Lane and Rick Roberts Way.

Our Ballymore colleague and development director Simon Ryan said: “East Bank is transforming Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park with the most ambitious cultural project in a generation. With the London College of Fashion, UAL and UCL East already open, Sadler’s Wells East will follow later this year with V&A East, and BBC Music Studios soon after. So, this site demanded new homes of design excellence – in keeping with the bar that has already been set by our cultural and academic partners and neighbours and the site’s most incredible setting by the water and on the park.

“We’re so proud of what has been achieved by our partnership with LLDC, and with the support of a brilliant design team. It’s fantastic to have the green light so detailed design work can commence with a view to beginning construction in early 2026.”

Rosanna Lawes, executive director of development at LLDC, added: “As East Bank, one of the country’s largest cultural and education districts, nears completion it is exciting to move onto

the next phase of development. The joint venture partnership with Ballymore means that we can rapidly build on the park’s successful legacy to create another thriving and sustainable community of well-designed and sustainable homes.”

At the most northern part of the site, a marker building known as the ‘Prow’ has been designed by O’Donnell+Tuomey, who have also designed the neighbouring V&A East and Sadler’s Wells East. The three mid-block buildings of Stratford Waterfront, designed by Howells, feature strong textured masonry bands that connect them to their East Bank neighbours. The buildings make the most of their setting within the centre of the park, with each staggered to maximise the long range views of the City and to the north. Sustainability has informed their design and will ensure each home will receive good quality sunlight and daylight, while minimising overheating. In addition, residents can enjoy amenities such as a gym, concierge, co-working spaces, and podium play areas, all next to Waterworks River.



A CGI showing the plans for Stratford Waterfront



A closer look at one of the buildings at the scheme

“East Bank is transforming Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park with the most ambitious cultural project in a generation.”

The palette of all four residential buildings complements the materiality of prestigious island neighbours: the V&A East Museum, London College of Fashion: UAL, BBC Music Studios, and Sadler’s Wells East. The four buildings share characteristics of strong vertical and horizontal lines, which harmonise with East Bank’s distinctive identity of earthen tones and cast materials, reflecting the making heritage of east London.

At ground level, the scheme will offer future residents, workers, or visitors to East Bank multiple café and restaurant options alongside a south-facing waterfront promenade with views and connections into Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Landscape designed by LDA Design features play space, seating, and diverse tree planting, all contributing to a green and walkable neighbourhood.

Reflecting on the designs, Areta Soare, director at Howells, concluded: “We’re excited to share the plans for Stratford Waterfront with its unique offering that will complement the cultural hub at East Bank. Situated on a constrained site, we have worked closely with clients and collaborators throughout to ensure this scheme represents high-quality designed and crafted homes for this prominent location.”

Construction is anticipated to be underway in spring 2026, with completion anticipated for late 2029.



Ballymore sponsors the 'Taste of Kildare' 2024 Festival

Ballymore is proud to be sponsoring the Taste of Kildare food and drink festival which will take place between Friday 20–Sunday 22 September 2024 at Naas Racecourse in Co. Kildare. Now in its third year, the event promises to be bigger than ever as it collaborates with over 100 partners in the tourism and hospitality sectors to deliver a vast choice of experiences and adventures for visitors of all interests and ages.

Avril Bannerton brings with her a wealth of experience having held similar events in London, Australia and Dublin throughout her career. As she explains: "I've long been a fan of Ballymore and the work they do. I approached the team to support our festival given their values align so organically with what Into Kildare have already achieved in the county."

"I was thrilled when they not only said yes, but offered so much support and enthusiasm to the project. It feels like a perfect collaboration and, I hope, the start of many more."

As Linda Mulryan concludes; "We're proud to support Taste of Kildare this year, bringing the community together to celebrate the county's rich food culture."

Scan the adjacent QR code to book your tickets and use the code **BALLYMORETOK24** at the checkout before 31 August 2024 to enjoy 20% discount.



It marks a poignant collaboration for Ballymore as we savour our roots in Ballymore Eustace which inspired our company name 40 years ago, and became the location of our first show home. As Linda Mulryan, deputy managing director of Ballymore explains, "Being from Kildare myself, I know how special an event like this is for bringing families, friends and neighbours together. Ballymore built its first show home in Kildare over 40 years ago and has built 4,000 homes in the county since, with another 3,000 planned, so this partnership means so much to the whole company. We look forward to helping showcase Kildare's culinary talent in September."

The event, which is being run by tourist board Into Kildare, with the help of Avril Bannerton as festival director, will include hands-on workshops and masterclasses designed to showcase local talent and bring together a line-up of 20 artisan producers. Highlights include the attendance of some of the culinary stars behind Kildare's top dining establishments, including celebrity chef Derry Clarke of The Club at Goffs, Gareth Naughton of Neighbourhood and Gary O'Hanlon from The K Club. There will also be visiting chefs including celebrity chef Rachel Allen, Chapter One's Ross Lewis, Melissa McCabe of Feast, and Martin Shanahan of Fishy Fishy.

For Ballymore, it's a perfect opportunity to show our support for growing businesses – something we're continually committed to doing, as well as strengthening our allegiance to a place where we've created several neighbourhoods, such as Stonehaven, Station Walk, River Walk and our upcoming development in Confey, Leixlip.

"It marks a poignant collaboration for Ballymore as we savour our roots in Ballymore Eustace which inspired our company name 40 years ago, and became the location of our first show home."

