

## May Day Extravaganza

By David Gardner

Over 2500 people from a multitude of nationalities gathered at Westminster Cathedral on 1<sup>st</sup> May to support a call for greater solidarity with low paid workers and migrants of all faiths.

West London CITIZENS members joined a vibrant procession into the Cathedral alongside a rainbow of ethnic chaplaincies, trade unions, and organisations promoting justice. The service was spoken in many different languages, and featured styles of music and praise from around the world. Many were moved to tears by the voices of the African singers.

Drawing on a long, if mixed, tradition of Catholic support for workers, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor invited the church in London to be active in resisting the exploitation of migrant workers, and he endorsed the need to "regularise" undocumented migrants. In closing remarks, Mgr

John Armitage, a long-time member of London Citizens, revealed that the Cardinal's chair was the very one used by Cardinal Manning in 1889 as he signed a deal to end the Great Dock Strike. "At the beginning of our campaign for a Living Wage, that chair was empty. Now, we are proud to say, it is occupied."

To the hip-swaying sounds of a Congolese band, people spilled out of the Cathedral and into a colourful Living Wage rally in the piazza outside. The Cardinal spoke again to endorse London Citizens, and was joined by Sir Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain; Rev. Dr. Nicholas Sagovsky, Canon Theological of Westminster Abbey; Bronwyn McKenna, Director of Organising for UNISON; and Jack Dromey, Deputy General Secretary of TGWU.

West London CITIZENS

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Members out in full force in the Cathedral Piazza on 1st May

## Local Elections Special

By Jamal Mannan

The Conservatives did exceptionally well in all three of our West London Citizens boroughs, taking Ealing and Hammersmith & Fulham, and strengthening their position in Kensington & Chelsea.

In the week before the local elections, our members met with the party leaders in all three boroughs, cementing a number of important agreements with the Conservative leaders who have now taken power. But it wasn't all easy.

The toughest of the West London assemblies was our first in **Kensington & Chelsea** where the Conservative Party has held power forever in the borough. At our assembly Cllr Merrick Cockell, the leader of the Conservatives, seemed quietly confident of another strong performance on 4<sup>th</sup> May. The incentive for him to respond enthusiastically to our proposals was limited and no firm commitments were made. Both Cllr Cockell and Cllr Cunningham, labour

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## 18th May ALERT

Our **major 'Go Public' assembly** has been in the planning for over a year.

The local meetings we've just held with party leaders have set us up well for a great night on 18th May.

The key attraction of the evening will be the **premiere of our short film** on the White City Shopping Centre development, putting West London Citizens case for 'economic justice' guarantees which secure real benefit for local people and their families. A representative of Westfield, the company behind the development, will be present to see the film and respond.

There will be a band, a drama presentation from students at Cardinal Wiseman, and a celebration of growing membership of West London Citizens.

We're still waiting for confirmation from **Livingstone's** office on whether he will come to announce the new Living Wage for London figure on 18th May.

The **newly elected leaders of our boroughs** will certainly be there to reconfirm their pledges to work with West London Citizens on the priorities which our communities have identified for action.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead (1901 - 1978)

WEST LONDON  
**CITIZENS**

## GO PUBLIC ASSEMBLY

**7.15pm for 7.30-9.00pm, Thursday, 18th May  
Hammersmith Assembly Hall, King's St W6**

closest tubes are **Ravenscourt Park** (District) and **Hammersmith** (District, Piccadilly, Hammersmith and City);  
Buses 27, 391, 366/267, 190;  
free car park available after 6.30pm in Nigel Playfair Avenue

"those who love peace must learn to organise as well as those who love war"  
Martin Luther King (1929-1869)

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**Ken & Chelsea Accountability Assembly**

leader commended us on our forward thinking plans and though no firm agreements were struck the event put WLC firmly in the minds of the two leaders. Both said the 18th of May was in their diaries. This will give us an opportunity to show them West London Citizen's full membership.

**Ealing** was next. The Assembly got off to a fantastic start with performances from students at Cardinal Wiseman School. First a thoroughly entertaining play on the benefits of recycling, with a couple of twitchy rats lamenting the shortage of food opportunities created when people recycle. Second, an uplifting song, 'Recycle, Reduce, Reuse', composed and performed by the 'Wise Waste' group.

