

# Reclaim Our Spaces meeting

Wed September 28th (2-5pm)

Conway Hall

Minutes

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Introductions & apologies

Present: **Stephen Hignell** (Queer Spaces Network); **Martin Cain** (Friary Park Preservation Group); **Mama D** (The Spark); **Mfasis** (The Spark); **Ilinca Diaconescu** (LGTU); **Toby Laurent Belson** (Westway 23); **Richard Lee** (Just Space); **Leslie Barson** (Granville Community Kitchen); **Pat Turnbull** (London Tenants Federation; Save Britannia Leisure Centre); **Tony Linforth-Hall** (Saving Southwark); **Sofia Roupakia** (Migrants Rights Network); **Rebecca Shays** (Migrants Rights Network); **Max Boucher** (Community Support); **Carlos Burgos** (West Green Road / Seven Sisters Development Trust); **Steve Burak** (Reclaim the Power); **Robin Brown** (Hayes Community Development Forum); **Cecil Gutzmore**; **Njeri Yebiemem** (Pan African Women Network); **Rastko Novakovic** (Trade Unionist for Housing; Southwark Notes; 35% Campaign); **Nicolas Fonty** (UCL, Just Space); **Paul Richards** (Long Live Southbank; UpRise); **Wilfried Rimensberger** (Millbank Creative); **Devon Thomas** (Brixton neighbourhood forum); **Esta Orchard** (Mela); **Barbara Lipietz** (UCL); **Santa Pedone** (Just Space; Elephant & Walworth Neighbourhood Forum); **Yvonne Field** (The Ubele Initiative).

Apologies: **Ben Walters** (Royal Vauxhall Tavern Future); **Debby Kennett** (London Gypsy and Traveller Unit); **Sara Gonzalez** (University of Leeds); **Patria Roman** (Latin Elephant); **Zahra John** (Take Back The City); **Althea Bart**; **Eli Anderson** (Storyaid); **Jake Colman** (The Spark); **Jackie Richards**; **Noha Nasser** (Mela); **Stephen Kenny** (Grove Park neighbourhood forum); **Ayo Wallace** (The Ubele Initiative); **Owen Hodgkinson** (Old Tidemill Garden); **Claudia Firth** (London Cooperative Housing Group); **Bethan Lant** (Praxis); **Felicia Ruperti** (Organic Lea); **Cecil Sagoe** (UCL); **Robin Grey** (Community Food Growers Network); **Yula Burin**; **Anna Lau** (The Spark); **Max Max**; **Winston Whittier** (Long Live Southbank); **Martin Ball** (Our Tottenham); **Tony Cealy** (The Ubele Initiative); **Shirley Kanazawa** (Our Tottenham); **Eileen Conn** (Peckham Vision).

**Yvonne Field** (The Ubele Initiative) facilitated the meeting.

After introductions, some people gave us updates on current live campaigns. **Leslie Barson** told us that the Granville Plus Centre (a Youth Arts building in Brent) will be soon closing its doors and therefore the **Granville Community Kitchen**, which operated in the building for nearly 24 years, will have to find new accommodation. Leslie asked for legal support and the need for collective action.

