Ealing Citizens alliance wins change

Ealing Citizens is a Borough alliance of Citizens UK in West London. Its aim is to bring different civic society organisations together to organise and act for the common good. In just over a year, Ealing Citizens has made great strides and is growing in both strength and membership.

Who we are
Like all Citizens chapters, we build power by uniting people around common issues or concerns. We recognise that real change can only be achieved when community-rooted organisations pool resources and learn the art of public action: building enough power to oblige the state and the market to respond to the needs of ordinary people, while also leading on the issues which are the responsibility of civil society.

Hence, our alliance is made up of dues-paying institutions from a range of local faith, school and community organisations such as Christ the Saviour, St Barnabas, St Anslems, William Perkin High School, Northolt High School, Acton Mosque and Monster Cat Theatre Co. Our work is supported by Daniel Macintosh, a Citizens UK Community Organiser.

Our housing campaign
In 2016 our institutions embarked on a listening campaign, listening to hundreds of people in Ealing to find out what they care about, what concerns and affects them. Everywhere we went people were talking about housing. People are concerned about how much it costs to rent, how much it costs to buy. They’re worried about whether their children will be able to live near them, whether increasing rents will force them out of London. Many people are struggling to get by in flats which are barely fit to be considered a home, while watching the construction of new flats on their doorstep which they know they will never be able to afford.

Pledges and change won
Having listened to our communities we agreed on our top housing priorities and began preparing for a housing accountability assembly ahead of the May 2018 local elections. Over 200 of our members attended and we negotiated our asks with the candidates for leader of Ealing Council. Together we won the following commitments:

Renters Rights and Rogue Landlords
- Introduce and publicise a private renters charter to help tenants in the private rental sector understand their rights and obligations.
- Fund and run renters rights community workshops, where tenants can drop-in for advice on their housing problems.
- Extend the selective licensing scheme, with robust enforcement so that rogue landlords are required to improve or leave the market.

Community Land Trust
- Work with Ealing Citizens and London Community Land Trust to identify a viable site to develop 50 Community Land Trust homes.

We are proud that by Ealing Citizens holding Ealing Council to account, we ensure that they have delivered on these housing pledges.

To continue do this, and campaign on other important issues that affect out communities we need to grow the power of our alliance and develop more community leaders who are engaged in public life.

Our plans for the future
At this exciting time for our alliance, we are continuing to recruit, and are keen to welcome faith institutions, schools (primary & secondary) and local charities. If your institution wants to join us make our community stronger, please don’t hesitate to get in touch with our Ealing organiser Daniel Mackintosh daniel.mackintosh@citizensuk.org
We would love to hear from you.
MORE than 60 Ealing community leaders held a candle-lit advent procession from Christ the Saviour church, Ealing Broadway, to St Barnabas in Pitshanger.

It comes after years of campaigning by Ealing Citizens for affordable housing to be built in the borough, specifically in Central Ealing and Acton.

The campaign received a boost when the three main prospective Parliamentary candidates for Ealing Central and Acton, Rupa Huq (Labour), Julian Gallant (Conservatives) and Sonul Badiani (Liberal Democrats) all pledged their support for the Affordable Housing Campaign.

The work of Ealing Citizens and the Affordable Housing Campaign is an example of community activism bringing about meaningful change.

For three years, members of faith and community groups have worked together with the council developing a plan for 50 permanently affordable homes on a site in central Ealing.

By working with the London Community Land Trust, people from Ealing are at the heart of the project.

Last year, at a local election housing assembly, the leader of Ealing Council, Cllr Julian Bell, committed to working with Ealing Citizens to build 50 Community Land Trust homes in central Ealing.

The council is now close to providing a site. The candle-lit procession was followed by a celebration, in which many churches, faith institutions and others gathered for an advent service led by the Bishop of London, the Rt Rev Sarah Mullaly.

Jackie Ashmenall, of Christ the Saviour, said: “Time and time again, we hear of families having to leave their communities, struggle with squalid living conditions and chronic overcrowding. Poor housing is bad for families and bad for society.”

Fr Justin Dodd, parish priest at St Barnabas, added: “Adult children are still at home with parents, when they should be making homes of their own. For communities to flourish, people need to be able to put down roots and have real homes.”
Ealing Citizens and London Community Land Trust are working with Ealing Council to build the Borough’s first Community Land Trust (CLTs) homes.

