For Community and

- East London's FREE Working Class News Sheet - 6

Solidarity



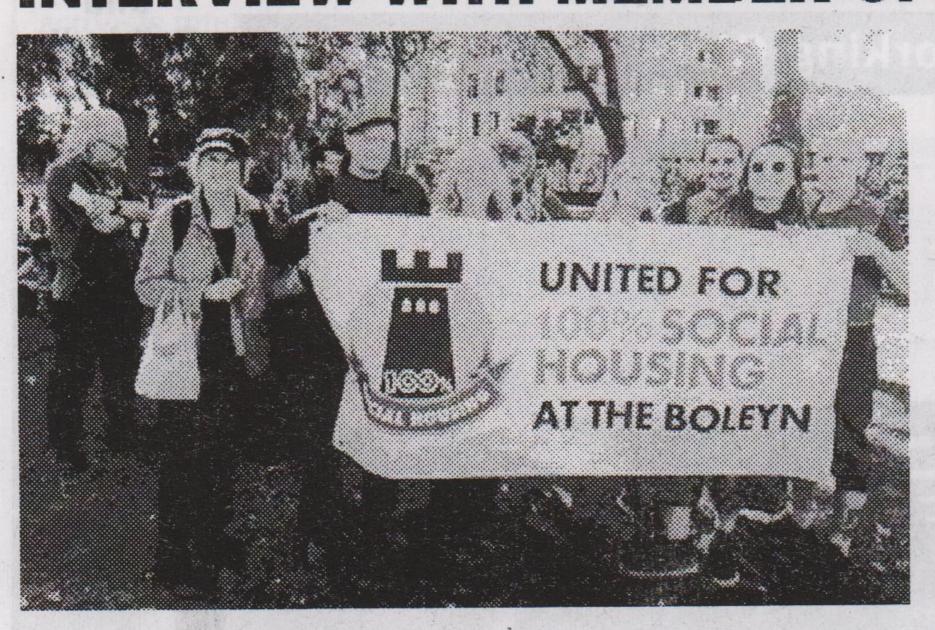
The current struggles in East London are part of a long tradition. We take pride in this tradition of solidarity, struggle and community. We remember the Match Girls Strike, the dockers' and tailors' strikes, all in 1889, the Wapping print strike in 1985, the squatting movement in the late 60s and early 1970s. We remember the Battle of Cable Street, Sylvia Pankhurst and the Women's Suffrage Federation, Rudolf Rocker and the Worker's Friend, the struggle against the National Front in the 1970s. We are reminded how East London Irish and Jews united to oppose the march of Mosley down Cable Street in 1936.

East London has been the birthplace of many progressive movements and inspired many books. For some writers East London means the Abyss, Darkest London, Outcast London, miles and miles of slums. For us the traditions of struggle and community are what counts.

What also counts is the fact that East London has been a haven for people fleeing from persecution and massacre. Take the Huguenots, French Protestants who had to leave France after more than a million were slaughtered and who ended up in the East End. Take many Jews from Eastern Europe, forced to leave there after vicious massacres and persecution. These waves of immigration to the East End were followed by the settling of immigrants from Ireland, many of whom worked on the docks, and from Bangladesh and Somalia in the 20th century.

Being Proudly East London doesn't mean we oppose new incomers to the area as long as they're not rich yuppies or property developers who are attempting to destroy our communities and drive us out. East London has a tradition of sheltering those fleeing from persecution and poverty, and it is one we also proudly celebrate.

INTERVIEW WITH MEMBER OF BOLEYN DEVELOPMENT



Howler: How did the campaign come about? What are the aims?

The Boleyn Dev campaign was born as a result of an outcry from the local community, shocked by the plans for the iconic Boleyn Stadium when West Ham United move to the Olympic Park in 2016. The local council plan to allow private developers Galliard Homes to build a "village" of almost 900 properties on the Boleyn Ground next year. None of these are for rent and only 51 "affordable" (80% of market value). With the growing housing crisis in London, especially in Newham, one of the capital's most deprived areas; we think it is vital that people have homes in their community that they can afford! We therefore stand for 100% social housing on the Boleyn Ground!

Howler: What has happened since the campaign started?

