

Chairman's Report 2023/2024 AGM

Our catchment covers around 650 households and last year I confirmed our aim was to increase our membership from 116. I'm delighted to say that at the end of 2023 our membership stood at 140 – but there is still room for expansion! Membership of ECSRA costs £10 (individual) and £15 (family/household) and enables us to fund refreshments and music at our events such as the “Lighting of the Christmas Tree” and wine and canapés at our AGM tonight. – Subscriptions also help pay for the DJ at our annual summer family BBQ/Disco. All residents are welcome to these events. However, they all need funding - and ECSRA membership fees provides this – so please make 2024 the year when everyone here tries to recruit a member so the majority of the 650 households in our area join ECSRA – which will enable us to continue providing free or subsidised events for our community.

EVENTS: During 2023 - ECSRA hosted 5 events – some of which were shared with the Garden Sub-Committee. Our AGM in February, held here at the School started the ball rolling with Guest Speaker, Felicity Buchan, MP for Kensington, who brought us up to date with events at Westminster.

In May we celebrated the Coronation of HM King Charles III in the Garden with a Coronation Tea featuring a brass band and a magnificent array of food - contributed by residents – with refreshments provided by ECSRA and the Garden Sub-Committee.

The BBQ and disco, our annual fundraiser, was held a little earlier on Saturday 24th June, to enable more families to attend before the main school holidays. We started at 5pm to cater for young families and ended at 11pm to be considerate neighbours and keep to our Temporary Event Notice licence. The four BBQ fires were set up for communal use (one specifically for vegetarians and one pork-free) with a gazebo for the disco with DJ Paul of Krueel Intensions - who got everyone up dancing and joining in the fun - culminating in a conga around the garden. People brought their own rugs, tables and chairs and, with a lovely summer evening, the event was well attended and deemed to be a success.

We held a “New Orleans Jazz Evening” with DJ Jerry Shillingworth in The Bottlery for all residents of the Square - and we’re back at The Bottlery on 17 October for an Indian Evening”. It's a great opportunity for residents to mix and get to know each other and I'd like to express our special thanks to Jimmy from The Bottlery who provided the venue, wine and some of the eats free of charge as he wanted to support the community. Once again, Sue Lupton and I were busy in our kitchens beforehand preparing Creole and Cajun canapés for the event. Our final event was, of course, “The Lighting of the Christmas Tree” in December and this year we had a Santa – which made all the difference. The Earl’s Courtiers led the carol-singing accompanied by a brass band generously sponsored by John D Wood & Co. It’s magical to see so many neighbours of all ages celebrating the festive season together - consuming Alan’s mulled wine, Katrina’s 100 home-made mince pies and Mariaclara’s home-made chocolate chip cookies – which the children love!

Thanks to all the wonderful members who helped behind the scenes with the Events’ catering over the past year and to our Committee who have provided all the canapes for our Reception tonight.

There were 2 other events organised by and held for residents in 2023 – a “Commemorate Tea Party” for 3 residents who have lived in the Square for between 40-55 years who had passed on in 2023. It was a delight to have the Revd Jenny Welsh, the Vicar of St Mary The Boltons, who helped us celebrate the lives of Christine Powell, Roger Dearden and Frank Phelan. Many thanks to Simone Smith for suggesting and organising the gathering in the Garden and to all who brought drinks and nibbles to share under the gazebos on a damp afternoon.

Halloween in Earl’s Court Square was a delight with around 30 charming trick-or-treaters turning our neighbourhood into a festive hub. Our communal garden, aglow with Halloween lights, hosted a joyful gathering of diverse neighbours. Children in super cute costumes and some adults in funny ensembles added a touch of whimsy to the night. Many thanks to all involved with organising this community event and especially to Angela Casucci who masterminded it.

