

thecourt

August / September 2020



A PRINCESS IN THE COURT

Lotti Henley, Local Hero

COMMUNITY SUPPORT & GREAT PLANS AHEAD

Earl's Court Youth Club Shines

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Meet Roger Hawkins and David West, Lead Designers for the new Earl's Court Property Development



Keeping
Life Local



Even though our great local schools have done amazing work since the Covid-19 Lockdown began, many children have had no access to home schooling since March. No laptops, no broadband, no opportunity to learn or enjoy sport and activities. Added to that, worrying numbers of school-age children and their partents have not had enough to eat.

People in households up and down the borough are suffering from stress-related mental health issues, and many people we know and love are still self-shieldeding, too afraid to leave the house.

Please be mindful that residents in Earl's Court (and beyond) are still really struggling. Now is the time for us all to do our bit - to chip in and help - in any way we can.

As the broader community begins to open up, in line with pandemic government guidelines, it is vitally important that we consciously endeavour to understand how each of us can get involved and proactively support the many great causes in our area.

In this issue, we share some incredible stories of challenge and hope. Our local heroes continue to go above and beyond the call of duty, supporting and protecting the minds, bodies and souls of vulnerable people of all ages in our neighbourhood.

Meet Lotti Henley, a princess in Earl's Court. This 95 year old lady is founder of a charity that distributes tens of thousands of tonnes of food to needy people annually via her charity PlanZheroes.

Hear from Abdi Aden, Centre Manager of the Earl's Court Youth Club. This man and his incredible team have created an extraordinary schedule of community support programmes - from e-education initiatives to funded family nutrition support. With Abdi at the helm, ECYC plans to evolve its much-loved Youth Club to become a wonderfully inclusive, vibrant, and all-encompassing community Hub.

We hear some good news from Dads House - a dedicated Food Bank that supports the nutrition, support and practical support needs of single dads in our area.

Read about the great success of Mutual Aid, and hear from local resident Abhin Shah, and how he wants Earl's Court to go greener, when it comes to transport.

In *The Court* this August/September, we also have an insightful interview with Roger Hawkins and David West - Lead Designers of the new Earls Court Property Development. We hear how community input will be key as important plans are drawn up for the 22 acre development that sits on the footprint of the Earl's Court Exhibition Centre and local TFL site.

STAY STRONG. STAY FOCUSED. STAY SAFE. STAY CONNECTED.

Enjoy the issue.

LOTTI HENLEY A PRINCESS IN EARL'S COURT

Lotti Henley was starving during WW2, sucking stones and chewing weeds to ease her terrible hunger. Aged 95, she strongly believes that food should never be wasted, and that those that need food should get it.

FROM PRINCESS TO PAUPER

Born Princess Windisch-Graetz of Austria, Lotti's life before WW2 was the stuff of dreams. Her home was an 80-room castle, and she and her siblings grew up in stunning countryside enjoying the fabulous fare produced on the castle's farm.

Everything took a dramatic change for the worse in 1943 when, just 19, Lotti was sent to the northern Italian frontline as a nurse. There she witnessed the true physical horrors of war first hand. Following this traumatic time, she was sent to a displaced persons' camp in Munich which was run by Russians. It was there that she began to experience true starvation.

Lotti and her sister were released from the camp when the soldiers discovered the girls' prestigious family background. Penniless and hungry, they were hundreds of miles from home, and had to painstakingly begin to make their way to Salzburg in Austria, where they hoped to find people they knew. They walked 100 miles on foot, bartering everything they had for any scraps of food available.

In time, the girls were reunited with their family, and soon began working in a military hospital for recovering soldiers. This is where Lotti's lifelong mission to feed the hungry began. "Refugees would queue up behind the hospital, begging for scraps that the sick soldiers couldn't eat," says Lotti. "I'd scrape the leftovers into a big dish for them, and hand it out because it wasn't long since I'd been starving myself."

A MOVE TO LONDON

One fateful day, Lotti met an English soldier named Tony at the hospital. They quickly fell in love, soon married and then moved to London.

