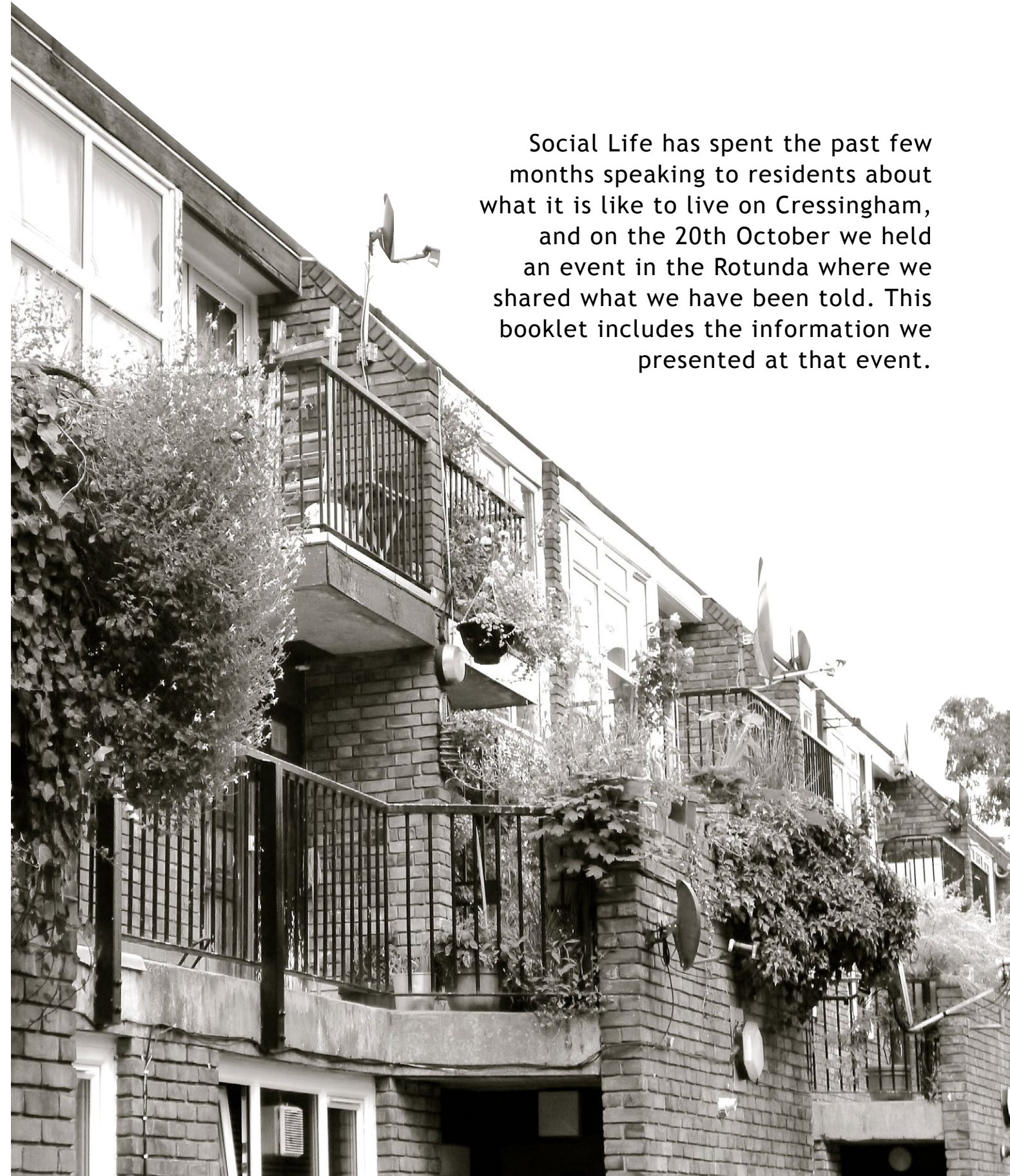


Living on Cressingham

This booklet reports on conversations with over 100 residents on Cressingham Gardens estate.

Social Life has spent the past few months speaking to residents about what it is like to live on Cressingham, and on the 20th October we held an event in the Rotunda where we shared what we have been told. This booklet includes the information we presented at that event.



Cressingham Gardens Estate

Cressingham’s history

Cressingham Gardens was built between 1967 and 1978 by Lambeth council. It is a low rise, low density estate, originally designed by Edward Hollamby, Lambeth’s borough architect. The estate was built to ‘Parker Morris standards’ which means homes are spacious and light inside.

It was built around the many trees on the site, its design blends well into Brockwell Park and separates it from Tulse Hill. The estate is designed in blocks, with houses and flats opening into shared areas. There are many large green areas, gardens and balconies.