We have hosted a stall outside Queens Market on Green Street most Saturdays since the start of the campaign, where we have been able to collect hundreds of objection letters from the local community. We have been handing these in to the council, either during large protests or in more small scale hand overs.

We currently have 699 signatures on our e-petition. Additionally we have had representatives at many other radical events, including the People's Assembly Against Austerity Demo in June and the March Against Evictions hosted by Focus E15 Mothers. This has helped us to further publicise the campaign, as well as support the multiple similar campaigns in London. We have also had support from the fans of the Clapton Football Club who made a special collection for the campaign.

Howler: What is the current situation?

The council committee responsible for making the decision about the Galliard proposals are due to meet any time from October, and so we are currently just waiting on a date and then we will be mounting a big protest to show the council what the local community thinks of the plans. In the mean time we intend to collect further letters of objection and to spread the word of the campaign in the community.

Howler: What can people do?

The first step to helping is knowing about what is happening and spreading the message amongst your friends and family. You can follow our progress on Twitter **@boleyndev100** or by searching for us on Facebook:

https://www.facebook.com/Boleyn-Development-100-1601676723413228/timeline/.

We would love more people to become actively involved in the campaign, so please do drop us an email on boleynground 100@gmall.com to find out about our next meeting.

Recent up-date!

As we go to press we have just heard that the planning application is to be considered by the Planning Committee on the 20th of October. Good news is that Newham Council has recommended rejecting Galliard's application. This is great but Galliard will not let this stop them. The campaign continues!

CLAPTON ULTRAS: FOOTBALL FANS SHAKING THINGS UP IN EAST LONDON

This is an edited version of an article that appears in the current edition of <u>Strike!</u>

Before 2012 there were no Clapton Ultras: over the space of only three seasons, a group of left-wing anti-fascist football fans have, with their passion, noisy songs and a fondness for smoke flares in support of Clapton FC, a club in Forest Gate in east London, shaken up the staid, parochial county league that the team plays in.

What is happening in Forest Gate is a reflection of a growing trend amongst an increasing number of football fans who are tired of paying £50 or more for a match ticket, or simply cannot afford to, just to watch a game with no atmosphere or spectacle. At Clapton FC, most fans also support a League side, but have adopted a local team, one with a long and rich history but forever at the fringes of football, because it means watching with

friends for only £6, a beer in hand, without oppressive policing or officious stewards insisting everyone remain seated. For many, this is what has attracted them to switch to non-league football, or to return to the game after often years away from regular attendance at overpriced Premiership and League fixtures.

There is something else, however, that makes the Clapton Ultras noticeably different from other groups of football supporters: their absolute opposition to the often boorishly sexist, homophobic and right-wing sentiment and behaviour tolerated at many larger clubs. This has been coupled with the adoption of the best elements of a continental anti-fascist Ultras' culture that is strengthened by the presence of many Italian, Spanish and Polish fans.

This attitude extends to the club's place in its local neighbourhood, one of the poorest in London and the

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most ethnically diverse in the country. Acts of solidarity organised by the Clapton Ultras include distributing rights cards on the powers of immigration enforcement teams, organising food donations for a local project supporting asylum seekers with no access to public funds, raising cash for local group supporting victims of domestic violence and turning up in numbers to support campaigns around homelessness and evictions. At the end of the last season, on a truly magical day involving rainbow-coloured smoke flares, we helped launch an appeal that eventually succeeded in raising funds to keep open Newham's only LGBT youth group, which faced closure because of council cuts.

For many of us, this kind of community organising is just as important as the football: the Ultras bring together, in significant numbers, a group of like-minded activists with years of campaigning experience who can make a real impact locally. This extended to encouraging more local people so Clapton FC better reflects the community where it is based: just recently, we held a stall at the local Forest Gate Festival simply to remind local people that the club still exists and is far more welcoming and family-friendly than many might imagine. It's a real

necessity because, perhaps unsurprisingly, the majority of working class football fans remain white, straight and male. Constantly reaffirming our opposition to all forms of discrimination is slowly encouraging a greater level of diversity as the number of supporters increases, but not as fast as we would like.

Fundamentally, though, the Clapton Ultras remain just football fans, who happen to have created a safe, supportive space for others like themselves on the radical, largely unaligned left. It's somewhere to have a laugh, make new friends, temporarily forget what a massive cockwomble David Cameron is and still enjoy an outpouring of emotion at an away game in a tiny village somewhere out in the wilds of Essex.