ON A MISSION TO SAVE FOOD

Lotti Henley turned 95 on July the 11th, 2020. When she retired as an interpreter, she volunteered in 2009 with Citizens UK - an organization working on social justice issues. Not long after she became the Chair of Greener Planet Action Team - a West London entity created to spread the word about environmental issues in the community.

Subsequently, this Earl's Court Square resident formed Plan Zheroes - zero food waste heroes! The goal? To save surplus food



When you're hungry, you can't think of anything else - you can't plan for tomorrow. There are so many hungry people in Britain, but there's also so much wasted food. When I was young, the baker would run out of bread at 3 o'clock - everybody knew that, so they'd go early. But now shops and restaurants overstock food - they never run out, and the waste is enormous. There is more surplus food than there are hungry people.

- Lotti Henley

from going into landfill and to get it to charities that need it. See <https://planzheroes.org/> for details.

Having secured £7,000 from the RSA (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce), Lotti created a website where charities and the food



businesses can connect using an interactive online map and it was not long before the system directed great surplus food to people that really need it. The GLA's Sustainable Development Commission also supported Plan Zheroes, by appointing Lotti as a London Leader (2011). In 2016 she received a Point of Light award from Prime Minister David Cameron.

BIGGER AND BETTER

In 2019, the Charity saved 69 tonnes of excess food going into landfill. Over 200 since it started. 90% of this is London-based. The charity is now gathering momentum elsewhere in the country, but it only has the financial resources to employ one part time paid person, the rest of the work is done with volunteers.

If you want to help, or have surplus food to donate, please contact planzheroes.org

A BIRTHDAY GIFT THAT MATTERS

When Lotti was asked by The Court earlier this year what she would like for her birthday gift, she said that she wanted to raise funds for Plan Zheroes. The good news is that for Lotti's 95th Birthday fundraiser, the goal is to raise £9,500. The campaign has already raised over £11,000 to date.

If you would like to support Lotti's dream to reduce food waste and support charities in need of food donations in London, please visit <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/12640#!/Donation>

Some excerpts have been taken from an article published in The Mirror Newspaper (November 2017)



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EARLS COURT YOUTH CLUB SAVES THE DAY.

Abdi Aden is a man on a mission. He is the Centre Manager of one of London's most proactive and respected youth clubs, and understands better than most the challenges that people in Earls Court are facing, day-to-day.

"We have two main areas of focus right now. We must do what we can to continue to safeguard and develop the potential of hundreds of children that live within metres of the centre. We also need to offer food support to families and individuals in need.

An estimated 40% of all homes in Earls Court are social housing properties, and with resources typically being less than most people need, we step in to help where we can."

PREMIERE SUPPORT - CHELSEA FC

"The Earls Court Youth Club has worked with Chelsea FC's charitable foundation for many years. Their football coaches train the children after school and during school holidays, but when the Covid-19 Lockdown happened they wanted to take their support to the next level.

We have worked with nutritionists, chefs and volunteers to feed hundreds of families since March, and we hope to continue this support, if funding continues.

When a mother tearfully tells you that she struggles to buy personal hygiene basics for her teenage daughter while trying to make the weekly food budget stretch, you know things are bad.

And so, we are here to help, as much as we can. Thanks to Chelsea FC, and our other generous patrons and donors, we have been able to work with nutritionists, chefs and volunteers to feed hundreds of families since Lockdown. We really hope to continue this support as many families have been negatively impacted by job loss and reductions in household incomes."

SAFEGUARDING THE POTENTIAL OF CHILDREN

Vulnerable children were offered access to school during Lockdown, but when parents from disadvantaged backgrounds were reluctant to send children to school for family health reasons, many children had no access to online learning tools. No laptop. No WiFi. No access to a smartphone. E-learning is not a luxury that everyone can enjoy.

KIND DONORS HELPED HOME EDUCATION

Since March, the Earls Court Youth Club has distributed almost 100 laptops and



tablet devices to school age children in the area. Parents have also received free WiFi dongles. Now they connect to the internet, free of charge.

HOW CAN YOU HELP THE EARL'S COURT YOUTH CLUB?