The names of the estate and blocks reflect the history of Tulse Hill. “Mercy Cressingham, spinster” owned the land when it was used for farming, from 1806 onwards. “Bodley”, “Uppgroves” and “Scarlettes” were all names of former Manors in Tulse Hill. The architect was strongly influenced by William Morris and the social ideals of the Arts and Crafts movement, which is reflected in the careful design of the estate.



Sue’s daughter on Hardel Walk in the 1980s, Sue in 2013.

“The house is not just a house, it’s a home” Scarlett Manor resident



Bodley Manor Way.



Scarlette Manor resident in his living room; a typical back garden; a typical stairwell on Hardel Walk; Longford Walk resident in front of her house.



Living on Cressingham

Homes

Many people are happy with their homes on Cressingham and appreciate the light, spacious design.

On most blocks there are residents who are living in overcrowded conditions. Some would like to move to a home with more bedrooms, others are reluctant to move because they would like to stay on the estate, and are willing to put up with being overcrowded to stay on Cressingham.

“How much nicer can you get, at the end of a long day working, to go and sit out there”
Scarlette Manor resident on their garden

One resident expressed that his living standards are holding him back and making him unhappy.

Some people told us that the flats are expensive to heat, that they can be too hot in Summer and cold in winter.

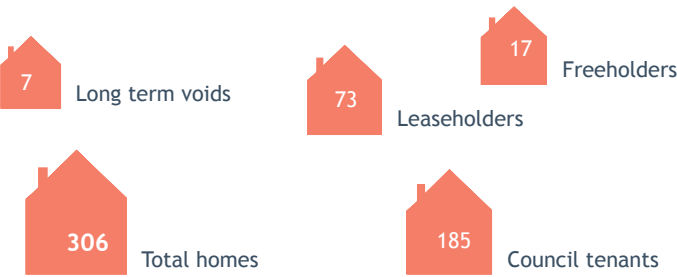
“If I’m going to give up my great living room, my garden and park over the road, I want something as good.”
Longford Walk resident

The majority of people have had problems with their houses. But many said that the benefits of the estate outweigh any problems.



Who lives on Cressingham?

The estate was originally built as council housing but now is home to a mixture of council tenants, leaseholders, freeholders and private tenants. There are 306 homes on the estate, 209 of these are home to council tenants, there are 73 leaseholders and 17 freeholders. Some of the leasehold and freeholders now rent out their homes.



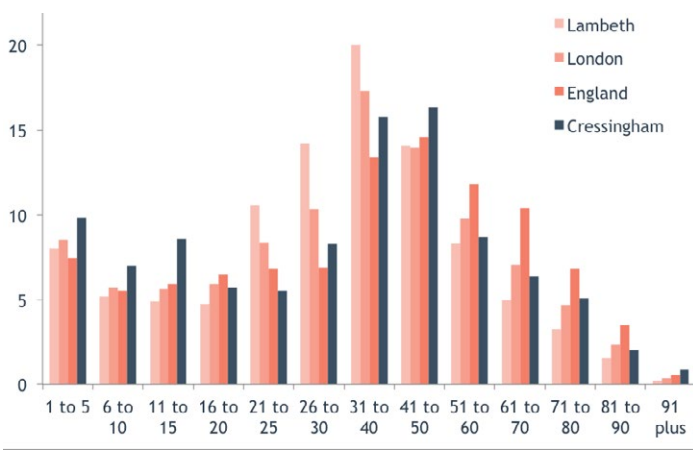
Comparing Cressingham's population to the Lambeth average, there are more children and young people under 20 living on the estate, more people over 40, and fewer people in their 20s and 30s. More people on Cressingham are unemployed or long term sick than the Lambeth average, fewer people work full time. People living on Cressingham are more likely to consider they are in poor health than people across Lambeth.

The three biggest ethnic groups that residents consider they belong to are White British, Black African and Black Caribbean. The majority of people living on the estate were born in the UK. Slightly more people are overcrowded than the Lambeth average. A quarter of council tenants on the estate have made an application to the council to transfer to a new property. This is slightly lower than the average for the borough.

