

# LONDON FORUM OF AMENITY AND CIVIC SOCIETIES

## REVIEW OF THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2005

### *Report of Executive Committee to the AGM*

During this year we have had the lowest numbers of committee members and officers than for some time. That was due to the loss of several of our 'Core Team' due to illness and the lack of any new nominations by members at the AGM in 2004.

Nevertheless, we have had a period of high activity and involvement, particularly with the GLA Assembly Members and officers. Several planning inquiries took a lot of time of our team and our members in preparation, evidence and cross examination.

This year has been dominated by the planning changes introduced in September 2004 by the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act which made the GLA London Plan the development plan for the capital. The London Forum has been represented at meetings with the Mayor's planning team and boroughs on the preparation of the five sub regional development frameworks for London. Those have identified requirements for development in Opportunity and Intensification areas and the cross-border issues for boroughs and regions. The outcome of the consultation on the frameworks will influence both the alterations to the London Plan next year and the preparation of local development plan documents that will eventually replace the borough UDP policies.

Nominations from societies of people to work with our committees fell to an all time low this year and that has restricted our events programme, our research work and delayed our newsletters. As well as nominations of people to our Core Team, we are seeking volunteers from member societies who can support our work by some contribution of their time and expertise on key topics. We need to continue work that has earned us a good reputation and helps us to meet our members' expectations.

Open meetings were held on the planning changes that were being introduced by the new Act in 2004, on open spaces and on Crossrail & Channel Tunnel Rail Link. We arranged our second meeting for societies with board members of Transport for London. Members joined the Kew Society at a meeting on the London sewer problems that are leading to heavy discharges into the Thames. We are pursuing action on this.

London Forum works with the Civic Trust on strengthening and supporting civic society effectiveness, on the impacts of the night-time economy and improving the public realm. A grant from the Trust is being used to improve our communications. Bulletins were issued to those members on e-mail and have been well received.

Involvement has been maintained with members of the Thames & Waterways Stakeholder Group of the GLA, the West London River Group and others seeking to protect and enhance our rivers and canals and their usage.

Our member societies were encouraged to support CPRE (London) in their investigation into threats to the Green Belt.

Four meetings of the Executive Committee were held and the Planning & Transport Committee met six times. Matters discussed included the topics above and our activities for next year. The Executive Committee maintained a programme of policies and actions to achieve the organisation's objectives and to develop its relationships and influence but some activities cannot be commenced until we have more people.

The London Forum is very appreciative of the office space and facilities provided by Alan Baxter and Associates and for donations that some member societies made.

## **MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENTS**

The Vice-presidents join with the President this year in paying tribute to the Forum's considerable achievements under Peter Eversden's Chairmanship. These have included the development of the Forum's role as a major player in the planning consultation process, particularly in London's policies, guidance and frameworks; giving evidence, responding to policy drafts at both Government and GLA levels and actively defending community interests at key public inquiries, many of which are related to proposed waterside developments.

The Forum's wider role and influence rests on the continued growth in membership from the original 35 Member Societies to more than 100; and the links we have developed with some 40 Associate groups; listed at the back of the report. This represents a significant percentage of London's concerned population. It is no coincidence that we share office premises with a number of our associate groups at Alan Baxter and Associates, in Cowcross Street. Alan Baxter has created a working environment in which architects, designers, engineers, artists, campaigners and visionaries meet easily. The London Forum is not alone in appreciating both the informal contacts and the Gallery as a meeting place. We congratulate the editorial team and graphic designer Ross Shaw, on the new look *newsforum*. It contains vital planning information.

The current issue, highlights concerns that the London Assembly and our members have, about the need for the Mayor to improve openness and accountability, particularly in planning decisions. Two regular *newsforum* features, which promote the work of our members and associates are 'Spotlight' by Tony Aldous, and 'Round the Societies' by George Parish.

The Vice-presidents are organising the **Walter Bor Media Awards 2005**, with a new category, 'Media Impact'. Our aim is to encourage exchange of ideas, and promotion of the London Forum membership to a wider audience, by publicising newsletters and publications. On November 15th, an exhibition of all material, will be on show at the presentation of the winning Awards, so that all members and guests will see the high standards achieved through the dedicated voluntary sector. Do make sure your Society is represented, and that your publications and communication achievements are with us before the 23rd September closing date. If you have not already sent in materials, we will be able to receive them at the AGM on the 22nd.

Lastly, it would be wonderful if, even in your own busy schedule, you felt you could give a little assistance to the Core Team in the coming year. Think about it and let us know at

the AGM. We need your support in achieving the aims of all who care about the quality of life in the capital. "You know it makes sense".

**Sir Richard MacCormac**

**Tony Aldous**  
**Marion Harvey**  
**Judy Hillman**  
**Martin Simmons**  
**Bill Tyler**