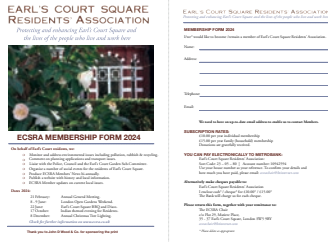


EARL'S COURT SQUARE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

*Protecting and enhancing Earl's Court Square and
the lives of the people who live and work here*

CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

Chrissie Courtney



Dear Members

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. Subscriptions also help pay for the DJ at our annual summer family BBQ/Disco – the only event that generates a profit. 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 every member 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. <https://ecsraco.uk/membership>

AGM 2024:

The Chair and Hon. Treasurer gave their Annual Reports and the Executive Committee was duly elected for another year.

Cllr Cem Kemahli (RBKC's Lead Member for Planning, Place, and Environment) was the Guest Speaker at our AGM - which was attended by around 40 residents. Cem gave an informative talk on matters relating to Earl's Court. The one operative dealing with cleaning up graffiti has been increased to four operatives. When graffiti is reported it is cleaned off within a week. However, racial or antisemitic graffiti is cleaned off within 24 hours. An electric vehicle is now employed around Earl's Court picking up rubbish between collections. He mentioned that in the past “wrong day” stickers would be placed on inappropriately dumped rubbish but now, once collected, an enforcement letter would go to the person/address concerned. Cem confirmed there were two collections a week in Earl's Court Square – on **Mondays and Thursdays**.

Cem then moved onto the ECDC redevelopment of the old Exhibition site and talked about how a lot of what the Council would like to see is determined by TfL who own a good part of the site and that TfL reported to the current Mayor of London who has his own ideas of what should or should not be allowed. There followed a discussion in relation to car ownership and parking. Cem mentioned that TfL wanted the ability of 15% of the residential units to have disabled parking facilities on the site. TfL have a large say in what would be allowed on the ECDC site. Residents expressed concerns regarding the restricted parking on ECDC's site impacting on parking in Earl's Court Square.

When asked by a resident “what the Council was doing about the dreadful state of the amenities of Earl's Court Road as it was a disgrace that we have no banks and no good shops, in comparison to other areas around London.” Cem responded that the Council was doing what it could but could not order banks to remain on site if they have a fall in footfall which does not allow them to justify keeping the bank open, especially as a lot of people now bank online. Cem was also asked what the Council's position was on the new legislation coming into effect concerning restrictions on short-term-lets - such as Airbnb. Cem responded that from 01.01.2024 there was not a lot that the Council could do until 90 days had passed - though it would be difficult to determine if a host was using their property longer than 90 days. After that hosts would have to register their properties with





the Council. However, the Government had not allocated any funding to Councils to undertake the maintenance and monitoring of such a register.

Chrissie Courtney ended the meeting by thanking Councillor Cem Kemahli for attending ECSRA's AGM and everyone present for their support and invited them to join the Executive Committee, Ward Councillors, PC Amber Clark and PC Ben Hunter for drinks and canapés – which had been provided by the Executive Committee.

<https://ecsra.co.uk/members-area/agm/chairmans-report/>

<https://ecsra.co.uk/members-area/agm/> (2024 AGM Minutes at end of page)



PLANTERS IN 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. They 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 – First for “Gardening Under Difficult Conditions” and Second 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 flowering!

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 and are pleased to report that SUEZ is now collecting from their newly dedicated rubbish vault - which we hope will resolve the problems.

Problems are again being found outside 312 ECS and the Council erected new signage outside the building to remind residents not to dump their rubbish on the wrong days which was vandalised. We have requested a metal replacement. We believe that this is now the only building in the Square without a dedicated rubbish collection. 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.

<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/contact-us/report-problem/report-problem-street>





RBKC measured the traffic volumes on ECS last December and, on average, 19 drivers a day are driving the wrong way along the SW arm, which is about 2.5% of the total traffic using that arm of the Square.



RBKC WAITING LIST:

If you need a secure space for your cycle please email RBKC on cycling@rbkc.gov.uk requesting a cycle hangar space in Earl's Court Square to get onto the waiting list as each hangar only takes 6 cycles.

Cost: Deposit £25 and £72 annually for each secure space.

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 have now been actioned by RBKC - which we hope will improve safety.

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

THREE NEW CYCLE HANGARS FOR EC SQUARE:

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.**

DISPOSAL OF UNWANTED MEDICINES

Please dispose of expired, unused, medications at a local chemist, so they do not get into the landfill or the local water system. All chemists in the U.K. are required to take back expired or unused medicines.