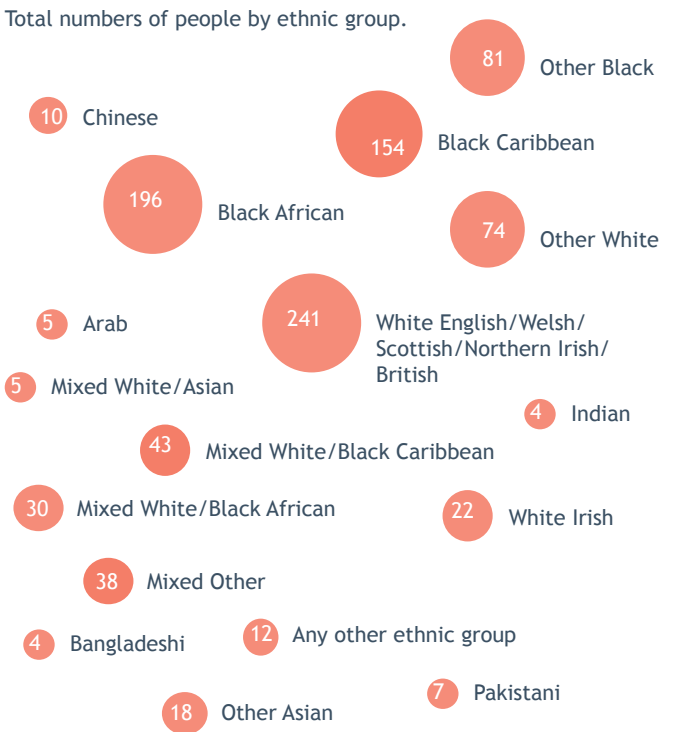
Health



Age



Ethnic origin



All these statistics come from the Office of National Statistics and are for 2011. They cover the Cressingham Gardens estate and a small area on the other side of Tulse Hill.

Social Life's work

Why is Social Life here?

Social Life has been appointed by Lambeth Council to work with the residents of Cressingham Gardens to consider the different options for the future of the estate.

Social Life will work with tenants and residents to develop a set of proposals. We will give everyone living on the estate a voice in shaping what happens in the future. Our starting point has been the discussions between residents and the council that began in 2012.

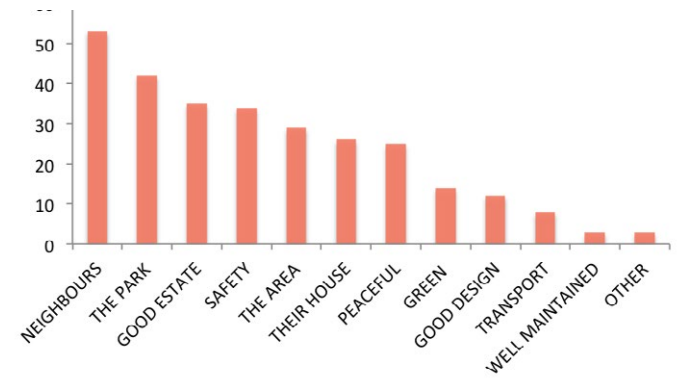
Developing options for the estate with residents

Social Life will be running a taskforce - a series of four meetings - from December 2013 to February 2014. Our aim is to bring together a group of residents that reflect the different blocks, housing types and backgrounds of the people living on the estate.

The taskforce will be run as a series of “deliberative workshops”. This is a way of bringing a group of people together to explore an issue in-depth, to look at new information, and to come to a shared view. We believe that everyone makes better decisions when they are given an opportunity to talk through the issues and when they are given good information and support from experts.

We aim to develop options for the future of the estate. We need residents to volunteer to take part in this taskforce. We want people to commit to as many meetings as possible, but we know you all have busy lives. We will make sure that what is coming out of the taskforce meetings is made available to all residents through estate notice boards, through a website that Lambeth is setting up.

Social Life is a social enterprise set up by the Young Foundation in 2012.



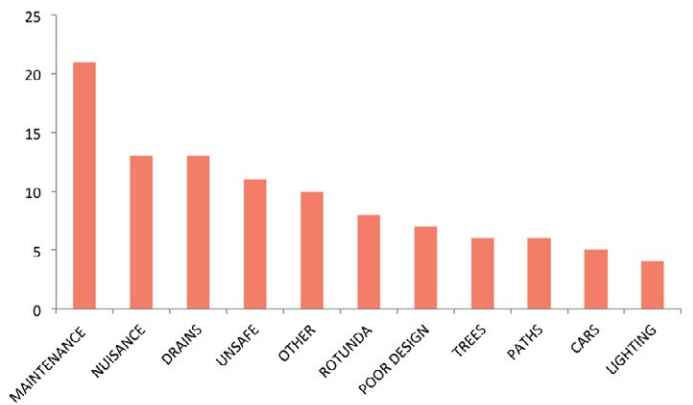
What Cressingham residents said they like about living here, by number of responses (from 118 interviews).

Talking to residents

The Social Life team have spoken to 109 households on Cressingham Gardens, with two to four Social Life staff visiting the estate to speak to residents on 22 occasions in total.