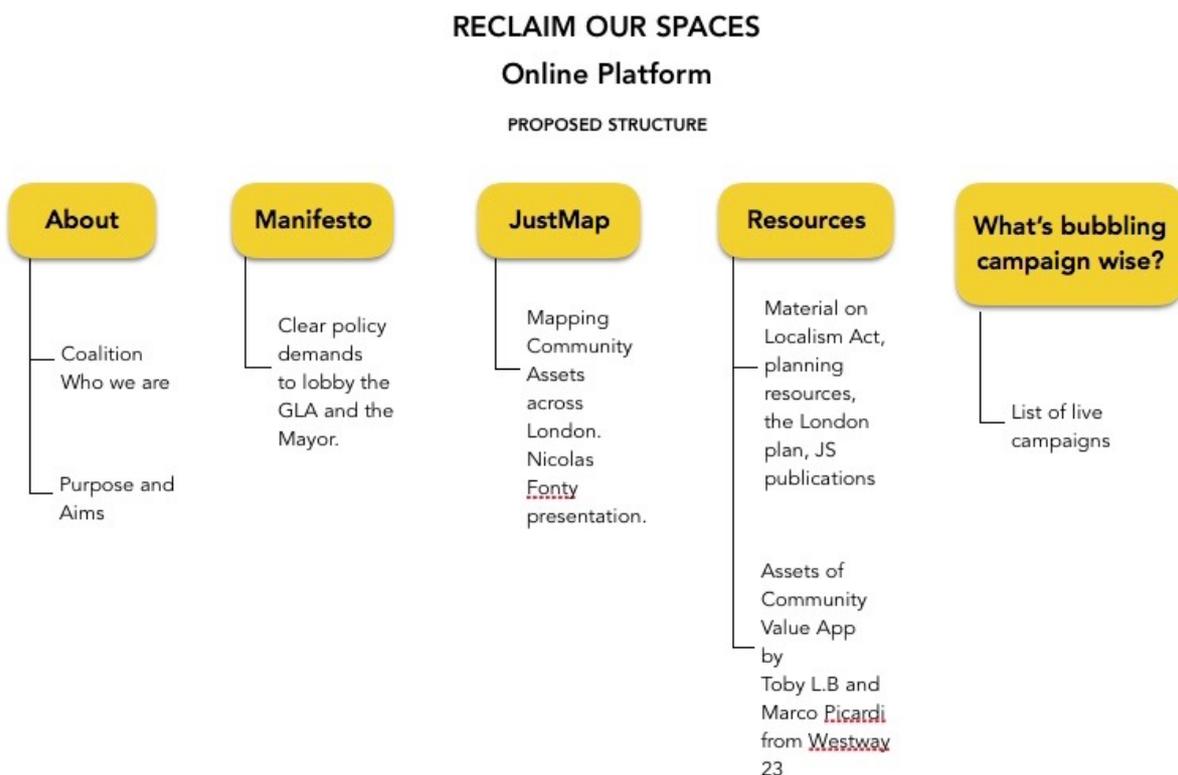
**Paul Richards** gave us an update on the “**Stand up to Lambeth**” protest planned for the **8th Oct**. People will be marching from Windrush Square in Brixton to Clapham Common to protest against the destruction of services, homes, jobs and the rights of residents. The protest is organised by the Save Brixton Arches campaign and other local groups. Any support that can be given to the organisers would be very welcome.

Another update came from **Owen Hodgkinson**, who sent his apologies and informed us about the public hearing on the 29 Sept, which will decide about the demolition of the **Old Tidemill Garden** and **Reginald House** in Lewisham. Local groups will stage a protest outside the Town Hall. Some community representatives will also speak during the meeting. People are invited to join the protest or attend the meeting and sit in the gallery in support of the speakers.

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## RoS online platform

How should it look like? Purpose, content, maintenance and funding. Proposal and discussion.



The above proposal for the skeleton (in terms of content) of the platform, was presented by Santa Pedone. It is based on the suggestions gathered during the conference held at Conway Hall in June. The aim is to have a section explaining the **purpose** of the coalition on reclaiming community spaces in London and a **manifesto** with clear policy demands for lobbying the GLA and the Mayor.

Another section will be dedicated to **JustMap**, mapping community assets across London and based on the work carried out so far by Nicolas Fonty, who gathered data on community assets via public workshops in neighbourhood festivals and specific community events across London. The **resources** will consist of **planning material** useful to community groups and possibly the **Assets of Community Value App** developed by Toby Laurent Belson and Marco Picardi (Westway 23). This app is a very interesting project, which will simplify the process of applying for assets of community value designation, making it easier for community groups which would like to protect the buildings they use.

Last but not least, there will be a section called “**What’s bubbling campaign-wise?**”, which aims at giving updates on live campaigns. A draft list was prepared by Santa Pedone and distributed during the meeting. The list is a work in progress and should be updated regularly to reflect the variety of campaigns across London. Any suggestions to improve and develop the list is welcome. (The list is attached to these minutes).

