

**EARL'S COURT SQUARE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 24TH FEBRUARY 2021 AT 6:30 P.M.
DUE TO COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS THE AGM WAS HELD VIA ZOOM.**

The Chair, Chrissie Courtney, welcomed everyone to the Earl's Court Square Residents' Association Annual General Meeting.

1. **Apologies for Absence:**

Heidi Bradner; Kevin Colgan; Freddy and Helen Gibbs.

2. **Minutes of the 2020 AGM:**

The Minutes of the 2020 AGM had been circulated. They were proposed by Stacy Bouvier and seconded by Sue Lupton as being a true record of the meeting. Members took a virtual vote with 100% acceptance of the 2020 AGM Minutes.

3. **Chairman's Report:**

As I reported in our magazine, 2020 has been an extraordinary year in so many ways. Our Summer/Autumn events were cancelled due to Covid-19 but we started the year with a well-attended AGM and ended with a socially distanced "Lighting of the Christmas Tree" in the Garden. Singers from the Royal Opera House and West End stage sang a medley of festive songs, illuminated by a gold and silver Christmas Tree – whilst residents watched from the safety of their windows, balconies, doorsteps and pavements.

ECSRA certainly didn't go into hibernation during lockdown and there was a proliferation of Zoom meetings and a flurry of new projects which we feel will enhance Earl's Court Square.

ECSRA has applied, and been successful, in obtaining RBKC funding for two projects, both of which are financed by accumulated developers' contributions:

The first, from City Living Local Life (CLLL) of £2,301, is for 4 racing green plaques which will also bear the RBKC crest, to commemorate past residents whose lives have made a difference to Earl's Court Square. Initially these will be for Jennifer Ware, a doyenne of Earl's Court Square who was born and died in the Square and Douglas Eaton, who was Father of the House at the London Stock Exchange and a Councillor for 33 years. Both Jennifer and Douglas gave a lifetime of devotion to the Community and their legacies live on. We have also chosen to commemorate 2 people who made an impact in the international sphere - Dame Ninette de Valois, Founder of the Royal Ballet and Faud Rouhani, First Secretary-General of OPEC who was also an Ambassador-at-Large and a writer and musician. We are planning on a small reception in the Garden in September with their families at which our MP, Felicity Buchan, will unveil the 4 plaques to be installed on the buildings in which they lived.

The second project we are progressing has received £6,329 Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) funding, also financed by developers' contributions. This is for a row of 6 bespoke chamfered corner slate grey planters to be sited in the SE Arm of the Square - which we are hoping will prevent motorbikes, mopeds and cyclists taking shortcuts through the bollards onto Earl's Court Road as they are causing problems for pedestrians. Unfortunately, this project has been delayed as the Council Officers do not want the planters sited between the bollards and we are in discussions with the Council about a compromise solution with the planters now sited in a straight line on the pavement between the end 2 bollards.

Since lockdown I have been approached by 18 residents regarding the provision of secure bicycle hangers - with each hanger providing 6 bicycle spaces. Initially ECSRA was against bicycle hangers in the Square but with ever more people avoiding public transport and cycling to work, and increased bicycle theft, ECSRA identified two locations within the NE and NW arms of the Square where bicycle hangers could be sited which would not impact on the architectural integrity of the Square and Garden or necessitate the loss of a residents' parking bay. We have strongly objected to the Council's recent proposal to locate a bicycle hanger outside 51 as we feel this would have a detrimental impact on the Square and the Garden. We are in discussions with Council Officers to promote our proposals for 3 bicycle hangers to be located in the NE and NW arms of the Square. In the meantime, residents who wish to go on a Council waiting list for spaces should email cycling@rbkc.gov.uk. <https://www.cyclehoop.com/product/shelters-canopies/bikehangar/>.

