

Thornton Heath Community Action Team (THCAT)

Annual Report 2023-2024



Thornton Heath Community Action Team – Annual Report 2023-2024

THCAT Chair's introduction - Linda Watson

As one of the founder members of THCAT, constituted in January 2015, I am pleased to reflect on another year, (our 9th) and share some of our recent activities in this report.

I am proud and grateful for the dedication of our volunteers and, in particular, I would like to extend my thanks to our current committee members. We don't often shout about our work and much of it goes unseen but all the effort contributes to improving our area. In addition, the support we receive from the wider Thornton Heath community is invaluable - whether through varied donations, hosting our meetings, attendance at events, or simply spreading the word about our activities.

Working closely with the council and councillors, local police, businesses and organisations in the area is vital in supporting us to achieve our goals. Also, volunteering is at the heart of what we do. We have achieved much this year, but there is always more work to be done, and we encourage you to join us. Being mindful that many of you may have limited time, we have put together a few suggestions of actions you can take to support the work of THCAT - your contribution can make a difference:

If you have 5-10 minutes, why not

- use the Love Clean Streets app to report rubbish or other street issues
- talk to a neighbour about using the app
- use social media to post something positive about our area
- say hello to a new neighbour and explain about Croydon's recycling bins
- do a quick litter pick in front of your home
- tidy THCAT's bookshelves (if you happen to be waiting on platform 2 at TH station)

If you have 20-30 minutes

- check that your front garden helps make your street look cared for
- plant some pollinating plants
- if your garden is concrete, plant up a container or two
- water a tree in your street
- do a longer litter pick in your street

If you have 90 minutes

- help with community gardening at Ambassador House forecourt
- install a water butt in your garden
- come along to a THCAT meeting

Volunteering is not just about giving but also about gaining—new skills, friendships, and the satisfaction of knowing you are taking action and playing a part in improving your community and environment.

As we look forward to the year ahead, our 10th year, I am confident that, with the continued dedication of our committee, other volunteers and our community, we will achieve even greater things. We are fortunate to belong to a community that understands the importance of coming together to address local issues and improve our shared environment.

Let's keep the momentum going and continue to make Thornton Heath a place we are all proud to call home.

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Festive door wreath and garland competition 2023

Following on from the inaugural competition held last year, we were keen to promote the idea of decorating front doors once again to help make our area feel even more welcoming and festive. Prizes were awarded for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place, decided by members voting on THCAT's facebook page.



Once more, there were many beautiful entries showing how talented local residents are! From left to right in the photos above, Bridget won 1st prize for her wreath made from yew from her garden, plus ivy and berries foraged from some waste land, Polly won 2nd prize and Suzanne 3rd.

Christmas tree event on Ambassador House forecourt

THCAT has been putting up a Christmas tree near the station since 2014. In 2023 it was a bitterly cold Saturday when local garden shop, Rambling Rose kindly donated and delivered a massive Christmas tree. While adults fixed the huge tree securely in place and wove fairy lights and winter greenery (donated by THCAT members) around the front railings, children were enjoying decorating a small tree with baubles and tinsel.

THCAT and members provided hot drinks, mince pies etc with special thanks to Caroline and family for heating, safely transporting and serving the hot drinks as local pianist, Alison, played festive songs and carols until the keyboard battery seized up from the cold.



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Of course, that's not the end of the story, the tree had to be taken down, all the decorations put away for another year and the fairy lights untangled and tidied away!

Many thanks to all who were involved in erecting and dismantling the tree and decorations.



Valentine's Day 2024 - love is in the air

To brighten up those often dismal February days and make people smile as they walk by, we have invited you to hang a red token of love (such as a ribbon, bow, flower or heart) to the railings opposite the station in Thornton Heath for several years now. Unfortunately, it always seems to be the most wet, windy week of the year so everything needs to be waterproof and tied on tightly!

Croydon Community Lottery

THCAT signed up as a cause for the Croydon Community Lottery in May 2023.

This is an online lottery which raises money for local good causes in Croydon. It's a fun and easy way to support local charities and community groups while having a chance to win prizes up to £25,000. By playing this lottery, you can help THCAT fundraise and continue our work in making positive changes in Thornton Heath.

We receive 50p of every £1 ticket purchased through our page

<https://www.croydoncommunitylottery.co.uk/support/thornton-heath-community-action-team>

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THCAT's Book Exchange at Thornton Heath Station

If you happen to be on platform two, please take a look at our popular book exchange in the waiting room which we continue to promote and maintain.

Thank you to all members and locals who frequently donate books and please write THCAT on the page ends to discourage people from taking a pile.