Most of these visits have been with the Social Life trolley. On some visits we spoke to residents in their homes or on their doorsteps, often following up initial contacts that we had made through our trolley visits.

These conversations have helped us understand residents’ perceptions of the estate, the council, what they know of plans for future change, and how they would want to be involved in this. We have also looked at the statistics about comparable areas, using data that Social Life has developed.



What Cressingham residents said they would change about the estate, by numbers of responses (from 118 interviews).



Social Life's work from July to October 2013.

The Rotunda

The Rotunda

The Rotunda is valued by many for its special architectural history. In the last year the TRA have put a lot of work into renovating the building and would like to make it a resource for the whole community. The management of the Rotunda is voluntary and carried out by residents. Different residents have been involved in trying to run activities in the past but it has been hard for them to maintain that commitment.

Some activities that people would like to see are English lessons, dance classes, fitness activities, activities for young people like roller blading and table tennis, and play schemes in the school holidays.

A small number of people, most of them elderly, spoke of how they believe that the Rotunda used to serve the community

“I would like to see it fixed up, have a team to run it, generate some income that could contribute to repairs”
Bodley Manor resident

“If we could have an exercise club down there that would be brilliant”
Hardel Walk resident

better. These people described how there used to be more activities for residents, like the Over 55s Tea Afternoon which was an opportunity for older residents to get together, have some refreshments and talk. Many of the residents who used to go to this said they would love to see activities like this happen again.

“We should learn to knit, make cushions, put on a play”
Uprove Manor resident



Image: The Rotunda; Bubbles: Some of the suggested activities that residents said they would like to see in the Rotunda.

Living on Cressingham

The sense of community

What residents said that they most liked about the estate was the strong community feel. Forty-seven residents talked to us about their good relationships with their neighbours.

Block unity

The ten blocks of Cressingham Gardens are designed so that each one has a small pedestrian street or walkway that binds the two rows of houses facing each other. Each block has its own distinct identity, some are higher and face onto the street, others are bungalows next to the park. Each block also has its own smaller community, with neighbours, especially longer standing residents, often knowing every single person living on their block. Hardel Walk, the largest block, tends to have clusters of neighbours with each raised level. People spoke about how the layout of the blocks means that you constantly bump into your neighbours, seeing each other coming and going.

There is a high level of trust on the estate and a lot of residents will leave their front doors open or hang out in their block walkway so that they can keep an eye on their children or chat with their neighbours. Some blocks have communal gardens.

“It’s definitely friendly” Roper’s Walk resident

Although people do know residents across the estate, people say the strongest relationships and sense of community is to the block where you live and your block neighbours.

One Hardel resident told us that 45 different nationalities live in her block, including people from Jamaica, Ireland, Portugal, England, Nigeria ... she enjoys going to the different celebrations and sharing food from different countries.

Mutual support

According to some residents, there is a lot of inter-generational support on Cressingham. Many older people have said neighbours kids will help them with their shopping. Younger people told us that their parents send them out to help with shopping or shovel snow in the winter. And this support is also reciprocated; older people look after kids if a parent needs to pop out, or watch out for them playing out front. One woman said the local kids

call her “Nanny” and another looks after her neighbour’s baby.

There are a lot of people on the estate in ill-health and many that are living alone. For them it is important to know that their neighbours will check in on them to make sure they’re ok.

“It’s a really lovely community” Scarlett Manor resident

Several people told us they know their neighbours will come and help if they are unwell and this gives them peace of mind. One resident from Bodley Manor pointed out how important neighbourliness is for people’s mental health, saying it happens here “in a very natural way”.

Many residents leave a spare set of door keys with their neighbours. They look after neighbours’ plants or pets while they are away, and notice if they haven’t seen someone for a while.

The Tenants and Residents Association

There is an active Tenants and Residents Association (TRA) that came together a year ago. The TRA meets fortnightly and has organised planting, improvements to the estate, the Open House in September, and an estate action day where over 70 repairs were carried out and many trees removed.

The TRA has surveyed the estate to find out whether residents want to stay on the estate, what repairs they need done, and what they think about possible regeneration plans. The TRA describes its aim as: “to represent residents, ensuring that an option to repair the estate remains a firm option.

The TRA is endeavouring to ensure transparency from Lambeth Council, by scrutinising their claims relating to the proposed regeneration. If the research shows that repairs are the best option, the TRA would campaign for that.”

Some residents not actively involved in the TRA feel that the TRA doesn’t understand the experience of everyone living on the estate, and there is a perception amongst some that it “isn’t for them”. The TRA would like more people to be involved and to run wider activities but feel all their time has had to be focused on the future changes.

