



Lewisham, East Southwark and District Group Newsletter September 2022

Name
Address

Membership No:

CSPA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: VOLUNTEER NEEDED

The CSPA AGM is being held on 12/13 October in the Chesford Grange Hotel, Kenilworth. It starts with lunch at 12.30 on the 12th and ends at 15.15 on the 13th. This AGM is the first one held for three years, as the last two were cancelled due to Covid.

The Group delegate to the AGM for many years was Sylvia Smith, who has now moved to Southend and can no longer represent us. The Group is, therefore, looking for a new delegate.

The AGM is an important meeting as it sets the future policy for the CSPA. There are also guest speakers from the National Pensioners Convention and the Charity for Civil Servants. Sue Gray, second Permanent Secretary at the Cabinet Office, is the after-dinner speaker. The AGM agenda was included in the autumn issue of The Pensioner just issued. There is no obligation on the delegate to speak, although they can do so if they wish. A short written report back to the Group would be appreciated.

If any member is interested in attending, please contact either Andy Beglin or Mike Sparham (contact details shown alongside) by 20th September. Costs are met by the CSPA and there is a short coach transfer between Coventry Station and the Kenilworth hotel for those travelling by train. A delegate's partner can also attend at a cost of £50, although a partner's travel costs cannot be reimbursed.

AN APOLOGY

Due to a mistake in Head Office, which prints and distributes our newsletters, the last issue was initially published with the correct front page but with pages 2 – 4 from the Bristol Group newsletter. There were five newsletters being printed that day and unfortunately the two became mixed up. The correct version was published the following week. Please accept our apology for any confusion this caused.

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DIAL A RIDE: FROM DOOR TO MORE – AGE UK LONDON REPORT

A previous newsletter reported on a study being done jointly by Age UK London and Transport For All into the Dial A Ride service. Their report has now been published, looking at the changes in the service arising from the pandemic and making a number of recommendations on how the service could be improved. The aim is to better serve the needs of the people who use it, and who, in many cases, rely on it to get out of their home. Dial A Ride currently has 256 buses in their fleet and a further 60 buses are available from contractors.

The report forms part of Age UK's Out & About campaign on social isolation and highlights how vital the service is. It has made the following recommendations to TfL on how to improve the service:

- Allow longer journeys (at present limited to 5 miles)
- If phone calls are unanswered, offer a call back within an hour
- Ensure newsletters and other communications are distributed at regular points in the year to all users and are available in accessible formats
- New booking system guaranteeing a minimum of three journeys a week
- Extend operating hours from 10pm to midnight or 1am
- Market the service
- Clearer information on permitted destinations, particularly health appointments not at an NHS hospital
- Email requests for bookings to be confirmed by 5pm
- Reduce late arrivals by 25%
- Review the scheduling system to ensure routes are as efficient as possible

The report records many positive experiences of Dial A Ride, which is a lifeline for many, but also records frustration at much of the administration. The Group welcomes the report and

supports the recommendations, which we hope TfL will consider seriously.

A copy of the report can be downloaded from www.ageuk.org.uk/london or obtained from Age UK London, Crown House, 27 Old Gloucester Street, London WC1N 3AX.

Dial A Ride is a door-to-door accessible bus service for people who are unable to use public transport. To become a member phone 0343 222 7777 or download a form from www.tfl.gov.uk/modes/dial-a-ride.

TfL CONSULTATION ON BUS ROUTE CUTS

During June and July, TfL undertook a consultation on reducing the number of bus routes. The Group looked at their proposals but there is little significant change proposed in South East London. There are three relatively minor changes:

- Route 53 to be cut back to Elephant & Castle
- Route 171 to terminate at Newington Causeway
- Route C10 to be re-routed between Elephant & Castle and Lambeth Palace to run via Waterloo Station, replacing the 507

The one major change proposed is to cut route 12 and replace it by extending route 148 from its current terminus at Camberwell. The Group has expressed a concern that the new route 148, which starts at Shepherd's Bush, would be about 20 minutes longer than route 12 and thus more susceptible to traffic delays in West London and South London.

The consultation is now closed. There were a large number of responses and the London Assembly Transport Committee has asked TfL to reconsider the proposals. The Group supports a reliable and accessible public transport system, and we await the outcome of the consultation with interest.

COST OF LIVING CRISIS

At the time of writing, an 80% increase in the energy price cap had just been announced, but energy bills are not the only things that are increasing in price. A weekly shopping bill shows a number of other substantial price increases with inflation at its highest level since 1981.

Many of us will remember the major civil service pay strikes in 1979 and 1981 and that pattern is now being repeated with strikes over pay and conditions in a number of industries. Pensioners though do not have that option. Most pensioners are on a fixed income, reliant on the Government for increases in the state pension and, in the case of civil servants, their occupational pension. 5.5 million pensioners do not pay income tax because their income is below the tax threshold, so do not benefit from any income tax cuts.

