



1. Introduction

WERA has continued to work hard to tackle many of the issues on the estate, many of which have been long standing concerns such as the broken wall on the front of the estate, pot holes, solving of the Anfield Close Door which was too heavy and difficult to open for residents, as a result of WERA action an electronic door opening device was fitted and as recent as 30th December 2008 residents will now be able to electronically open the door from their properties following concerns raised by WERA.

Many of the issues raised have been resolved with dedication and gusto by myself and you're Residents Association.

Many of the priorities set at our last AGM have been achieved and continue to be at the forefront of the work carried out on behalf of all residents. I will cover some of the priorities in more detail further on in this report.

This year also saw the resignation of Shirley Crawford, who had been Treasurer to WERA for Three years. This came as a surprise and a sad loss to the Association. We remain truly thankful and grateful for the work Shirley put in.

However in November 2008, WERA elected new officers, Sue Cranmer as Shirley's predecessor and new Vice Chair, Margaret Cregan. Sadly they will not have had to properly fulfil their roles in the short space of time before this AGM. I thank them for taking up the positions and hope they may consider re-standing for election in 2009.

We have built many good relationships and established many beneficial links with officers, councillors and organisations who have served as magnificent partnerships in achieving much of 2008's success.

2. Priorities for 2008 and Updates as listed below:

2.1 **Windows. Double glazing to replace the metal frames**

This has been a main focus in 2008 for WERA and required a lot of the work we have been carrying out in 2008.

Weir Estate has had 'Crittell' metal, single glazed windows since 1952, many of which have bowed and rusted. This has caused residents to endure cold properties and soaring heating costs. Prior to 2008 Weir Estate had not been included in the Programme and had missed off previously from all other major works programmes. Due to the work of the Chair and officers of WERA, residents are now top of the major works programme for 2009 and new double glazed windows will be installed starting in **February 2009**. This is a result of a number



of meetings and working with the local ward councillors to ensure that Weir Estate is included and given priority. The issue was highlighted in the 'South London Press' and after some considerable effort, finally Residents will be able to enjoy warmer, safer and comfortable homes.

The issue of the windows has not been without its problems and hurdles, considering the impact it will have on Weir Estate Leaseholders, who raised concerns about the cost implications, again WERA has been working to resolve the concerns and tackle many of the problems that has arisen. This was carried out by a meeting with Leaseholders and council officials. WERA has also committed a large sum of income to elevate the burden which will be placed on leaseholders in today's economic climate. Leaseholders have now been issued with their proportion of the cost for the project in October 2008.

WERA should remain committed to resolving these issues and ensuring the windows programme remains on schedule for residents in 2009 and is carried out without inconvenience and disturbance to residents or estate services. WERA should remain involved in ensuring that all decisions are taken with the involvement of the Association and its members.

2.2 Repairing of fences

Many of the Fences on the estate where repaired successfully in the early part of 2008 however some still require work and this should be dealt with in the coming year, once the new financial year begins.

2.3 Repairs to Roads around the estate

Many of the Roads on Weir Estate, where littered with pot holes and required works to repair them and improve the safety and appearance. WERA stepped up its pressure to ensure this work was carried, which was not without its problems but again WERA tackled the problems head on and the works to all roads around the estate where carried out successfully. Further works will be required in 2009 to parts of the estate that where missed and areas of which the work is not of a good standard.

2.4 Improve Resident Participation and Involvement

WERA has seen a marked increased of residents attending meetings in 2008 from the previous year and this continues to grow.

However, this still remains a concern and a matter that needs continued effort to improve. In order to improve resident involvement, WERA published a Residents Magazine in October 2008, which has now regrettably been withdrawn following a poor reception from residents and no responses to any of the items within the Magazine.



WERA is here for the benefit of residents and serves to improve the estate and lives of those who live here. It is essential that Residents take an active responsibility and role in ensuring that the work of WERA is able to continue and the way in which services are delivered are carried out to the best affect of those who live on Weir Estate. It is positive that we have seen a dramatic increase in residents both coming back to meetings and new residents attending.

2.5 Continued Support of the Weir Link and the CCTV/Security

WERA has continued to support the Weir Link which arrived onto the estate in March 2008 and was celebrated at fun day, attending by over 500 residents and local people, making it the most successful day to date. The fun day was attended by the Local police, the fire service, Clapham Park Project (CPP), Keith Hill MP and the Mayor of Lambeth who officially opened the centre. We was also introduced to the new staff who would be taking charge of the day to day running of the centre, Clare Ballard-Yawson, Centre Manager and Julie Reynolds, Outreach Worker.