“It creates a community through all the ages” Bodley Manor resident

What we’ve found

The current **design** of the estate appears to support local social life and resident wellbeing, **residents value the good relations** between neighbours, the **easy access to the park** and the bus stops.

Cressingham is largely a peaceful estate where neighbours have **good social relationships**.

Social networks are mainly within blocks. Residents describe the estate as being “safe” and “peaceful”.

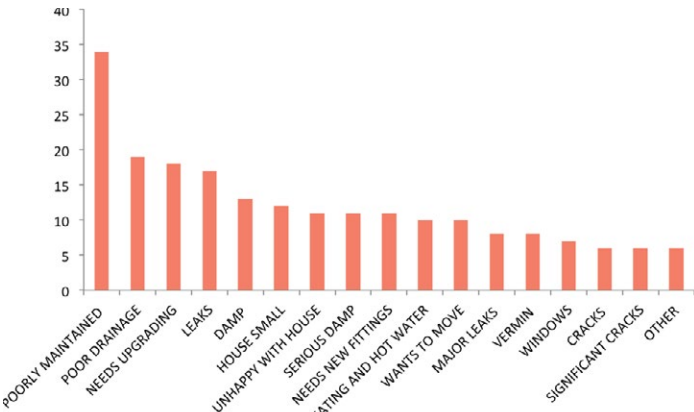
Cressingham is seen as a **safe place**, and (apart from isolated incidents) this perception is reflected in crime statistics. Some longer standing residents have said that the **estate has improved a lot, it used to feel more unsafe in the past**.

There are problems with **disrepair** in some individual properties, and in the common areas in some blocks. **Residents of certain blocks experience shared problems**, possibly caused by wider structural problems of the estate and by faults in the design (to be confirmed by the survey which will report at the end of October)

Common problems include **leaks, blocked drains** and **damp**

Some residents - social and private tenants, freeholders and leaseholders - would be **happy to leave the estate, either to get a home that suits their needs better**, or for personal reasons. Some people living with disrepair and structural problems would be happy to move to a better home without problems. Some people would like **a better or larger home** on the estate.

Some **vulnerable residents** are living in homes with **severe disrepair**. There is a feeling that getting repairs done takes a long time and is often ineffective.



What Cressingham residents said about the problems with their homes, by numbers of responses (from 118 interviews).

People have a **high degree of attachment to their estate**, for some this is because of the design and architecture; others have less attachment to the buildings but wish to retain their good relationships with their neighbours and the peacefulness of the estate.

The vast majority of residents would **prefer to stay** on the estate.

Compared to similar areas, Cressingham has **lower crime** than we would expect. Cressingham residents’ sense of belonging and their **feelings of safety are higher than in similar areas**. They also have better relationships with their neighbours.

Many residents are **confused by the process** to date, and believe that there is already a plan to demolish the estate. There is a group who are unwilling to take part in consultation because of **time delays** and because they feel they have made their feelings known in the past. Some residents are **actively campaigning** against substantive change for the estate; another group who used to participate in the TRA **feel alienated from current TRA activities**.

Living on Cressingham

The estate’s character

“Peaceful” and “quiet” were commonly used to describe why people liked living on the estate. There are many things that give the estate this special quality, some people say it’s because of its village-like feel and others says it’s because it’s next to the park.

Many people fear that if there are more people living on the estate, its unique character will change.

One resident from Scarlett Manor said he likes the layout because it’s set back from the main road and there’s the park, so it’s ideal for kids to play. Hearing kids running around makes the estate feel safe and lively. He wants his kids to play here as they grow up.

“It’s a beautiful place to live in”
Upprove Manor resident

“When we came here we thought ‘my god! It’s wonderful!’” Hardel Walk resident

“It was like a fairytale, so beautiful” Hardel Walk resident

Many of the residents that moved onto the estate in the 1970s are still living here. Families have gone through a whole cycle of expanding and then shrinking. There are some families with three generations living on the estate. However many of the original residents have left or passed away. People miss their old friends.

The original residents have mixed views about how the estate has changed. Some people feel that when they moved in it was a wonderful estate and now it has been left to decline. Others remember crack dens and squats and say the estate feels much better now.

According to many of residents we spoke to, there is a perception that the estate as a whole has been very poorly maintained over the years.

“They’ve let it go to rack and ruin”
Longford resident



Hambridge Way.

Safety

Although some residents feel unsafe, for the majority, Cressingham is a safe place where they are not afraid of crime.

Crime statistics for Tulse Hill show that the estate has lower crime than other estates in the area. Local agencies told us the same thing.

