

ANNUAL REPORT 2009

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Four Resident Meetings** held in January, March, May (Transport) and November (Community Safety). The committee trialled an evening meeting in May but attendance was lower than weekend meetings.
- **Summer BBQ event** held for second year, with increased attendance and new attractions.
- **National Lottery Award & Office Refurbishment:** Successfully awarded £3,440 in March from the *Awards for All* Scheme. Used to purchase furniture and equipment for new resident association facility.
- **Calypso Gardens Public Art Competition:** Supported a Southwark Council competition for a new piece of public art. The winner, Otis Aarts, was a 9 year old local resident!
- **'Peckham Space' Partnership:** Peckham Space (a partnership between Southwark Council and Camberwell College of Arts) will partner EQRA to commission an exhibition based upon the theme of identity in Peckham North. The chosen artist will work with local people to develop a project which will be delivered in 2011.
- **Corporate Support** – Deloitte & Touche donated a reconditioned laptop to EQRA as part of their community programme. Co-operative Food also donated vouchers for our 2009 AGM Prize Draw.
- **Cleaner, Greener, Safer** - £5,000 awarded to remove disused kiosk on Sumner Road (opposite The Galleria development). Replacement barrier has also been erected on Chandler Way.

LOCAL ISSUES

Public Transport

EQRA met with Transport for London (TfL) officials on two separate occasions during 2009.

I attended a meeting with their Planning Directorate in Central London in July to discuss the Cross River Tram (CRT). During this meeting I argued strongly for the CRT, but as many of you will now know, development work on the CRT was cancelled during the year and the proposals archived. The project team has also been disbanded. The publication of the Mayor's Draft Transport Strategy last November also failed to mention the CRT, meaning that the tram route is unlikely to remain safeguarded from other development.

The Draft Transport Strategy therefore confirms that no major public transport investment is now likely in Peckham before 2025 at the earliest (with the exception of the East London Line Extension through Peckham Rye). The document does promise to investigate the business case for an extension of the Bakerloo Line from Elephant & Castle, via Burgess Park, to Hayes in Kent. However, this would be considerably more expensive than the CRT, with no funding in place. EQRA maintains that the Mayor should retain the CRT in his strategy, protecting the route and ensuring the CRT remains viable if alternative options prove undeliverable.

In the short to medium term, public transport improvements in our area are now likely to focus upon improving the existing bus network.

EQRA therefore also attended a further meeting with TfL to discuss the continued under performance of the 343 bus route. However, no timeframe for improvements was forthcoming. TfL argue that a change in ownership of the operator during 2009 should lead to improvements in the current situation. The route is shortly up for contract renewal.

A written update on the latest situation has been provided by Transport for London for this meeting.

Gloucester, Tuke & Cherry Gardens Schools

EQRA continue to have concerns about traffic flows on Burcher Gale Grove during the daily school run, with parking and other safety related issues.

Following complaints from nearby residents, new road markings are due to be installed outside the new car park entrance on Burcher Gale Grove. The school has also asked parents not to park in resident parking spaces when dropping off or picking up their children.

The new Tuke School, under construction on a site next to Gloucester School, remains on track to open in September 2010. Concerns relating to the Tuke School site can be raised with Site Manager, Simon Earle on 07827 897 266.

Southwark Council have also actively considering relocating Cherry Gardens Special School to a site next to Tuke School – on the site of the school hall where we are holding our meeting today! The plans could see £14m spent on a new building as well as improvements to Gloucester School, which would be downsized from a four to two class entry system. The plans are currently with the two schools for consultation, before going out to the wider community during 2010. If approved, the plans would see Cherry Gardens open in September 2013 and the improvements to Gloucester School (including a new entrance and lift) completed by 2012.

Burgess Park

EQRA was one of three local groups which signed a letter of support for the successful 'Premier Parks' bid to the Mayor of London in 2008.

Burgess Park now has a £6m funding package in place from the Mayor of London and the Aylesbury NDC for improvements. The current project team hope to complete these works by May 2012.

During the year LDA Design won the competition to design a Masterplan for Burgess Park and we are delighted to welcome Rebecca Towers at our meeting (Head of Parks, Southwark Council) who will be providing us with an update on current progress.

Southampton Way

There have been continued delays to the opening of the new Tesco Express store on Southampton Way. Current dates supplied to residents by Tesco indicate an opening date ranging from the beginning of March to the middle of May (2010!).

Southampton Way is also due to benefit from £235,000 in Council funding to improve the appearance of the road, with work completed by March 2011.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Metropolitan Police Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) in Peckham attended EQRA's Summer BBQ in August. Distributed leaflets and 'SMARTwater' property marker equipment.

Peckham SNT and the Southwark Wardens Service also attended our November 2009 meeting on Community Safety. Both provided advice on protecting personal property and preventing injury over the Christmas period.

Committee member, Louise Clarke, attended regular local police meetings, highlighting areas of concern and feeding back news to our own resident meetings.

During the year we also persuaded Southwark Council to replace a number of old concrete lamp standards on Newent Close as well as install two new lamp posts on Comfort Street.

