



## Churchfield Community Association

### **Annual report 2014**

The CCA has seen a number of changes this year, with some additions to and changes of roles in our executive. We have continued our involvement with the public objections to the development plan for The Oaks, and have also continued to increase our response to alcohol licence applications. We are pleased to have instigated a new initiative this year: a hustings meeting which was held before the local elections in May.

The CCA's involvement with such issues of public concern, as well as an appreciation of local successes (such as Acton Park's success in gaining another Green Flag in the spring, awarded for excellence in managing open spaces), has shown the value of having an identifiable community group.

The great value of our association lies in bringing people together with a sense of belonging and commitment, and in providing a forum in situations where the community can act as one. There has been hard work, and also a range of social events which have been great fun and well attended. Many people have expressed their appreciation of having such a group.

We continue to see many positive developments along Churchfield Road which makes the area more attractive to potential residents and businesses, especially when they discover that we have such a strong, engaged community, represented by this association.

This is my second report as chair. I would like to thank members old and new, especially those who serve on the executive, for putting so much effort into improving our part of Acton. Special thanks go to Jill Williams and Roger Foreman for serving on the exec committee for a number of years and who have recently resigned, and to our new exec members – Sanya Sheikh, Harry Hammonds and Maire Lowe.

### **Consultations and public involvement**

#### **Hustings meeting for local elections**

More than eighty people attended the local elections hustings meeting in Acton, organised by the CCA and held in May 2014, just before the local elections. This was a much bigger turnout than had been expected. The meeting was held in the large community meeting room in the new Town Hall extension.

All the political parties standing for the local elections in the four Acton wards, plus the one independent, participated. Each candidate made an opening statement of up to five minutes setting out their main priorities, and then the discussion was opened up to the audience. One of the most contentious subjects raised was the proposed redevelopment of the Oaks shopping centre.

Other discussion points included views on HS2, about which most of the panel were somewhat in favour, and cuts to the NHS. A majority of the audience seemed supportive of the proposed conversion of the old Acton library building into an Arts Centre. On the bedroom tax, Labour was challenged about why they had not resisted the tax. The issue of street drinking was the final topic discussed. The point was made from the audience that it was not that easy to eradicate it and that the reasons behind street drinking needed to be addressed.

Most people who attended the hustings felt it was a worthwhile way of spending their evening. We are planning to host a similar event before the General Election next May.

## **CANForum (Central Acton Neighbours' Forum)**

As a community association we are happy to support the idea of community-led neighbourhood forums, which have been encouraged by the Localism Act (2011) as a means of incorporating a local perspective into a particular area's planning strategy.

Central Acton Neighbours' Forum (CANForum) has applied to be approved as the qualifying body to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for the Acton area. The boundary incorporates the entirety of the Central and South Acton wards, as well as aspects of the East Acton and Southfield wards. The application, once approved by the council, will allow CANForum to move forward through a period of community engagement and consultation towards the drafting of the final evidence-based planning policy document.

Once the document is prepared an independent officer will examine CANForum and scrutinise the suggested policies. If the planning document passes examination it will be put to a local referendum and, if approved by the community, will be given statutory underpinning as one of the four planning documents the council will consider moving forward. Public consultation for the designation application closes on the 26th November 2014, with the approval or conditions returned in the New Year.

## **Health Issues**

In view of the many changes to the configuration of NHS services in Acton, we have asked Maire Lowe, one of the executive members, to keep a watching brief and report to us. Maire has become a Healthwatch volunteer and regularly attends NHS strategy and Ealing Council scrutiny meetings to observe changes and, where appropriate, to challenge them. For those interested in also becoming a Healthwatch volunteer, information will be available at our open meeting directly after the AGM.

## **The Oaks development**

Following planning consent being granted to the Acton Regeneration Company (ARC) for its flawed plans for The Oaks, the Oaks Action Group – the majority of whom are CCA members – appealed to, first, the Mayor of London and, then, to the Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government to have the decision overturned. Unfortunately, both appeals were unsuccessful.

Finally, a judicial review of the council's behaviour during the planning procedures was initiated. This was heard in the High Court on 7 November, but the judge did not agree with the action group's arguments and the review failed. However, the group's lawyers, who are working for free, have urged them to appeal this as they feel there is an important principle to be made here. The group has agreed to this, with the proviso that it must not cost more than Acton residents have already pledged to fund legal action.