Both performances helped to set the scene for our first proposal that the candidates adopt our 'Bin the Rats' Action Plan for Southall, put forward with great vigour by Angela Greenidge and backed by loud support from the whole room. Only the Lib Dem, Cllr Harvey Rose, signed up to the Action Plan in its entirety, but Cllr Jason Stacey agreed to return in six months to report publicly on the progress being made in Southall. There were agree-

ments given to work on most of our proposals, notably strong support for the Living Wage from Cllr Jason Stacey (Cons). Most importantly all three leaders gave a resounding 'YES' to working with WLC and meeting our members twice a year.



**New Leader, Cllr Jason Stacey in Ealing**

The **Hammersmith & Fulham** assembly began with the introduction and welcome of a new member, the Somali Community Consortium (profile on page 3). Then straight to business. With questions flying in from all directions, the pace of the meeting was fast and direct, thanks largely to our timekeeper Tom Preddle's ferocious use of the bell.

It was apparent from the passion and questions directed at the leaders during the question & answer session that Supplementary Schools and education in general was the hot potato in this borough. Firm commitments on our proposals were given by the Labour leader, Cllr Stephen Burke, in contrast to the vaguer answers given by Cllr Stephen Greenhalgh (Cons). Overall, the responses from both were considered and generally positive. Again there was a clear willingness from

both leaders to work with WLC in the future starting with our Assembly on the 18th May.

The event concluded with a testimony from Abdul-Fatah, Director of Al Muntada centre, telling his experience from the General Election when Greg Hands, the conservative candidate for parliament in Fulham, had made promises and offered strong support which dried up immediately after he won the seat. This should be a lesson to us all. Although it's been a fantastic achievement for our new organisation to meet with party leaders over the last few weeks, and to gain some commitments on our agenda, the real work begins on 5th May when we start holding them to account for the promises made.



**Hammersmith & Fulham Assembly**



**New Leader, Cllr Greenhalgh in LBHF**

## May Day Extravaganza cont'd

were out in force, represented on stage by Cecilia Finn of Cardinal Wiseman, whose splendid banners were everywhere. She introduced a brave worker from the Hilton who testified about the appalling treatment of migrant workers in London hotels of this luxury international chain.

The first annual Living Wage Employer Awards were held to recognise 'socially responsible contracting'. Proud recipients of these awards included KPMG, the Institute for Public Policy Research, and Queen Mary,

University of London.

All in attendance remarked at how moving the day's events were as faith, trade union and civic leaders stood together in solidarity with workers and migrant communities. The music, rousing speeches and raucous crowd all helped make the day an enormous success, with calls for a repeat in 2007. May Day 2006 - a truly great day to remember!

**Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor greets Sir Iqbal Sacranie of MCB**



## Beautiful Banners

Members got an outlet for their creative inclinations at our Banner Making Workshop on 22<sup>nd</sup> April.



**'Ethical Olympics'; 'Bin the Rats for a Greener, Cleaner London'; 'Hotel Workers Rising'** banners

were produced in gorgeous colours and shapes by a mixed group from East, South and West London. Cecilia Finn directed operations and arrived with all the fabrics, paints, tracing paper, iron and good humour required.



The banners were shown off to two and a half thousand people as they processed into Westminster Cathedral on 1st May. We'll use them again and again. We love them already.

## New Member Profile: Somali Consortium

**By Hasan Ahmed, Secretary, Somali Community Consortium**

The Somali Community Consortium, which joined West London Citizens on 30<sup>th</sup> April, is itself a new alliance. Seven Somali Community Groups have very recently come together with an ambition of overcoming the perception of division and clan affiliation amongst Somalis, and in order to develop a positive and united voice.

Somalis are commonly demonized in the press and in many neighbourhoods of London. The community does face very significant challenges of unemployment, poor educational attainment, drug abuse and poverty. What is needed is a way out of these problems which the community itself champions and leads. The Somali Community Consortium hopes to be a part of that strategy.

Even before it was formed, members of the Consortium were excited about the possibility of joining West London Citizens. Members will take full advantage of the community leadership training offered by London Citizens, not only as a way of building up their skills but in order to grow relationships

with people from other local organisations and communities. One key objective of the Somali Community Consortium is to identify suitable facilities for social welfare and leisure time activities for Somalis. The need to enhance people's quality of life by getting them together in a place they can call their own, at least for certain times of the week, is overwhelming.

The Somali Community Consortium came in great numbers to our assembly on 30<sup>th</sup> April with Cllr Stephen Greenhalgh and Cllr Stephen Burke. Both agreed to work with SCC to help tackle the community's problems constructively.