SOUTH QUARTER UPDATE

During the year EQRA launched a major membership drive, with the support of Countrywide Managing Agents (the estate's managing agents), that has seen its South Quarter leaseholder membership rise from approximately 10 to 30.

This is a major improvement and provides a good platform from which to seek official recognition for EQRA, which would bring with it additional rights to information and consultation on service charges, if there is a desire to take this forward.

We have also worked with individual South Quarter leaseholders to encourage Countrywide Managing Agents to issue audited service charge accounts for the 2007/08 year (the first time such accounts that have been issued since the development was completed in 2004/05).

Furthermore we have participated in the planning for proposed redecoration of communal areas in the estate by suggesting additional contractors from whom estimates for carrying out the work might be sought.

EVOLUTION UPDATE

During the year, EQRA secured new metal fencing (paid for by Taylor Wimpey) on either side of the main car park gates on Burcher Gale Grove to improve security. Following a number of major fires in the area, signs were also placed on block entrance doors to remind residents to close their communal doors securely. Trinity also arranged for "No Ball Games" signs to be put up in the main car park following complaints from residents.

Management changes at Trinity saw the Estates Manager Karen Bowman replaced by Raechel Turner, who in turn was replaced by Andrew Fletcher later in the year.

EQRA also wrote to all leaseholders, via Trinity Estates, during the year to request support for official recognition of the residents association. Such recognition would provide leaseholders with additional rights to information and consultation but requires EQRA to evidence certain levels of membership amongst leaseholders.

Trinity Estates have cooperated fully in this exercise and to date have received 53 valid EQRA membership forms (58%). Therefore, our official recognition attempt was not successful as the threshold of 60% hadn't been met. However, additional forms have since been received which would mean that, if valid, EQRA have achieved official recognition!

On 8th December, EQRA organised a meeting at Southwark Town Hall between *Evolution* residents and Trinity Estates. This provided Trinity with an opportunity to update leaseholders and tenants on the ongoing suspension of services. During the meeting Trinity confirmed that the service charge account remains significantly in arrears and that all non essential services would remain suspended until the situation improves. No timeframe was forthcoming.

Trinity Estates agreed at that meeting to try and provide answers to the questions raised at our AGM. Trinity have also given a commitment to attend future EQRA AGM's, if it is felt that today's update has been useful for members.

FINANCES

I am pleased to report that your association has been able to continue to operate on a self funded basis through ongoing grant support and fundraising activities. This has allowed EQRA to operate without charging an annual membership fee to the 281 properties within our boundaries.

Our Treasurer, Sharon Gebhard, will present our accounts for 2009 during the meeting.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Our main social event last year was once again the Summer BBQ in Calypso Gardens.

In addition to the support received from Hyde Housing Association (who manage the Gately Court development on Samuel Street), EQRA also secured additional funding from the Grassroots Fund to support the event. Highlights included two bouncy castles, donkey rides, live music, face painting, tombola, food stalls and a bar.

This year we raised £507.92, which was a fantastic result. These funds will provide vital financial support to the association over the coming year. I would like to thank event co-ordinator, Meriam Soopee, and the many volunteers who gave their time in making the day such a success.

In December, EQRA also held a festive gathering for residents at the new Grand Union bar and restaurant in Camberwell. The event was attended by local Councillor Barrie Hargrove as well as EQRA residents, both past and present! This was the last year that we have funding secured for such an event. The committee is therefore keen to hear from residents about the type of event, if any, they would like to see next year.



MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the current members of your committee and the many residents, both past and present that have supported EQRA during the year.

In particular, I would like to extend my appreciation to Cristina Dominguez and Mandy Purdie, both of whom will be retiring from the committee at this meeting.

Cristina has been the committee representative for the *Evolution* development since EQRA was founded in 2007. She has been instrumental in ensuring that *Evolution's* developer, George Wimpey (Laing Homes), completed repairs to communal areas within the two year warranty period. She also sought to build an effective dialogue with the managing agents, Trinity Estates, despite repeated changes in Estate Managers! Cristina cannot be with us today but sends us her best wishes and we wish her well with her new life in Spain.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Terry Wilson for managing and updating our website so diligently! If residents have any ideas for the site then please let Terry know by emailing webmaster@evolutionquarter.org

I am also standing down as Chair at this meeting after completing the maximum two year term of office. I would therefore like to express my appreciation to all those who have supported me during my time in office. It has certainly been an eventful journey!

I had no idea whether anyone would turn up at that first meeting at Chumleigh Gardens Café in 2007, but they did, and I have continued to be impressed at the energy and commitment shown by so many of our members to their community. This is itself a rebuttal of the stereotypes so often perpetuated by the media of our neighbourhood.

I am confident that your association is well placed for continued success, though we cannot become complacent. Such success is ultimately dependant upon the continued support of you, our members. The more we work together, the more we achieve together!

I hope you will now join with me in offering your appreciation to the work of your committee over the past twelve months.

Thank You

Phil Bale
Chair, EQRA

Date: 23 January 2009