

EARL'S COURT SQUARE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON TUESDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2021 AT 6:30 P.M.
UPSTAIRS AT THE BOLTON PUB, 326 EARL'S COURT ROAD

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

1. **Apologies for Absence:**

Mariaclara Vilona, Magda Zawisza, Judith Lawson, Jenny Scott, Alan Malcolm, Cathy Burnaby-Atkins, Rachael Jones, Rodney Brangwyn, Ilke Vowinkle, Helen Gibbs, Ann Green.

2. **Minutes of the 2021 AGM:**

The Minutes of the 2021 AGM had been circulated were on the website. They were proposed by Andrew Foster and seconded by Kevin Colgan as being a true record of the meeting. Members approved the 2021 AGM Minutes with a show of hands.

3. **Chairman's Report:**

2021 has seen a mid-year lifting of Covid-19 restrictions which meant ECSRA was able to organise "A Day To Remember" on the 8 September when ECSRA Members were invited to a Champagne and Canapés Reception to celebrate the lives of four notable individuals who lived in our Square. The Soho Square Jazz Duo provided background music and a hundred guests and neighbours mixed and mingled in brilliant sunshine in Earl's Court Square's stunning garden. The specially commissioned green and white ceramic plaques, funded by RBKC's City Living Local Life (CLLL), are erected on four buildings in the Square as a permanent reminder of the local and international achievements of Douglas Eaton, Faud Rouhani, Dame Ninette de Valois and Jennifer Ware. Our grateful thanks to John D Wood & Co, The Sloane Club (who provided the delicious canapés) and the generous benefactors who donated the champagne for kindly sponsoring this prestigious event and to the ECSRA team led by Christine Powell who worked behind the scenes to ensure all went to plan on the day.

Sadly, we had to cancel our summer BBQ/Disco again this year which has had an impact on our finances as we rely on the profits from this event to fund our community activities as our only other revenue is from membership subscriptions/donations. We have re-booked DJ, Jerry Shillingford, again and are hoping it will be third time lucky and the event, which is open to all residents, can go ahead in the Garden on **Saturday 9 July 2022.**

2021 has been an amazing year when the spirit of Christmas flowed around Earl's Court Square for our annual "Lighting of the Christmas Tree" on the 12 December - a joint venture with the Garden Sub-Committee - which is also open to all our residents. The community made a magnificent contribution of £755 to ECSRA towards funding the Santa Brass Band Quintet - who added to the festivities and put the "oompah" into our favourite Christmas carols and songs. Our thanks to Magda Zawisza and Orla Walsh (for their fundraising efforts on Earl's Court Square Neighbours' WhatsApp) and the many generous contributors who made this a memorable community event. Thanks also to Alan Malcolm - for making his legendary mulled wine (from a secret recipe with three gallons of fermented grape juice) Katrina Quinton - for a mountain of delicious homemade mince pies and Mariaclara Vilona for providing the children's cookies and thanks also to the many residents who joined us - making it a joyful event to remember.

The ECSRA Executive Committee continues to have virtual Zoom Committee Meetings and we have been very active behind the scenes on many projects. Besides successfully obtaining a grant from CLLL for our four plaques, we were also successful with our bid for funds from RBKC's Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) and the SE Arm of the Square now sports six bespoke grey planters, which has significantly reduced the number of motorbikes, cycles and mopeds taking shortcuts onto the Earl's Court Road. Besides, environmentally enhancing the area, the planters have improved pedestrian safety, which was becoming a problem for our elderly residents and parents with young children. Sadly, we have had to add edging strips to prevent them being used as seats as this was damaging the plants. The Council delays in getting this project off the ground and the inclement Autumn weather have also impacted on plant growth and Charles Wood will be replacing the six aloes, which are damaged and are very slow-growing, with

enhanced planting to give extra height as the Executive Committee are looking for more of a “show stopper” for our residents in this prominent location.

The third project for which ECSRA obtained RBKC funding (NCIL) is for a cycle hangar located in the NE Arm of the Square which should be completed by the end of this Financial Year. ECSRA’s support for three bicycle hangars (each housing six cycles) was fully covered in my report to residents at last year’s AGM and was necessitated by the number of residents cycling to work due to the pandemic and increased bicycle theft. It has been extremely difficult to identify sites that minimise impact on existing buildings, maintain the architectural integrity of the Square and that do not take away residents’ parking bays. We have a CLLL bid pending for funding an additional two bicycle hangars, which we have requested are located together in the NW arm of the Square (making a total of 18 secure spaces for bicycles) which we hope our Ward Councillors will support. Residents should contact cycling@rbkc.gov.uk to go on a Council waiting list as they will be managing and maintaining the bicycle hangars.