<https://psnc.org.uk/services-commissioning/essential-services/disposal-of-unwanted-medicines/>

Report any ASB/CRIME on www.met.police.uk then choose 'Crime' or email earls court.snt@met.police.uk or call 101.

EMERGENCIES ALWAYS CALL 999.

GARDEN NEWS

Katrina Quinton



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 Cllr Linda Wade and Cllr Tim Verboven for supporting this project.

PUBLIC SERVICE PROTECTION ORDER (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.
- Street urination and defecation.
- Consumption of alcohol in a public place.
- Loitering and refusing to leave an area.
- Aggressive begging.
- Bicycles and scooters – riding on pavements within the protected area prohibited but pushing and walking alongside bikes or scooter allowed.

The Council's PSPO Consultation (active from 9th January to 20th February) received 450 responses and is due to be implemented in April.

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. **We would stress, it is essential that sufficient resources are made available by RBKC and the Police to properly enforce them.** ECSRA works very closely with the Police - and I serve on the Earl's Court Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panel. We were delighted to welcome our Dedicated Ward Officers PC Amber Clark and PC Ben Hunter to our AGM.

After the fun and games of the rather soggy Coronation Tea Party, summer in the Square really seemed to get going. The Open Squares Weekend in June was a success with a gentle flow of visitors, and we welcomed over 400 people from all over the country and the world and so many residents joined us in the garden to enjoy the live music in the afternoons. As a community we had the RA's barbeque; a tea party to remember Roger Dearden, Christine Powell and Frank Phelan; a Macmillan Coffee Morning raised £180; a fashion photoshoot; Breakfast at Tiffany's for the film night; Halloween was a clear evening and the garden was invaded by lots of excited children and their parents all suitably dressed and who demolished sausage rolls and hot chocolate before bedtime. The leaf rake at the end of November saw over thirty families wielding rakes and scooping up over one and a half tons of leaves from the lawns in a couple of hours – with more consumption of hot chocolate and sausage rolls due to popular demand. During the summer about twenty-five residents asked to borrow the tables and chairs for events, whether dinners, drinks or gatherings to celebrate birthdays of all ages and important events from christenings to first communion, confirmations and engagements. The chairs and tables are such an asset, and we will be replacing some pieces as they wear out.

That was just the events, horticulturally speaking the tulip trees which were planted about 25 years ago flowered for the first time. It was especially thrilling that they chose the Open Gardens Squares Weekend to burst forth and impress the judges from the London Gardens Society and also the Brighter Kensington and Chelsea scheme who awarded us the Bronze Medal in the Small Garden Square Class and Second Place in the Garden Square Class

respectively. I am very grateful to Charles Wood and his team for their expertise and good humour as I went to collect the awards.



There is never a closed season in the garden and it was a joy to see the red camellia in flower last week, joining the last of the roses from last year in the north-west corner. Other camellias are in flower and the winter flowering cherry too. Hopefully the snowdrops and aconites will poke their heads through shortly and the daffodils and tulips are on their way! Our phoenix/bird of paradise topiary is taking shape well and our fingers are crossed! I am getting over excited about introducing climbing plants that might give it some more exotic plumage!!

We have also come to the conclusion that the ubiquitous box moth who has decimated the box balls now needs that source of food to be removed from the Garden and we will be pulling them out in the spring and replanting with alternative topiary features – probably yew but maybe decorative ilex too. The two dead trees have also been removed, the Photinia near the shed will allow the existing walnut tree to grow in its place and we will reorder the bed opposite the north gate where the Pride of India was, in due course.

The Garden AGM agreed to raise the precept and the fee charged for the Subscribers to the garden. We welcomed new members to the Committee and are hopeful that a number of satellite committees can be formed regarding children’s activities and also maintenance.

The issue of Subscriber Keys was raised and the meeting agreed that a further meeting should be held in the Spring. It is a difficult subject and an emotive one. It is important that any decision should reflect the opinion of a majority of all Garden Ratepayers, rather than the relatively small number of people who were able to attend the AGM. We will keep you advised.

In the meantime, please do put 8-9 June in your diaries for the Open Garden Squares weekend and also the first week in September for the Open-Air film night.



ECSRA 2023 EVENTS

During 2023 - ECSRA hosted five 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 24 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 Kruel 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, Chrissie and Sue were busy in their 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 200 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 Executive Committee who provided all the canapes for our AGM 2024 Reception.