"Funding is a constant challenge. We have little or no consistent funding - every year it is a struggle. We typically apply for 12 grants per annum and get just three. We want the Club to become a full Community Centre for people of all ages and physical abilities. Disabled children and adults need an

outlet too. Our current building is not fully accessible to all. With specialist architectural and funding support, our dream to transform our great Club into a specialist Community Centre, suitable for a truly diverse group of young and old residents, could come true."

AN APPEAL TO LOCAL TEACHERS

With so many ECYC children currently way behind in their school studies, The Court would like to reach out and ask if you could volunteer some time to tutor children during the remainder of the holidays or at after school clubs at the Youth Club.

If you think you can support the Earls Court Youth Club, and the amazing work that they do, please contact Abdi on abdi.aden@ecyc.org.uk. He would be delighted to hear from you.

SUPPORT FOR SINGLE DADS

The Earls Court Development Company has teamed up with charity partner Dads House to launch a food bank in Earl's Court to support families struggling as a result of the pandemic.

A free premises at West Brompton Crossing as well as food donations were provided, which were sourced from cash and carry, when Dads House struggled to get the quantities of food needed to resource the food bank.

To date, the charity has served a total of over 2,500 people across Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham and provided around 13,000 meals for vulnerable families.

Dads House was set up in 2008 by William McGranaghan (Billy to his friends) to help single fathers with the practicalities of raising their children alone, but the charity is now offering help and support to anyone who needs it.

Billy McGranahan said:

“What’s been achieved so far by our staff, volunteers and those who have been kind enough to donate is amazing and I’m incredibly proud, but our work hasn’t finished and there is still much more to do. The pandemic has seen a huge spike in the number of families that need support and that only looks set to worsen when the furlough



Dads House founder, Billy with West Brompton Foodbank coordinator, Luke

scheme ends. A lot of people will find themselves in truly dire straits. Here at Dads House, we are crowdfunding to raise money to support those who need it most and would be hugely grateful for any further donations, no matter how small.”

To donate or find out more, visit <https://www.dadshouse.org.uk/>
To contact Dads House, email info@dadshouse.org.uk or call 07765183504



THE RISE AND RISE OF MUTUAL AID DURING CORONAVIRUS

BY COUNCILLOR LINDA WADE

During the pandemic, Mutual Aid sprung up overnight in Kensington, and amid the unfolding disaster, we have seen countless acts of kindness and solidarity. It’s this spirit of generosity that will help guide us out of this crisis and into a better future.

Based on the principle of neighbour-helping-neighbour, Mutual Aid was conceived specifically to support those that were self-isolating. Shopping. Collecting prescriptions. Dog walking. Being a “chat buddy”. The support response to the community challenges inflicted by the pandemic was simply extraordinary.

Offers of help provided essential lifelines to those unable to leave their homes — so thank

you, one and all, to those that gave of your time. You were inspirational and really helped make this grassroots project work.

A GREAT COMMUNITY ATMOSPHERE

There was a great atmosphere of the community coming together, buzzing with positivity. People felt connected to both individuals and place in a way that they could never have dreamt of before March.

For residents working from home for the first time, getting to know their neighbourhood by helping deliver was an interesting experience. Some residents donated their time and energy, while others provided fresh food and vegetables to supplement the Government Food Parcels. Others cooked food

for individual residents with special dietary requirements.

As Lockdown restrictions ease, we hope that we can retain some of the wonderful energy and enthusiasm to help others in Earl’s Court - a great place to live and work.

There are still some vulnerable residents in our community that face challenges, support, in the form of shopping and collecting prescriptions.

So, if you are interested, or if you would like to donate, please contact us on www.mutualaidkc.com or 020 7097 3731

Mutual Aid is looking to the future and how we can harness this fabulous volunteer energy. If you have any good ideas, let us know, but, in the meantime, stay aware and stay safe.

The Earls Courtiers proudly Present...

Stephen Sondheim's

INTO THE WOODS

Starring West End Superstar
Kristen Gaetz Riva

Friday 11th & Saturday 12th September

Barkston Gardens

7pm start

Tickets: £10 adults | £5 children 11 & under

To book, head to www.thecourt.london/intothewoods. Alternatively, get in touch with Toby Brown on 07736 345776 or toby.brown@tlclondon.com.