The pension triple lock was suspended this year, meaning that state pensions were increased by the level of price increases instead of the higher level of increases in average earnings. Next year it is important that the triple lock is applied to state pension increases, so they continue to increase in line with inflation. Civil service pensions are linked to CPI (Consumer Prices Index) which, in July, stood at 10.1%. That figure is forecast to continue rising and the month that determines the increase in public sector pensions is September (published in October).

CSPA campaigns over the coming months will focus on seeking a triple lock increase for state pensions and a full CPI increase for the civil service pension in 2023.

CSPA 70TH ANNIVERSARY

This year the CSPA celebrates its 70th anniversary. A Parliamentary Reception is being held on 8th November in the Churchill Room. The Group will be represented and we are writing to the local MPs to invite them to attend.

REPORT FROM CSPA LONDON REGIONAL MEETING

Every year London groups are given the opportunity to send representatives to meet with our Regional Representative Dr David Owen and members of the Executive Council to get an update on issues affecting the Alliance. This year's meeting took place on the 1st July 2022 at the Civil Service Club and our Deputy General Secretary David Luxton was the main speaker. This was the first face to face meeting we have had for two years due to Covid restrictions, and it was very good to see everyone again.

I represented our group at this meeting and there were representatives from across London who participated in this meeting.

David Luxton reported on the work done by the Alliance over the year, the change in priorities for the Alliance and a look to the future and an update on the work undertaken this year. In the afternoon session there was an opportunity for group representatives to update the meeting on how their groups were progressing and to discuss various problems which we all share. Overall it was a very informative meeting and it was good to be back sitting around a table with London colleagues.

Andy Beglin
Group Secretary

GROUP MEETINGS

The local Group meets on the third Wednesday of every month in the Jubilee Room at the St Laurence Church Community Centre, 37 Bromley Road, Catford SE6 2TS. Meetings begin at 11.00, and entry is £2. Tea and coffee is provided.

We would love to see you. The next meetings are on:

<i>September 21st</i>	<i>October 19th</i>
<i>November 16th</i>	<i>December 21st</i>

CATFORD – A POTTED HISTORY



Many of us will remember taking a coach from Catford to the seaside. This coach is leaving the Timpsons coach station, on its way to Portsmouth & Southsea. The date is probably the early 1960s, as the coach registration plate (XXT) was only introduced in September 1959.

The name Catford was first recorded in 1254, but its derivation is not known for certain. The “ford” part almost certainly refers to a ford crossing of the River Ravensbourne; but the “cat” part is disputed. There are two assumptions: one that it refers to wild cats that frequented the ford; the other that it refers to cattle who were grazed nearby. There were two moated houses recorded, one near Catford Bridge and the other at Rushey Green, and a small hamlet developed around them. The lands were enclosed in 1810 and Catford’s development came in the second half of the century following the arrival of the first trains in 1857 (Catford Bridge).

In 1875 the Lewisham Board of Works built offices in Catford, which later became Lewisham Town Hall. In 1880, the shops lining Catford Broadway were built and St Laurence church was consecrated. St Dunstan’s College opened in 1888, and was the first school to contain specialist science laboratories. In 1890 the Thomas Tilling horse drawn tram was introduced and, finally that century, in 1892 the second rail line (the Catford loop) was built, thus completing a period of rapid development. Ownership of the trams passed to the London County Council, which electrified them in 1906.

In the early days of the British film industry one of the main studios was in Catford, in the grounds of Southend Hall (opposite the present day Homebase site). Built in 1914 it was leased to the Britannia Film Company and known as Windsor Films. It lasted until 1922. Sadly, none of the black and white silent movies thought to have been made there still survive. Southend Hall was demolished in 1937.

Further development occurred between the two World Wars. The Broadway Theatre was opened in 1932 as a Concert Hall and is now Grade II listed. Also at that time the Lewisham Hippodrome was built and a Greyhound Stadium opened. The Timpsons Coach Station was built in 1937. Only the theatre still exists. The Hippodrome was demolished in the 1960’s to make way for Eros House, which itself now stands neglected and unloved. The Greyhound Stadium lasted longer than many others but was closed in 2003 and is now flats. There is no record of when the Coach Station closed (if anybody remembers, please let us know)..

The Town Hall was rebuilt in 1958 and the 1960’s saw many changes to Catford, not all of which have stood the test of time. Apart from the building of Eros House, the shopping centre was also built then. St Laurence Church was demolished and rebuilt on Bromley Road to make way for the new council building, Laurence House. At the time there were plans for a ring road to replace the South Circular road, which never materialised, but it explains the partly unsurfaced land behind Laurence House which is now used as a car park. The fibre glass cat above the entrance to the shopping centre appeared in 1974.

Famous people who come from Catford include comedian Ben Elton, Guardian journalist Lucy Mangan, and England footballer Joe Gomez. Spike Milligan lived in Catford as a child and he later wrote an unflattering poem called “Catford 1933” which describes a grim life.

The CSPA Group takes an interest in the local area, and this is the eleventh in our series of “Potted Histories”. The twelfth will feature Herne Hill.