ECSRA EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE 2024



**DATES FOR YOUR 2024
DIARY:**

Saturday/Sunday 8-9 June -
London Open Gardens Weekend

Saturday 22 June
5pm – 11pm: Disco/BBQ:
in Earl’s Court Square
Garden with our popular DJ –
Jerry Shillingworth.

Thursday 17 October
7pm – 9pm: Indian Evening:
in The Bottlery at 231 Earl’s
Court Road.

Sunday 8 December
4pm – 6pm: Christmas Tree
Lighting (with Garden Sub-
Committee):
in Earl’s Court Square Garden
with mulled wine, mince pies,
hot chocolate, cookies and
carols.

**ALL RESIDENTS
WELCOME**

We hope you will take a
moment to have a look at the
photos of recent ECSRA
events for the residents
of Earl’s Court Square on our
website:

<https://ecsra.co.uk/recent/>.

There were two other events organised by and held for residents in 2023 – first a **Commemorate Tea Party** for three residents who have lived in the Square for between 40-55 years who had passed on in 2023 followed by Halloween . 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 page 6 and also on our website <https://ecsra.co.uk>

EARL'S COURT SQUARE AND BEYOND – Sue Lupton

A look back at Earl's Court, an oft forgotten corner of Kensington.

The Manorial Lands of the Earls of Oxford stretched from Kensington High Street to Fulham Road and from the railway line in the west to Gloucester Road. The Manorial Court House (now Old Manor Yard) was never their home. It was a Magistrates' Court, where disputes were settled, fines handed out and rents paid. With only one Earl (or his Agent) sitting at any one time, the apostrophe goes before the 's' - making Earl's Court the correct and official spelling for three centuries. Sadly, this was dropped by the previous owners of the Exhibition Centre site to become Earls Court.

Earl's Court in 1787 was a market garden. Some building activity started in the early 1800's. Initially, family houses were built to provide for the expanding wealthy classes with a retinue of servants (outnumbering them) housed on top floors. During the late 19th century developers misjudged and oversupplied the market - with many facing liquidation. Instead of family houses, most were turned into boarding houses.

There was a time in the 60's and 70's when Earl's Court became 'Kangaroo Alley' with many Australians living and working in the area, who wanted to be part of the "London scene", finding cheap accommodation. The area, which had become run down, slowly improved as squatters and drug dealers, who had taken up residence, moved away.





It's The Troubadour's
70th Anniversary.

Earl's Court was a magnet for famous people "living on the edge" associated with Sex 'n Drugs 'n Rock 'n Roll. The Troubadour (still operating) accommodated these 'Rockers' living and hanging out in the area who performed in the basement some seventy years ago. Famous residents included a young Robert Zimmerman (Bob Dylan), Paul Simon, Jimmy Hendrix, Sadie (aka Elizabeth McGovern aka Lady Grantham). Members of the Stones, Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, all strutted their stuff. Pete Doherty smashed a guitar four minutes after his opening riff. A teenaged Adele performed at the Troubadour and the biggest names in the music business performed at the Earl's Court Exhibition Centre, when Earl's Court Square would experience the tinkle of chandeliers and keys in the lock with each crescendo.

Today Earl's Court is more sedate and gentrified. Sadly, ten years ago the 'pink pound' had moved to Brixton and the Earl's Court Exhibition Centre was purchased for housing development resulting in a detrimental effect to our high street. Fortunately, the voluntary Residents' Associations are maintaining the quality of living in the area with regular community.

BEHIND THE SCENES – Sue Lupton

I'm sure you can imagine it's (not) as easy as can be,
To slide the tree off a tail-lift with ingenuity.
Tis 7am the start of the day
Cyclists avoiding and, on their way,
Katrina grappling hook and strap in hand,
Got it to the garden, a marvel of 'I can.'

More help arrives with Charlie Woods,
Moving slabs and gravel bags behind the shed.
The Barrel rolled out with 'suitable singing,'
Arranging a bed with masses of filling.

Guy ropes affixed whilst still on the ground,
With four hundred lights, star placed on top.
The process of muscle power steadies 'it's rise'
Onto trestles to help with its size.

Left a bit, right a bit, the cries go out,
Coffee and mince pie's the reward to keep going.
With help from a wedge to stable the tree
the cool lights arranged in rows to 'a tee!'

When finished all covers are locked into place,
On electrical boxes protecting from foxes.
And needless to say, there's a sigh of relief.
When the lights go on and giving no grief.



Our thanks to the Earl's Court Square Garden
Sub-Committee who kindly provide and fund
the Christmas Tree every year.

More stories on our website – <https://ecsra.co.uk>