

## Citizens to set their own agenda - 31<sup>st</sup> Jan

### Welcome to our first newsletter!

This comes just in time for the Delegates' Assembly when members of West London Citizens will vote to adopt their first campaigns and set the agenda of WLC for the year ahead. We have been preparing for this exciting night for 18 months.

Each member of WLC is invited to have 10 to 15 delegates present on 31<sup>st</sup>. After debating the various campaign proposals before the assembly they will then vote as one unit.

All the proposals have emerged from issues identified through our Listening Campaign, launched on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2005 when 400 people from West London Citizens met at St Columba's Hall. At this stage West London Citizens cannot practically take on every proposal so we need to make a careful selection and prioritisation.

The event takes place from 7.30pm-9.15pm on 31<sup>st</sup> Jan

in **Acton Town Hall**, High Street, W3. See back page for a map.

### 21<sup>st</sup> January Policy Day

A day of preparation for the Delegates Assembly is taking place on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> Jan, from 10am-3pm at the Maria Assumpta Centre, 23 Kensington Square, W8. Policy experts and academics who specialise in issues raised during the Listening Campaign (e.g. planning, employment, and environment) are coming to run workshops and to support us as we construct winnable and specific campaign proposals.

Anyone who wants to contribute to shaping what goes before the membership on 31<sup>st</sup> Jan is very welcome on 21<sup>st</sup>.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> members will look at how to organise the voting process on the 31<sup>st</sup>. We want a process which gives everyone's issues a chance of being worked on, but which does not overload us.



*Dilbagh Singh Chana of Ramgarhia Sabha Gurdwara in Southall*

## CITIZENS WEBSITES RELAUNCHED

Look out for our new family of CITIZENS websites. They are full of helpful information about events, campaigns, training, press coverage, and publications. There are pictures and details of our organising team and history.

We still believe passionately in face-to-face community organising but the website is a helpful tool. If you can, please use it!

[www.londoncitizens.org.uk](http://www.londoncitizens.org.uk)  
[www.westlondoncitizens.org.uk](http://www.westlondoncitizens.org.uk)  
[www.southlondoncitizens.org.uk](http://www.southlondoncitizens.org.uk)  
[www.telcocitizens.org.uk](http://www.telcocitizens.org.uk)  
[www.livingwage.org.uk](http://www.livingwage.org.uk)  
[www.cof.org.uk](http://www.cof.org.uk)

### FOR YOUR DIARY

Time and Date:	Event:	Venues:
10am - 3.30 pm Saturday 21 <sup>st</sup> Jan	<b>West London Citizens Preparation Day for Delegates Assembly</b>	<b>Maria Assumpta Centre</b> , 23 Kensington Square, W8 5HH
7.30 - 9.15 pm Tuesday 31 <sup>st</sup> Jan	<b>West London Citizens DELEGATES ASSEMBLY</b>	<b>Acton Town Hall</b> , High Street, W3 6NE
7.30 - 9.15 pm Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup> Feb	<b>West London Citizens Strategy Team Meeting</b>	<b>Venue to be confirmed</b> See the website at <a href="http://www.westlondoncitizens.org.uk">www.westlondoncitizens.org.uk</a>
9:15am-6:00pm Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> Feb 9:15am-4:30pm Saturday 18 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Community Leadership Training</b>	<b>Transport House</b> 128 Theobalds Road, Holborn WC1X 8TN

## Your Listening Campaign

People have worked hard and been very creative with the West London Citizens Listening Campaign, and this became obvious when feedback and results were offered by members at well attended meetings in each of our three boroughs. Ashley Willis at Cardinal Wiseman School in Greenford gave an impressive PowerPoint presentation on the results of a survey of parents. This revealed a wide range of concerns but litter and environmental problems featured very highly, as it did for member communities in Southall.

