

## **ECSRA CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2018/2019:**

Welcome to our AGM and a special welcome to Cllr Hamish Adourian who has joined us tonight. Cllr Malcolm Spalding and Cllr Linda Wade have had to attend an RBKC Meeting relating to the re-development of the Exhibition site on our behalf but they both hope to join us later.

2018 has been a busy year. ECSRA's main focus has been on persuading the Council to strengthen their planning and waste disposal enforcement procedures, as we feel prosecutions would be a deterrent. Rubbish "hotspots" remain outside 312 (now with a permanent though somewhat tatty "A" board) 45 and 69. The "hotspot" outside 1 Earl's Court Square has improved due to ECSRA lobbying for the provision of an on site bin area. Many thanks to Heidi Bradner, Mariaclara Vilona, Tricia Oleary, Jenny Scott and other volunteers who have raised 90 dump complaints during the year.

The location of the cycle lanes in Earl's Court Square, which residents feel are dangerous for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists, are another cause for concern and we will keep lobbying RBKC and TfL for improvements.

Criminality within Earl's Court Square remains a problem and we all need to be extra vigilant. I serve on the Earl's Court Safer Neighbourhood Team Ward Panel whose priorities are: drug related crime, anti-social behavior - which includes begging, burglary and robberies and motor vehicle crime. There have been problems with street drinkers loitering on stairs and residents are increasingly installing CCTVs in their buildings to act as a deterrent for this anti-social behavior. We continue to lobby for more "bobbies on the beat" and I am pleased to report that the Kenway Road police hub has escaped closure for now.

Our Dedicated Ward Officer, PC Andy Clough, who has been with us since mid 2014, has just moved to Westminster to join a neighbourhood tasking team working across the new Central West Borough. And PC Christie Brinkley has moved to Acton to become a detective. However, we'd like to extend a warm welcome our 2 new Dedicated Ward Officers, PC Steven Dell and PC Matt McCaul and we are pleased to report that PCSO Danny Wright will remain part of the Earl's Court team. We have been liaising with PC Dell about the recent spate of car crimes outside Wetherby Mansions and he has advised that he is "happy to change shifts to the needs of the ward and do some plain clothes work around it as he is very keen to get on top of this issue."

Members requested, an early start to ECSRA's BBQ this year to allow young families to join in the fun. We're pleased to report this was a success, and our BBQ on 22 June will again start at 5pm. Last year's DJ Infinity (back by popular request) arrived at 7pm and soon all ages were up disco dancing until 11pm. (*Under the terms of our TENs Licence, the music has to end promptly at 11pm - as we need to consider our neighbours overlooking the garden.*) ECSRA provided the communal BBQ's, lit up the venue with festive lighting and the Committee hosted a table for solo residents and Councillors. The balmy weather helped swell the numbers at an event, which is open to all the residents of Earl's Court Square. Profits from the BBQ go towards financing "The Lighting of the Christmas Tree" and AGM, which are "free" events for residents, and on-going

expenses - such as maintaining and updating our informative website - which I hope you are all using. The figures are all given in Alex's financial report.

A "Greek in the Square" Members' evening was held in the Gardens last September. Andrew mixed ouzo cocktails and Maria (our Membership Secretary) provided an array of delicious and authentic Greek canapés - with help from the Committee. A team of Committee volunteers put up a fairy-lit marquee where Members were able to mix, mingle and dance to background music from The London Bouzouki Player. Sadly, the attendance at this year's event was disappointing, probably due to a busy Saturday night, which competed with the England/Croatia football match and the Last Night of the Proms. We are hoping for a better turnout at our next USA themed Members' evening on Thursday 12 September.

The year ended with the "Lighting of the Christmas Tree" with Alan Malcolm's legendary mulled wine, mince pies, Mariaclara's delicious cookies and canapés kindly donated by The Gojk Restaurant. Carols were sung by "Live to Sing, Sing to Live" (who are crossing their fingers their funding will continue) and our gold and silver lit tree was festooned with chocolates for the children. Many thanks to the Garden sub-Committee for supporting ECSRA by allowing us to use the beautiful Earl's Court Square Gardens for our events and for sharing the cost of the Christmas tree for this well attended event - and to Katrina Quinton for organising the tree.