All ticket proceeds to go to charity.

Please note: Full Government COVID-19 health & safety risk assessment will take place. Social distancing means we will only be able to have an audience of 100 each night, so please book quickly to avoid disappointment.

West Brompton Crossing Open Once Again

If you're out and about over the holidays, don't forget to pop into West Brompton Crossing which is fully open and running business as usual following the ease in Lockdown restrictions. The pop-up high street on Lillie Road includes The Prince, a grand old pub brought back to life around a beautiful covered woodland garden; four restaurants; a deli; The Crossing, a rotating community space which provides space for local artists, students, designers and businesses; a bike repair shop and a café.



From 3 to 31 August, get a 50% discount when you eat in (Monday/ Tuesday/ Wednesday) at restaurants that are registered with the Eat Out to Help Out Scheme. Go to www.gov.uk and search for Eat Out to Help Out for details of participating outlets.

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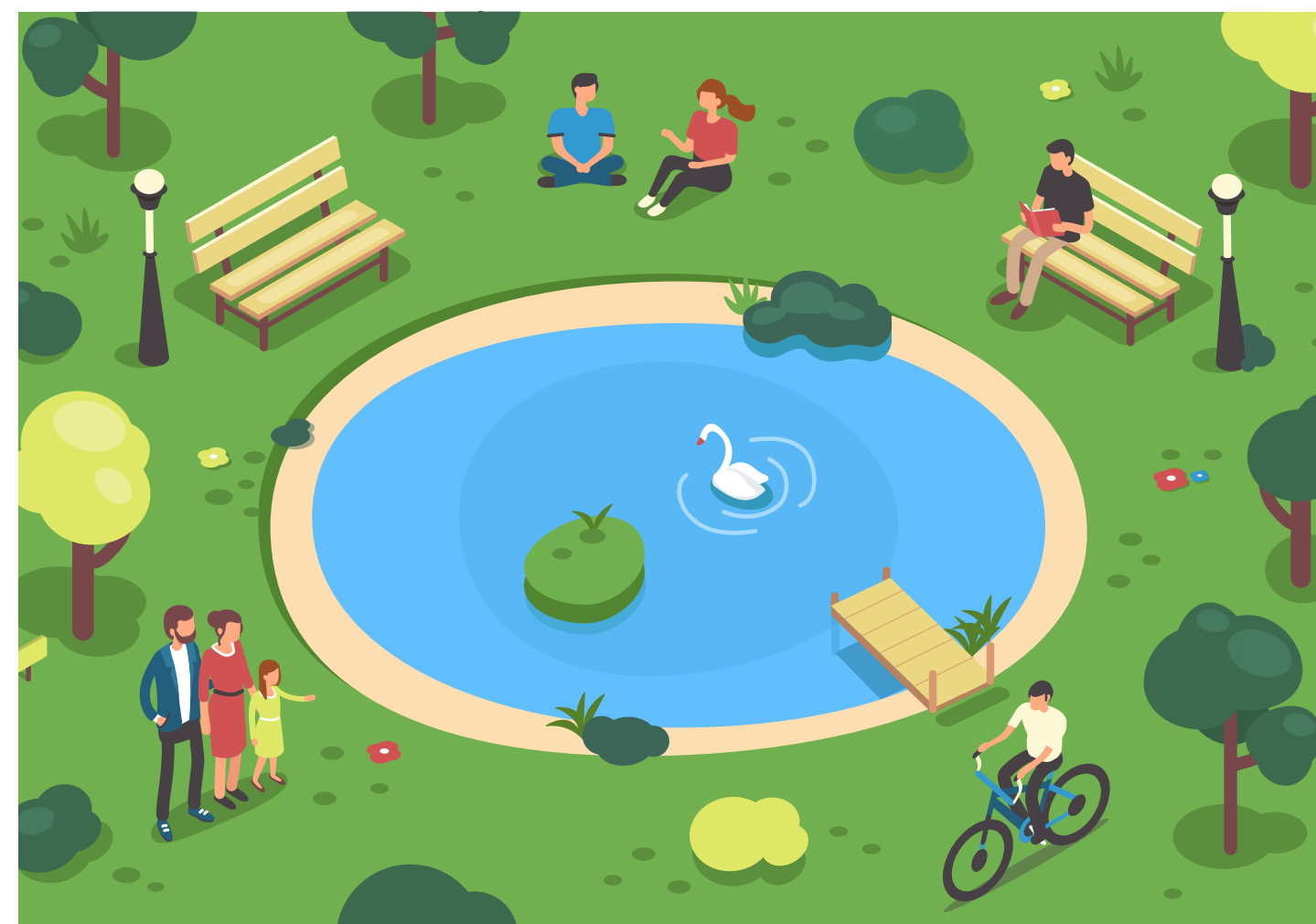
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SAFE TO STROLL AND CYCLE

