Spikes Bridge Sports Day

Never let a few drops of water spoil your day! This was certainly our motto for the Spikes Bridge Sports Day arranged on 4/10/14 as the weather was atrocious for most of the day but this did little to dampen the enthusiasm of the many hardcore participants who turned up on the day.

An exciting and competitive football competition involving 10 teams took place and was won by the Traveller Titans. Enormous thanks to Mesba and Helal from London Tigers for supporting the event on Eid. As well as the sports focus of the day we also arranged a canal clear up activity with the Canal & River Trust. Volunteers from Helplink worked with the Trust and cleared up a section of the canal. Finally, a big thanks to St James who sponsored the day and supported all the activity.

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GNP events

SCA has now been hosting the Greenford, Northolt & Perivale Community Federation for some months. The GNP Federation has brought together groups in the north of the borough and been involved in some first class health improvement work.

This picture, from the Rectory Park Playday on 6/8/14, shows the high level of community involvement that Jackie Sear and Zeina Mehio have been able to generate in the GNP area. The playday was a huge success and around 4000 families joined in the fun and enjoyed the activities organised by Ealing Early Years, Childcare and Play Services. Families at the GNP Health Zone were able to pick up free information leaflets and activity packs, sample delicious healthy recipes prepared at the GNP stall and have free diabetes checks.

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ONAM Festival

Southall is home to a large community of residents from the south Indian state of Kerala and every year they celebrate the Onam festival. The festival celebrates both the harvest and the return of the mythical king, Mahabali, from the underworld.

Onam is arranged by the British Keralites Association and this year’s event took place on 20/9/14 at Featherstone High School. As usual, there were many hundreds of people who attended and enjoyed the lighting of the lamp ceremony and many cultural dance performances. The festival started with a traditional and delicious meal served on a banana leaf, ensuring the day got off to the best possible start. This very colourful festival is a reminder of the truly multicultural nature of Southall.

Samba in Southall

On 12th June, SCA arranged the ‘Samba in Southall’ event at Spikes Bridge Park. The day was part of Diabetes Week events and coincided with the start of the football World Cup in Brazil.

SCA arranged diabetes health stalls, NHS health checks and a fun football competition for community partners. Needless to say the sunny weather and football ensured a good turnout and we had teams from Ealing CVS, Tallo Centre, Ealing CCG, SCA, Met Police, Southall College, Jags Allstars and London Tigers. The competition was well contested and eventually won by London Tigers but the undoubted highlight of the day was the samba dance off to decide who played in the final, between SCA and the CCG team. Many thanks to Dr Raj Chandok for supporting the event as part of a drive to tackle rising diabetes rates.

FGM Conference

SCA has been running a FGM project, called ‘Breaking the Silence’ for over four years funded by Rosa, Esme Fairburn Foundation and the Trust for London. Over the years there has been a steep rise in awareness of the illegal practice and greater national publicity about FGM related issues and cases.

On 22/9/14 we arranged a very innovative open space FGM event designed to stimulate understanding and discussion about FGM locally. The event was arranged at Pitzhanger Manor in Ealing and attended by over 40 people, many of them professionals. In addition to Ealing participants we had attendees from across London and also from the Home Office.

Well done to Suki and Bishara for their efforts in pulling the event together and also to members of the FGM Steering Group for supporting the event.
The SCA Annual General Meeting took place on 25/9/14 at Villiers High School. The meeting attracted our largest ever audience with over 100+ attendees and was opened by the Mayor of Ealing, Cllr Tej Bagha. As well as the presentation of our annual report and accounts, we had an impressive guest speaker in the Metropolitan Police Borough Commander, Paul Martin.

We also had a large and varied array of stalls from voluntary sector groups and new partners such as St James and Back Heathrow. One particularly poignant part of the AGM was the retirement of Dilbagh Chana MBE, as a trustee. Mr Chana had been a treasurer and founder member of the organisation and will be greatly missed.

Southall Play Day

The second Southall Play Day event took place in Southall Park on 13/8/14. Arranged by LBE Children’s Services, the Play Day aimed to help families learn about the play and learning opportunities available for children locally and the wide range of activity stalls offered interactive and fun sessions for a younger audience.

Once again the good weather ensured a great turnout and many families with children participated, learning about services available for them. Many of the stalls had a visible healthy living focus and so there were many exercise and activity opportunities. The SCA stall was very busy and our arts and crafts table was inundated with children and adults practising their creative skills.

It proved a great opportunity for local residents to find out more about services for children and families in Southall.

SCA Community Forum

Our Community Forum meeting on 7/5/14 brought up many issues that will be crucial in Ealing over the coming years. Our guest speaker was Martin Smith, Chief Executive of Ealing Council. Mr Smith highlighted the huge level of budget cuts that would have to be made in Ealing over four years. This would have a major impact upon services and the authority would have to choose priorities for future funding.

Although this was the main discussion point, the Forum also considered a number of other localised issues such as street trading, rising demand for food banks, need for more affordable housing and how rising birth rates were ensuring high priority on school rebuilding schemes. This just served to confirm the need for platforms like the Community Forum, to give voice to local resident concerns.
The funds raised by the SACA charity ride were donated to the Rainbow Trust Children’s Charity. It was fantastic that the hard work of the cyclists raised £30,000 for this charity that works with families that have a child with a life threatening or terminal illness.

It was extremely inspiring to see hundreds of cyclists arrive in Southall Park at the end of their two days of toil. As the cyclists arrived we were all privileged to see Fauja Singh, the legendary centenarian marathon runner also present and supporting the event.

The whole day showed how community partners can work to arrange activities that benefit many Southall residents. This year’s event was a huge success and we already look forward to next year’s bike ride.

The Sikh Arts & Cultural Association (SACA) arrange an annual charity bike ride from Birmingham to Southall and this year’s ride event concluded on 20/7/14 in Southall Park. The bike ride is exceptionally planned and delivered and over 200 participants were involved in the marathon ride.

SCA worked with the organisers to arrange community stalls and activities in the park prior to the large contingent of cyclists arriving. The indefatigable, Jags Sanghera, helped hugely in planning and delivering the event and here is pictured with his father and Ravi Sandhu, who later delivered some amazing Pungra dance sessions for park users. If you check on the SCA website you may even spot some pictures of our local MP getting involved!

The SCA Community Forum provides a regular platform for residents and groups to discuss topical issues and find out more about topical local developments. Recent meetings have focussed upon local health services and future delivery of services in Ealing.

Our last Forum meeting on 20/8/14 took place at Southall Town Hall and focussed upon an issue that has regularly been raised at recent Southall meetings namely ‘respect for women’. Many female residents have complained and raised concerns about the behaviour they have been subjected to in different parts of Southall. Our excellent guest speaker, Meena Patel from Southall Black Sisters, spoke about current issues and reminded all about the history behind the issue.