## **Acton Central ward forum**

This is run by the ward councillors and has an annual budget of £37,500 to deploy in capital improvements to Acton Central ward and running costs for various events. CCA executive members are among the most regular, persistent and engaged attenders and have helped get funds allocated for improvement to the environment in and around Churchfield Road.

## **Licence applications**

We continued this year to monitor alcohol and late night food licence applications in the town centre, making representations when appropriate. We encourage responsible licensing practices. Good retailers get in touch to discuss their licence plans and respond by setting reasonable hours and building in conditions to minimise nuisance, such as off-licence Park & Bridge for the new wine bar in Churchfield Road. In other cases, though, we, alongside the police and other residents, have had to make representations to Ealing Council's licensing panel about late hours, crime, anti-social behaviour (ASB) and noise nuisance.

Maureen Colledge continues to lead for the CCA on this, attending and speaking at Licensing Sub-Committee meetings on our behalf, and liaising with the police and other local community associations. We have had success, with hours restricted and conditions imposed on new and revised licences.

Work during the year:

December 2013, **Windmill pub**: representation against new application effectively seeking to overturn decisions in July 2013 limiting hours and setting conditions on noise and nuisance.  
Outcome: July decisions mostly confirmed.

March 2014, **Maanki News**: following discussions on new application for alcohol sales, representation asked for conditions and staff training.  
Outcome: accepted by applicant at hearing.

March 2014, **McDonalds**: applied for late night refreshment to 3.30am. Following discussions with them, made representation.  
Outcome: the committee refused later hours.

April 2014, **Melroza Café**: discussion over new licence application. After reassurances, no representation made.

May 2014, **Pinx (formerly Tune Inn)**: along with Mill Hill Park Residents' Association, wrote to magistrates to complain that long delay in hearing the appeal by the club was denying residents justice, as the club could continue operating until appeal.  
Outcome: appeal went ahead and applicants lost; licence revoked.

June 2014, **Kebab Centre**: discussions over late night refreshments application to open to 1am Sunday-Thursday and 4am Friday-Saturday. Representation made.  
Outcome: applicant accepted earlier hours and conditions at hearing.

August 2014, **Euphorium**: representation made supporting police request for revocation of licence after stabbing.  
Outcome: licence revoked.

October/November 2014, **Consultation on revisions to Ealing's Licensing Policy**: after discussions with the CCA exec and other Ealing community/residents groups, submitted comments including support for continuing Special Policy Areas (SPAs), for action on street drinking, cumulative impact policies in SPAs and examples of licensing good practice. Our comments asked the Council: to extend the Acton SPA up Horn Lane and into The Vale; to seek diversion programmes for street drinkers; to publicise Temporary Event Notice applications and put conditions on when premises have past history of problems; to recommend that staff are trained within three months, not six months; and to increase resources for noise nuisance monitoring.

## **Projects**

### **Acton Central Station book swap**

The Acton Central bookswap has been up and running for over two years. It has become an integral part of life in Acton Central and has brought a real sense of community to the station and its staff. The CCA has provided 3,000 stickers so far to encourage borrowers to read and return books and many other volumes have been donated without stickers. All sorts of books in many languages have been given and borrowed. Some have been returned.

Since the bookswap started, the station staff have started gardening in pots and troughs on the platforms. The CCA supported this financially by buying bulbs, before London Overground decided to fund the flowers itself. The station staff are now winning awards for best Overground team and station. The CCA attributes this firmly to the community boost provided by the bookswap.

## **Acton Christmas Fair**

As usual, we ran a stall selling bric-à-brac, second-hand books and jewellery, and children's toys, plus operating a terrific tombola, organised this year by Picot Cassidy. All items for sale and for prizes were donated by CCA members, without whom we couldn't run this activity, so many thanks to you all. On the day, we raised £391.21, £200 of which was given to APPLE, the children/young people's charity in Acton Park.

This year's fair is supposed to be happening on Saturday 13 December, but as the council is trying to crowd-fund it, there is still uncertainty about whether it will take place. However, the CCA has told them that we will be taking a stall, so if you have anything to donate for sale or for the tombola (booze, unwanted gifts, etc.), please contact Nancy Duin [nduin@nancyduin.net](mailto:nduin@nancyduin.net).

## **Acton Carnival**

We again made our presence felt at the Acton Carnival in July, running another stall (same as the Christmas fair one - see above). For the first time in a long time, the weather wasn't great and numbers were down. Consequently, we did not do nearly as well as other years, netting only £247.57. We donated £120 of this to APPLE.