**Nicolas Fonty** presented JustMap, a mapping project which has the following objectives:

1. Make more community assets and related campaigns more visible
2. Share knowledge
3. Connect and build alliances

Nicolas identified 3 types of community assets which can be mapped:

1. Physical Assets: community centres, libraries and other facilities, markets, pubs with community life, spaces for venue or exhibitions, parks, playgrounds, local media, genuine affordable housing ...
4. Human Assets: organisations with positive impacts, community groups, charity groups, specific professional or individual ...
5. Activities Assets: (formal and informal) festival, sport meetings, barbecues parties, skateboarding, community gardening, street musicians, informal flea market ...

He also highlighted the need for being collaborative in order to create a common platform capable of aggregating the many existing datasets. With this objective in mind, he suggested the creation of a multidisciplinary working group, which can bring the JustMap project to life.

After this presentation, **Yvonne Field** kicked-started the discussion by highlighting that in order to bring this project to life, we also need to apply for funding and therefore a team of people need to look into the funding available from the GLA, Locality or other bodies. Crowdfunding is also another option.

**Stephen Hignell** was supportive of the project, but he highlighted that the maintenance of keeping such an enormous dataset up to date could be an enormous task. So he suggested to look closely at how all of the data from multiple sources will be collected and uploaded and also to how the dataset will be maintained so that it is kept up-to-date.

**Toby Laurent Belson** also showed support for JustMap. Drawing from his experience in developing the Assets of Community Value App, he argued that one of the challenges will be to make use of the potential of the social media platforms people use (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc.. ) and build a platform which interacts with these. He also highlighted that funding-wise, it will be important to specify how we treat the data collected.

**Rastko Novakovic** stressed out the need for the platform and the map to be accessible and used by everyone. On this note **Max Boucher** raised a concern about inclusion and the need to reach out to groups not usually involved in the planning process.

There was general agreement that a mixture of funding is needed and that someone should look into it and make applications.

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## Dissertation on coalition building - presentation

**Barbara Lipietz** presented the results of a MSc dissertation on *Social Mobilisation and Accommodating Diversity - A negotiation between commonality and difference* by UCL student **Mya Goschalk**. The dissertation was requested by Just Space to help us consider how social movements can achieve both a wide participation and a common agenda that enables things to get done. Some case studies – World Social Forum, Southall Black Sisters and the student movement in Mexico City – were used to show the negotiation that is needed between social justice goals and socially just processes.

This work was presented with the aim of shedding light on the difficult task of building an RoS coalition. A summary is being prepared for circulation. Whilst some participants welcomed the research and requested a copy, others wanted to ensure a practical rather than theory based approach.

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Establishing a relationship with the GLA as a coalition of different community groups, campaigns and organisations. What do we need?

To answer this question, **Richard Lee** (Just Space co-ordinator) started by presenting the work done since 2007, when Just Space was created to address the complete lack of community participation in the Examination in Public (EiP) of the London Plan. Richard explained the structure and development of Just Space (Fig. 1). He highlighted that one of the first achievements of Just Space was to occupy 1/3 of the seats at the London Plan hearings. However, this came at the end of the process and did not lead to fundamental changes to the London Plan.

Richard then introduced the latest Just Space publication *Towards a Community-Led Plan for London*, which aims to exert pressure on the Mayor and the GLA by influencing the formulation of the next London Plan from the start.

Just Space thinks that the Mayor should enter into a Social Compact with Londoners agreeing to a programme of effective, meaningful and continuous engagement that enables all Londoners to work with the Mayor and officers in a spirit of cooperation and in co-production of the new London Plan and its related strategies. **Just Participation** had been formed to enable Just Space to bring together a much wider and broader range of groups to influence all parts of the GLA. Just Space had provided some limited funds for **Just Participation** activity which is being used to administer and co-ordinate the RoS coalition. Other resources were also needed.

Richard went through JS policy proposals on Lifetime neighbourhood and Community Infrastructure;. In particular, he spelled out the proposals aimed at protecting community assets and guaranteeing the affordability of community floor space. Richard asked if the RoS agreed to adopt the Just Space proposals on community infrastructure as a starting point to present to the Mayor.