BY ABHIN SHAH, NEVERN SQUARE RESIDENT ASSOCIATION

A few months ago the System came to a rapid halt. Now the Government is pressing us to get back to 'business as usual' without acknowledging the revelation made even clearer to us during the Lockdown; that 'business as usual' for most of us was eternally stressful, unequal, broken and ultimately unsustainable.

Zooming in on my local area in London (the borough of Kensington and Chelsea) we can look at one aspect of post Lockdown life we certainly don't want getting back to 'business as usual' - the normal state of heavy traffic noise and air pollution.

In the first few weeks of Lockdown we were woken by beautiful birdsong rather than the throbbing, vibrating hum of heavy traffic passing through the Earl's Court Road and its neighbouring red routes.

We could finally walk calmly along the streets without the risk of getting hit by a vehicle. Instead of jumping in a car we could revel in the joy of cycling down the deserted roads. Our lungs, made more precious to us during the pandemic, were filled with the

gentle scent of spring instead of the toxic exhaust fumes coughing out of lorries.

However this gentle peace didn't last long. Within a few weeks, together with the added help of government incoherence with Lockdown easing, the roads began quickly filling with the heavy traffic once again.

Many of the changes in our working life and how we travel through the city will want to stick and endure long after Lockdown is lifted. So it is crucial that local councils, local authorities, governments and TFL re-evaluate city/town planning to accommodate more of the road area to cyclists/pedestrians rather than the usual king Car.

Many boroughs in London and cities across Europe are now undertaking this city wide travelling revolution. Whilst being better for our health and well being, transforming street space in favour of the cyclist/pedestrian rather than the passing polluting vehicle can ultimately lead to a more sustainable boost to the local economy. The city flaneur and the content

cyclist are far more likely to venture into local shops and add to the unspeakable magic of a community than a stressed out motorist swallowed up in the foul soup of traffic.

Earl's Court Road in particular has continually broken WHO limits on air pollution and according to a recent Friends of the Earth study is one of the most polluted in the UK. The ghastly heavy traffic problem of Earl's Court and surrounding roads in this borough has been at crisis point for far too long for this community.

This seems to be the perfect time for the local council (RBKC) and TFL to work together on this. By collaborating, leaving political antics aside, and engaging with the local community they can come up with a radical, visionary plan to serve this long held call to transform these unhealthy, vehicle serving roads into roads safe for walkers and cyclists.

If you are interested in making Earl's Court greener contact: info@nevernsquareresidentsassociation.org.uk



NEW MASTER PLAN BEGINS FOR EARLS COURT DEVELOPMENT SITE

As the Earls Court Development Company appoints Hawkins\Brown and Studio Egret West as joint principal masterplan architects for the Earls Court development site, *The Court* speaks to Roger Hawkins, Founding Partner of Hawkins\Brown and David West, Founding Director of Studio Egret West to learn more about what the future holds.

What do you think of Earls Court as a place?

Earls Court has got such a rich and vibrant history in arts and culture - the place has seen some incredible things take place over the years!

From the countless trade shows, musical and sporting events that took place in the former exhibition centres to musical legends like Bob Dylan and Jimi Hendrix playing gigs at The Troubadour! There is so much to celebrate about its history, character and community already.