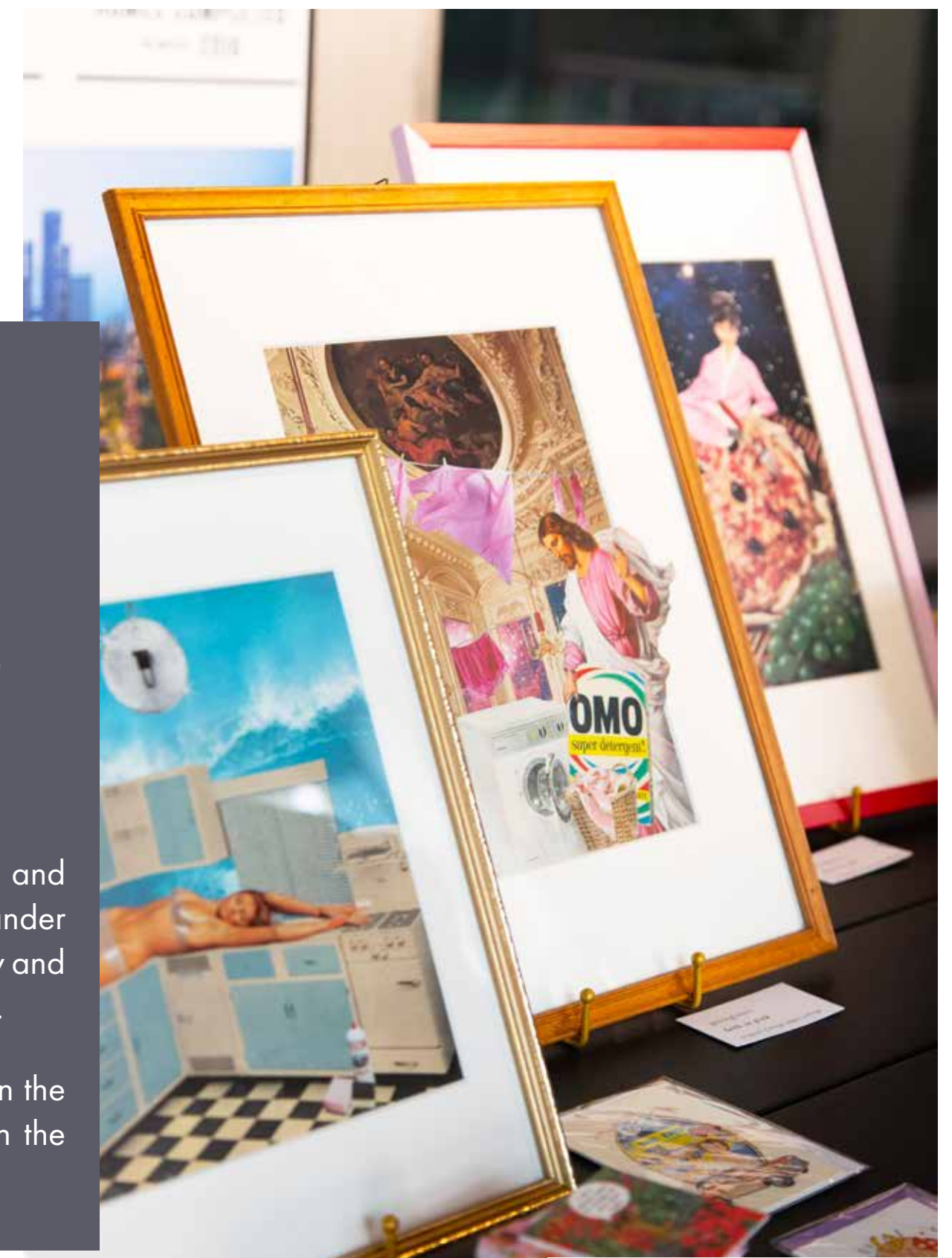


Linda Mulryan and Hayleigh O'Farrell of Ballymore join event organisers at the launch

VIEW FROM THE OUTSIDE Shaping communities through art

Residents and visitors have the opportunity to meet and create their own works of art at our ever-popular Islander Festival this summer. Ballymore is fostering community and supporting London's artists through this vibrant event.

In this article, we meet some of the artists involved in the festival, who share their thoughts on engaging with the community and using art to bring people together.



Ballymore has demonstrated the power of art to bring people together through events at this summer's Islander Festival, which runs until September at London City Island and Goodluck Hope in east London's Docklands. Art workshops have given residents and visitors the chance to make friends and find out more about what the neighbourhood has to offer, all while creating artworks for their home.

The festival's series of varied Workshop Wednesdays began in May with a sell-out pottery workshop by 3D designer and artist Amanda Cotton in the 29th floor Lantern Room resident space at Goodluck Hope. Cotton, who teaches pottery at her own Art Craft Studios at the nearby Trinity Buoy Wharf arts centre, equipped the 25 workshop attendees with essential handbuilding skills using clay. They then applied their skills to create everything from teacups to animal sculptures.

The makers gained more than their artworks. "It's a good way to meet people, do something different and chat," says Cotton. "Some people knew each other and came as a group or in couples; other individuals came to meet people from the local community. Although I'm in the room, everybody is able to support each other, as one person might know a skill and another might not."

As well as having varying levels of pottery making skill, some attendees were less familiar than others with their surroundings.



Islander guests enjoyed a range of art forms

"A few people I spoke to were new to the area and trying out different things locally," says Cotton. "A lot hadn't been to the Lantern Room, even though they lived in the area, and a lot didn't know Trinity Buoy Wharf was at the end of the road."

Since the workshop, some have ventured to Cotton's studios to fire and paint their works. "The workshop was a lovely experience," she says. "There's always a great atmosphere at workshops, where people can learn new skills, be creative and build friendships."

The festival's Affordable Art Pop up later in May gave another opportunity for residents to make friends and artworks. For one day only, Goodluck Hope's sales suite was transformed into an art gallery where exhibitor and vintage collage artist Laura Goossens, hosted mini-workshops.

Goossens, who works under the brand name Gooseglitters, takes images from old, unwanted books and magazines and puts them to creative re-use with the addition of biodegradable glitter. She is not only passionate about her own sustainable artworks, but also about inspiring others to "recycle, reimagine, repurpose" and about sharing the mental health and wellbeing benefits of collage through workshops.

People of all ages and artistic abilities tried creating collages after seeing her works on show. "Their reaction was, 'can I create something like this myself?'," she says. "Once they had, people left with a sense of pride that they had created an artwork they could put on their wall."

Goodluck Hope may be a new neighbourhood but, says Goossens, "There is an amazing sense of community there already". She continues: "Seeing people connect over art, take that break to create and then forgetting about time was such a good indicator."

For Ballymore, there's more art on the events calendar at Goodluck Hope and elsewhere. "We are keen to support artists because their work helps to enrich our places and nurture our communities," says Hayleigh O'Farrell, Ballymore's head of brand and communications. "Our residents' enthusiasm for these events clearly shows their community value."

Artists' websites:

Gooseglitters is at: www.gooseglitters.com
Amanda Cotton is at: www.amandacotton.co.uk and Art Craft Studios: www.artcraftstudios.co.uk



Laura Goossens talks to guests on the day

The Islander Festival continues...

Alongside art workshops, the festival has a full calendar of events, including live music, morning yoga classes and a teddy bear's picnic for our youngest residents. To find out more about the festival, go to our Goodluck Hope website.





Q&A

How we're working with the community to give London's heritage a brighter future



Guests on the LFA tour

As part of our plans for a new neighbourhood at Knights Road in the Royal Docks we've been working with the community and landscape architect Gillespies to reimagine a park beside the site.

Described by Gillespies' partner Eugenia Grilli as "a hidden gem" and now in its centenary year, Lyle Park was a highlight of this June's London Festival of Architecture (LFA). In this Q&A, Grilli and colleague, senior associate Neil Matthew, give *bulletin* readers a guided tour.