The campaign has been led from the start by local residents fed up of seeing local people being priced out of the neighbourhood they call home.

CLTs are a way of providing permanently affordable homes that are owned and run by local people. We’re now talking with Ealing Council about a large site and this is a fantastic opportunity to bring community vision to the project from the outset.

Active engagement from local people is the first step in ensuring the site is community led. We need your help as neighbours to participate in decisions as we move forward. Look out for updates on our progress and news about CLT workshops and other events.

CLT homes are *genuinely* affordable, not just for the first buyer but for generations to come

The price of homes is set according to local incomes

All the homes will be set aside for Ealing Borough residents in housing need with a connection to the local community

For more information and questions?
Contact:
Claire Meggitt CTS
EalingCLTHomes@gmail.com
www.londonclt.org
Love your neighbour as yourself is the great teaching – but how do we get our teeth into it? Jesus tells us in the gospel that we shall be judged by what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters – for the homeless, the sick, those in prison, the stranger.

He calls us to “hunger and thirst for justice”, to be “peacemakers” and to show by our deeds of love and justice that the Gospel we proclaim at Sunday Mass is fulfilled in our actions.

So how do we represent the values of Jesus and the Church in the world about us? How do we put this teaching into practice in everyday life in the communities in which we live?

**West London Citizens** offers a very good and practical way of doing that. Saint Anselm’s Parish in Southall is a founding member of West London Citizens and has been actively involved with citizens for over 15 years. It is a people’s organisation. It is about communities working together for the common good.

Many of our parishioners are low paid workers at Heathrow Airport struggling for survival, to make ends meet and to pay very high rents. Recently after a long Citizens UK campaign and with the strong support of our neighbours, particularly friends from the parish of Christ the Saviour on Ealing Broadway, we managed to persuade the airport authorities to become a Living Wage employer. As a result at least 3,200 workers at the airport will be receiving a pay rise of almost £3 an hour. This makes a huge difference to those workers and their families.

It was, therefore, very good to visit Christ the Saviour and lend our support to the Ealing Citizens campaign for affordable housing in central Ealing and particularly the establishment of 50 Community Land Trust (CLT) homes, which will ensure that the price of these homes is permanently connected to local incomes, rather than the market. Like people in our wider parish, many of the congregation of Christ the Saviour experience significant difficulties with housing. These are some of the difficulties that people describe: “My landlord wants to raise my rent to a level I can’t afford on an NHS salary. My son and I face being evicted from our home.”

“There’s been a rise in rough sleeping around the church. During the recent cold weather, it was extremely difficult for those living on Ealing’s streets.”

“We’ve seen parishioners in inadequate and unsafe housing with young children. How can children feel secure when their housing situation is precarious?”

“Though I’m a Londoner born and bred, I know I’ll never be able to own my flat. How can I save for a large deposit when the cost of living in London is so high?”

These stories are why we assembled with other member communities in the new Christ the Saviour’s community hub and challenged Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat prospective parliamentary candidates to sign our Housing Pledge to work with Ealing Citizens to build 50 CLT homes. I am delighted to say we got backing from all three political parties.

From the hub we went in candlelit procession to St Barnabas Church of England where we were greeted at the church the door by Bishop Sarah Mullally, Bishop of London, who received the Pledge. There then followed an Advent Procession with Carols during which Helen Willely, a member of the St Barnabas parish, gave a reflection on her experience of homelessness and precarious housing.

The service spoke to us of Advent as a season in which we joyfully wait for the birth of Jesus even as we recognise the brokenness of our humanity and the suffering of the world into which the Messiah comes as a fragile baby. Our deep longing for the love of God made human in Christ and sent to heal, restore and save us, was expressed in the readings, carols and choral music.

“Drop down ye heavens from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness.”
5 reasons why I am glad we as a Mosque joined Ealing Citizens
Aizad Hussain, Treasurer of Acton Mosque

1. To build our Mosque through developing leaders.

Community Organising is about training individuals and institutions to facilitate change. Back in November I heard of a local Citizens campaign winning 50 permanently affordable homes for their neighbourhood. It was a diverse team of local people. After years of campaigning, it would have been easy for them to give up, but they kept on going and now they have won! This success is inspiring - it builds belief that things can change and in turn build leaders.

