



Minutes of Thornton Heath Community Action Team's Public Meeting on Tuesday 16 August 2022

at AgeUK, Scratchley Hall, Brigstock Road, Thornton Heath.



Apologies and Health & Safety announcement

Andrea, Chair of Thornton Heath Community Action Team (THCAT), welcomed everyone, introduced herself and explained how THCAT is a volunteer organisation in existence for over 7 years, holding public meetings approximately every 6 weeks in different Thornton Heath locations.

Apologies were received from Beulah, Jackie and Broderick Lisa Karen.

Andrea thanked AgeUK for hosting this meeting in the lovely garden which was created as part of the ['Love your Garden' TV programme with Alan Titchmarsh](#).

New members introduced themselves during the meeting and explained the issues of interest to them including: more innovative approaches to preventing fly-tipping, rubbish dumping in streets and green spaces, reducing traffic, traffic pollution, no enforcement happening re cars idling.

1. Panel discussion on volunteering opportunities locally

Several committee members were invited to speak about the benefits of volunteering.

Linda spoke about how you can give as much or as little time as you like which is good for those working, especially full-time. She also explained the huge amount of

positive energy, particularly when volunteering on big projects such as street mosaics, which comes from passers by and the community and how these projects leave a lasting legacy. For those who, when faced with a problem, search for solutions then volunteering to improve the area can be very rewarding. A further benefit is getting to know so many diverse people locally.

Graham talked about projects he has participated in which include the [planter project](#), a mosaic, the Pond, litter-picking and tidying, [Thornton Heath Rec. Community Garden](#). He definitely recommends volunteering and mentioned the mental and physical benefits. He also explained it's good to work with other local groups e.g. in Norbury, for insights.

Gaëtane explained how if you want to start litter picking in your area you can register by email at the Council (to become a [street champion](#)) who will give you litter bags for collection of rubbish. She also cautioned not taking on too much.

Barbara explained the volunteering she and others on Melfort Rd have actively been doing for some time, trying to make things better.

Andrea talked about her roles as Chair of [Friends of Grangewood Park](#) and editor of [The Chronicle](#). There are many types of volunteering from litter-picking to campaigning, e.g. for better housing locally and the new playground in Grangewood Park.

Laura is AgeUK Croydon's Volunteer Programme Administrator. She explained that the garden was created in late 2019 and had to be kept under wraps until [Alan Titchmarsh's 'Love your Garden' TV programme](#) aired, but after this, Covid restrictions and lockdown came into force. Volunteers kept the garden watered and assisted with the food hub at at AgeUK.



More AgeUK 'garden monitors' are being sought to help with hosting in the garden on:



**Wednesday afternoons between 1.30-3.30pm
Friday mornings from 10.30-1.30pm**

Volunteers don't need to be garden experts but willing to help welcome clients and support with gardening activities. [Visit THCAT website for a link to AgeUK's volunteering options.](#)

It would be so good also to have **help improving and maintaining the flower bed outside the library** opposite AgeUK, and known volunteers could obtain water from the water butt in AgeUK's back garden, donated by Vân from THCAT.

Some time before the drought, the plants were looking good and one person commented on how schoolchildren visiting the library really enjoyed seeing them.

2. Relaunch of Thornton Heath Community Action Team's planter project



This project was started by former member Peter Lawrence in 2017 with Graham and Michael joining and continuing the action when Pete moved away.

It was started to help prevent fly-tipping on street corners, showing that local people (planter guardians) cared about and looked after their area to avoid the 'broken window syndrome'.

Currently, there are around 80 planters in Thornton Heath with some recently donated to thank the NHS.

[Graham is doing a shout out for more volunteers to assist with installation \(including someone with a car to help transport the planters\), plus more planter guardians.](#)

Having a few people in the street is a good idea to help keep an eye on the plants and ensure watering can continue if someone is on holiday or ill.

3. Formation of Trumble Gardens Friends' Group



The appearance of Trumble Gardens has deteriorated badly in recent years and has been described by members as depressing and unsightly with ASB.

Houses in that space were bombed during the 2nd World War and the space was laid out as formal gardens dedicated to Alderman Trumble who was Mayor at that time.

It was reported that homeless people appear to be living in a shelter there, also the park is frequently used as a toilet and drinking space.

THCAT is asking for more volunteers to join the 3 people willing to set up a Friends' Group and Graham (Chair of Bensham Manor Ward panel) will pay for the Public Liability insurance. It is also hoped to have support from the Community Payback Team.

Questions were asked about the Public Space Protection Order (but this has now lapsed) and whether there is a budget for this space. However, this is difficult to find out.

4. Update on the 'We are Thornton Heath' mobile phone app

Ian, Community Manager for this App at Loqiva explained how 26 local businesses have now signed up and the footfall census is up and running. They are encouraging more people to use this free app ([download here](#)) and are about to have a marketing push.

The first year was paid for by the council but, being a Croydon company, Loqiva is happy to continue. It is seeking to address problems faced by a community using technology. <https://wearethorntonheath.app>

**WE ARE
THORNTON
HEATH**

5. Funding opportunities and Borough of Culture

[Croydon Borough of Culture](#) is next year and local musician and THCAT member Mark Hugget suggested applying for a grant from Ignite Fund for 'Untold Stories' to commemorate [Desmond Dekker](#) who lived locally, especially as Reggae was designated an International Treasure in 2008. Ideas included a mural or live event.

One person didn't know about Desmond Dekker and suggested a gallery for others who weren't aware. Another person suggested members research the history of their own houses and display information for passers by to develop awareness of local history.

6. Local Policing Plan update

[The Safer Neighbourhood Team](#) (comprising 16 officers across the 3 wards in Thornton Heath) has carried out 2 surveys locally. One on attitudes to the police and the other about crime and ASB. Issues raised will form a strategic Policing Plan and a public meeting will be held to share and discuss.

Andrea added that a rise in car break-ins last year related to drugs had resulted in a 60% drop since a police operation in January.

There was some discussion around people living in Tesco car park and outer gates not being locked.

7. Update on Walkabouts by THCAT Flytipping Ambassadors and pushing for a formal strategy on illegal HMOs and rented properties

Barbara, Gaëtane and Paul have been carrying our regular [walkabouts](#) in all 3 local wards, taking many photos, sending reports to key council members, chasing emails, re-checking properties, reporting possible un-registered HMOs, especially those

causing problems.

Enforcement is needed and a dedicated person at the council to deal with this. Proactive rather than reactive strategies are needed to help tackle these issues as Thornton Heath is saturated.

8. Campaign to surcharge other councils locating tenants in Thornton Heath

The council has legal powers which are not being used. Other councils, such as Birmingham, Westminster, Hammersmith and Fulham, have implemented this surcharge to contribute to local infrastructure.

9. Flag up local planning issues for meeting planned with Councillor Jeet Bains (Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration).

Committee members will be meeting with [Councillor Jeet Bains](#) on a walkabout along the high street to discuss lack of enforcement, sub-standard facilities, at times promised in planning applications and not implemented and often inadequate greening/landscaping.

Questions were asked about new builds and why empty properties weren't being prioritised.

10. Date of next public meeting

Tuesday 27th September 7-8.30pm

Venue to be confirmed.



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