What is Lyle Park's history?

Eugenia Grilli: Lyle Park is a site of great historical and community significance.

In 1924 industrialist Sir Leonard Lyle, whose sugar refinery was nearby, donated the land to create a park for workers and local residents. This park served as a crucial green space in the densely populated industrial area, offering an oasis amidst warehouses and factories, and providing recreational and sports facilities for factory workers. As we approach the park's centenary in 2024, it's important to reflect on its legacy and current state.

Tell us more about the park today?

EG: The park could be called a hidden gem, as it is located on a small side street but has beautiful river views. It has an arboretum, mature trees and historic features; there are ornamental wrought iron gates and a war memorial water fountain.

The children's play area, the first thing visitors encounter, is underused and a bit unimaginative. In contrast, the football ground remains active, indicating some community engagement. The park's mature trees provide structure and biodiversity.

Additionally, the Newham Parks Tennis Scheme features two popular all-weather courts equipped with floodlights.

Neil Matthew: As Royal Wharf has come forward, Riverscape comes forward and the Knights Road planning application is brought forward, the local population is ever growing. Increasing demand for this kind of park – and connecting it properly to those residents – will transform its use.

How are local people shaping the improvement plans?

NM: We've had an exhibition for residents and taken a group round Lyle Park to get their feedback. It was clear that people very much appreciate the area's green spaces already, as at Royal Wharf.

The residents also like the river walk along Royal Wharf and are pleased that's going to continue past Lyle Park and into the Knights Road development as that comes forward.

The exhibition took place alongside a community day, where local children had the opportunity to create ceramic tiles. They are going to be used by a mosaic artist who will create an artwork for the park.

What is Ballymore's vision for the park's future?

EG: We're working with Ballymore to transform Lyle Park into a vibrant riverfront neighbourhood park offering diverse sports, play, and recreational opportunities.

Key improvements include the creation of an urban woodland and northern plaza to enhance the entrance, and a tree-lined promenade that links sports areas, exercise spots, and resting places to the waterfront. A central lawn will serve as an informal recreation space, and a new adventure playground will be established along the riverside within the existing arboretum.

The park will be framed with gardens and existing trees to enhance its ambiance, while new pedestrian links and a riverside promenade will connect the park to new neighbourhoods. Additionally, new tree planting and landscaping will improve biodiversity and air quality, and new clubhouse facilities as part of the Knights Road development will complement the sports areas.

NM: We think that – because of its location and the way the new residential areas are developing – the park is going to become a centrepiece of this area and a focus for the community.

EG: John Mulryan has often mentioned that a typical London park is busy, active and has informality within it. We also talk with Ballymore about this area being one town. It's not a series of different residential developments; ultimately this is going to be the green lung of the town. Its success will be measured by the park's ability to attract and engage the local community and the work we've done with the local community has been very valuable.

Our ambition is to revive Lyle Park to its former glory while integrating modern design and updated facilities. We aim to make Lyle Park a cornerstone of open spaces within the London Docklands, providing an active recreational area that reflects contemporary design principles.

What's planned for Knights Road?