Residents described there being a lot of ‘natural surveillance’ on the estate with residents always keeping an eye out for each other. For example, they will watch each other’s children when they’re playing outside and alert one another if there are unfamiliar people hanging around.

“I leave the door open and let the kids play outside. You don’t get that often in London”
Longford Walk resident

Some people talked about how the layout and design of the estate contributes to the sense of safety: the kitchens face onto the block walkways, and cars cannot get onto the estate.

Some people liked the fact that Cressingham doesn’t have some of the characteristics of other nearby estates like dark stairwells. The car parks on Cressingham used to attract anti-social behaviour but this seems to have stopped.

Some residents have had people breaking into their homes through their back gardens and there are houses with barbed wire attached to their garden walls. Two residents spoke to us about difficult incidents in the past, and how these brought neighbours together.

One resident living in the north part of Crosby Walk says that the empty homes, which she called the “concrete jungle”, make her feel very unsafe. Another resident living in this end of the estate says he is used to the empty homes now, people look out for each other, but he won’t go to the rest of the estate because there you have “to watch your back”.



Hardel Walk.



Some residents said the area between the back gardens of Hardel Walk and the fronts of Hambridge Way feels unsafe.

Living on Cressingham

Estate maintenance

Residents get on very well with the estate cleaners from Pinnacle; many mentioned how the public spaces are well kept. Others told us that they have to do the maintenance of the communal spaces themselves.

Some residents have set up a gardening club to maintain the communal spaces and are taking real pride how Cressingham looks. There is a feeling that some residents could maintain the spaces outside their homes better. People complained about rubbish being dumped.

People feel fed up of asking the Council and Lambeth Living for things to be done, and a lot of people told us they are doing repairs themselves. Some worry about the amount of money they have spent on them.

“The estate is managed by people who don’t have the skills to manage an estate, they dont understand buildings, trees and plants” Hardel Walk resident



Vacant properties on Crosby Walk.

The wider area

One of the unique qualities of the estate is its proximity to Brockwell Park. Almost all residents told us they liked living here because of it.

The common green spaces on the estate, including the mounds, are used less because people go to the park. People with small children often let their kids play out on the estate. The green spaces are well used for gardening.

Residents liked the location of the estate. There is access to many buses that can take you to Brixton, Tulse Hill and Streatham for example. Many people feel that this community is part of the wider Brixton community. However some expressed concerns that the face of Brixton is changing and there’s a fear that these changes, particularly in terms of the population, will spread to Cressingham.

“The park is such a bonus, moving would be a massive change” Crosby Walk resident



Image: Resident-led planting across the estate’s public spaces; Bubbles: What residents liked and didn’t like most about the estate, by number of responses.



Bodley Manor home next to Brockwell Park.



Informal shortcuts to the park used by younger residents.

Block headlines

Here is the breakdown of the comments residents have made, by block; what they liked about the estate; what they would change about the estate; and if they had any problems with their home.

● Hardel Walk

We carried out 29 interviews with 27 households. We asked what they liked about the estate:
15 said their neighbours
12 said they feel safe
11 said being close to the park
8 said it is a good estate
8 said it was peaceful
7 said their house
6 said they liked the wider area
6 said good transport links
5 said good design
5 said the greenness
1 said the estate is well maintained
1 said that local schools are good.

We asked what they would change about the estate:
8 said poor maintenance
6 said problems with their neighbours
6 said the poor design of their homes and the layout of the estate
4 said the drains and gutters
3 said they want the Rotunda to be used more
2 said it feels unsafe
2 said the estate needs more lighting
1 said problems caused by trees
1 said the paths
1 said problems with cars, parking and car parks
1 said that residents should make more effort to look after the estate
1 said that there is no playground for older children
1 wants a summer school or activities for young
1 wants the Rotunda to be repaired
1 wanted to see fewer “trophy dogs” on the estate
1 wanted to see something done about drug dealing.

We asked if they had any problems with their home:
7 said their home was poorly maintained
5 said their houses generally needed upgrading or refurbishing
4 said they had leaks
4 said poor drainage inside their house
3 said they want to move to another house
2 said they were unhappy with their house
2 said they had damp
2 said their house was too small
2 said the cost of heating and hot water
2 said they had problems with their windows
1 said they had major leaks
1 said they had cracks in their house
1 said that slugs fall in through the roof
1 person said their home was too hot in summer, too cold in winter.

● Ropers Walk

We had 4 interviews with 4 households. We asked what they liked about the estate:
2 said it is a good estate
1 said their neighbours
1 said good design
1 said the greenness
1 said their house.

