



# EALING MATTERS NEWSLETTER

9 July 2018

**ISSUE 2**

Welcome to the second newsletter from Ealing Matters. Formed in winter 2017/18 we are a network of residents' groups throughout Ealing which is attempting to hold the powers that be to account and to maintain and enhance quality of life for Ealing residents. At our second meeting of residents' and community groups on 30 May 2018 we ran an engagement exercise to discover what issues we should pursue and how we might best tackle them. We are making progress on creating a web site and we'll launch this before the autumn.

As ever, throughout the borough planning issues and Council engagement issues proliferate. A selection of them are covered below:

## **ACTON**

South Acton was allegedly the site for London's biggest redevelopment when planning permission was granted in 2012. The plan involves extensive demolition, the building of 2,350 flats, and the creation of a 'new neighbourhood' called Acton Gardens. The lead developer is L&Q, the largest landlord in Greater London. Local residents are becoming agitated by a range of issues. Central to the complaints is the viability of the Acton Gardens Master Plan. This plan involves rent increases which will make it unaffordable for many current residents to live in Acton Gardens.

Promises were made in 2015 that new properties would be provided for residents who need disabled access and that lifetime homes would be available for local residents. These promises are not being honoured. Strong allegations have been made that Compulsory Purchase Orders have been raised in secret and that a strong racial and class bias exists. Making matters worse, apparently, are the attitudes and behaviour of Ealing Councillor Officers, Councillors and L&Q staff.

## **EALING CENTRE**

Save Ealing's Centre and Ealing Voice have engaged the expert charity lawyers Bates, Wells and Braithwaite to represent them in preventing Ealing Council from 'disposing' of Victoria Hall. The lawyers have now written to the Charity Commission pointing out that the hall is not owned by the Council but by the Victoria Hall Trust (VHT), which is a charity. It describes the Council's long running mismanagement of the trust including its appropriation of trust revenues and it confirms the illegality of leasing the hall to the hotel company Mastcraft for the next 240 years. The letter urges the Charity Commission to exercise its powers to remove Ealing Council as Trustee of the VHT and to transfer the ownership into new hands.

## **HANGER LANE GYRATORY**

On 21 June 2018, Ealing Council granted planning permission for 565 student flats to be built in four tower blocks rising to 13 storeys on the Hanger Lane Gyratory site. This site is totally unsuited to residential use as air quality on Hanger Lane is among the worst in London with emissions way in excess of EU safety levels. This was one of the main reasons why the GLA opposed the development (a point not properly explained in Ealing's Planning Committee report). It also explains why windows up to the 6<sup>th</sup> floor will be welded shut and occupants of the lower floors will have to rely on mechanical ventilation, which is environmentally unsustainable and a breeding place for Legionnaires Disease.

## **HANWELL**

200 flats are being proposed down Trumpers Way in south Hanwell. Old workshops will be demolished and new workshops built with flats above. No details have been released on the tenure breakdown of the flats.

## **OLD OAK AND PARK ROYAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (OPDC)**

OPDC was launched on 1 April 2015. It is the Local Planning Authority and regeneration body for a 1,606 acre site spanning parts of Brent, Ealing (the largest share) and Hammersmith. This is the UK's largest regeneration project, with plans for 25,500 new homes and 40,000 new jobs. If delivered, this will be the densest residential development ever built in London. A new, large train station is planned for where HS2 meets the Elizabeth Line at Old Oak. The proposed housing densities are very high (450 units/hectare) and they exceed London Plan guidelines. Re-consultation of the OPDC Local Plan is currently underway. See [www.london.gov.uk/opdclocalplan](http://www.london.gov.uk/opdclocalplan). Deadline for comments is 30 July 2018. After assurances by HS2 that trees would not be felled around Wells House Road, the following day on 26 June 2018 these trees were chopped down by HS2. The survival of 'The Castle' pub is threatened even though the OPDC draft plan includes '...conserving and enhancing the Castle Public House'.

The Old Oak Neighbourhood Forum (OONF) was designated by the OPDC on 9 February 2018. The 54 acre Neighbourhood Area is but a very small part of the OPDC. Under the 2011 Localism Act the OONF is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for this area.

## **SOUTHALL**

The Save Southall Town Hall Campaign attended a full Judicial Review hearing on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> July 2018. The campaign is aimed at stopping the sale of Southall Town Hall to a religious organisation, as campaigners believe the process followed by Ealing Council was unfair and unlawful. Local stakeholders are committed to preserving Southall Town Hall as their main and iconic civic building and want it to remain open and accessible to all communities.

## **WEST EALING**

The cost of getting a new leisure centre and swimming poll at Gurnell is 608 new flats in residential tower blocks up to 17 storeys. There will be car parking for 302 cars and a skateboard park, but the football pitch is lost. To the surprise of many most of Scotch Common has been leased to Pitshanger Football Club for 15 years. There was clearly no public consultation about this.