Another project of which we are very proud is the provision of a **London Hearts Defibrillator** which is located behind the tills at Krystals - which is open 24/7. There will be a sign on the outside of the shop to say that there is a defibrillator inside and the device has been registered with the London Ambulance Service. This project has been driven by Alex Tullett, who has put in a lot of hard work behind the scenes to get funding approved and get this device placed in Krystals. Alex is now on a roll and planning on several other locations - so our area will have adequate cover.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) has been a continued problem this year which ECSRA has been actively working to resolve behind the scenes. There have been instances of noisy parties and drug dealers/users loitering on doorsteps intimidating residents. Parents double-parking outside St Cuthbert with St Matthias Primary School - which is illegal and a nuisance – and with pollution from idling engines also becoming a problem, I’m pleased to report an air monitoring unit has been ordered to be sited outside the school. We are hoping that arrangements for RBKC Wardens to patrol the area will act as a deterrent - although we feel the school should be more actively involved in controlling the problem.

We are very concerned to hear that Earl’s Court is no longer an “*enhanced ward*” and we have lost Police as a result. This summer the Chairs of The Earl’s Court Safer Neighbourhood Team Ward Panel and the Residents’ Associations of Earl’s Court Square and Nevern Square Conservation Area (the two largest RAs in Earl’s Court) launched an online anti-ASB Petition (backed up with two days of street stalls outside M&S in Earl’s Court Road to collect hand-written signatures) with a total of 1000+ local residents signing our Petition. A report compiled by Professor Mike Hough (previously senior researcher in the Home Office where he and a colleague designed the British Crime Survey) was presented to Felicity Buchan MP on 3 February. We discussed residents’ concerns and asked for Earl’s Court to be ring-fenced and treated as a special case with traditional policing. We also expressed our concerns that the Police and the Council were not taking our ASB problems seriously as they were relying on questionable statistics. We stated that we felt the RBKC Wardens were ineffective and needed to be properly trained by the Police. Also, we needed more visible policing with regular patrols (not just the odd raid from time to time) and the Police needed to be community minded. Felicity is going to discuss our concerns with the Met Borough Commander and revert.

On **Sunday 5th June 2022** ECSRA will be joining forces with the Garden Sub-Committee to celebrate The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee with a “Bring a Plate” Afternoon Tea in the Garden. Arrangements have yet to be finalised but “*communities are being encouraged to get to know each other a little bit better, coming together in a spirit of fun and friendship*”. Please put the date in your diaries. We anticipate everyone bringing a plate of food to share with the two Committees providing tea/coffee and drinks for the children. The Garden Sub-Committee will be organising and funding the musical entertainment. We hope this will be a Traditional English Tea Event which brings the Jubilee celebrations into the heart of Earl’s Court Square.

Our next event is the **Earl’s Court Square History Walks** on Sunday 6 March at 10:00 and 12:00 with refreshments at 11:00 in the Garden. This event evolved as Christine Powell and Sue Lupton had done a lot of research on the Square for our Plaques Event last year but sadly, there were few takers for tours as everyone was enjoying the sunshine and the complimentary champagne and canapés. Rather than waste the research, Christine and Sue offered to run two consecutive tours in the Spring. As spaces will be limited, please would you either speak with us tonight or contact me on ecsrachair@btinternet.com if you would like

to join a Tour on Sunday 6 March and learn a bit more about The History of Earl's Court Square. If you can't make the walk, please do read Christine's article for The History Walks on our website.

We are also planning an **Oktoberfest** for our Members and their guests on Tuesday 18th October from 7pm – 9pm and details will be emailed to Members when finalised. And we have fixed Sunday 11 December for our “Annual Lighting of the Christmas Tree” - which we now share with the Garden Sub-Committee. Do please also look at our website www.ecsra.co.uk for details of all our events as it is regularly updated.

Finally, I would like to thank all my colleagues on the ECSRA Executive Committee for their help and advice during 2021 – and especially to Alex Tullett, our Hon Treasurer who is eternally vigilant on ECSRA's behalf and represents us on the Earl's Court Society. Besides looking after ECSRA's finances, Alex looks at all Planning/Licencing/Traffic and Parking applications and is closely monitoring the proposed development of the exhibition site. Heidi Bradner's project is Rubbish and Recycling and she has built up a close relationship with RBKC to attempt to find solutions to our remaining “hotspots”. Sue Lupton, our magazine editor, sources ads which fund the magazine and has again persuaded our generous sponsor, John D Wood, to print it free of charge. Christine Powell, our Membership Secretary deserves our thanks - and mine particularly - as she has supported some of my crazy schemes (such as the issue of our new Membership Certificates) even though they generate additional administration. I hope you like them as I thought it would give all our Members a sense of belonging to ECSRA! Christine also represents ECSRA on environmental matters. The Executive Committee are a very tight knit team of nine volunteers, of whom we should be proud. They turn up willingly to set up and assist at all our events, take turns with leading projects, and all actively contribute to the efficient running of ECSRA. They live in the Earl's Court Square Conservation Area and work together “*to protect and enhance Earl's Court Square and the lives of the people who live and work here*”.

We're also grateful to our Ward Councillors, Hamish Adourian, Malcolm Spalding and Linda Wade for their continued support and hope they will support our latest CLLL bid - for the remaining two bicycle hangars in the NW Arm which was submitted in November.