ECSRA has a balance of £1,424 in their Nicholson Fund which was provided by the developers of Matiere Place and has been used over the years for the enhancement of the Square. The Executive Committee are now debating on the most effective use of these limited funds and have agreed the following guidelines:

That the Nicholson Funds should be used to facilitate enhancements to Earl's Court Square, including the arms of the Square, but not beyond. It cannot be used within the Garden railings. That work to individual buildings should normally be considered the responsibility of that building and that ECSRA should continue its work to encourage property owners to retain or revert to the original appearance. Conversely the fund should be there to pay for projects that would not be possible if left to individual owners. We envisage using the very limited funds for encouraging the buildings to replace missing finials (and we are looking at whether ECSRA can fund a mould for these) and encouraging all the buildings in the Square to use a Garamond 7" black font for their numbers. This is very much an on-going project for the Executive Committee and we hope to reach some conclusions to help achieve our aims during the course of the year.

I do hope that you have all received a copy of ECSRA's annual magazine. This is a mammoth undertaking for Sue Lupton, who edits the magazine and miraculously manages to get the adverts to cover Judy Head's professional costs each year, and we owe a huge thank you to Sue for undertaking this voluntary work and to John D Wood & Co for the sponsored printing. Sue has asked me to point out that there is a History Quiz competition (compiled by Christine Powell) which expires on the 28 February with a prize of a bottle of champagne or chocolates. So far there has been no response – hopefully it's not too difficult – so please do have a go!

ECSRA's other means of communication is our website, which is maintained professionally and updated regularly by Judy Head with input from Sue and I. In the past there were problems with tricky passwords - but the passwords have been done away with and the website is easily accessible now and has lots of interesting information about the Square and local matters. Please do all have a look – there really is something for everyone on www.ecsra.co.uk.

Due to the pandemic and the reduction of short-term lets, rubbish dumping on the Square has decreased, thanks to the efforts of Heidi Bradner and her Team of residents who report illegally dumped bags. The Council prefers you to use the online form as this generates a case report for the resident who is then informed of their investigation reports. Sadly, there are a few areas which remain "hotspots" though Heidi contacts the building managers to try to find solutions.

As I reported in the magazine, Kenway Road Police Hub closed last October, and The Earl's Court Safer Neighbourhood Team is now based at Kensington Police Station. Earl's Court has had a 19% reduction in crime with 1,180 crimes reported over the period December 2019 to November 2020 compared to 1,459 in the preceding 12 months with the peak month being June 2019 (159 crimes). Earl's Court had 90 drug offences during the last 12 months with a 30% reduction from 128 offences in the previous 12 months. There was also a 33% reduction in burglaries and a 36% reduction in robberies. Despite these figures, the residents of Earl's Court Square have been subjected to anti-social behaviour problems with people sitting on the steps of buildings drinking and taking drugs which residents have found increasingly intimidating. There have been break-ins and thefts of motor vehicles – and, this week during lockdown, residents have complained of weekend partying and loud noise from a top floor flat of a building facing the Garden in Earl's Court Square. Fortunately, the Police are dealing with this flouting of Covid regulations. Earl's Court has been recognised as an "enhanced" Ward due to its ASB problems and, after help from our MP and much local lobbying, we now have an enlarged Earl's Court Safer Neighbourhood Team comprising 1 Sergeant, 4 PCs and 1 PCSO. The Police are working with the new RBKC Wardens and you should notice an enhanced Police/Warden presence on our streets. I have circulated a "Community Safety Survey" to Members with the AGM Notice which the Council would appreciate your views on to assist them formulate community safety policy going forwards. I feel sure that residents would like to see an increased use of CCTV to fight crime as the present RBKC restricted monitoring hours are ineffective.

Alex Tullett (our Honorary Treasurer) in addition to doing all the accounts, is kept busy reporting and responding on all planning, traffic, parking and licencing matters on behalf of ECSRA and I am particularly grateful to Alex for his advice and assistance dealing with all ECSRA matters on a day-to-day basis. We have a new Membership Secretary, Christine Powell, who has asked me to ask everyone to please remember to renew their 2021 memberships and advise her on ecsramembers@talktalk.net. The membership subscriptions remain at £8 for individuals and £12 for families/household so please don't forget your transfers - as we need them. If you would rather pay by cheque or cash, please let Christine know.