Everyone agreed. However, it was highlighted that they should be viewed as a work in progress, which could include other aspects that go beyond planning policy.

**JUST SPACE  
ORGANISATIONAL  
CHART**

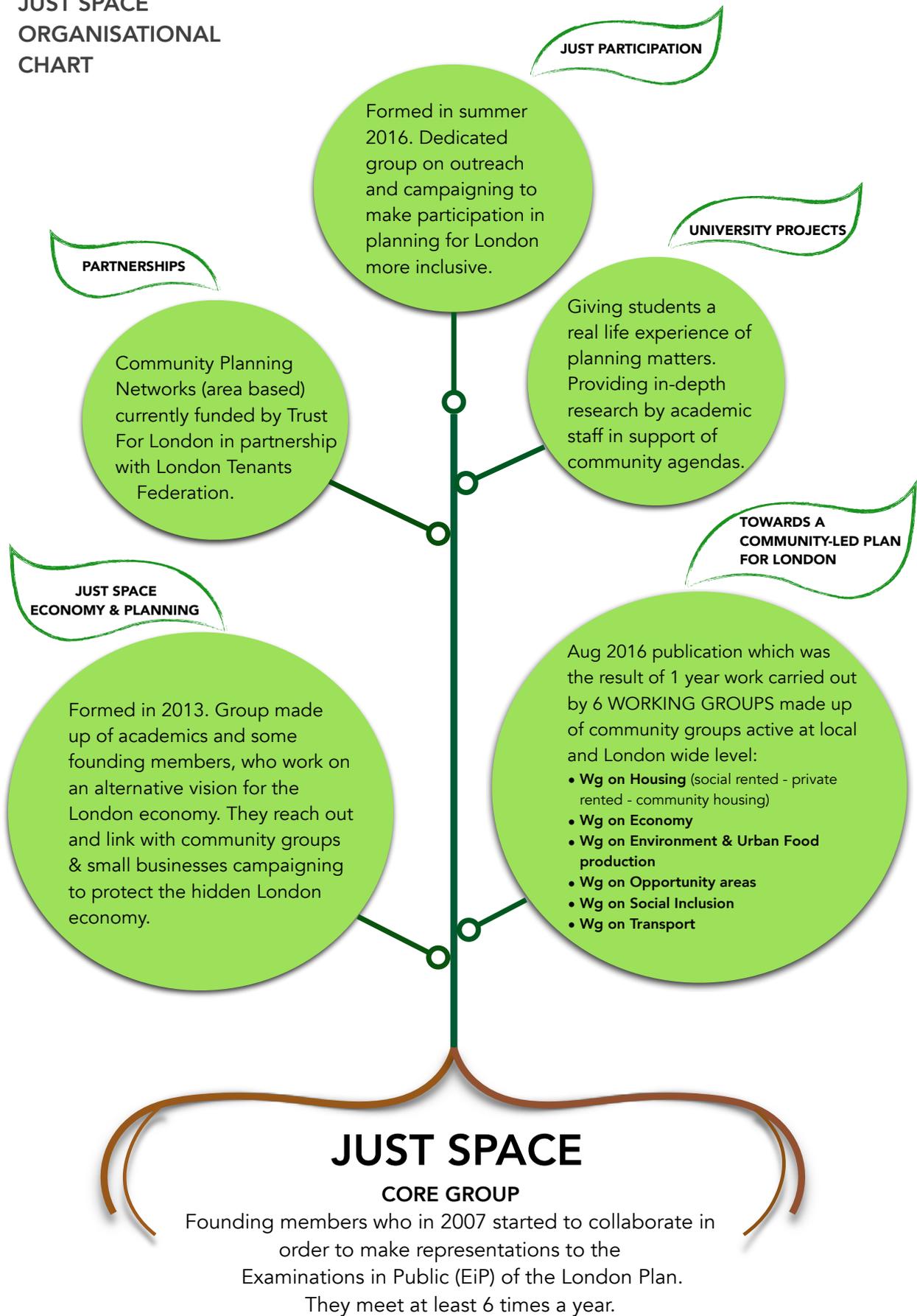


Fig. 1

In particular, **Toby L.B.** pointed out that “Stop and search policing” and how this practice impacts on gentrified areas should also be investigated and included in a community-led plan for London. **Rastko Novakovic** suggested that the Anti-raids Network has developed some knowledge of this impact and could be involved. **Paul Richards** showed support to Just Space work and agreed that it is a good idea to include policing in the future work carried out on a community-led plan for London.