WERA has supported the Weir Link by donating large sums of money and enjoys an excellent rapport and relationship with the centre and its staff. The Association moved meetings to the Weir Link in August 2008 and often uses its facilities. The centre, run by trustees, including are very own marvel, Claire Rennie. Pat Broderick and Shirley Crawford who are both residents of the estate. It is with great tribute to their determination and hard work that the Weir Link is now able to open its door to local people and offer services to residents of the estate and surrounding areas, changing the lives of many people. I believe the Weir Link provides a real central focus to the estate and provides us with a hub for the community to meet and socialise. The Staff have always been welcoming and willing to assist WERA in many different ways. WERA and The Weir Link will hopefully continue to work together and strengthen its relationship into the future and WERA should remain committed to ensuring the centre remains at its heart.

2.6 Push on Estate basics - Cleaning & Services to estate by Council and its Contractors

Weir Estate has seen a drastic improvement to services on the estate, these have included regular cutting of the grass and marked changes in the estate cleanliness. This has been as a result of pressure and efforts by my self and WERA. The estate is the cleanest is has been for sometime and work continues to be carried out it many different areas such as repairs and grounds maintenance. We have ensured that WERA is considered in all areas of the basics to the estate and will continue to monitor this as a matter of course.



2.7 Repeat of the 'Fun Day'

See 2.5 – I think it is fair to say that 2008's fun day was a tremendous success and should now feature regularly in the yearly calendar with a greater showcase of the Weir Estate.

2.8 Accessing of charity or other funds for the WERA

Though WERA has not accessed Charity grants, which still remains a future possibility, we have had income this year from filming of 'Law & Order UK' in November 2008. This has enabled the possibility of further opportunities for income to be obtained from location shoots. WERA and Weir Estate residents co-operated fully and to great effect with the location team and worked to ensure that any inconvenience was kept to a minimum. The production company was truly delighted with the support and work of WERA and hope to return to the estate as well recommending Weir Estate to other companies as a good place to work at. I feel this would be of great benefit to Weir Estate as well as raising the profile of the estate in which we live. WERA should look at obtaining further funding in the coming year to invest in other projects to improve the look and benefit of the area.

WERA also received funds from the sale of land on Anfield Close, which had previously been opposed, but due to the involvement of the association and myself, The Anfield Close Development was allowed to go ahead with sanctions from the planning department as well as a continued sustained commitment from the Council and Wandle Housing Association, the project has caused little impact on the estate. The work carried out by WERA on this, has ensured that all parties have considered residents and the impact of the development. Previously little, or no consultation was carried out on past attempts to erect three five bedroom houses on the old 'garages site' however due to our work we have been consulted and involved in every stage of the project as well as in regular contact with the Contractors and liaison with officials responsible for building the houses.

Aerial Money – WERA has also had funds from the Aerials on Weir Estate; this money is yet to be spent and should be decided by the end of the financial year. I also suggest that WERA allows future income to come into the Associations account. WERA currently do not benefit from the interest on the funds, this currently goes to Lambeth. This is vital funds that WERA is missing out on, however. consideration has to be given to the VAT that would be placed on the money when its spent as WERA is not VAT registered. However, I am not convinced that allowing such funds to remain in the hands of the local authority is acceptable considering their financial position and the current economic climate.



2.9 Renew Association with Community Safety & Police and Improve Crime Reduction

Following the collapse of the previous safer neighbourhood Team (SNT), Thornton ward WERA worked with other local Residents associations to ensure that a new SNT was put in place as quickly as possible. In March 2008, the new team was implemented with the introduction of PC Christian Igwegbe, PCSO's Carl McClain and Karen Rose. I immediately began working with the team to tackle issues surrounding crime in the area. In June 2008 the team was joined by a new Sergeant, Ashok Patel. The team have been a very visible presence on Weir Estate and this has proved to be a huge benefit with a reduction of crime by over 50% compared to 2007. Weir Estate is now one of the lowest estates in the borough for crime.

In September 2008 the team was at full strength with PC Claire Richardson. The team have committed a lot of time working with WERA and working to reassure and prevent crime on the estate.

They have become a welcome part of the day to day security and running of the estate and we now have an extremely good working relationship and understanding with the team. Their work on the estate and indeed in the ward has shown that working together can really make all the difference. Almost all crime in the area is down by half over a year period. The team often act on information providing a proactive approach to community policing.

We are very fortunate to have such fantastic local police officers and Community Support Officers. I am grateful for the work and effort they have put into improving the lives of residents and making Weir Estate a safe place to live and visit. I hope this has restored faith in the policing of our estate and WERA should continue to embrace and work with the Safer Neighbourhood Team.

3. Partnerships

This year has seen WERA building and strengthening partnerships with many different people, Associations, organisations and project both in the local area and further afield. The importance of these partnerships and working together has provided WERA with considerable power in tackle many of the issues mentioned within this report.