You can find the Clapton Ultras online at: claptonultras.org, on Facebook at: facebook.com/ClaptonUltras and on Twitter at: @ClaptonUltras

The Clapton Ultras fanzine, Red Menace, is at: redmenacefanzine.wordpress.com
The Clapton Ultras podcast, The Old Spotted Dogcast, is at: theoldspotteddogcast.wordpress.com



POPLAR HARCA - AGENT OF SOCIAL CLEANSING

One of the biggest landlords in the London borough of Tower Hamlets is Poplar HARCA (Housing and Regeneration Community Association), the so-called social housing association, managing 9,000 homes. Like other 'social' housing associations it inherited many council estates from both the Greater London Council and the local council.

You would have thought that HARCA should continue to provide social housing in a borough that has one of the highest poverty levels in London. In actual fact Poplar HARCA's business strategy is to evict social tenants and replace their homes with properties for private sale and

'affordable' rent, which we know is 80% of market rents and therefore unaffordable to most.

They have already done this with the Leopold Estate (originally 135 socially let homes, now 71 'affordable' rent) and the Aberfeldy Estate (originally 211 homes for social rent now 190 at so-called 'affordable' rent).

At Balfron Tower in Poplar, HARCA, which the tenants voted in to manage the block, claims it can't afford to refurbish the block and rent properties at social rents. However, if full, Balfron brings in around £1.5m a year in rents, which would be enough to pay the necessary

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loan off over 20-years. And what has happened to all the rent Poplar HARCA took since it began managing Balfron in 2007? According to residents it's not gone on maintenance.

If permitted, around £20m will be spent on refurbishing the 1960s block before the majority of its 146 properties are sold off to bankers and investors with no chance of its original and intended residents to return.

There were around 135 socially let homes at Balfron. After the refurb there will be none. They did the same on previous occasions with the Leopold Estate (originally 135 socially let homes, now 71 'affordable' rent) and the Aberfeldy Estate (originally 211 homes for social rent now 190 at 'affordable' rent).

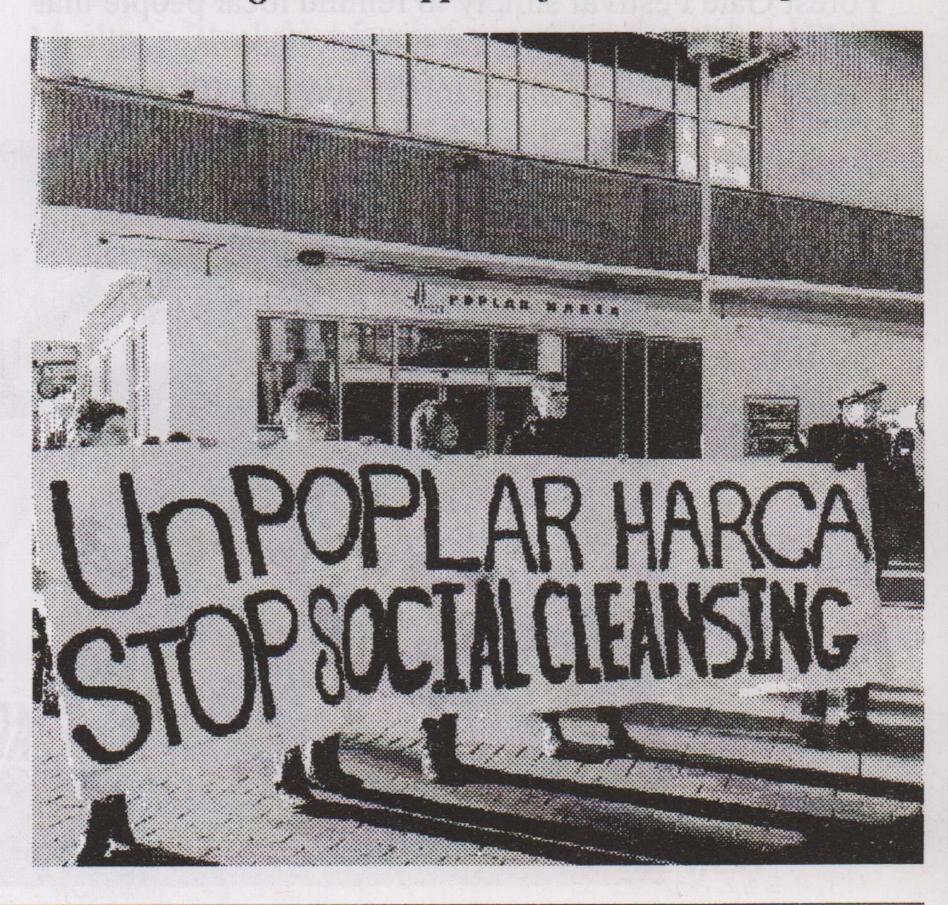
Action East End together with Tower Hamlets Private Renters highlighted what was going on at Balfron Tower when they demonstrated outside it and the nearby Balfron Tower. One resident, Stephen Halsey, started an online petition that got hundreds of signatures. The petition says: "Instead of returning the refurbished flats to former social tenants they will be sold off as luxury apartments on the private market. This will see a loss of 99 social homes despite Poplar HARCA boss Steve Stride claiming no development should see a loss of social housing....Residents cherish the light and space in their homes and the extraordinary view from them. Now HARCA deem them too valuable for the local community. We demand that Balfron stays at least 50% social."