2. To see the ‘World as it should be’

In Citizens we talk about the ‘world as it is’ and the ‘world as it should be’. Our members face ‘the world as it is’, inadequate housing, hate crime, low wages and our young people have to navigate escalating street violence. Citizens in Ealing are organising around these issues – listening to people’s concerns, doing research and taking action. The world becomes a little more as it should be when we act together.

3. To cross cultural boundaries and connect meaningfully

Much of interfaith gatherings seem to be just tea and politeness. But Ealing Citizens opened my eyes to new possibilities. Community Organising is about focussing on what we are jointly concerned about. At the same time if you are person of faith you don’t leave that at the door – you bring your whole self with you. So, Muslims, Jews, Christians, school leaders, university academics, work together for justice. The relationship of trust and support formed in Citizens have won Living Wage commitments from Ealing Council and Heathrow Airport, secured permanently affordable housing, welcomed refugees and formed the backbone of our borough leadership group that has held our local politicians to account. A lot of tea has been drunk but with tangible results.

4. It’s so relational

Community organising is about relationships. Citizens UK training argues that the world can change through its core practice of 121 conversation. In a world that is less and less about personal contact and more and more about virtual connections, 121 meetings are invaluable. We tend to shout at each together from a distance changing the world little and changing us for the worse. At the start of each Ealing Citizens meeting we begin with a ‘rounds’ question – I was sceptical at first but soon realised the value of this – the meetings are better for it because we share what is important to each other from the beginning. It shows the power and the humanity of conversation.

5. Because it’s fun!

It’s difficult to convey on paper but there are so many things I have enjoyed. I enjoy working with the leadership team, building relationships and the learning experience involved in all this. I also enjoy celebrating the positive outcomes and am excited to be working with our Council to deliver the first CLT homes in Ealing. I also am look forward to building our power by increasing the number of membership institutions.
DO YOU WANT TO BE PART OF BUILDING EALING CITIZENS?

If your organisation is outward-focused, wants to work with different people and win change for the common good, please join us to learn about community organising and our plans to for Ealing Citizens. This organisation will enable local people to decide, define and build campaigns around the issues we can’t change by acting alone. Join us to hear stories of the social justice campaigns we have won and our future plans.

Details:
Tuesday 31 March 2020, The Community Hub, Dickens Yard, Christ the Saviour, Ealing, 19:00 - 20:30

Contact: Daniel Mackintosh, Senior Organiser Citizens UK
@mckdnl
Daniel.mackintosh@citizensuk.org
https://www.citizensuk.org/
How does community organising work?

Community organising starts with the recognition that real change can only be achieved when community-rooted organisations pool resources and learn the art of public action – building enough power to oblige the State and the Market to consider and respond to the real needs of ordinary people whilst also leading the way ourselves on the issues and good practices which are the responsibility of Civil Society.

Community organising uses a cyclical process to bring about positive change:

In order to be as effective as possible, we are committed to providing training to all our leaders. In the last 30 years, Citizens UK has trained more than 7,000 community leaders in community organising and leadership techniques and built strong and permanent relationships of trust between diverse organisations. Through this training and by putting it into public action, Citizens UK has given citizens the confidence to participate in public life for the good of their institution and communities as well as to enhance the safe and peaceful governance of the UK, their nation, region, city, town and neighbourhood.

Fundamental to a strong community organisation is ownership, independence, and accountability. By far the best way of achieving this is by raising membership dues. Citizens UK has different levels of membership dues. The level of dues is set by the local Leadership Groups each year. Citizens UK Chapters have a policy of not taking public funding for core organising work.

To learn more about community organising and our power to create change, check out the Citizens UK video ‘What is Community Organising’ at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddBjb-xRPOk
SAVE THE DATE:
The Assembly will take place on 21st April 2020 at 6pm
at the Copper Box Arena, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park,
E20 3HB

London Citizens will be travelling to this event as a group, do let us know if you want to join us, or you can travel independently. Tickets are free.

- London Citizens holds its 6th Mayoral Accountability Assembly
- 6,000 Londoners, the biggest ever Citizens UK Assembly and the largest event in London Mayoral history
- A celebration of diversity and democracy
- Hear the Citizens’ Manifesto for London, focusing on how to tackle housing, youth safety, climate change, welcome and wages.
- We will be securing public commitments from the Mayoral candidates and a relationship with the next Mayor

For more information contact your turnout captains