Our role moving forward will be to ensure that we carefully consider how the long-term vision for Earls Court captures and nurtures the creative talent and enterprise that already exists.

What is the spirit of the area, as you see it?

To this day, there seems to be a real bohemian spirit in the Earls Court area. It's always been a home to creatives, artists, musicians and writers and I think that energy can still be felt.

Do you have a provisional vision for the development? What are the primary changes you feel are essential from the original master plan?

We want to bring a fresh approach to the Earls Court project, one that puts collaboration with the local community at its heart. Our aim is to produce a brand new, sustainable, mixed-use masterplan that stitches the Earls Court project back into its local area, but we want to work with the community to develop this vision.

“Our role moving forward will be to ensure that we carefully consider how the long-term vision for Earls Court captures and nurtures the creative talent and enterprise that already exists.”

What level of consultation will there be to help inform your thinking?

Part of the reason that The Earls Court Development Company chose to appoint us was precisely because we share the same ethos of ensuring community led development and transparent consultation.

There will be numerous opportunities for local people to meet the project team, discuss plans and give insights and suggestions into priorities for the area. We will always provide an open door approach to ideas and feedback.

Have you developed destination projects before?

We led on the design for Here East which builds upon London's Olympic legacy. The area has turned into a catalyst for growth and an innovation campus that is home to London's fastest growing clusters including esports, cybersecurity and the creative sectors.

Based on the mix of residents, is this development going to have something for everyone?

Definitely. The most interesting places always provide a diverse offering. The approach at Earls Court will be based on collaboration and consultation with key stakeholders and the



“The new masterplan will deliver homes across a range of tenures, including more affordable homes than the previous masterplan. Our aim is to create a mixed, integrated and balanced community which welcomes all demographics.”

local community so that everyone has a voice and a say in what comes next.

Will we be able to afford in the development or is the project still high end?

The new masterplan will deliver homes across a range of tenures, including more affordable homes than the previous masterplan. Our aim is to create a mixed, integrated and balanced community which welcomes all demographics.

Based on initial conversations, there seems to be a rental rather than sales focus for the project. Is this true, and if so can you explain how to make the tenant living experience a valuable one? How do you think you can create a solid sense of community in Earls Court?

Earls Court already appears to have a tremendous sense of community, and we want to work in partnership with that community to develop a master plan that works for old and new residents alike. Renting is commonplace in London and indeed, renters can still contribute greatly to their local environment and their local communities. The best way to bring everyone

together is to ensure that we are creating vibrant, public spaces which are attractive and encourage everyone to come together outside of their homes.

The Earls Court Development Company representatives mentioned that they were keen to make the development a destination. Does the London Arts and Culture scene have an influence on early thinking?

Absolutely, arts and culture is part of Earls Courts DNA and we want to nurture and promote that. It's important to us to work collaboratively with all interested parties - both ultra-local and London-wide - to create an outstanding destination in which people will love living, working and visiting.

What are the next steps?

We want to meet with the community and introduce ourselves later on this year. Whether a face-to-face meeting or event will be possible is wholly dependent on the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, and safety will always be our priority when engaging with the community. If it is not possible to meet face-to-face, we will use digital channels to ensure virtual meetings are possible.

To sign up for updates on the Earls Court property development project, please visit www.theearlscourtdevelopmentcompany.com/contact to register your details. Alternatively, you can write to the developers: info@theearlscourtdevelopmentcompany.com.

Visit our virtual community hub this summer holidays

We appreciate that in this time of social distancing the thought of keeping the kids entertained over the summer holidays can feel daunting. If you're feeling stuck for ideas, visit our virtual community hub for creative and fun ideas and activities.

From arts and crafts guides to family friendly recipes to virtual storytelling, the community hub has plenty to keep your family active and entertained for a summer at home.

The community hub also includes information on the support available in the community, ways of getting involved with local volunteering initiatives and information on some of the services being provided by local businesses.

Visit the community hub at
www.earlscourtcommunityhub.com

Should you wish to contact us about any information or services on the community hub, or would like to offer your own ideas or information to list on the community hub to help others, we'd love to hear from you!

Please get in touch at
info@theearlscourtdevelopmentcompany.com