We look forward to welcoming you all to our 2024 events details of which are on our website www.ecsra.co.uk

PLANTERS IN THE SE ARM:

ECSRA has taken over the re-planting and maintenance of the planters which were originally funded by a Council NCIL Grant. The planters have been effective in blocking cycles and motorbikes from using the pavements to access Earl's Court Road which was dangerous for pedestrians. The new hedging has been funded by the Nicholson Funds and we donated the original plants to the Garden. These plants were not flourishing and, despite a few reservations from residents, they were replaced by ECSRA with a mixture of flowering - mainly evergreen - hedging plants which we felt would be more robust, provide flowers from November to May/June with berries at the appropriate times of the year and will grow to a height of around four feet and have thorns to deter people using the planters as seats. I am delighted to report that the planters, which I hope you all agree looked spectacular last Summer, won two RBKC awards under the Brighter Kensington & Chelsea Platinum Jubilee 2023 Scheme – 1st for “Gardening Under Difficult Conditions” and 2nd for “Best Community Effort”. Thank you to Alex Tullett for all his hard work and green-fingered contributions and we look forward to the Spring when we hope they will flourish and bloom once more. If you look closely the bulbs have started sprouting!

CYCLE HANGARS:

Thank you to all Members who responded to our Cycle Hangar Survey which helped the ECSRA Executive Committee finally reach a difficult decision. **From the 33 responses received, 27 residents supported more cycle hangars** - so we felt there was a proven need for additional cycle hangars in the Square. The Survey responses were divided equally regarding the loss of a residents' parking bay versus loss of a payment bay – so we felt it fair that there was a potential loss of one of each in our bid for Council funding.

Following a walkabout with RBKC's Sustainable Travel Manager, Caroline Dubarbier, ECSRA looked at all the possibilities. There was no suitable site in the SW arm – where there are already problems with the one-way system and school double-parking and the SE arm was ruled out due to on-going problems with delivery vehicles. We finally identified 3 additional cycle hangar sites – **giving 18 additional secure cycle spaces for residents** with the least impact.

With 44 residents waiting for cycle hangar spaces you will have seen that three new cycle hangars have now been installed - 2 sited in the NE arm take up a payment bay + part of a bike hoop bay. The site in the NW arm is immediately outside the Olympia Hotel and is in a residents' bay - near a streetlight but with no Electric Vehicle point. We now have 24 secure cycle spaces within 4 cycle hangars in Earl's Court Square.

We specifically requested that the cycle hangars are only for residents of the Square. However, we were advised this was not Council policy. We have, however, stated that priority should be given to the residents of the Square. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Cllrs Linda Wade and Tim Verboven for supporting this project.

TRAFFIC PROBLEMS IN SW ARM (WARWICK ROAD):

ECSRA has worked with the School and the Council to minimise the problems of children being dropped/collected from the School and the "no waiting" signs outside the School have been amended to reflect the longer school days Monday to Friday 8am to 9:30am and 2:30pm to 5pm but the school complains of constant problems with delivery vans (delivering to nearby residents) which stop in between their cones and on the yellow lines. The School has now adopted their "School Travel Plan" and are actively encouraging parents to walk or use public transport.

The Council has also addressed ECSRA's concerns about vehicles attempting to exit from the SW arm into Warwick Road by painting "one way" arrows on the road. Prior to painting the "one way" signs RBKC measured the traffic volumes on Earl's Court Square last July and, on average, 27 drivers a day were driving the wrong way along the SW arm which is about 4% of the total traffic using that arm of the Square. A further traffic survey was carried out between 9th and 15 December, after the extra arrows were installed, which found that 19 drivers per day (a 30% reduction) were still driving the wrong way along the SW arm of the Square which had dropped to just under 2.5%. The Council are of the opinion that the new road markings have made the one-way restriction very clear, so the few drivers that are still driving the wrong way are likely doing so wilfully, so it is unlikely that any additional road markings or signs will change their behaviour. We have asked for the RBKC Wardens to monitor the SW arm at peak times and issue

finer (mostly to cyclists who are ignoring the one way signs) as a deterrent.

TRAFFIC PROBLEMS IN THE NE ARM (EARL'S COURT ROAD):

Following complaints from residents that vehicles were entering the Square from Earl's Court Road, ECSRA met with Councillors and Officers to discuss the problems. ECSRA has suggested that the current "No Entry" sign was obscured by a traffic light and should be re-positioned. The Council are considering this request.