Now HARCA have their eyes on the Chrisp Street Market, one of London's oldest. A recent article on Stride in Inside Housing noted that: "Mr Stride's tenacity and powers of persuasion are to be put to the test again in delivering his latest grand plan: to turn Poplar into the next Shoreditch. He envisions a 'tech city' of post-industrial offices serving as hubs for trendy tech-start-ups that are being priced out of Old Street's 'silicon roundabout'. It is likely there will be a few more tours to

do before the hipsters show up - but it is an increasingly conceivable possibility." In other words, a market that has been a supplier of cheap food and goods to the working class of the East End is to be gentrified out of all recognition, the cheap shops removed as well as 100 units of social housing surrounding the market.

In reply to this a campaign has been set up by local people to highlight what Poplar HARCA actually plans to do with the market. The campaign, actively supported by both Action East End and Tower Hamlets Private Renters, has put on stalls in the market and leafletted nearby streets to publicise what is going on. A public meeting was planned for October 20th as the Howler was going to press.

If we organise together to stop these developments in both Balfron Tower and Chrisp Street Market we have a chance of stopping Poplar HARCA dead in its tracks, with its plans to destroy working class life in the area. HARCA has to be exposed as an agent of gentrification rather than a genuine supplier of social housing.



NO.W.HERE FIGHTS TO BE SOMEWHERE!

The area around Shoreditch has been a key part of the gentrification of London, with giant office and residential towers, and shops such as Cereal Killer (seller of ridiculously priced bowls of cereal and the target of a recent protest by Class War), catering to the incoming rich. The no.w.where collective based near the Shoreditch end of the Bethnal Green Rd is now being threatened with eviction as the developers spread their tentacles further into East London. They are not accepting the situation and have mounted a determined campaign that has already seen some success. They have just been granted the status of 'asset of community value' by the council which makes it more difficult for the landlord to evict them.

There is also some evidence that a couple of property developers who were interested in the building are losing interest because the property is not worth the money the landlord is asking and there is resistance to the sale. As a member of the collective says: 'The small wins along the way, keeping greedy landlords and their scavengers - poverty developers in check – show what can happen when we as a community stand up to them!'

However, they need our support! The landlord is appealing against the 'asset of community value' status, arguing that they don't serve the local community and there is bound to be a property

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developer who will want to pay the price given the way the area is a centre of gentrification.

Things you can do to support the campaign as we aim to satisfy our long term ambition to become a cultural worker's co-operative.

- 1. Send in letters of support from the community to show that you value their contribution to the local community.
- 2. Sign the petition (text below) to lobby the landlord to renew the lease.
- 3. Stay in touch with no.w.here http://www.no-w-here.org.uk/

Twitter - @nowherelondon

Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/nowhere-113803008639312/timeline/

This petition

https://www.change.org/p/landlords-protectcommunity-spaces-stop-the-eviction-of-no-where?recruiter=146013045&utm_source=share_peti tlon&utm_medium=copylink

is vital as no.w.here joins a long list of grassroots community spaces, homes and hospitals facing eviction in London. For 10 years no.w.here has worked in Tower Hamlets as a not for profit community project, open artist platform and film laboratory built on the historical legacy of the London filmmakers co-operative. Run by cultural workers who place value on education, resistance, collaboration

and free expression, no.w.here's future is under threat from a tidal wave of property developers. Vital in its community, no.w.here does not view displacement by billionaires or the destruction of communities as a natural evolution.