We asked what they would change about the estate:
1 said poor maintenance
1 said problems with cars, parking and car parks.

No one reported any problems with their home.

● Uprove Manor Way

We carried out 14 interviews with 11 households. We asked what they liked about the estate:
5 said their neighbours
5 said their house
4 said it is a good estate
4 said it was peaceful
4 said being close to the park
3 said they liked the wider area
1 said the greenness
1 said they feel safe
1 said the estate is well maintained

We asked what they would change about the estate:
4 said problems with their neighbours
4 said the drains and gutters
3 said poor maintenance
3 said problems with cars, parking and car parks
1 said it feels unsafe
1 said problems caused by trees
1 said the estate needs more lighting
1 said the paths.

We asked if they had any problems with their home:
7 said their home was poorly maintained
4 said they had major leaks
3 said their houses generally needed upgrading or refurbishing
3 said poor drainage inside their house
3 said they needed new bathrooms and kitchens
3 said they had problems with vermin
2 said they were unhappy with their house, feeling they had too many problems and were tired of trying to get things fixed
2 said they had significant cracks in their house
2 said the cost of heating and hot water
2 said they need a new oven
1 said they had serious damp
1 said they had leaks
1 said their house was too small
1 said they want to move to another house.

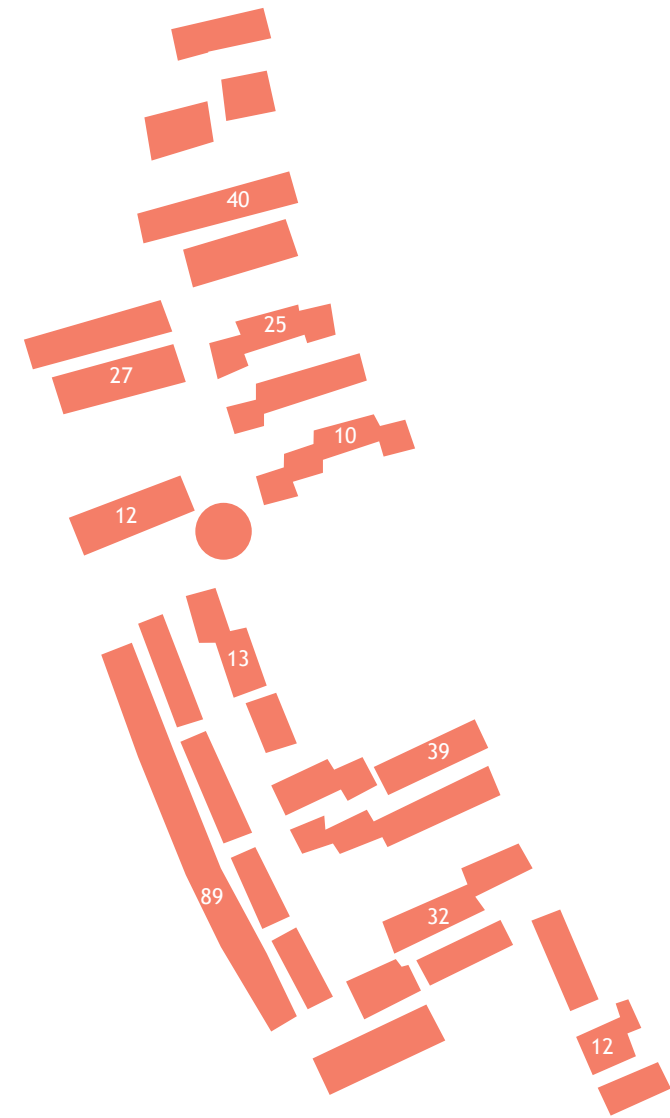


Image: Cressingham’s blocks with the number of homes in each.

● Longford Walk

We carried out interviews with 9 households. We asked what they liked about the estate:
8 said their neighbours
5 said they feel safe
4 said it was peaceful
3 said it is a good estate
3 said they liked the wider area
3 said being close to the park
2 said good design
1 said their house
1 said the estate is well maintained
1 said good transport links.

We asked what they would change about the estate:
1 said poor maintenance
1 said problems with their neighbours
1 said they want the Rotunda to be used more
1 said the drains and gutters
1 wanted service charges for leaseholders to be lower.

We asked if they had any problems with their home:
5 said poor drainage inside their house
3 said they had leaks
3 said their home was poorly maintained
2 said they had problems with vermin
1 said their house generally needed upgrading or refurbishing
1 said they had damp
1 said they had serious damp
1 said they had major leaks
1 said they had cracks in their house
1 said their house was too small
1 said the cost of heating and hot water
1 said they had problems with their windows
1 said they want to move to another house.