Over 1,300 homes



Over 4,000 sq m of light industrial and modern workspaces



Flexible ground floor spaces for retail and community uses

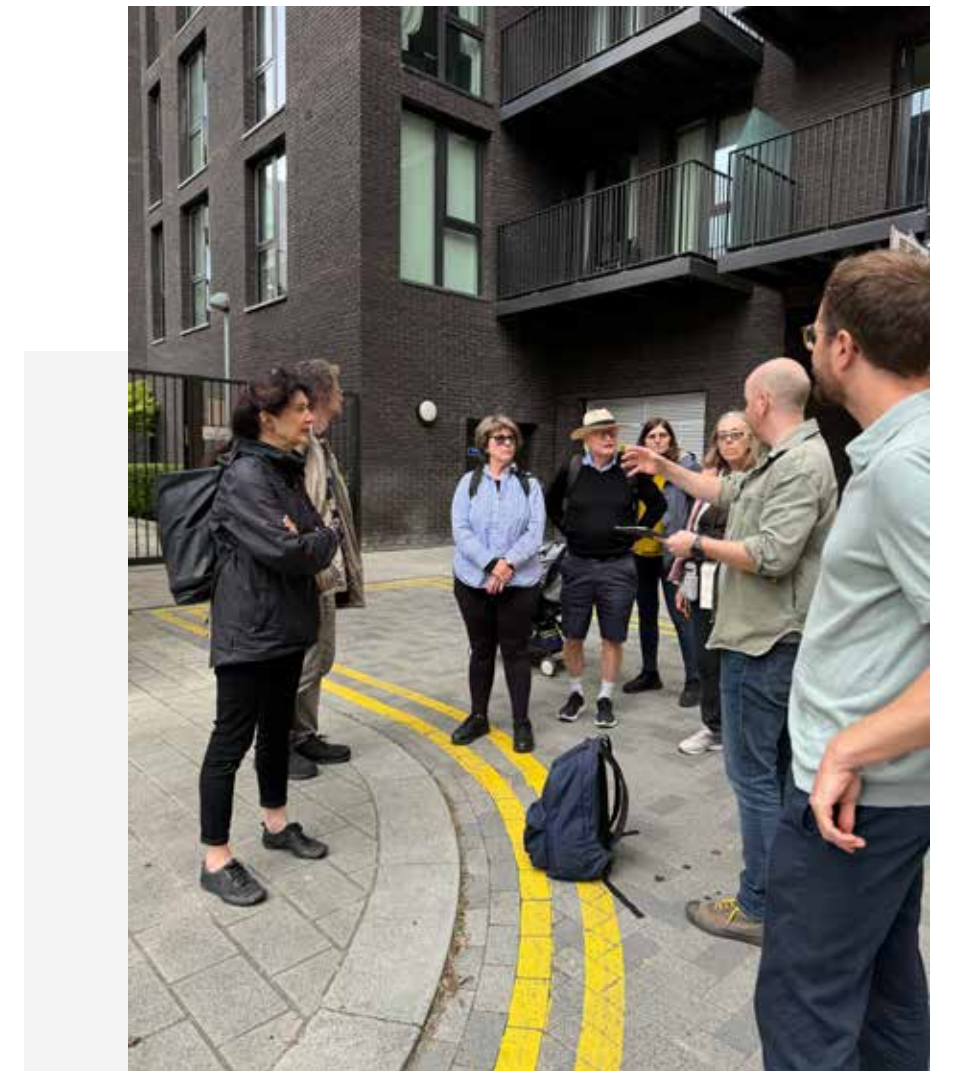


Green spaces, with enhanced riverfront connections

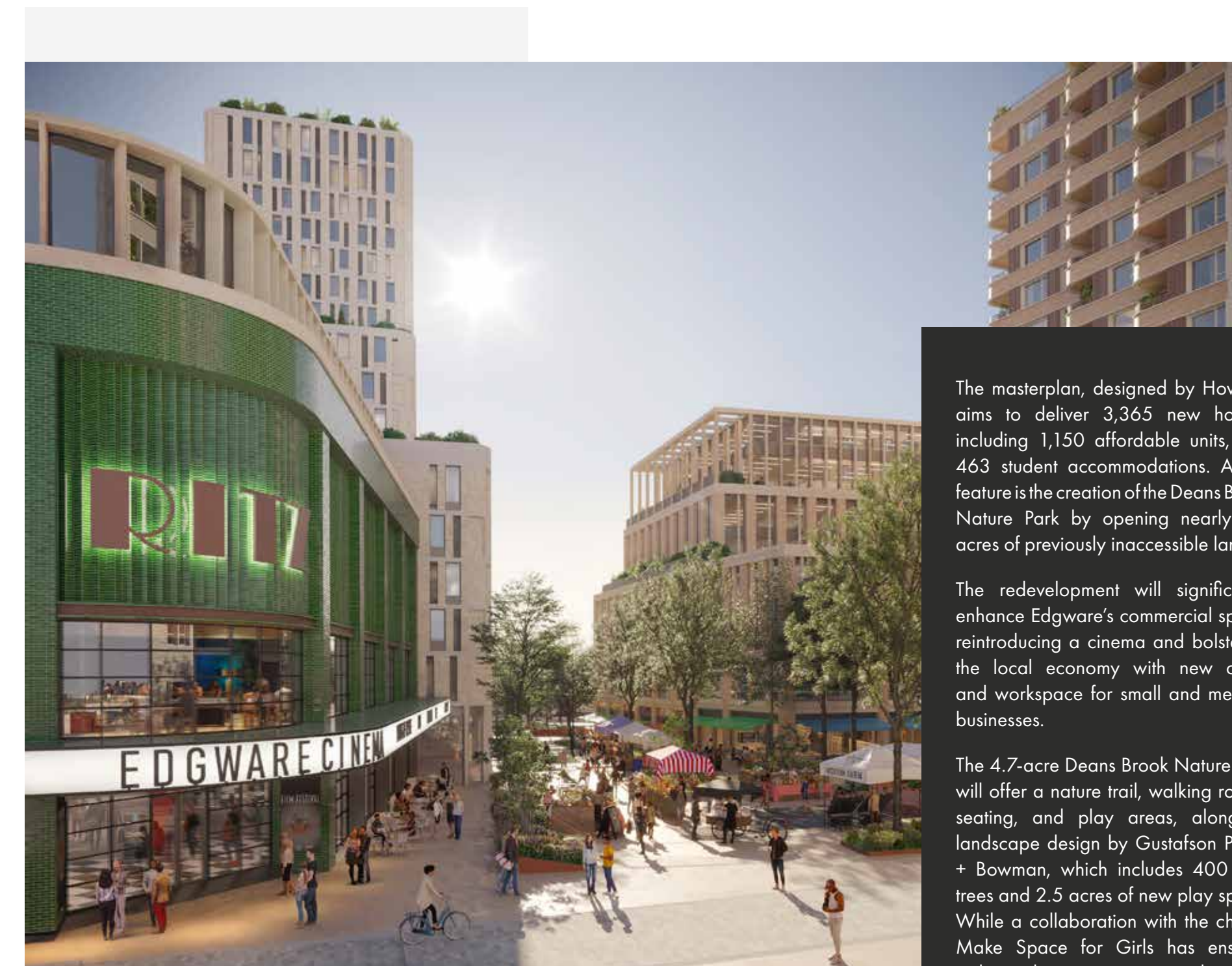


Community events to boost the use and profile of Lyle Park

We are working towards submitting a planning application for Knights Road over the summer, so watch the *bulletin* for more news.



Guests hearing from our landscape architects Gillespies



We've submitted a new planning application in Edgware

Ballymore, in partnership with Places for London, has submitted an outline planning application to redevelop Edgware's Broadwalk Shopping Centre, bus station, and garage.

The masterplan, designed by Howells, aims to deliver 3,365 new homes, including 1,150 affordable units, and 463 student accommodations. A key feature is the creation of the Deans Brook Nature Park by opening nearly five acres of previously inaccessible land.

The redevelopment will significantly enhance Edgware's commercial space, reintroducing a cinema and bolstering the local economy with new office and workspace for small and medium businesses.

The 4.7-acre Deans Brook Nature Park will offer a nature trail, walking routes, seating, and play areas, alongside landscape design by Gustafson Porter + Bowman, which includes 400 new trees and 2.5 acres of new play space. While a collaboration with the charity Make Space for Girls has ensured inclusive design, creating social seating, play spaces, and safe areas for young people. The development aims for zero emissions, incorporating renewable energy sources, solar panels, green roofs, and community gardens.

Speaking of the news John Mulryan, Group Managing Director at Ballymore said: "Edgware is an incredible town with a rich history – and this site presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity. We're submitting this application 100 years on from the opening of Edgware station. With this masterplan we are

looking to help Edgware continue to thrive over the next 100 years – with new homes, green spaces, job opportunities, sustainable travel, as well as places for friends and family to spend time together and make memories among new shops, restaurants, and community spaces.

"We're proud of the plans we're submitting, and we thank the huge numbers of people in the community who've met our design team and helped shape these plans."

Graeme Craig, Director and Chief Executive at Places for London, added "Following extensive engagement with the local community and close collaboration with our partner, Ballymore, we are pleased that the planning application to deliver an enhanced and improved town centre for Edgware has now been submitted. It looks to revitalise and support the local economy, alongside new opportunities for the community to explore new green and open spaces, while also delivering the homes that the capital urgently needs."

The first phase, including the new nature park, retail, leisure, cinema, homes, Sainsbury's store, office, bus station, garage, library, and community centre, is expected by 2031, with full completion by 2036.



Celebrating Summer in Brentford

The Brentford Project's idyllic waterside setting played host to a bumper programme of events this summer.

Our waterfront neighbourhood, The Brentford Project, has welcomed visitors from near and far over the past few months with the return of our annual Summer Series.

