

In this issue:

- *Gas Works in the City*
- *Shoe Lane Library Home Delivery Service*
- *Blackfriars Station Underpass*
- *Blackfriars Bridge*

Check out our website for other news of the ward and further details on newsletter topics!

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GAS WORKS IN THE CITY

Residents will have noticed the continuing disruption and congestion caused by street gas works in the City, the latest and most significant occurring in Gracechurch Street. This has necessitated the long-term closure of London Bridge to north bound traffic with vehicles being diverted to Tower and Blackfriars bridges causing increased congestion elsewhere in the City.



36 INCH GAS MAIN INSTALLATION CIRCA 1880

We hope the following information will give some useful background as to why these problems are occurring and the difficulty in remediating the situation quickly.

In Greater London the gas distribution and supply network services approximately 2 million customers. Currently there are approximately 120,000 gas escapes, 12,000 excavations and 380 kilometres of mains replaced per annum.

In April 2001 a 30-year programme was launched which aims to replace all iron pipes within 30 metres of buildings (some 45,000 kilometres in London). Many of these gas mains were laid over 100 years ago (see picture above) and were made of cast iron, ductile iron and steel. These old pipes are at the end of their life and are failing through corrosion or fracturing due to earth movement. These are being replaced by polyethylene pipes that can sustain higher pressures than the metal pipes and do not corrode. The new pipes are inserted inside the old pipes wherever possible to speed the work up and minimise disruption.

There are 2 types of pipes, distribution and supply. Distribution (large bore, typically 36" or 48" diameter) deliver gas to local areas, and supply (smaller bore) deliver gas to buildings. The positive news is that most of the smaller pipes that fail more frequently have been replaced already in the City. The larger pipes fail less often but are more difficult to replace and these are now being addressed.

Clearly gas leaks are highly dangerous and must be addressed promptly when they occur, Cadent which is the company responsible for the network has a statutory right to commence street works in emergencies within 2 hours of giving notice to the City of London corporation which is the Local Authority for the square mile. However, with careful planning and coordination disruption can be minimised and your members will remain vigilant in ensuring that this is the case.

We are pleased to report more positive news concerning the construction of the Thames Tideway Tunnel at the Blackfriars foreshore which will necessitate the relocation of the 36" gas main running east west along the Embankment. It was initially planned to route the diversion through the Whitefriars area of the ward, but we have heard from Cadent that they believe that an alternative solution has been found, however this might cause disruptive traffic works on Embankment. Given the recent repeated gas leakages and disruption in Tudor Street we have also asked Cadent to consider bringing forward the replacement of the mains there to minimise future problems.

Your voice on
Common Council:



Ian Luder - Alderman



Chris Boden



Emma Edhem



Michael Hudson



Angus Knowles-Cutler



Catherine McGuinness



Graham Packham



Henrika Priest



Jeremy Simons

Find our details on:

www.castle-baynard.org.uk

SHOE LANE LIBRARY HOME DELIVERY SERVICE

Not able to visit your local library? If so the library can come to you. The City of London Library Home Delivery Service will deliver books and more, once every four weeks, to City residents who are unable to get to a library by themselves. This could be because of a disability, old age, an inability to carry heavy books, or a temporary injury or ailment which restricts you to your home. The library can provide a wide range of library material - novels, non-fiction, large print, music, talking books and DVDs.

Free delivery and collection is made to your home. To find out more contact the library at: Shoe Lane Library - 1 Little New Street, Hill House, London, EC4A 3JR. Tel: 020 7583 7178 Email: shoelane@cityoflondon.gov.uk



BLACKFRIARS STATION UNDERPASS

The underpass at Blackfriars Station has fallen into disrepair since the Station was remodelled and commuters can no longer exit directly from the underground to the underpass. The underpass has attracted rough sleepers and there have been problems with litter, urination and flooding. Members have been pressing City officers to improve the situation. Unfortunately, responsibility for the underpass is split between the City (who look after cleaning) and TfL (who maintain the underpass fabric).



City officers have scheduled increased visits by their cleaning contractors with regular disinfecting to eliminate smells and TfL have recently repaired the lighting in the subway. TfL have committed to render the areas where tiles have fallen off the walls and to redecorate other areas over the summer. The rough sleeper problem appears to have diminished at the moment and the subway looks better although far from ideal.

BLACKFRIARS BRIDGE

Users of Grade II listed Blackfriars Bridge will have noticed that it is long overdue for painting and maintenance. Problems have been caused by the parapet, which is causing the visible rust-staining and corrosion to the structure. It has taken some time to investigate these issues due to access restrictions for a number of reasons, including recent Thameslink, Cycle Superhighway and Thames Tideway activities.



However, preliminary investigations are now complete and an approach has been identified, subject to approval from the City of London Corporation, Historic England, and the obtaining of Listed Building consent. Careful coordination between multiple agencies will be needed for the works to be carried out.

For example, Thames Tideway and the Port of London Authority will need to be involved to programme safe navigation and working for span closures, and the City will need to coordinate with TfL for highway space and access. The work is therefore likely to take 2-3 years. Currently it is expected to start in April 2019. Members will be monitoring progress closely and pressing for this to be carried out as quickly as possible.