Finally, I would like to thank all 9 of my colleagues on the ECSRA Executive Committee for their help and advice during 2020 with a particular thank you to Andrew Foster who has hosted tonight's AGM. We are also grateful to our Ward Councillors, Hamish Adorian, Malcolm Spalding and Linda Wade who are always ready to assist and to Katrina Quinton, Chairman of the Earl's Court Square Garden Management Sub-Committee for her continued support, and we look forward to resuming "service as usual" once lockdown is lifted this summer.

Questions & Answers:

There were no questions but Carole Taylor offered her thanks and said the Report was very interesting. Acceptance of the Report was proposed by Sue Lupton and seconded by Andrew Foster as being a true record of the meeting. Members took a virtual vote with 100% acceptance of the Chairman's Report.

4. **Hon. Treasurer's Report:**

Treasurers' Report for the Accounts ending 31st December 2020.

Tom Brown of The Garden Sub-Committee reviewed the accounts with me.

In terms of cash the RA finished off the year with an increase in the balance after accruals and receivables are taken into account compared to the end of last year.

The main variances this year are: -

Income.

Subscriptions. Up.

Donations. Up.

Advertising. Up as we undertook advertising in for the Newsletters.

BBQ. Down, COVID-19 restrictions meant we could not hold one this year.

There was no members evening, again due COVID -19 restrictions

Expenditure.

Not a lot here concerning increases on 2019;

BBQ. Was a deposit. It will be hoped the BBQ can be held in 2021 and the DJ has advised this can be carried forward.

Accruals.

Majority is in relation to the Xmas tree event.

There were no questions for the Hon. Treasurer

The acceptance of the Accounts were proposed by Tom Brown and seconded by Andrew Foster.

Members took a virtual vote with 100% acceptance of the Hon. Treasurer's Report.

5. **Election of Executive Committee:**

Currently serving, retiring by rotation and offering themselves up for re-election under the rules:

Chrissie Courtney – Chair (Proposed by Katrina Quinton/Seconded by Alex Tullett.)

Alex Tullett – Hon Treasurer (Proposed by Tom Brown/Seconded by Christine Powell.)

Andrew Foster (Proposed by Sue Lupton/Seconded by Katrina Quinton.)

Christine Powell (Proposed by Alex Tullett/Seconded by Chrissie Courtney.)

Members took a virtual vote in support of the re-election of the members of the Committee listed above.

Currently serving and continuing under the rules:

Heidi Bradner

Shailesh Katyal

Sue Lupton

Mariacarla Vilona

Maria Xirou
Magda Zawisza

Members took a virtual vote in support of the above members of the Committee continuing under the rules.

6. **Amendment to the Constitution - clause 10.6:**

The Executive Committee has the discretion to decide whether the ECSRA Annual General Meeting (AGM), Special General Meetings (SGM), Executive Committee Meetings, Sub-Committee Meetings or Working Parties should be held face-to-face or by video-telephony (virtual).

The motion was proposed by Katrina Quinton and Seconded by Sue Lupton. There was a virtual vote and 100% support for the change to the Constitution.

7. **Any Other Business:**

Tom Brown thanked the Executive Committee for all they had done. There was an unpleasant problem with dog dirt in the south end of the Square which was a daily occurrence. Sue Lupton said she had not seen any dog dirt but there was a smelly drain located in the southern side since the weekend. Chrissie Courtney said that Heidi Bradner had also mentioned a problem with dog dirt and it was something the Executive Committee would take up.

Katrina Quinton said that Stacy Bouvier would shortly be contacting Garden Subscribers giving them a deadline to renew their keys as there were now eight people on the waiting list so she would be more vigilant with re-issuing keys. She is having to send around 3-4 emails asking Subscribers to pay up and would be a lot firmer in future with enforcement. She asked Subscribers to advise her if they did not wish to renew their keys. Katrina also mentioned that the lawns were being re-seeded and asked people to stay off them as they were being treated with chemicals.

Chrissie Courtney thanked everyone for their support and was sorry we would not be able to have our customary drinks after the AGM.