**Mama D.** suggested that education facilities should also be mentioned and taken into account in the community infrastructure chapter of Just Space publication.

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17 Oct 2016 - GLA Planning Committee meeting -

Richard Lee informs everyone that Just Space had started meeting London Assembly Members at the GLA to promote the Community Led Plan. One issue that had come up was for the need for a wide range of groups in Just Space to be more visible to the GLA. On **Monday 17 Oct**, the GLA Planning Committee will meet from 10am to 12am. The London Plan might be discussed and this meeting would be an opportunity for Just Space and Reclaim Our Spaces to show our presence - many people showed interest in attending this meeting. **Santa Pedone** will send an email to the entire RoS mailing list with details about the meeting. **Toby L.B.** suggested that we should think of a visual way to make the coalition visible during the meeting. It was suggested that he could maybe prepare a banner.

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Arranging a meeting with the the first-ever deputy mayor for social integration, social mobility and community engagement - Matthew Ryder.

Everyone agreed that it is important for the RoS coalition to arrange a meeting with Matthew Ryder. We will try to organise a meeting with him for **November 2016**. This could be at City Hall, but even better if Matthew Ryder came to meet all of RoS at a community venue. **Ilinca Diaconescu** suggested that we could organise a guided walk around different community venues that are under threat.

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## 12-13 Nov 2016 - 'Land for What?' Conference - Updates

**Mama D.** gave an update on the ‘**Land for What?**’ conference, which will run on **Sat 12th and Sun 13th November** at Resource for London (Holloway road, London). The conference has been hosted by Community Food Growers Network, Just Space, Landworkers’ Alliance, London Quaker Housing, New Economics Foundation, Radical Housing Network, Shared Assets, London Community Neighbourhood Co-operative, Three Acres And A Cow and The Ubele Initiative.

The event will focus on land rights, ownership and usage as a common issue which has the potential to unite many different struggles and a wide range of people. The conference has its own website at [www.landforwhat.org.uk](http://www.landforwhat.org.uk).

She also asked if the RoS coalition will be able to contribute to the conference.

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## Wrap-up and summary of action points agreed for next steps

### Action points

- Agreement on developing an RoS online platform will require the setting up of a dedicated working group. **Santa Pedone** will send an email to the wider list asking who would be interested. **Nicolas Fonty** kindly offered to organise the working group. **Toby L.B.** and **Wilfried Rimensberger** expressed an interested in being part of the working group.
- Developing clear and specific guidance **on what we mean by meaningful and effective participation**, furthering the work already done in the Just Space publication. Next Steps TBC.
- GLA Planning Committee meeting on **Monday 17 October 10-12am, City Hall**. **Santa Pedone** will send an email asking who is interested in participating.
- Meeting to be arranged with Matthew Ryder. Next Steps TBC.
- Next meeting of RoS is due in about 6 weeks time (November) and will involve deeper conversations about what each group wants from RoS and what they can contribute. An offer of a venue for hosting the meeting is being sought.

## LIVE CAMPAIGNS (Draft list) ABOUT RECLAIMING COMMUNITY SPACES

### STREET MARKETS & INDEPENDENT SHOPPING PARADES

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- **Save Brixton Arches** [<http://www.savebrixtonarches.com/>]

Around 30 local businesses are under threat of being evicted by Network Rail as part of a wide redevelopment of Brixton. Many of these independent traders have been based in Brixton's Arches for over 40 years and are part of the very fabric of what makes Brixton. Save Brixton Arches aims to support the local community and independent traders fight to protect Brixton Arches.

- **Wards Corner Market** [<https://wardscorner.wikispaces.com/> ; <https://n15developmenttrust.wordpress.com/> ]

The Wards Corner Community Coalition (WCC) is a grassroots organisation working to stop the demolition of the homes, businesses and indoor market above Seven Sisters tube station and fighting the attempts of Grainger PLC to force out the local community.