A detailed report back was offered by members of the Servite parish in Fulham Road, who have met regularly throughout the Listening Campaign period and been a model of good organisation. Amongst other issues raised was the new Academy being proposed for Lots Road in Chelsea.

Shane Mitchell, Economics teacher at St Charles Sixth Form in Ladbrooke Grove, also gave a strong report of offering voter registration and transport costs as areas of particular interest to students.

Catherine Howarth has carefully recorded all the results from every member organisation, and will present these on 21<sup>st</sup> January at our Policy Day when the final campaign proposals for 31<sup>st</sup> will be fine-tuned.

## Don't lose your right to vote!

On 4th May 2006, Londoners go to the poll to elect councillors in every borough. Well, that's Londoners who are registered. London has the lowest levels of voter registration in the UK, with up to a fifth of eligible voters not on the register. This is a huge "democratic deficit". Young people, people living in rented accommodations and ethnic minority communities are particularly likely to miss out.

St Charles Sixth Form College in Ladbrooke Grove is ready to get active on this, and is proposing to other West London Citizens members that we all use our community networks and trained leaders to get local people registered by 13th March, and using our votes in May. The May 2006 elections will be the first opportunity for West London Citizens members to take their local priorities to candidates. How we do so will be discussed by members on 31st Jan.

## Leadership Training in 2006

Last year a record number of people - over 150 - attended our Community Leadership Training. We hope to break this record in 2006. People who attend are inspired by the experience, as well as having a huge amount of fun. In the words of one recent trainee, "*We learnt about POWER, and who has power; pressure groups, what makes the world tick, and how to use this knowledge to change it. And all in 2 days. What more could you ask for?*".

The training is focused on building relationships for the future with people from other member organisations, learning about the art of negotiation, how to develop a culture of relationships, and thinking honestly about self-interest and power. Without a steady stream of new faces coming on this training, London Citizens will not be able to affect change for the common good. People is our power!

The next training is on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2006 at Transport House in Holborn. Details and application forms are available from the office (0207 375 1658) and can be downloaded from the website.



## London Citizens AGM

West Londoners attended their first AGM as full voting members of London Citizens on 6<sup>th</sup> December. Eleven member organisations of WLC were represented. Cecilia Finn, Chaplain at Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School, was presented by Neil Jameson with a *Founders' Award* in recognition of the beautiful banners (see photo) she designed and made not only for WLC's first assembly but for TELCO's first assembly over nine years ago. Minutes of the AGM and our 2004/5 Annual Report and Accounts can be found on [www.londoncitizens.org.uk/](http://www.londoncitizens.org.uk/)



### SOUTH LONDON CITIZENS MONITORS LUNAR HOUSE

South London Citizens' year long enquiry into the service and facilities at Lunar House, the immigration processing centre in Croydon, led to a series of powerful recommendations for change. These can be found in their report, "A Humane Service for Global Citizens".

Lyn Homer, the Chief Executive of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate, attended South London Citizens assembly in November and agreed to meet regularly with a team of leaders from SLC who are monitoring changes in the service, and keeping the pressure on for change.

Members of West London Citizens who with an interest in the immigration service are very welcome to join SLC's monitoring team. Contact Jordan Estevao at the LC office on 0207 375 1658.



Mary Apragas of South London Citizens shows Lyn Homer, IND Director, the Citizens report on Lunar House

### Living Wage Campaign at Queen Mary University

Students, professors, and staff at Queen Mary University in East London are working with London Citizens members and with cleaners on the campus to persuade the Principal of the University, Adrian Smith, to ensure all support staff receive a London Living Wage of £6.70 an hour.

Having initially refused to meet, Principal Smith has now met with London Citizens leaders and admitted the moral case is overwhelming. He still maintains the cost is prohibitive, but has agreed to open up the books at Queen Mary so that a solution can be found. A strong campaign team is working on this effort. Contact: matthew.bolton@londoncitizens.org.uk.