### London Citizens Training Event

**Friday 19<sup>th</sup> May  
9.30am-6.30pm &  
Sat 20<sup>th</sup> May  
9.30am-4.30pm**

**Queen Mary  
University of London, Mile  
End, London E2**

**Please send in your forms to:**  
[colin.weathrerup@londoncitizens.gov.uk](mailto:colin.weathrerup@londoncitizens.gov.uk)

**Forms available at:**  
[www.londoncitizens.org.uk/training.html](http://www.londoncitizens.org.uk/training.html)

## Victory at Last at Queen Mary

Regular readers of the newsletter will have followed the ups and downs of the London Citizens campaign to make Queen Mary, University of London into the UK's first Living Wage Campus.

Victory became ours on 10<sup>th</sup> April, when the College Council committed itself publicly to a new policy which means that no-one employed directly or indirectly on campus will earn less than £6.70 per hour. The Guardian published a glowing report of our achievement, citing Christine Martin, a cleaning supervisor at Queen Mary for twelve years.



**Cleaners celebrate their victory at last**

"It is difficult to survive on in London on this kind of money. Sometimes you think you might as well not work for what you earn. I do a second job, and have to claim housing benefit just to make ends meet, so the living wage really has given me something to look forward to."

## London's Loss, Birmingham's Gain

After three years with London Citizens, working as an organiser with the TELCO members in East London, Andrew Crossley has been appointed as the lead organiser for Birmingham Citizens. The members in Birmingham are delighted.

He will be missed by the members in East London and by his colleagues in the Cavell Street office but our network is strengthened by this news. Matthew Bolton is taking up Andrew's post as the TELCO organiser.

## CITIZENS to star in White City Video



The WLC action team working on our campaign for Economic Justice Guarantees at the White City Shopping Centre will be getting in front of a movie camera on Saturday 6th May. With the help of a professional camera man and an off-duty BBC producer we are making a campaign video as a tool for our campaign. Our short film will be premiered on 18th May in front of the newly elected borough leaders and a representative from Westfield, the retail developer responsible for White City. It will be sent as a DVD to Westfield's chairman, Frank Lowy, in Australia, to the media and anyone else who can influence this important campaign.

## Book Your Place Community Leadership Training on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> May 2006

One of the greatest benefits of joining London Citizens is the free access to our two-day training courses on organising and community leadership. It's a great chance to step out of your usual routine and commitments to spend time reflecting, learning and meeting new people from other backgrounds, faiths and organisations.

The feedback from our trainings is always very positive. People feel they really understand how London Citizens works, why we're doing what we do, and what part they can play. Places are filling up for 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> May, which will be at Queen Mary, University of London.

Local tube: Mile End (Central)



## West London Citizens on the airwaves 8pm, Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> May

'Cities without Maps' is a two-part programme on Radio 4 which features a recording taken at our Delegates Assembly back in January. Ann Dodd's powerful and humorous testimony on living with rats in Southall, which swayed our members to vote for 'Bin the Rats' as our top campaign, is a highlight of the programme.

**Do listen in on 11<sup>th</sup> May.**

## Affordable Homes for LONDON CITIZENS

# LONDON

After an almost unfeasibly long period of feasibility studies, the Mayor's office has confirmed that they will move ahead with a 100 home pilot Community Land Trust, a proposal put to the Mayor at our Mayoral Accountability Assembly in May 2004. This means is that a green light has been given to make available land, and a suitable site is now being identified. Anyone interested in joining London Citizens Housing Action Team should contact Neil Jameson on

## London Citizens Meet Livingstone At City Hall

A fifteen strong delegation of London Citizens members will meet the Mayor on 16th May. A range of issues and campaigns are on the agenda. A report of this important meeting will be made in our next newsletter. Two West London Citizens leaders will attend on our behalf.

## LCWA

London Citizens Workers Association was successfully launched on 1st May.

The association is attempting to reach out to migrant workers in industries with little trade union activity. It's a route into trade unions in the longer term



## In a Lidl Trouble



By Colin Weatherup

### Campaign to Clean up Lidl, Hanwell

Local residents from Our Lady and St Josephs in Hanwell have been attempting to persuade the local Lidl supermarket to clean up their act by

re-opening the toilets at the front of the store, landscaping the outside area and providing twenty-four hour access to the car park.

West London Citizens have discovered that Lidl have been approached by the Planning Enforcement officers from Ealing Council, as they have failed to comply with the stipulations of the original planning application.

Joe McNamara, Martin D'Cunha and his wife, Bobby, along with Colin

Weatherup have confirmed a meeting with a senior representative of Lidl Property Office to ensure that something is done about the current situation.

We have invited a Lidl representative to be present at the West London Citizens Assembly on 18th May, and we are hopeful that they will agree to work with us to provide the services originally promised.