What is happening?

"The day after the election, the capital's luxury flat market soared, as the global elite rushed to buy a piece of 'real' London life". The Guardian 30 May 2015

no.w.here was renewing Its 9 year lease, as the Tory election win triggered a wave of property development speculation across London. Enquiries for our building led to the landlord closing down lease conversations, the building is now receiving development bids, no.w.here and three local businesses face eviction. In response no.w.here applied for and was granted legal status as an Asset of Community Value (ACV). This ACV status is now being appealed against by the landlord.

Stop the Blocks

https://stoptheblockslondon.wordpress.com/

The no.w.here campaign is part of Stop the Blocks, an umbrella group for anti-gentrification groups in Tower Hamlets, including Save Chrisp St Market, the Hollands Estate -

https://bbcresidents.wordpress.com/ - and Bishopsgate Goodsyard -

http://www.morelightmorepower.co.uk/.

SUPPORTER'S LETTER

Dear Action East End,

I received your copy of Howler for the first time at Norton Folgate on Sunday. Thank you for making me aware of some of the issues going on at the moment in east London.

On the front page you have quoted Stephen Conway, Chief Executive of Galliard as saying "London is no longer affordable for people on normal wages. In fact, it never really was".

Yes, it was, and for some considerable time. My husband's parents, both working class from Deptford bought their house in the sixtles on a normal working wage. My parents bought their house (large, old in east London) in the seventies, my dad was a carpenter and my mum a dinner lady in an east London state school.

We bought our house in the eighties on two very normal working wages.

In the seventies the landlord who owned all of the 28 houses in my parents road except for one, stated in his Will that all the houses had to be offered to the tenants to buy them at a bit below market price. Most tenants bought their house when the

landlord passed away. Everyone was working class, working in local jobs with average wages. The one house that the landlord did not own was owned by a lorry driver and his dressmaker wife.

Yes, it definitely was affordable and for a very long time. We have allowed the housing market to run out of control. Absent ownership, empty properties. House prices that are created by the global economy instead of reflecting the local, immediate economy and doing what houses are supposed to do, put a roof over people's heads.

Best regards,

Linda B.



TAKE BACK THE EAST END



The East End is under siege. Everywhere housing estates, markets and pubs are under threat as the property developers, aided by councils and housing associations, eye up the profits to be made by driving out the working class that have lived here for so long. The Blitz didn't do it but the property developers with a big thumbs up from this government think they can.

East London is rapidly becoming the playground of the rich as luxury flats go up everywhere. Not content with this, they want to steal our history too and see the East End as a theme park peopled with the token Pearly King or Queen or the odd sanitised pie and mash shop if you're lucky.

One glaring example of their attempt to take over our history is the new Ripper Museum in Cable Street. It was originally pitched to Tower Hamlets Council as a museum dealing with the history of women in the East End by the businessman Mark Palmer-Edgecumbe, former diversity officer with Google (joke!). Permission was granted in October 2014. We do not know if he had the intention from the start to actually make this a museum to the murderer called Jack the Ripper by the press at the time, or whether he realised later on that he could make more money. We know that he started buying Ripper artefacts from the Police Museum in London quite early on. When the wraps came off in July local residents realised to their horror that the museum was now one devoted to a serial killer and mutilator of working class women.

As Guardian reporters discovered Palmer-Edgecumbe: "first became interested in opening such an "attraction" in 2008, when he was involved in an exhibition about the serial killer at the Museum of London Docklands. He declared this on the museum's website, although the page has now been taken down. He was also listed as a codirector of a company called Jack the Ripper Museum (London) Limited in 2012. That company was wound up in March 2014. He's listed as the co-director of another company, 5S Visual Supplies limited, which was incorporated in October 2013 and changed its name to Jack the Ripper Museum (London) Limited in May 2014."