### Queen's Market in East London

A much loved market in Newham providing cheap food and much else besides has been the subject of a TELCO (East London Citizens) enquiry. Thanks to TELCO's efforts, the original plans to replace the market with a two-storey ASDA have been significantly modified, accommodating many local concerns. In the process TELCO has built a far stronger relationship with Sir Robin Wales, Mayor of Newham.

## Friends of London Citizens

Membership of London Citizens, with full voting rights, is restricted to civil society organisations paying annual membership dues. However an increasing number of individuals have expressed an interest in supporting us as *Friends of London Citizens*. A new *Friends* scheme was launched at the AGM, and is being co-ordinated by Paul Regan, our chair of Trustees. Friends of London Citizens are asked to make a regular tax-efficient donation. They will be invited to events and assemblies, will receive newsletters and publications, and are encouraged to give us the benefit of support and expertise on campaigns.

Whether you belong to a member organisation or not, do please consider becoming a friend as funds are needed more than ever in 2006. Forms are on [www.londoncitizens.org.uk/donate.html](http://www.londoncitizens.org.uk/donate.html)



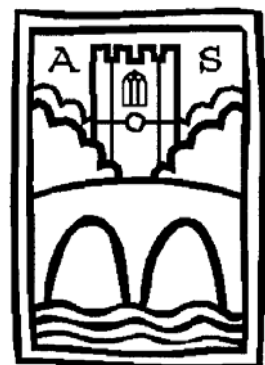
Abdulfatah Said Mohammed of Al Muntada Al Islami at West London Citizens Assembly

## CONTACT US

We are always keen to have feedback from YOU, our members, either about the current issue or with suggestions for inclusion in future issues. West London Citizens can be contacted through the London citizens Office at 112 Cavell Street, London E1 2JA, or by telephone on 020 7375 1658. Catherine Howarth is West London Citizens organiser.

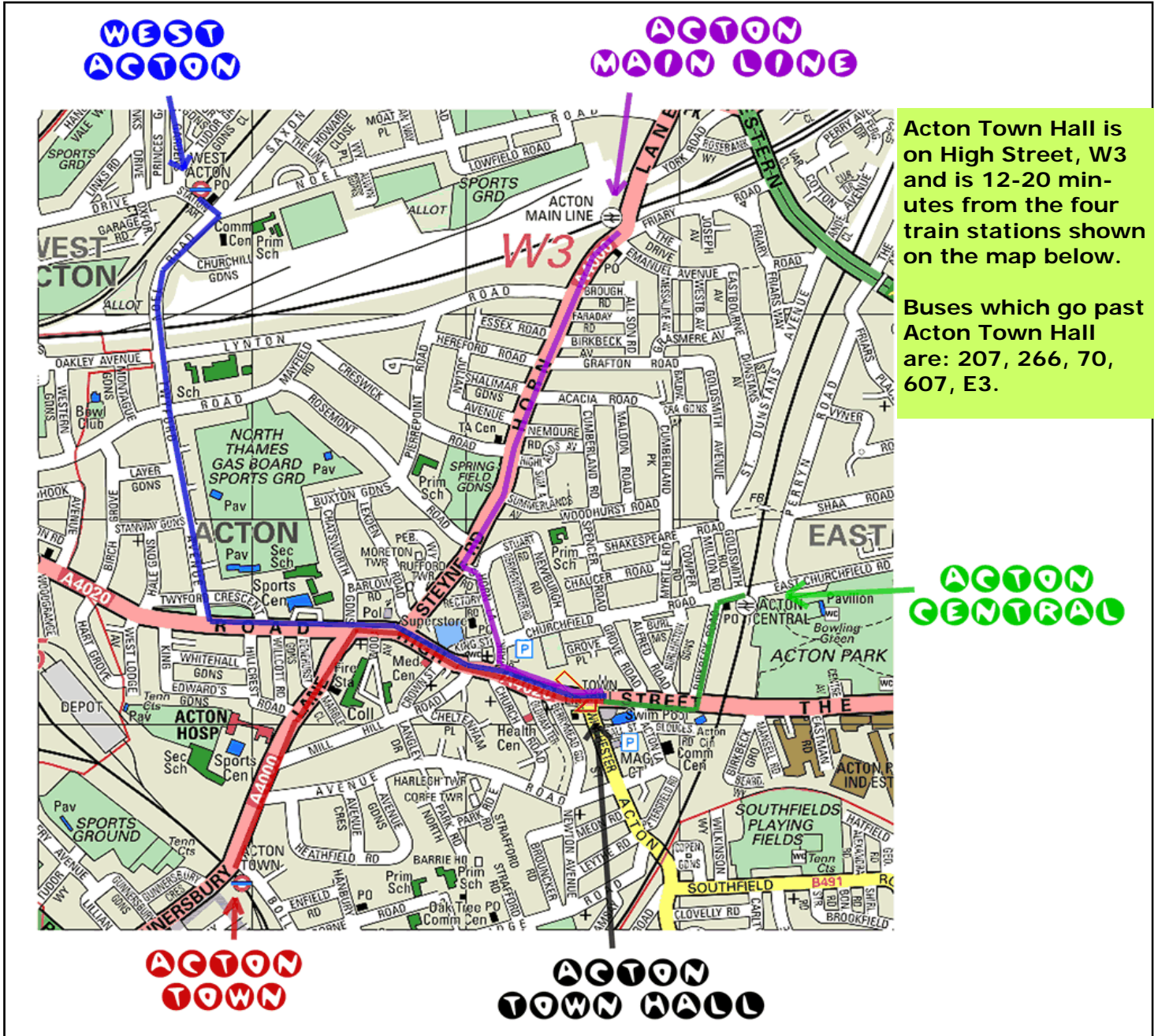
Her e-mail address is [catherine.howarth@londoncitizens.org.uk](mailto:catherine.howarth@londoncitizens.org.uk)