- **Berwick Street Market** [ [@BerW1ckStMarket](#) ; <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/keep-berwick-street-market-independent> ]

Berwick Street Market has been independent for 300 years yet Westminster City Council has decided to privatise it with barely any consultation. Private operators are already in the tender process and traders' licences have been terminated without warning. This campaign is opposing the privatisation of Berwick street market.

- **Save Chrisp Street Market** [ [@SaveChrispSt](#) ; <http://www.chrispstreet.org.uk/> ]

Fighting the gentrification and social cleansing of Chrisp Street Market.

- **Friends of Queen's Market** [[@FoQMarket](#); <http://www.friendsofqueensmarket.org.uk/>]

Friends of Queen's Market (FoQM) is a campaigning community group dedicated to protecting and promoting Queen's Market in Newham as a community resource.

- **Latin Elephant** [[@LatinElephant](#); <http://latinelephant.org/>]

Promoting participation, engagement & inclusion of Migrant and Ethnic groups in processes of urban change in London, in particular Latin Americans. They primarily active in the Elephant & Castle area.

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## GREEN SPACES

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- **Save Crown Close Open Space & Children's Play Areas** - Save West Hampstead [<https://savewesthampstead.wordpress.com/>]

Save West Hampstead "Stop the Blocks!" is requesting that Camden Council commission a fully independent lighting study based on the proposals for 156 West End Lane.

- **Westway23** [<http://www.westway23.org/>; @westway23; <https://www.facebook.com/groups/westway23/>]

Local group campaigning to protect the 23 acres of land under Westway, the elevated motorway which was built between 1964 and 1970, and ensure its continued public use.

- **Save Haggerston Park** [@SaveHaggPark; Save Haggerston Park Facebook page]  
A group of residents campaigning to stop Hackney Council plans to build on parkland in Haggerston.

- **Old Tidemill Garden (Deptford)** [@OldTidemillgrdn; [https://m.facebook.com/events/304747433227850?context=%7B%22ref%22%3A%22%22%2C%22action\\_history%22%3A%22null%22%7D&aref=3&ref=page\\_internal](https://m.facebook.com/events/304747433227850?context=%7B%22ref%22%3A%22%22%2C%22action_history%22%3A%22null%22%7D&aref=3&ref=page_internal)]

Local residents fighting against the demolition of this well loved community-run garden in Deptford.

- **Save Lea Marshes** [<http://www.saveleamarshes.org.uk/> ; @SaveLeaMarshes]

A group of individuals who are campaigning to ensure that all the Lower Lea Valley marshes – Tottenham Marsh, Walthamstow Marsh, Leyton Marsh and Hackney Marshes – remain open and green.

- **Save Battersea Park – Say No to Formula E** [<http://savebatterseapark.com/> ; @SaveBattPark]

- **Save Camberwell Cems** [@SouthwarkWoods; [savesouthwarkwoods@gmail.com](mailto:savesouthwarkwoods@gmail.com)]  
Fighting to save Camberwell cemeteries from grave 're-use' deforestation.

## LIBRARIES

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- **The Feminist Library** – Finding a new home [<http://feministlibrary.co.uk/support/emergencyfund/> ; <http://feministlibrary.co.uk/>]

In 2015 the Feminist Library celebrated 40 years of archiving and activism. But the future is uncertain – due to unsustainable rent increases the building that has been this library home for the past 30 years is no longer viable.

- **Save Lambeth Libraries** (Carnegie; Minet; Waterloo; Upper Norwood)

[<http://defendthe10-lambeth.org.uk/> ; @SaveLambthLibs ; @SaveWaterlooLib ; @save-UNlibrary]

In October 2015 Lambeth Council has announced it will decommission half of its libraries. Minet, South Lambeth, Durning, Upper Norwood, Carnegie and Waterloo all might close. This campaign is resisting these plans.

- **Save North Kensington Library** [<https://www.change.org/p/royal-borough-of-kensington-and-chelsea-council-save-north-kensington-library-for-public-use>]

The council is planning to close this historic building on Ladbroke Grove and allow a private prep school to take it over. Campaigners call on the Council to keep North Kensington Library building on Ladbroke Grove in public use.