The real history of the East End is a history of struggle. It's the Match Girls strike, dockers' strikes and tailors' strikes. It's a history of Rudolf Rocker and the Jewish anarchist movement, of Sylvia Pankhurst and her papers Women's Dreadnought and then Worker's Dreadnought. It's the Battle of Cable Street where local people stopped Mosley's Blackshirt fascists marching through a Jewish area. It's about the mass squats of the 1960s and the fight against the National Front in the 1970s. It's about self-organisation and direct action. It's not about a sordid glorification of a serial killer to make a fast buck. East Londoners will not accept this further insult to our culture and heritage.

This museum must not be allowed to continue. Tower Hamlets Council now needs to reconsider the application. If there is to be a museum on Cable Street, it should be one devoted to the rich social history of the East End, to women's struggles or indeed the fight against fascism for which Cable Street became famous. Tell Mark the Rip-Off to get lost and stand proud for our class and the East End.

There are regular protests at the museum supported by a number of groups.

For up-to-date information on the next protest see:

https://www.facebook.com/classwarparty

THE LATEST SUCCESS FROM THE QUEENS MARKET CAMPAIGN

Rapacious capitalism can go too far even for the middle classes. Developers pulling down a favourite pub, local libraries closed down, services slashed in the delightful village where one's second home is situated.

Cue the Localism Act introduced in 2012 which allows community groups to list favourite buildings or sites as 'assets of community value' on a local authority register. They then get the right to bid for them and then buy

should the owner decide to sell - not an automatic right to buy, mind you, the government didn't want to upset the developers more than necessary.

Miles away from Cotswold villages we have Queens
Market: the popular street market in Upton Park London
E13 specialising in value for money fresh food including
specialist African and Asian foods. Unfortunately it sits
on prime land next to the Upton Park underground station
and its customers don't fit in with Newham Council's

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gentrification agenda.

So it seemed a good idea to local campaign group the Friends of Queens Market to use the 2012 Localism Act to have the market nominated as an 'asset of community value' - probably not what Cameron and co had in mind when they passed the Act.

Queens Market is the popular street market in Upton Park London E13 specialising in value for money fresh food including specialist African and Asian foods.

Unfortunately it sits on prime land next to the Upton Park underground station and its customers don't fit in with Newham Council's gentrification agenda. The community has defeated one attempt to sell the market to developers but Newham Council have not renounced their plans to 'redevelop' the market. So in November the Friends of Queens Market sent in a formal application to get the market listed.

The legislation specifies that applications should be resolved within eight weeks. In fact it took over fifty

emails, press involvement, intervention from the Local Government Ombudsman and crucially community pressure and a demo before the market was listed twenty-two months later. A leaked email from the Town Hall referred to the application as 'another hot topic'!

Now following the listing the Council is legally obliged to tell Friends of Queens Market if they are thinking of selling the market. And could the distant future see the market run as a trader-community co-operative?

Last word from Daniel Woodard, market vegetable stall holder (for five generations!) who says: 'I'm over the moon! This gives us traders' stability and legal safeguards!'

Contact Friends of Queens Market to protect and promote the market

020 8472 4730, m: 07915234404

friendsofqueensmarket@yahoo.com www.friendsofqueensmarket.org.uk

TIPS FOR DIRECT ACTION IN YOUR COMMUNITY

The only way to win any campaign is to organise with other people in the community. Don't rely on others, such as elected or self-selected leaders to act on your behalf.