NatWest Bank has closed and is on the market for £1.05 million. St James Church may well be ‘repurposed’ as church bosses have made it clear that as a place of worship it’s unsustainable. Both buildings are valued by local stakeholders as heritage assets.

Other changes with borough-wide implications are as follows:

### **CROSSRAIL/ELIZABETH LINE**

The prospect is for yet further delays on the Crossrail/Elizabeth Line improvement work at Ealing Broadway and West Ealing Stations. Network Rail had assured us that contractors would be in place at the end of June 2018 but once again their deadline has passed with resounding silence. If it ever commences, which people are staring to wonder, it now seems impossible for work to be completed before the full service comes into operation at the end of 2019. For some time to come Elizabeth Line’s new commuters will therefore find themselves sharing their overcrowded trains with armies of contractors. With shiny new Elizabeth Line stations already opening in central and East London, Ealing’s five new stations are proving to be the Cinderella of the whole project.

### **EALING AS CHEAP CAR PARKING FOR HEATHROW TRAVELLERS**

I live in an uncontrolled car parking zone. Someone flying away for a week from Heathrow can park their car in my road for nothing. But now in a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) the same traveller could park inexpensively (£4.50/day). The difference here is that residents living in a CPZ are paying for controlled parking, but the Council is granting ‘cheap’ controlled car parking privileges within the CPZ to non-residents within a 10 to 15 minute walk of Elizabeth Line and other stations. This, of course, reduces the amount of car parking for CPZ residents. To rub salt in the wound for residents in a CPZ, the Council has raised the average cost of resident car parking permits by 53%.

### **CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE: DOES THE COUNCIL REALLY CARE?**

It is of course quite glorious for the Council to champion and part fund restorations of Gunnersbury Park, Pitzhanger Manor and Southall Manor. However at community/neighbourhood level that support is increasingly missing.

For example, residents in West Ealing are fighting to retain the iconic, art deco 1926 Woolworths façade. In November 2013 local residents at a public West Ealing Centre Neighbourhood Forum (WECNF) meeting voted to retain the façade as a heritage asset. WECNF duly placed the asset in its Neighbourhood Plan and in 2017 Ealing Council duly removed it. In December 2017 WECNF applied to Ealing Council for the façade to be added to the local heritage list. As of 6 July 2018 no progress has been made by Ealing Council. Perhaps the Council’s attitude to heritage and conservation is summed up by the fact that its Principal Conservation Officer works just two days a week. (By contrast, the London Borough of Lambeth employs three full-time and one part-time Conservation Officers, who played a key role in the recent £50 million refurbishment of Lambeth Town Hall, together with two urban designers – a role that does not exist in our borough.) A petition to save the façade was started and the number of signatories has reached 1,126. On 22 March 2018 A2Dominion submitted a planning application to develop the site and demolish the façade. 300 online objections against this application have been submitted.

At Gunnersbury Park, local residents used to live near a public park. The park is being commercialised and local people excluded from both the management and the park itself. Large fences, noisy events and extensive closed off areas of the park are now in evidence. Privatisation is being implemented under the banner of a ‘Community Interest Company’. Ealing Matters is close to Gunnersbury Park (see our Facebook page). There is to be a review in late July following the first major national festival in the park. This will look at policing, transport, environmental and other benefits/impacts. So far residents’ concerns have not been heard. Register your interest with Gunnersbury Park Neighbourhood Association (GPNA).

## **STREET TRADING**

Allegedly a new street trading policy has been drafted for review by Ealing Council General Purposes Committee in September 2018. A street trader, who has occupied the same site for over 30 years, recently had the cost of his licence increased by over 300%. The sustainability of his business is now under threat. If this licence increase is in any way typical of the proposed new policy one does wonder whether the new policy will encourage or discourage street trading. Trading from vans on the street, however, continues unabated despite continuous complaints from neighbours and Resident Associations.

## **BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS (BIDS)**

BIDs are private companies which set and spend an annual precept from businesses in the district in attempts to enhance the business environment. The performance of BIDs in Ealing is patchy. The oldest BID is in Ealing centre. It’s dominated by large land/lease owners especially British Land and St George. West Ealing centre’s BID was set up in 2012/13 using £100,000 of public money and the secondment of a Council Officer for a year. In the last two years it has performed poorly. In October 2017 a new BID manager was appointed who seemed to be making good progress until she abruptly resigned in June 2018. It may be difficult to persuade local traders, who are suffering from increases in rates, rents and future BID precepts to sign up to the BID for another five years in 2019.

The Council is promoting a BID in Acton. The proposal is being criticised by businesses on South Acton Industrial Estate. Many of them can’t see what value they would get from paying the annual precept. A consultation on the BID ended on 6 July 2018.

Please let us know your concerns about how, why, when and where changes are happening across the London Borough of Ealing, particularly in those areas of the borough not covered here. Please get in touch and stay in touch.

Regards,  
Eric Leach

Ealing Matters newsletter editor and  
Interim Chair  
[eric.alan.leach@gmail.com](mailto:eric.alan.leach@gmail.com)