This year we have worked with;

3.1 Thornton Ward Councillors, Lib Peck, Diana Morris & Michael Hipwell

The work our Ward Councillors have put in throughout the year has been second to none. They have provided a massive assistance in many issues such as the windows on Weir Estate, to the safety of residents to solving many other issues. They worked tirelessly in helping to challenge many of the problems and



concerns while being supportive and guiding the Association on the political nature of matters in which they have been given. They have provided much of their own time and fought to change many of the decisions that affect residents on Weir Estate such as proposed rent increases. Without their effort and hard work many of the issues we have had this year would not have had the solutions and outcome that they have. Diana Morris and Lib Peck have both battled on behalf of residents over the window issues, more recently so the impact on Leaseholders that was earlier mentioned.

WERA I am sure is extremely grateful to them for all their hard work over the year and I am sure will most certainly continue to support and work with them in return.

3.2 Molly Huggins Residents Association

'MHRA' neighbours Weir Estate and until 2008 had been estranged from Weir Estate. One of my first duties as Chair was to meet with and set about building a relationship with Molly Huggins Chair, Emerica Hyde. WERA and MHRA have continued to work together throughout the year and this has proved that by working together, many issues both locally and politically can be faced together. By supporting each other this has resulted in reduction in crime, nuisance from both estates, a mutual understanding and development of projects such as the Coffee Mornings which have proved a success on Friday Mornings. These have been enjoyed by both estates residents. WERA should certainly continue to build on this relationship and ensure that working together continues into 2009.

3.3 Poynders Gardens/Thornton Gardens Tenants Residents Associations

By working with Poynders Gardens and Thornton Gardens Estates, this has opened many doors not only on communication but working together. WERA has worked with and been supported by Thornton Gardens Chair, Hilary Clare-Wears on the Double Glazing issues often working side by side to raise the matter to the highest levels. The three estates earlier in the year began working together on youth engagement, which I am hoping will be picked up again in the New Year to improve the community for young people on all estates in the area.

3.4 Susan Mulligan – Former Clapham Area Resident Participation Officer (Lambeth Living)

Susan Mulligan had been working with WERA for over a year and often attended meetings and provided guidance and support as well as offering advice and direction of funding opportunities. Susan always made her self available and began many projects in the local area such as a cycle project, as well helping to form many of the links with outside projects. Without her kindness and hard work, much of the business with meetings etc would not have been achieved. Sadly for us, Susan Mulligan has now left her position as our Resident



Participation Officer and has taken a new job elsewhere within Lambeth. I personally would wish her well and give my sincerest thanks for all the hard work and time she gave us. I now hope whoever replaces Susan in this role will serve WERA and other residents Association to as good effect as she over the time she was working with us.

4. **Conclusion**

This year has seen many challenges over the past 12 months, I hope many of which have been resolved for the benefit of the Weir Estate Residents. We have seen officers come and go, however the association has continued to change many long standing issues.

We have continued to build on much of the previous successes and without the very important time and input of so many people (*please see Acknowledgements*) many of the tasks undertaken this year would have been far more difficult. Weir Estate is a wonderful place to live and we must continue to ensure that it continues to remain so.

Over the years in some cases as with the old windows, has been forgotten, however I am delighted to say that with hard work and commitment to resolving the matters, we will now see new windows on Weir Estate in the coming year.

We have seen many changes such as the Weir Link arrival after many years of an unsightly 2 storey derelict building. We have seen a much improved police presence on the estate and as the figures show has proven that crime is falling dramatically on Weir Estate.

I am hoping that now we have began to change the way Weir Estate is maintained, managed and supported that we can all continue to work together to make it the best it can be. I have been saddened and disappointed by still minimal support from residents themselves, this is where we live and it is our responsibility to ensure that is a safe, enjoyable, clean as well as managed to the best of its ability by the local authority. We should be embracing every opportunity to make the estate in which we live as friends and neighbours is at the forefront for those who make the decisions which affect us as residents and leaseholders.

It has been hard work for me this year, a true challenge, one I do not regret and one I hope will continue.

Change is in our hands and we can make things change for the better, together.



5. Acknowledgements

- * **Claire Rennie** – Continued Volunteering as WERA Secretary for your commitment and hard work for WERA despite your other many commitments.
- * **Shirley Crawford** – For the years of service to improving your estate and volunteering as WERA Treasurer.
- * **Pat Broderick** – For your many years of dedicated work and dedication in improving the estate and the continued support and commitment you have given to WERA.
- * **Our Local Councillors, Lib Peck, Diana Morris, Michael Hipwell** – for the work and support you have given to WERA over the past year.
- * **Thornton Ward SNT** – For working with WERA in maintaining a safe environment for our residents and being available to assist where possible.
- * **Staff at Clapham Area office** – for your efforts in improving our estate and working with us to resolve many of the issues. I hope this will continue in 2009!
- * **To those residents who have regularly attended monthly meetings, giving your time to discuss and tackle many of the problems that have arisen.**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has had an input or dedicated time to helping WERA reach its aims and objectives.

I would also like to wish you all a very Happy and Prosperous New Year from all at WERA.

I hope to see you all again in 2009!!