- Stalls to get the word out to local residents. Make some leaflets, and set up a fold-out table in a prominent place such as a local market. Use the opportunity to talk to people. Have a mailing list sign-up sheet and/or a petition.
- Pickets three people is enough to start, perhaps outside a company who use workfare, or to support someone having trouble at the housing office. Hand out fliers explaining the issues.
- Banners and signs a white bedsheet with black paint will do if you can't afford to get one made. Artistic
 people are a godsend for making beautiful banners, and it can also be a great way of engaging children
 and parents.
- Social media to spread your campaign more widely around London, and make links with other groups.
 Set up a Twitter profile, a Wordpress blog, a change.org petition, and a riseup.net email list.
- Community newsheet like the Howler, which you're reading now! An opportunity to tell people in more
 detail what's going on. Publish the same articles on your blog, and disseminate on social media. Place it in
 community centres, libraries, cafes, and hand it out at events.
- Public meeting if after a number of stalls you've collected a lot of emails, addresses or phone numbers, then book a room and call a public meeting. Give people a space to open up and discuss how the issues have affected them and the area, and discuss what to do to fight back.
- Occupy empty spaces to block demolitions and create new community spaces. This could be social
 homes facing evictions, empty shops about to be replaced with expensive businesses, or public services
 facing closure like libraries or nurseries. Groups like Focus E15 mothers and the Sweets Way Estate have
 had huge success doing this. Find legal and practical advice online from the Green and Black Cross and
 the Advisory Service for Squatters.
- Stay equal The most successful campaigns are where people feel empowered in the decision making process, where someone can come to a meeting and immediately get stuck in, where they quickly discover the power they have as an individual and don't just rely on others.

EAST LONDON RADICAL ASSEMBLY

is a group which tries to link together both existing local grassroots campaigns and new/inexperienced activists interested in a wide range of issues, such as housing, anti-cuts, police violence, immigration raids and more. The aim is to provide a space for people to come together across the usual sectarian or campaign boundaries to contribute to each other's struggles, to be an entry point for people wanting to get active in their area, and as a network for radical education and skill sharing. There are no leaders and decisions are made collectively.

The East London group is part of the wider Radical Assembly, a network of autonomous groups aiming to apply these same aims and principles across the city. It began in the days following the Conservative election victory, after an initial assembly was called by Brick Lane Debates which attracted 1000 people.

Actions of the East group have included a day of solidarity with the Focus E15 Mothers and Boleyn Ground campaigns, a public assembly in Victoria Park (as part of the Stop the Blocks weekend of action), and stalls handing out know-your-rights literature from the Anti-Raids Network. We have an upcoming event in collaboration with Focus E15 called East London Night of Resistance, taking place on 28th October, 8pm at the King Edward VII in Stratford, where there will be music, poetry, films and discussion on the housing crisis.

RADICAL HOUSING NETWORK

We in Action East End believe it is important to link up with other groups as part of the struggle for a better society. Therefore we are affiliated to the Radical Housing Network, (RHN) made up of London based groups fighting for housing justice.

The RHN has led the way in helping to build an effective housing movement. It is composed of over 30 local campaigns and groups who are fighting social cleansing and gentrification by resisting evictions and demolitions of estates and demanding more social housing.

http://radicalhousingnetwork.org/

They are organising a London-wide housing conference to bring different campaigns together to look in more depth at the issues and to share experiences and discuss strategies for the future.

DETAILS OF THE CONFERENCE ARE:

WHEN: November 14th - 10am-6pm

WHERE: All Saints Community Centre (rear of 105 New Cross Rd, London SE14 5DJ)

https://www.facebook.com/events/1756597 19438664/

OTHER INTERESTING CONTACTS AND CAMPAIGNS

Focus E15: Campaigning against evictions and social cleansing in Newham https://www.facebook.com/pages/Focus-E15-Mothers/602860129757343

Newham Monitoring Project: Longstanding campaigning group based in Newham, fighting racism and monitoring abuses of civil rights - http://www.nmp.org.uk/

Random Blowe: Great blog on what's happening in Newham - personal blog of a local activist - http://www.blowe.org.uk/

Tower Hamlets Residents and Tenants Associations - http://www.th-federation.org.uk/



ABOUT ACTION EAST END

Action East End is a local group based in East London that wants to contribute to the resistance against austerity, repression, social cleansing, and the takeover of our city by developers and the rich.

We do this by both defending ourselves in our communities and workplaces and promoting improvements in the quality of life for working class people. This we believe can only be done through our own initiatives, outside the agenda of the local authorities or political groups, and by taking collective action for ourselves.

One of our main activities is producing a local news sheet, **The Howler**, which gives publicity and support local campaigns.

Please get in touch to be on our e-mail list or to get more involved.

We meet the second Thursday of every month at the Common House, 5e Punderson Gardens, Bethnal Green:

http://www.commonhouse.org.uk/

Send an email to: actioneastend@gmail.com | Blog: https://actioneastend.wordpress.com/ Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/actioneastend | Twitter: https://twitter.com/actioneastend