Many residents have been concerned about the re-development of the Exhibition Centre site. The Council has organised a **Listening Forum on Monday 4 March from 18:00 at St Cuthbert's with St Matthias' Primary School**. This will be an opportunity for local residents to raise their issues and concerns directly to members of the Leadership Team. There's no need to register, but if you'd like more information on the Forum, please email [Governance@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:Governance@rbkc.gov.uk). ECSRA will be represented by Alex, Shailesh and myself at the meeting.

The issues we will be raising, all relating to the CapCo Exhibition site, are:

1. Population density increase and how this is going to affect the community. Shared resources such as roads, water, sewerage, medical facilities, recreation areas all of which, in turn, increase hazards such as noise and pollution.  
I am sure we were all concerned to read in today's newspapers that the annual mean pollution at Earl's Court station was 3 times higher than target levels in 2017, making it the worst location in London with readings of 129.5 micrograms of nitrogen dioxide per cubic metre. Nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) is one of the most harmful pollutant gases, irritating the lungs and potentially causing breathing difficulties. Road traffic is a leading source.
2. There is an opportunity for the Council to consider its new policy on affordable housing, in the context of any potential new application by CapCo in the RBKC part of the site. This is that 35% of all new applications should be affordable housing provision, generally split as half affordable to buy (eg for key workers or government "help-to-buy" schemes, and half social rented.) This would mean at least 17.5% of the whole development could be Council housing. In view of the shortage of accommodation for two excluded groups in RBKC (low paid key workers or young professionals who wish to buy, and elderly who need residential care/extra care /nursing homes) it is suggested

that at least half of the affordable housing on the Earl's Court site could be reserved for care homes for the elderly. So the Council could decide that at least 17.5% of any new CapCo scheme coming forward should be residential care/extra care/social care/nursing care homes for the elderly.

3. The community lost an Exhibition Centre, to which people attached a certain sense of pride and joy. It helped bring business and funds into the borough. It was a place "to go" right on your doorstep and should be replaced with a new world class Exhibition Centre.
4. Residents want to see a "green" area but what does this mean in terms of sqm or sq ft? How many trees will there be? And which trees? Will there be public access? "Green areas" should not be for the exclusive use of residents of the site. They should be for community use. Specifics should be clear and agreed with the community.
5. There should be no high rises as it not only goes against a conservation area, which is known for its period appeal, it enhances all adverse effects as in point 1. No more stories should be added.
6. Residents would like to see community use of the apron area (whilst the site is being developed) as there is a lack of playing space for children. It would make an excellent area for the Sunday Farmers' Market and the plays and films the Earl's Court Community Trust put on for the community during the summer, which would relieve pressure of hosting these in the Garden Squares.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our amazing team on the Executive Committee for their support this year. Alex, our Hon Treasurer, for looking after our finances and being responsible for planning, traffic and licencing matters; Heidi and Mariaclara, who supervise the rubbish and recycling team of volunteers and meet with RBKC officials on our behalf; Sue, who was awarded the Mayor's Award for Community Service in 2018, edits our magazine (which I hope you have all received). The magazine takes up a huge amount of Sue's time and is fully financed by advertising, which she has to source. Christine reports on environmental issues; Andrew, always helps behind the scenes to ensure our events are a success and brings his commercial experience to the Committee. Maria is our Membership Secretary. Shailesh - has taken the lead on expressing ECSRA's concerns regarding the Exhibition site (which I listed previously) and our two senior members - Jennifer and David - who bring a wealth of knowledge to the Committee. People are amazed when I tell them we have between 14-17 items on the agenda relating to the Square at each 2 hour Committee meeting and I'm delighted to report that we have a very active Executive Committee, who ensure the RA runs smoothly on residents' behalf.

A special thank you also to John D Wood & Co., who once more printed our magazine at no charge, sponsored The London Bouzouki player for our "Greek in the Square" Members' night, and printed our carol sheets for the "Lighting of the Christmas Tree". Their generous contribution to the community is much appreciated.

After much discussion, we have decided to increase our membership subscriptions to £8 for individuals and £12 for household/family to cover expenses. We do hope you will continue to support the energetic team of volunteers on the ECSRA Executive Committee - who work hard to ensure that Earl's Court Square remains a great place to live.

Our AGM is slightly different this year, in that we have made it a social event, so I do hope you will join our "Mediterranean Fiesta" downstairs to meet the Committee, Councillors and your neighbours to celebrate the New Year with Gojk's special "Spring" Punch, Mediterranean canapés and a cash bar.

Chrissie Courtney