## **Communications**

### **Community noticeboards**

We are still maintaining and updating the noticeboard at Acton Central Station, with a constantly changing display promoting the CCA and local events and themes. This is seen by a wide audience and acts as both a recruiter and a permanent presence for the CCA at a neighbourhood focal point.

We have another noticeboard, which also carries local news and information, at the junction of Baldwyn Gardens and Goldsmith Avenue. We also have a new noticeboard, bought to replace the one at the burial ground. However, as it is no longer possible to put a noticeboard there, we are hoping that we can dispose of it to an organisation that will be able to use it.

### **Newsletter**

We managed to produce the Churchfield Community Association Newsletter four times during the last year, and hope to continue producing it as a quarterly. As editor, I am very grateful to those who help in its production by suggesting items and writing features, and to Tom Doran for taking photographs. Contributions to the newsletter and ideas for articles are always welcome. I would also like to thank Ian Green for his help in resolving IT issues, and Picot Cassidy who has taken on the task of producing labels for distribution of the newsletter, along with those who have helped with delivery.

To complement our paper newsletter, we now have an occasional online newsletter (see under 'Email list').'

### **Social media**

The CCA has a facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/111471828887857/> with nearly 120 members. It is a really useful place to find out and share local information and opinion. We also have a twitter address: @CCAssoc1 which has grown fast in the last year and now has 430 followers. The CCA takes part in #EalingHour and #Acton Hour from 2000-2100 each Tuesday. Do join us.

## **Email list**

With over a hundred households on this list, it operates well in its present form, at least as far as members sending messages to everyone on the list. However, Yahoo! Groups, through which we run the list, made changes to its operating system, resulting in our inability to add new members to it since March. Much time has been devoted to trying to find a solution, and other options investigated, to no avail. However, recently there have been a few signs that the situation is getting better and we hope to update the list and get everyone on it who wants to as soon as possible.

In the interim, we have created an *online* newsletter (as opposed to the printed one sent out 3–4 times a year), using MailChimp, that goes out to virtually all our members. This carries information about upcoming events and important announcements. We intend to issue this sparingly – perhaps once a month or even less often – as we know that some of our members dislike any increase in their email ‘burden’. It seems to have been accepted – only three people have unsubscribed from it.

## **Social activities**

Over the past year, the CCA has held a variety of enjoyable social events. These provide a great way for CCA members and friends, and also anyone thinking of joining the CCA, to get together and to meet new people in our neighbourhood.

Each year we try to hold a **CCA Christmas Party**, and in 2013, we enjoyed the festive atmosphere in the downstairs restaurant area of The Rocket, with about thirty people attending. We are grateful to Filip Filipovic and all the staff at the Rocket, for their help with this, including decorating the tables and preparing a delicious buffet supper.

Our **'First Wednesday' pub socials** have continued throughout 2014. These drop-in evening events last a couple of hours and are held in various pubs and eateries in our neighbourhood, including the Station House, The Rocket, the George and Dragon, L'Oriental and the Aeronaut. All CCA members are welcome to attend these, as well as anyone thinking of joining the CCA. We are grateful to Jill Williams who regularly attends these First Wednesdays and offers to meet new members before attending for the first time.

Our popular **supper quizzes** have also continued this year. We are very grateful to our ever-resourceful quiz maestros, Paul Talbot and Philippe Bruyer, for organising these sociable events. Held in the downstairs room of Tony and Paula's L'Oriental restaurant, each Quiz evening starts with a delicious Lebanese finger food supper, followed by several quiz rounds, interspersed with puzzler sheets to ponder over. The accent is on enjoyment and there are always a wide range of questions and challenges to suit everyone.

In June, we enjoyed another wonderful **summer garden party** at 34 Goldsmith Road. Everyone brought tasty food and drink to share, and luckily the rain held off. Our thanks go to Mike and Linda for generously hosting this annual event again, in their lovely garden.

## **Membership**

We currently have around 240 members, which is slightly up on last year. We organised one recruitment stall in Acton Market in July and recruited ten new members from this, as well as getting our name more widely known in the community. We plan to do further recruitment stalls next summer. We currently have twenty-one businesses, located in or around Churchfield Road itself, which are members.

*Linda Taylor*  
*Chair*  
*26 November 2014*