My final thank you is to Katrina Quinton, Chair of the Garden Sub-Committee for her continued support with our many projects during 2021-2022. We always enjoy working with Katrina and the Garden Sub-Committee and appreciate her positive attitude and continued commitment to the community of Earl's Court Square.

Questions & Answers:

There were no questions. Acceptance of the Report was proposed by Katrina Quinton and seconded by Stacy Bouvier as being a true record of the meeting. Members approved the Chairman's Report with a show of hands.

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

Alex Tullett presented the Hon. Treasurers' Report for the Accounts ending 31st December 2021.

Tom Brown of The Garden Sub-Committee reviewed the accounts and confirmed he is happy with them.

In terms of cash the RA finished off the year with an decrease 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. Down.

Advertising. Down.

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

Xmas tree donations. These were primarily collected to go towards the Brass Band for the evening.

RBKC and John D Wood contributions. This was for the commemorative plaques and event.

Expenditure.

BBQ. Was a deposit which was handed back.

Increases on 2020.

Xmas tree costs. These relate to the Brass Band and mulled wine.

Commemorative Plaques. This was for the event to install the plaques and the event held in the gardens.

Sundries. We found that the newly installed planters in the SE Arm of the Square were being used as seating which resulted in the plants being flattened. We had uprights installed to make seating if not uncomfortable then at least awkward. We expect this to be a “one off” expense.

NB. Without this expense, we would have ended the year with a higher cash balance in the Bank compared to 2020.

Accruals.

Are in relation to the Xmas tree event.

There were no questions for the Hon. Treasurer

The acceptance of the Accounts were proposed by Freddie Gibbs and seconded by Liz Cookson.

Members voted with a show of hands to accept 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:

Heidi Bradner (Proposed by Sue Lupton/Seconded by Alex Tullett)

Shailesh Katyal (Proposed by Heidi Bradner/Seconded by Sue Lupton)

Sue Lupton (Proposed by Andrew Foster/Seconded by Cilla Ware)

Mariaclara Vilona (Proposed by Stacy Bouvier/Seconded by Liz Cookson)

Maria Xirou (Proposed by Tom Brown/Seconded by Christine Powell)

Magda Zawisza (Proposed by Kevin Colgan/Seconded by Liz Cookson)

Members voted with a show of hands in support of the re-election of the members of the Committee listed above.

Currently serving and continuing under the rules:

Chrissie Courtney - Chair

Alex Tullett – Hon Treasurer

Andrew Foster

Christine Powell - Membership

Members voted with a show of hands in support of the above members of the Committee continuing under the rules.

6. **Membership Rates:**

The Executive Committee proposed that the membership subscriptions were increased in 2023. Membership of ECSRA was open to everyone living in the Earl’s Court Square Conservation Area. Subscriptions were used towards funding the drinks/canapés provided at the AGM and the mulled wine and entertainment at the Christmas event. The magazine was financed by advertising and printed free of charge. The BBQ/Disco was the only event that generated a profit and this had been cancelled for the past two years. It was proposed that Individual Membership was increased from £8 to £10 and Household/Family Membership was increased from £12 to £15 from 2023.

The motion was proposed by Stacy Bouvier and Seconded by Chris Edson. Members voted with a show of hands to accept the proposed increase in Membersip Fees from 2023.

7. **Any Other Business:**

Chrissie Courtney reported that the Council were promoting a scheme “To Green for the Jubilee”. Residents were being encouraged by the Council to erect window boxes along the railings of their buildings. This was a matter for individual buildings to decide and provide funding. Alex Tullett has been liaising with “Window Flowers” to see if they would hire planted window boxes on railings for a few weeks. The Garden used to provide hanging baskets around the Square before they realised that only projects within the garden railings could be funded from the Garden Precept. The hanging baskets situated in the SE Arm of the Square were maintained by Window Flowers and funded by the buildings in the SE Arm. ECSRA was not in a position to fund this suggestion but could circulate quotes and/or suggestions and encourage participation. Residents were asked to enquire if their buildings were interested in window boxes for the Jubilee and contact Alex Tullett who would co-ordinate requests as all invoicing would have to be via ECSRA.

Councillor Malcolm Spalding updated residents on RBKC activities with particular mention of:

- Langham Mansions
- Planters
- Bicycle Hangars
- The Lord Jim Hotel planning application – re. Queens Court
- Future use of the Fish Factory shops
- Air quality monitoring
- Electric Vehicle charging points
- Garden Squares seminars (trees and insurance)
- ECDC Development site
- Acoustic cameras
- Councillor’s “Call to Action” about ASB in Earl’s Court and the focus on quality for social housing residents, better strategy care for vagrants and the work being done to actively monitor our environment.

8. **Guest Speaker: The Mayor of RBKC – Councillor Gerard Hargreaves:**

Chrissie Courtney introduced The Worshipful the Mayor of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Councillor Gerard Hargreaves, who gave an interesting and informative talk on the role of the Mayor and the Mayor’s regalia – which he had brought for residents to view.

Chrissie Courtney thanked the Mayor for attending ECSRA’s AGM and everyone for their support and invited them to join the Executive Committee and Councillors for drinks and canapés.