Greening Thornton Heath

There is much evidence now about the benefits of planting trees in urban settings - contributing to flood prevention, providing shade, lowering temperatures, cleaning the air and improving our well being.

Linda asked members to take action and identify where empty tree pits are locally to support Croydon Council's tree planting initiative. As a result of compiling these details, 97 new trees have been scheduled for our area - some already planted and others coming, hopefully in the next planting season (autumn/winter).

Linda has also been working with some residents and the council to secure trees for a triangle of frequently fly tipped wasteland and hopes that planting will take place this autumn to transform this unsightly hotspot.

The community garden on the forecourt at Ambassador House (opposite the station) is a popular spot for a coffee or lunch amongst the plants and bees. We consider this to be an important space, often the first sight of Thornton Heath when coming out of the station and a small oasis of green right on the high street. Many thanks to all those who regularly come to help with watering, weeding, bulb planting and tidying at our monthly gardening sessions.

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THCAT Community Engagement - Cass

Over the last 12 months, we have had community engagement across a number of areas within the community.

Spring Bulbs

Members of the community and Tesco kindly donated over 400 daffodil bulbs which were planted on the forecourt of Ambassador House and in the median strip and horse trough on Parchmore Road and surrounding streets.



Tesco also kindly donated a further 800 bulbs which were distributed from THCAT's stall at Thornton Heath Festive Fair to encourage residents to underplant street trees and pop into pots in front gardens.



Any businesses or individuals interested in donating bulbs to the THCAT, please email us on action@thorntonheath.net and mark to my attention.

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Ambassador House



We continue to liaise with the owners of Ambassador House on the planning progress and hope to have an update shortly. In the meantime, the gardening club meets on the first Saturday of the month at 1-3pm to maintain the garden beds in the forecourt. We would like to thank the security team from Ambassador House for their help attaching our hose pipe to their water supply.



We welcome all members of the community to join us, no matter what your gardening skills.

Area guide to living in Thornton Heath

We are working alongside one of the High Street real estate agents on an area guide to promote all the great things Thornton Heath has going for it, such as community, convenient transport links, affordable housing, facilities, parks etc for residents looking to move into the area.

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THCAT Environmental Team - Barbara, Paul & Gaetane

Our team continues to have regular walkabouts in all 3 wards (Bensham Manor, Thornton Heath & West Thornton) to monitor progress with fly-tipping hotspots. We also continue to check registered HMOs and identify unregistered ones to report to the Council.

We also regularly write to various council staff (both at officer and senior management level) to chase up outstanding matters, and when necessary, we do not hesitate to escalate issues to director/mayoral level.

Our regular meetings with the Mayor's office keep us informed with the Council's new strategies to tackle persistent problem areas. We are meeting the Mayor again at the beginning of September for a progress report on the Blitz currently happening in our high street and for a detailed update on our previous meeting held with him and some of his team on 26 April.

During our walks, we now distribute THCAT's new flyer which encourages residents to report issues on the LoveCleanStreets app. We are actively knocking on residents' doors whilst promoting the work THCAT do, and encouraging other local residents to get involved if they can.



After over 8 years of constant reporting, we finally see tangible improvements on the streets as highlighted in the following before and after photos.

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Livingstone Road – Van removed



Before and After.

Brigstock Road



Before and After

We are finally seeing long-term solutions being implemented after our engagement with the owners.

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We Are Thornton Heath: Community App & Business Hub

We're thrilled to report that We Are Thornton Heath continues to grow, providing valuable local information and connecting businesses with residents as well as with each other. The platform is made up of two key parts: the Community App for residents and the Business Hub for local enterprises. With well over a thousand app downloads, Tilly has been focusing on boosting business sign-ups. 42 organisations have already joined.

Previously, the Business Hub came with a free trial, but now it's totally free for all businesses to join. Before the end of 2024, we'll be upgrading the hub to streamline the experience, including removing the bank detail entry section altogether. In the meantime, businesses can sign up using a voucher code to bypass the payment page. Plans for the launch of the new and improved hub are in the pipeline.

Are you a local organisation?

WE ARE THORNTON HEATH
BUSINESS HUB ACCESS
100% FREE
VOUCHER
VISIT thorntonheath.loqiva.com
USE CODE* **FreeTHCAT2024**
*DO NOT ENTER BANK DETAILS

Join the other 42 businesses already using We Are Thornton Heath!

Claim your FREE account today!



Share your offers, events, and news, create GeoAlerts, and connect with other businesses in the forum.