Launched five years ago, the annual series has become a staple event, attracting over 7,000 visitors since its inception. This year's curated programme 'Summer on the Water' featured imaginative events centred around a floating pontoon on the water, including 'Supper on the Water,' featuring MasterChef Professional Elena Frattura, who served her culinary creations, 'Flower Arranging on the Water,' where local florists Bramble and Moss led a visionary masterclass, and 'Barre on the Water' with West London fitness specialist Charlotte Alloway.

The standout event though was the 'Festival on the Water,' a day-long festival centred around the newly opened Workhouse Dock, a picturesque venue adjacent to the Grand Union Canal and the River Thames.



"Launched five years ago, the annual series has become a staple event, attracting over 7,000 visitors since its inception."

There was a vibrant market featuring numerous independent makers selling unique products. Pop-up food and drink vendors offered diverse culinary delights, complementing the established businesses at The Brentford Project. Duke of London added to the excitement with a vintage car boot sale, showcasing a curated collection of classic and supercars. Visitors admired the cars while browsing vintage clothing, automobilia, artwork, and vinyl records, creating a nostalgic yet contemporary atmosphere.



In addition to the shopping and dining experiences, guests enjoyed live performances on the floating stage set up on the water. The day was filled with energy, attracting locals and members of the broader community, including a family who stumbled upon the event and were "thrilled" by the festivities.

Laura Jeffery, Ballymore's PR & events manager, said: "The Brentford Project is an ideal location for community gatherings. With a wide range of businesses and the beautiful waterside setting, there's something for everyone. The floating stage was a highlight, and the live music created a vibrant atmosphere for all ages. It's become a true community hub."

Our summer events continue throughout July and August with a partnership with Everyman Cinema, hosting two months of free open-air screenings of the Wimbledon tennis tournament and over 100 films, including Hollywood blockbusters, cult classics, musicals, and family favourites. The screenings will run until 31 August; for times and details, just scan the QR code.



Ballymore supports VR exhibit honouring the work of late Irish painter, Seán Keating



Co-directors of SIT STAND SMOKE, David Keating (centre) and Linda Curtin (right)

Ballymore has sponsored a new VR art installation, SIT STAND SMOKE, featuring work by Irish born romantic-realist painter, Seán Keating (1889–1977).

Harnessing cutting-edge technology, the 18-minute experience in virtual reality was brought to fruition by the painter's grandson, film director David Keating and his co-director and film artist, Linda Curtin – collectively known as Curtin/Keating.

SIT STAND SMOKE was exhibited at the Crawford Art Gallery in Cork City for ten days earlier this summer, and was an immediate sell out. The piece is intended for venues in Ireland and internationally with visitors heralding it as an intense and emotionally rich experience. It was conceived as a response to one of Seán Keating's most revered artworks, 'Men of the South' which depicts six Irish freedom fighters. The 100-year-old painting represents six ordinary men whose struggle helped bring into existence the new Irish state – while the VR experience explores questions of how the creation of the painting managed to capture an important moment in history and why it has been so resonant to so many for the past century.

The collaboration with Ballymore came, in part, with Curtin & Keating noticing a large mural in the east end of London depicting the 1936 Battle of Cable Street which celebrates local resistance. The large public artwork had been refurbished with support from Ballymore which David Keating describes as "an incredibly generous act". Recalling having met Ballymore founder Sean Mulryan, and having learnt that he was a fan of his grandfather's work, David says it felt like an authentic fit to approach Ballymore for help to bring to life a modern day response to Keating's painting



Seán Keating's original painting



Setting up the exhibition



A guest uses VR technology to view the exhibition

'Men of the South'. He says: "Ballymore was incredibly receptive, and we are hugely grateful to the team.

"The company has an excellent reputation in Ireland, the UK and beyond, so having their support was fabulous."

SIT STAND SMOKE was also funded by Screen Ireland, Animation Ireland and BT Group, along with the Crawford Art Gallery through the Building As Witness programme. Filmed exclusively in County Cork, the production involved over 100 cast, crew and contributors, with more than 50 local Cork people appearing in the piece.

Linda Curtin concludes: "It's wonderful to bring new relevance to the painting in this revolutionary, advanced way, using the technology of VR to help us appreciate how prosperous Ireland has become, and the freedoms we may take for granted that have not always been the norm." David notes: "I remember my grandfather well and I think he would be pleased. Although some think of him as a traditionalist, he was absolutely fascinated by technological advancements and innovation. It feels good to honour his work in this new, immersive form, fusing a classic oil painting with modern technology."

"The piece is intended for venues in Ireland and internationally with visitors heralding it as an intense and emotionally rich experience."



CONSTRUCTION What's happening onsite?

Knights Road and Thames Road, London

Knights Road and Thames Road are the next chapters in our growing riverside community at the Royal Docks – building on Ballymore's completed Royal Wharf neighbourhood and under-construction development at Riverscape.

We've continued to engage with locals living in these adjacent neighbourhoods, investing in the community, welcoming people to our sites, and showcasing our latest plans – with activation events including London Festival of Architecture walks that you'll have read about in this issue of *bulletin*.

Among the proposals for Knights Road are over 1,300 high-quality homes, some of them affordable, as well as over 4,000 sq m of light industrial and modern workspace. We also hope to create high-quality public spaces, green space, and better connections around Knights Road and will soon submit a planning application for our plans.

Thames Road, meanwhile, will also comprise high-quality new and affordable homes, a new modern primary school, workspaces that combine old and new industries in the area, as well as better river connections, green spaces and co-living spaces.

Bishopsgate Goodsyard, London

At Bishopsgate Goodsyard, our attention is firmly focused on the site's historic Braithwaite Viaduct arches. Clearance works have been completed above the listed railway arches in preparation for investigative works to determine the capacity of the structures. The arches, which were built in the 1840s, will be assessed before works are carried out to refurbish them to create retail space within and for the public park and hotel which will sit above them.

In order to fully assess the arches, trenches up to 4m in depth will be excavated into the current platform level, so that the build-up of the arches and any structural or remedial works can be confirmed during the next stages of design.

Works to plan the methodology for refurbishment of the London Road arches will also start in the coming months, in consultation with the contractors and Network Rail.

Current tenants BoxPark will begin vacating their area in the north west of the site later this summer, with removal of their cabins to be completed by the end of the year.



Riverscape, London

Our Riverscape development is now taking shape, with many plots now completed and occupied. With the plot 4 landscaping connection to Lyle Park and the river wall both opening in July, the public will have a chance to explore this emerging neighbourhood over the summer.

Cuba Street, London

Our proposals for our Cuba Street project in the heart of Canary Wharf are making progress towards construction. A planning application has been submitted, which seeks to increase the number of units from 421 to 434, and in recent months our team has been working on the final stages of the technical design.

The development includes a parkside tower of high-quality private and affordable homes, ranging in size from studios to three-bedroom homes, with a distinctive design by architect Morris + Company.