- **Save Marcus Garvey Library** (Tottenham) [friendsofmgl@gmail.com ; <https://www.change.org/p/tell-haringey-council-to-save-tottenham-s-marcus-garvey-library>; <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1527639460848841/?fref=nf>]

## COMMUNITY CENTRES

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- **Haringey Community Centres Network** [<http://ourtottenham.org.uk/haringey-community-centres-network/>; Contact HCCN c/o [info@communitybuilders.org.uk](mailto:info@communitybuilders.org.uk)]

Standing up for Haringey's community-run Community Centres of all kinds, linking up and supporting each other throughout the sector, and celebrating the widespread and vital range of services and activities carried out on behalf of a diverse community.

- **Save 365 Community Centre** (Brixton) [<https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/save-365-community-centre-2?bucket=membblast>]

## OTHER PUBLIC SPACES

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- **Save Britannia Leisure Centre** [@save\_britannia ; Save Britannia Leisure Centre Facebook group; <https://goo.gl/y45vcf>]

A group of Hackney residents who are campaigning to stop Hackney Council demolishing Britannia Leisure Centre.

- **Granville Plus Centre** [@GranvilleComKitchen; <https://granvillecommunitykitchen.wordpress.com/>]

Brent Youth Arts building until 31 March 2016 when the Brent youth service was cut.

The Otherwise Club and Granville Community Kitchen, have been tenants in the building for nearly 24 years. They have recently been emailed saying that they have to leave

at the end of the month because there is no fire warden for the building. The building is listed as a community asset.

- **Save Peckham Arch** [@SavePeckhamArch]
- **Save Grove Park Youth Club** [<https://www.facebook.com/savegroveparkyouthclub/>; <https://www.change.org/p/clive-efford-save-grove-park-youth-club-from-demolition>; @savegpyouthclub]  
Save Grove Park Youth Club is a collective of concerned people who are calling for the local authority owned youth club building on Marvels Lane SE12 to be saved from demolition. They are campaigning to save the building and its use primarily for a Youth Service provision and other community based opportunities.
- **Save Curzon cinema (Soho)** [<http://www.curzonblog.com/savecurzonsoho/> ; <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/save-the-curzon-soho>]  
Curzon Soho is an independent cinema in London and has recently been declared a 'surface of interest' by Transport for London, meaning that the much loved cinema could be destroyed to make way for Crossrail 2 developments.
- **Reclaim Queen's Crescent** [@QueensCres ; Reclaim Queen's Crescent Facebook page]  
Local residents demand a community fit for people, with community/youth facilities, a revived street market and workspaces to boost the area's economy.

## MUSIC VENUES & PUBS

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- **RVT Future – Future of Royal Vauxhall Tavern** [<http://www.rvt.community/>]  
Ensuring a thriving future for the UK's oldest LGBTQ pub and iconic performance space.
- **We Are The Black Cap** [@weareblackcap ; <http://www.weareblackcap.com/>]  
Campaign to reopen a well known and iconic LGBTQ performance space in Camden.
- **Save the Gladstone (Pub)** [@SaveTheGlad ; [www.facebook.com/savethegladstone](http://www.facebook.com/savethegladstone)]
- **Save Passing Clouds** [@passingclouds ; [www.passingclouds.org](http://www.passingclouds.org) ]  
Campaign to save this popular Hackney music venue from redevelopment.
- **Save the Queen's Head** [Save The Queens Head Facebook page; <https://www.facebook.com/savethequeensheadchelsea/?fref=ts>]  
An LGBTQ pub under threat of closure in Chelsea due to astronomical rent hikes.

- **Friends of Joiners Arms** [<https://www.facebook.com/Friends-of-the-Joiners-Arms-859212550775984/>]  
LGBTQ pub under threat of closure.
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**Other useful directories could be the following:**  
(for housing and economy activists)

INDUSTRIAL & CREATIVE SPACE UNDER THREAT

COUNCIL ESTATES & COMMUNITY LAND TRUST