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For residents, we're seeing a fantastic increase in event listings and offers! The app is packed with local events for people of all ages, catering for a huge array of interests and needs, including dance classes, live music events, creative courses, free family-friendly events, kids' clubs, community hubs, fairs, tech support, food banks and volunteering opportunities. This year we have seen more great offers from local bars and restaurants, plus discounts on plants, photoshoots, massages, kids' books and magic shows!

Tilly continues to regularly update the info directory with local heritage, community support, kids' activities, contact details for MPs and councillors and other useful resources, such as how to report local issues. She is also running the We Are Thornton Heath X (Twitter) and Instagram accounts.

We Are Thornton Heath is part of a growing network of digital town hubs powered by Loqiva, with platforms emerging across the UK. This digital approach is proving to help communities stay connected, informed, and engaged.

We're excited to see how We Are Thornton Heath continues to inspire and unite our wonderful Thornton Heath community.

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Financial Statement - David Fell

Opening balance on 26th Aug 23	£ 11,797
Income over the last 12 months	£ 1,412
Funds spent over the last 12 months	£ 1,912
Closing balance on 26th Aug 24	£ 11,297

Date	Funder	Cash in	Spent to date	Remaining	Project
2015	Capital Cleanup	£ 1,490	£ 1,490		Clocktower planting
2015	Paddypower	£ 500	£ 500	£ -	Christmas tree and decorations
2015	Whetherspoons	£ 250	£ 192	£ 58	Planting
2015-2016	Govia Thameslink Grant	£ 800	£ 800		Station
2015-2019	Donation	£ 82		£ 82	Unspecified
2016	Brewers donation	£ 150		£ 150	Clocktower area
2016	Humayun 2016	£ 2,275	£ 2,093	£ 182	Chronicle + Dog Fouling campaign
2016	Jamie Audsley 2016	£ 3,750	£ 3,750		Highstreet, side streets and parks
2016	Thornton Heath Arts Week	£ 721	£ 721		Arts week
2017	CVA	£ 390	£ 390		Unspecified
2017	Jamie Audsley 2017	£ 2,000	£ 1,000	£ 1,000	Hotspots to beauty spots
2017	Job Centre Cash	£ 38	£ 38		Job Centre garden
2017	Karen Jewit 2017	£ 350	£ 350		Planters
2017	Matthew's Ward Budget	£ 5,000	£ 5,000		Chronicle
2017	Pat Clouder 2017	£ 100	£ 100		Job Centre garden
2017	Simon Carter	£ 100	£ 100		Chronicle
2017	Stuart King 2017	£ 500	£ 500		Pond planting
2018	Alison Butler 2018	£ 750		£ 750	Brigstock House Planters
2018	Jamie Audsley 2018	£ 7,500	£ 7,500	£ -	Highstreet, side streets and parks
2018	Pat Clouder 2018	£ 400	£ 400		Planters
2018	Stuart King 2018	£ 1,500	£ 1,500		Pond planting
2018	Unknown	£ 77		£ 77	Unspecified
2019	Jamie Audsley 2019	£ 7,500	£ 7,500		Improving Thornton Heath
2019	Janet Campbell 2019	£ 700	£ 560	£ 140	The Pond
2019	Stuart King 2019	£ 500	£ 476	£ 24	The Pond Mosaic
2019	Alison Butler 2019	£ 2,500		£ 2,500	Ambassador House Forecourt
2019	Jewett & Clouder 2019	£ 400		£ 400	Planters
2020	Jamie Audsley 2020	£ 6,500	£ 6,500	£ -	Ongoing actions
2020	Stuart King 2020	£ 20		£ 20	Pond donation
2020	Pat Clouder 2020	£ 200	£ 190	£ 10	Free Art
2020	Karen Jewit 2020	£ 200	£ 200		Free Art
2020	Janet Campbell 2020	£ 100	£ 88	£ 12	Free Art
2020	Alison Butler 2020	£ 250	£ 132	£ 118	Planters
2021	Cedric's Legacy	£ 8,537	£ 4,717	£ 3,820	Brook Road Trees
2021	In Bloom 2021 donations	£ 280	£ 275	£ 5	In Bloom
2022	Govia Thameslink Grant 2022	£ 199			Station
2022	Melfort Rd Banners Crowdfunding				Banners
2022	General Donations	£ 15			Unspecified
2023	Stanley Arts	£ 1,200	£ 1,200		Trumble Gardens Hut
2024	Croydon Lottery	£ 212			Unspecified
2017-2018	Market	£ 10,126	£ 10,093	£ 33	Thornton Heath Market
2017-2020	People's Health Trust	£ 26,028	£ 26,028		Terms of bid