We also expressed concerns that the cycle lane markings on the NE arm needed clarification as cyclists were not keeping to the designated lanes. This was agreed and the changes will be included in the Council's road marking changes this year.

PUBLIC SERVICE PROTECTION ORDERS (PSPO):

Following concerns raised by residents of Earl's Court regarding the overall safety of the area, the Council is proposing to implement a Public Service Protection Order (PSPO). The measure is intended to address anti-social behaviours, enhance safety, and contribute to the overall improvement of the quality of life in Earl's Court. The proposed PSPO restrictions include:

- Use of illegal drugs or psychoactive substances.
- Littering.
- Street urination and defecation.
- Consumption of alcohol in a public place.
- Loitering and refusing to leave an area.
- Aggressive begging.
- Bicycles and scooters – prohibits riding on pavements within the protected area but allows pushing and walking alongside bikes or scooters.

The public Consultation, which opened on 9th January - closed on 20th February (yesterday) and I do hope it had your support as I emailed details to all our Members in January and February.

ECSRA supports the introduction of a PSPO to cover the whole of Earl's Court to restore the public's confidence in eliminating anti-social behaviour in Earl's Court. **But, we would stress, it is essential that sufficient resources are made available to properly enforce them.** ECSRA works very closely with the Police and I serve on the Earl's Court Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panel. We are delighted to welcome PC Amber Clark and PC Ben Hunter to our AGM tonight.

EARL'S COURT DEVELOPMENT COMPANY:

ECSRA is represented by Alex Tullett at ECDC/Earl's Court Society workshops where he is able to express our residents views and concerns on this very important project. Please do speak with Alex should you have concerns as he also represents ECSRA on the Earl's Court Society.

ECSRA NEWS/WEBSITE:

Members have all been emailed the first edition of ECSRA News. It is intended that this is published twice a year and the next edition will be circulated to all our Members in the Spring - after this AGM.

The ECSRA website is regularly updated and has all the details of our forthcoming events, archive information about the Square and hosts masses of photos of all our past events. Please do have a look at www.ecsra.co.uk.

FACADE RULES: After considerable work by the Residents' Association the Square was granted full Conservation Area status by the Council in 1975. One of its stipulations is that the buildings on the west, north and east sides **must be** painted a specific shade of **Magnolia** with woodwork **in white** but the colour of front doors is at the owners' choice. The colour for the house numbers is **Black** and typeface is **Garamond, 7 inches in height**. The latter detail is not in the

Conservation Area Document but is something ECSRA recommended. Please keep our Square looking beautiful by advising your Managing Agents/Housing Association when they are re-decorating buildings that the Façade Rules are on our website . We recently had to intervene when one of the buildings was re-painted as it had a distinctly “lemon” tinge and if there are any residents here from 2, 4 and 5 Earl’s Court Square - please support ECSRA with trying to get the font on the numbers of their buildings changed to Garamond.

RUBBISH & RECYCLING:

There are a few remaining “hotspots” for rubbish dumping and ECSRA is working behind the scenes to eliminate these. We have been working with the Council, Directors and Managing Agents of 69 ECS to activate one of their existing vaults so it can be used for rubbish bins and hopefully this will be finalised soon. Problems are again being found outside 312 ECS and we have requested an “A” Board outside the building to remind residents not to dump their rubbish on the wrong days. We believe that these two buildings are the only ones in the Square without a dedicated rubbish collection area within the building. There are still occasional problems in the NE arm of the Square and Heidi Bradner, who leads on Rubbish & Recycling, would ask everyone to always report instances of rubbish dumping to the Council on their website as it helps build up a picture of problem areas.

Finally, I’d like to thank all my colleagues on the ECSRA Executive Committee for another year of Zoom meetings when we have had lively - and sometimes heated discussions - discussing all the issues I have identified in my report. However, we remain united in our endeavours “to protect and enhance Earl’s Court Square and the lives of the residents who live and work here.” The Committee is pleased that we will be re-commencing our face-to-face meetings in 2024.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chrissie Courtney', with a large, stylized initial 'C'.

Chrissie Courtney