The development will also feature an indoor-outdoor gym at level 32 overlooking the River Thames and city beyond, and expansive communal spaces for residents at ground, first and second floor levels. The scheme will also deliver the largest new public park in the Isle of Dogs in over 30 years, and a parkside restaurant/café.

Stratford Waterfront, London

As you'll have read elsewhere in this issue of *bulletin*, Ballymore, and our partners the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC), have secured detailed planning consent for 700 new homes neighbouring East Bank, the new cultural quarter for innovation, creativity and learning in Stratford.

Stratford Waterfront, designed by our long-time partners Howells, along with O'Donnell+Tuomey and LDA Design, will feature four residential-led buildings up to 27 storeys high, situated within Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. The plans also include approximately 1,750 sq m of commercial space at ground level and over 4,000 sq m of public open space, emphasising biodiversity and play.

8th Lock, Dublin

We completed our work at 8th Lock, finishing the final rental apartments in this new Dublin neighbourhood. Savills is now marketing these homes for rent, attracting much interest due to the well-designed units, onsite state-of-the-art gym, rooftop gardens, concierge services, and excellent connections within Dublin and beyond.

Stonehaven, Naas, Co. Kildare

Construction of Stonehaven's phase 1A is almost complete, with the majority of its large three and four-bedroom houses now occupied. The remaining homes are due to be completed over the summer while delivery of the public parkland is set to start this autumn, with the first phase completing in the same quarter.

Phase 1B is also under construction, providing a mix of smaller units with two and three-bedroom duplex homes as well as three and four-bedroom terraced and semi-detached houses. The show houses for this phase are due to be delivered in early 2025.

When fully complete, Stonehaven will have 380 homes in a landscaped setting complete with a neighbourhood centre, which will include a grocery, café and crèche.

Station Walk, Newbridge, Co. Kildare

With the construction of Station Walk's first phase now completed, attention has turned to its second phase, which incorporates some subtle design changes to define its unique character areas. This second phase is now well over half-way through its construction programme and has seen the same strong market demand enjoyed by earlier sales launches.

The development is providing efficient and sustainable living in a mix of two, three and four-bedroom semi-detached and terraced homes, all in close proximity to Newbridge train station.

Construction of Station Walk phase 2 is due to complete in March 2025.

Dublin Arch, Dublin

Our team has been busy onsite at Dublin Arch, carrying out enabling works and related groundworks. This major mixed-use development adjacent to Dublin's Connolly Station extends to approximately 111,000 sq m and will include homes, office space, and Ireland's first Standard Hotel.

The masterplan envisages new homes, office buildings, community clubs, artists' studios, restaurants, bars, retail, landscaped plazas, and a central public square at the heart of the scheme. With direct access to Connolly Station and convenient proximity to Bus and Luas lines, Dublin Arch will be Ireland's most connected commercial hub.



Guinness Quarter, Dublin

Dublin's Guinness Quarter is one of the most exciting regeneration schemes in Europe. For this landmark site, we hope to create a truly mixed-use community, with new build-to-rent homes, two hotels – which will include a swimming pool and rooftop bar – as well as a 280-capacity performance space, food hall, marketplace, and workspaces. We're also creating new public spaces and squares.

Following the granting of a 10-year planning permission late last year, our team has been working on designs and logistics – exploring and progressing market opportunities along with preparing detailed costings for each of the 15 plots which make up the overall masterplan for this exemplary development.

Sea Gardens, Bray

The vision for our Sea Gardens development in the coastal town of Bray, to the south of Dublin, is now becoming reality with the completion of the first 128 houses and duplexes.

Construction works are in progress on 16 terraces, as well as apartment blocks C and D. Block D's 26 apartments are due for completion in December 2024, with the 80 apartments in block C due to complete in 2025. Houses are due for completion in May 2025.

The Sea Gardens neighbourhood is set to have 1,200 homes in all, with the first phase including two, three and four-bedroom houses, two-bedroom apartments and three-bedroom duplexes. Amenities and green spaces are integral to this new neighbourhood and include the Market Square, new Linear Park and Central Park, all of which contribute to its vision for sustainable twenty-first century living.

More awards success for Ballymore

Ballymore has achieved accolades on both sides of the Irish Sea, winning the Residential Project of the Year for River Walk and the Development of the Year Award for The Brentford Project.

River Walk won at the 2024 Irish Construction Awards (ICA). This new neighbourhood is in Ballymore Eustace, the area from which Ballymore took its name in 1982, and brings founder Sean Mulryan's vision to life, extending the village with 80 energy-efficient homes that blend traditional Irish cottage aesthetics with modern design. River Walk draws on the area's rich heritage, seamlessly connecting the community to existing amenities.

Speaking of the win, Sean Mulryan said: "River Walk is our vision for a contemporary neighbourhood that draws on the best of local and Irish heritage. Our goal was to create a place that integrates with Ballymore Eustace, celebrating its heritage while emphasising quality and sustainability. Returning to this village after four decades symbolises a homecoming, as we create a new neighbourhood that harmoniously coexists with its existing charm. We are thrilled to have our work recognised by the ICA judges and extend our congratulations to all the other winners and nominees."

In the UK, The Brentford Project won at the annual PROPS Awards in London – with judges celebrating this bold approach to regeneration. The development injects new life into a previously neglected and overlooked waterfront area of west London – responding directly to local needs, revitalising the town centre and waterfront, delivering new private and affordable homes, five acres of public realm, new retail and leisure spaces, and creating employment opportunities.

Speaking of the win, Ballymore's managing director John Mulryan added: "The PROPS Awards provide a unique opportunity for our industry to come together and celebrate our collective achievements while raising funds for a worthy cause."

"I am delighted that our work in Brentford has been recognised and extend my congratulations to all the other winners."

The news comes as The Brentford Project is also shortlisted for this autumn's British Homes Awards, while Ballymore is also shortlisted for the forthcoming Business LDN Building London Planning Awards, with the company's Riverscape development in the city's Royal Docks nominated for the Best New Place to Live Award.



The Brentford Project in London



This aerial shot shows River Walk's proximity to Ballymore Eustace

ESG Focus

Ballymore is more than just a developer – we create vibrant communities, dedicated to enhancing quality of life and fostering a deep connection to arts and culture. We make a positive impact by focusing on three specific areas: arts and culture, community wellbeing, and environmental stewardship. Our commitment underscores our holistic approach to sustainable development and community enrichment.

Here we run through our community endeavours this past quarter, a time in which we have continued to support local groups and grassroots organisations across the UK and Ireland to further nurture and improve our neighbourhoods.