### All Saints Fulham Joins West London Citizens



The Parish Council of All Saints Fulham elected in November to join West London Citizens. They missed the first assembly but will be voting at the delegates assembly, along with all the other members, having paid their membership dues in December. They are hosting the Hammer-smith and Fulham CITIZENS meeting, and are already a valuable addition to our membership in Fulham.

## GETTING TO ACTON TOWN HALL ON 31st JANUARY



Acton Town Hall is on High Street, W3 and is 12-20 minutes from the four train stations shown on the map below.

Buses which go past Acton Town Hall are: 207, 266, 70, 607, E3.

### The Low Road

What can they do  
To you? Whatever they want.  
They can set you up, they can  
Bust you, they can break  
Your fingers, they can  
Burn your brain with electricity,  
Blur you with drugs till you  
Can't walk, can't remember, they can  
Take your child, wall up  
Your lover. They can do anything  
You can't stop them  
From doing. How can you stop  
Them? Alone, you can fight,  
You can refuse, you can  
Take what revenge you can  
But they roll over you.

But two people fighting  
Back to back can cut through  
A mob, a snake-dancing file  
Can break a cordon, an army  
Can meet an army.

Two people can keep each other  
Sane, can give support, conviction,  
Love, massage, hope, sex.  
Three people are a delegation,  
A committee, a wedge. With four  
You can play bridge and start  
An organisation. With six  
You can rent a whole house,  
Eat pie for dinner with no  
Seconds, and hold a fund-raising party.  
A dozen make a demonstration.  
A hundred fill a hall.

A thousand have solidarity  
and your own newsletter;  
Ten thousand, power and your own paper;  
A hundred thousand, your own media;  
Ten million, your own country.

It goes on one at a time,  
It starts when you care  
To act, it starts when you do  
It again after they said no,  
It starts when you say *We*  
And know who you mean, and each  
Day you mean one more.

**Marge Piercy**