Cleaning up Lyle Park in London

Ballymore and Newham Council have joined forces to help clean up Lyle Park as it prepares to celebrate its 100th birthday this year. The historic park in London which sits adjacent to our Riverscape development in the Royal Docks is a place much loved by the community.

In a bid to tidy up the park ready for its centenary year, 30 Ballymore colleagues, including staff from the development, construction and asset management teams, dedicated their time to provide some much needed maintenance freshening up many areas. Tasks included clearing litter and scaling back overgrown areas with some gardening, cutting, weeding and planting bringing neglected areas back to life.

The clean-up comes just weeks after Newham Council celebrated Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean campaign, encouraging Newham residents to demonstrate pride in their locality by participating in a mass action litter pick.

It's also another example of Ballymore's commitment to the communities in which we serve, as Niamh Sheehy, our land manager and ESG lead concludes: "We make a conscious effort to embed ourselves in our local communities in the UK and Ireland, a big thank you to our colleagues who have helped Lyle Park look its best."

"We look forward to seeing Lyle Park in all its glory as it hosts its 100 year celebrations."



Spreading colour and cheer in Kildare

May saw the Naas Community College hold their most successful colour run to date with over 360 runners taking part in the popular and colourful sprint. Ballymore, which holds strong roots in Kildare was proud to be a sponsor, helping to raise money to finance a new classroom and play area for the college.

The Colour Run is a five-kilometre, untimed event which sees participants doused in a different colour powder as they reach each kilometre. It was a day full of energy with one participant describing it as "the best fun."



Renewing our commitment to Dublin City University

Ballymore is once again supporting Gaelic football at Dublin City University (DCU) for the 2023/24 academic year as part of our continued commitment to the development of sports in Ireland. The largest university Gaelic games club in Ireland, DCU Dóchas Éireann has 800 members across 28 men's and women's football, camogie and hurling teams.

This continued partnership is reflective of our responsibility to our community, and highlights the importance of investing in grassroots sports to empower and encourage young athletes to discover their potential. Ballymore has supported the men's and women's football teams at DCU since 2021 helping to bring cutting-edge facilities, to inspire the highest possible standards of sporting performance and academic achievement.

As our deputy managing director Linda Mulryan explains: "Ballymore is committed to investing in initiatives that catalyse positive societal impacts and cultivate the communities where we provide homes. We firmly believe that sports are fundamental to society, fostering a sense of belonging within communities while significantly improving overall health and wellbeing, so I am thrilled to renew our partnership with DCU for 2024."

A new defibrillator for the Broadwalk Centre in Edgware

Ballymore has helped to provide a defibrillator for Kisharon Langdon Brady Youth at its Edgware premises. Brady Youth is a youth group which operates across three sites across London where it welcomes young Jewish people who face difficulties learning and socialising. The groups provide them with a space to make friends, try new activities and participate in after school clubs and holiday schemes in Edgware, Hendon and Elstree.

Defibrillators are a life-saving piece of equipment which apply an electric charge or current to the heart to restore a normal heartbeat. The addition of one to the Edgware group will help to provide a safe environment, and assist the charity in their overall mission of empowering individuals with disabilities and special educational needs.

Centre manager of The Broadwalk Centre, Angela Brooks said: "We would like to express our gratitude to Ballymore for allowing us to utilise the unit to be able to fund raise for the equipment. Together, we have made a difference in the lives of those who need it the most."



Promoting skills in Edgware

Ballymore, in partnership with Places for London has funded and delivered The Skills Centre in Edgware as part of their commitment to nurture and grow local skills within the construction industry. The community focused facility comes as part of the proposed regeneration of Edgware town centre with Ballymore resolute in their intention to provide opportunities for local people to embark on a range of careers in construction.

The hub will act as a focal point for growing local skills and talent, providing a base for anyone keen to embark on a range of rewarding and varied careers in construction and the built environment. With the proposed regeneration of the centre providing the perfect circumstances for careers to flourish, Ballymore, along with their partners remain steadfast in their resolve to involve as much upcoming talent in the local area as possible.

The centre, which is situated on Station Road is an employer-led, community-focused, training and apprenticeships provider, and is already making an impact with local care-leavers and apprentices from Barnet Southgate College who were involved in the fit-out. Speaking about his experience, Simon said: "The construction skills and experiences I've got here are really valuable. Not only are they helping me get the necessary qualifications I need to build my career, but they're also practical skills that are helping me become more self-reliant and save money at home."

As our developments director Simon Ryan adds: "The Skills Centre exemplifies the potential of under-utilised high street spaces. Whether you're looking to find a path to your first job, or looking to make a change in career, The Skills Centre has a lot to offer."



Staff Interview: Meet Brian De'ath

Seven months into his role as managing director of sales and marketing, we chat to Brian De'ath about what brought him to Ballymore, his view of the housing market, the fundamental needs of home buyers, and how his beach hut at Frinton on Sea is his favourite place of all.

You don't work in this industry without familiarising yourself with Ballymore! Its 40-year track record speaks for itself, and I'd followed the company's progress throughout my career. Quite simply put, I love what we produce.

The element that makes Ballymore stand out and really encapsulates our USP is the individualistic approach to every project we undertake. We don't arrive and say 'we're going to put our overarching Ballymore stamp on this', which wouldn't necessarily be an unsuccessful approach – instead we devote our energy into asking 'how can we best capture the heart of this location.' The focus is always to add to the unique character of the landscape with the stamp of approval coming from studying each potential development in isolation. This is an inherently different approach to developers I've worked for previously and forms part of the Ballymore magic.

A vision of the future

This innovative outlook ensures that every project seamlessly captures the essence of its location, to develop an organic addition to a space whilst creating a thriving new community. I'll never forget visiting Embassy Gardens in 2011 at the very beginning of its journey. There was just the original three-storey marketing suite on site surrounded by nothing but car show rooms and light industry, yet when asked what I thought of it whilst standing on the terrace viewing platform, my response was simply 'I think I feel ill.' The truth is, I wished that I was delivering this quality of experience on the projects I was dealing with at the time, but we weren't. The fact that this space had been able to elicit this level of feeling, despite the existing surroundings being completely uninspiring, shows how very special it was.

We can dress it up as much as we like, but at the heart of buying a home is the need to feel secure and safe. People have always – and will always – want a place where they can shut out the rest of the world and relax. The ability to attract buyers lies in this simple truth and, as I realised on my first visit to Embassy Gardens, in the power of being able to evoke that feeling of home. It is the skill of executing a space whereby people can see a vision of the future, their future. That's what Ballymore has done countless previous times – and it's what we still do today.

There is also a great energy and sense of responsibility in working here, which I think can only come from being part of a family-owned and managed business. Having worked for PLCs and received the advice to 'act like you own it', I'm now part of a business where the owners sit at the very heart of everything the company stands for. It doesn't belong to distant shareholders who you can't visualise, it belongs to real people working incredibly hard, showing up every day to do the best they can.

Seeing the bigger picture

An essential part of my role is to engage and motivate the teams around me. Without selling our properties we don't have a business, so managing the sales team is an integral part of my day-to-day. I used to work as a salesman at an estate agency, so I make sure to utilise those skills with more of a helicopter view to not get tied down in the finer details, whilst also remembering that every single sale deserves a celebration. Each sale is a reminder that we have triggered that human response to the feeling of being in a Ballymore home.

It's important to never lose sight of how people feel in a space, something I feel is at the core of Ballymore's projects. The business has a very good handle on the numbers – you don't get to achieve what it has in these past 40 years without this – but it combines this fiscal responsibility with intuition, a gut feeling, which is necessary, especially when planning multi-phased projects like Embassy Gardens. There are always going to be variables you can't control or predict, and it takes a certain skillset to successfully navigate the many ups and downs of the market.

In 2023, the housing market experienced another very tricky year... I feel I've been saying this for the best part of the last decade! My personal view is that we'll look back on the period from June to November as a low point in this cycle. More broadly, Brexit and Covid have presented us with continued challenges – we've seen a higher demand for larger homes with buyers choosing to stretch themselves into bigger spaces, whilst investors, usually quick to snap up the smaller one-beds and studios, have been far thinner on the ground.

Although we have had a positive start to this year at Ballymore, we can never be too complacent – the market still feels fragile and there isn't much depth to it currently. Interest rates have a big part to play in giving potential buyers the confidence to move forward with their purchase, and all of us in the industry are waiting expectantly for the first rate cut.

Out of the office

Outside of work you'll mainly find me spending time with friends and family. I've been married to Gaynor for 23 years and we have two girls, Holly Rose (19) and Madeleine (17). We love to spend time at our pink and white striped beach hut in Frinton on Sea – in fact, I'll be cycling the 70 miles there this weekend and the girls will meet me there, travelling by car! My favourite thing to do is paddle boarding and swimming in the sea, and I'm also a keen runner. I've just started to experiment with triathlons and am looking forward to a couple of events later this year.

I feel very fortunate to have stumbled into the development industry. There was certainly no grand plan for this as a career when I left university, and I put whatever success I have been part of over the past almost 30 years to saying yes to opportunities and having a can-do, positive attitude. Working for Ballymore is in alignment with my own goals: you have to be invested and believe in the product you are selling, and when the product is this good it's easy to say yes to it, both from mine and a potential purchaser's perspective.



Embassy Gardens Bloomsday Festival and Royal Wharf Summer Fête: A Celebration of Community and Culture

Last month saw a vibrant showcase of community spirit and cultural celebration at our neighbourhoods in London. The Bloomsday Festival at Embassy Gardens in London, a uniquely Irish event originating from Dublin, commemorated the work of esteemed Irish poet James Joyce and was co-hosted by Robin Gill, owner/chef of Darby's Oyster Bar, Bakery, and Grill at Embassy Gardens. Meanwhile, Royal Wharf welcomed back its much-loved annual family fun day on the waterfront, packed with activities and performances for all ages.



The Royal Wharf Fête was a day of colour and vibrancy

Bloomsday drew over 2,000 visitors from the local community and beyond, eager to enjoy the jam-packed roster of performances and activities. With featured performances from over 16 artists, the diverse line-up showcased both emerging and established talent. Spoken word presentations created poignant moments, while various singers and bands captivated the crowd. Highlights included headliner acts including Irish singer/writer Imelda May, soul-pop musician Fintan James, and musician BLÁNID.

Robin Gill remarked, "Every performance was rich with Irish soul – a celebration of our culture and all we stand for. The crowd supported the performers, each bringing their own unique creative energy. It was bold, vibrant, and full of life, making for a richly diverse experience that encapsulated the essence of Ireland."

The festival also featured a pop-up Irish market with event partners like Teeling Whiskey, Five Farms Irish Cream, 40ft Brewery, and others, offering a curated selection of craft food and drink. Visitors embraced their inner performers with a free Try an Instrument session hosted by World Heart Beat Music Academy, a charity based in Embassy Gardens that aims to transform lives through music. Passers-by delighted in trying the Irish flute or fiddle, fully embracing the day's spirit.

"It was bold, vibrant, and full of life, making for a richly diverse experience that encapsulated the essence of Ireland."



A day of music and celebration on Bloomsday

Younger guests enjoyed creative activities and a screening of classic Irish films at World Heart Beat, including the Oscar and BAFTA-winning short film, *An Irish Goodbye*. Robin Gill concluded, "The day captured the magic of Ireland by representing its rich, diverse culture. The range of activities and performances meant there was something for everyone—both young and old—to enjoy."

One week later we were in London's Royal Docks for the annual Royal Wharf Summer Fête. The annual family fun day was as popular as ever, with visitors enjoying a day loaded with activities and performances. Street food stalls offered a varied culinary experience, while the craft market attracted visitors of all ages with its vast range of handmade pieces. Live music provided an energetic backdrop as families participated in numerous workshops, classes, and sessions.

Highlights included an inclusive HUM Yoga Class overlooking the water, designed to relax and re-energize participants, and a group HIIT session for more energetic members of the crowd. The day focused on younger guests with continuous family entertainment and kids' theatre specialists BB Broadway facilitating soft play sessions and age-specific activities.

Children's party and play experts Sharky & George were also a huge hit with their array of parachute games, tug-of-war, and water balloon catapults, which were as popular with the adults as with the children. Businesses at the Wharf also got involved, with hairdressing salon Silverclip hosting a Route 66 day featuring live music from vintage jazz and soul performer Heide, smooth jazz and swing with Chris Harvey, followed by a live set by DJ Don. They also provided complimentary American-style nibbles and beers, delighting customers with their hospitality.

Ballymore's Laura Jeffrey, PR and events manager, said: "Royal Wharf is the ideal location for the summer fête, with its idyllic waterfront position and green spaces providing ample space for families to relax. The abundance of businesses further amplified the experience, and it was great to see some of

them get involved. It's a day devoted to families with a wealth of activities for all age groups to enjoy. It's wonderful to see the neighbourhood being enjoyed by the community."

"Highlights included an inclusive HUM Yoga Class overlooking the water... and a group HIIT session for more energetic members of the crowd."



The setting for Bloomsday at Embassy Gardens



Performers entertain the crowds on Bloomsday



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