● Bodley Manor Way

We carried out 14 interviews with 11 households. We asked what they liked about the estate:
7 said their neighbours
4 said it is a good estate
4 said they feel safe
2 said being close to the park
2 said good design
1 said it was peaceful
1 said they liked the wider area
1 said the greenness
1 said their house
1 said they liked the parking.

We asked what they would change about the estate:
2 said poor maintenance
2 said they want the Rotunda to be used more
1 said it feels unsafe
1 said the paths
1 said the drains and gutters.

We asked if they had any problems with their home:
4 said their home was poorly maintained
3 said they had serious damp
2 said they were unhappy with their house
2 said they had leaks
2 said they had problems with their windows
1 said they had cracks in their house
1 said the zinc roof is too hot.

● Scarlett Manor Walk

We carried out interviews with 7 households. We asked what they liked about the estate:
5 said their neighbours
5 said they feel safe
3 said it is a good estate
3 said being close to the park
2 said it was peaceful
2 said they liked the wider area
2 said the greenness
1 said their house
1 likes the TRA and what they do for the community.

We asked what they would change about the estate:
3 said poor maintenance
3 said problems caused by trees
1 said the paths
1 said they want the Rotunda to be used

We asked if they had any problems with their home:
4 said they had damp
3 said their houses generally needed upgrading or refurbishing
2 said their home was poorly maintained
2 said the cost of heating and hot water
1 said they were unhappy with their house, feeling they had too many problems and were tired of trying to get things fixed
1 said they had serious damp
1 said they had leaks
1 said their house was too small
1 said poor drainage inside their house
1 said they needed new bathrooms and kitchens.

● Hambridge Way

We carried out interviews with 8 households. We asked what they liked about the estate:
5 said their neighbours
3 said being close to the park
3 said the greenness
3 said it was peaceful
2 said their house
2 said they liked the wider area
1 said it is a good estate
1 said good design of their home and the layout of the estate
1 said they feel safe
1 said good transport links.

We asked what they would change about the estate:
2 said it feels unsafe
2 said the drains and gutters
1 said the paths
1 said problems with their neighbours
1 said they want the Rotunda to be used more.

We asked if they had any problems with their home:
3 said their home was poorly maintained
3 said they want to move to another house
2 said they were unhappy with their house
2 said they had significant cracks in their house
2 said poor drainage inside their house
2 said their house was too small
2 said they needed new bathrooms and kitchens
1 said their houses generally needed upgrading or refurbishing
1 said they had damp
1 said they had serious damp
1 said they had leaks
1 said they had cracks in their house
1 said they had problems with their windows.

● Chandler’s Way

We carried 4 interviews with 4 households. We asked what they liked about the estate:
2 said they liked the wider area
2 said their house
2 said being close to the park
1 said their neighbours
1 said it is a good estate
1 said good design of their home and the estate
1 said it was peaceful.

We asked what they would change about the estate:
1 said the paths
1 said problems caused by trees
1 wants the council to create a register of vulnerable on the estate.

We asked if they had any problems with their home:
1 said poor drainage inside their house
1 said the cost of heating and hot water.

● Papworth Way

We carried out interviews with 4 households. We asked what they liked about the estate:
3 said it is a good estate
2 said they liked the wider area
2 said being close to the park.

We asked what they would change about the estate:
1 said it feels unsafe.

We asked if they had any problems with their home:
2 said their home was poorly maintained
2 said they needed new bathrooms and kitchens
1 said their house generally needed upgrading or refurbishing
1 said they had damp
1 said they had serious damp
1 said they had leaks.

● Crosby Walk

We carried out 22 interviews with 20 households. We asked what they liked about the estate:
12 said being close to the park
8 said they liked the wider area
6 said their neighbours
6 said it is a good estate
6 said they feel safe
6 said their house
2 said it was peaceful
1 said the greenness
1 said they liked the Rotunda.

We asked what they would change about the estate:
4 said it feels unsafe
3 said poor maintenance
1 said the estate needs more lighting
1 said problems with their neighbours
1 said the poor design of their homes and the layout of the estate
1 said the drains and gutters
1 would change the green bins.

We asked if they had any problems with their home:
6 said their home was poorly maintained
5 said their house was too small
4 said their houses generally needed upgrading or refurbishing
4 said they had damp
4 said they had leaks
3 said they had serious damp
3 said poor drainage inside their house
3 said they needed new bathrooms and kitchens
2 said they had major leaks
2 said they had cracks in their house
2 said they had significant cracks in their house
2 said they were unhappy with their house, feeling they had too many problems and were tired of trying to get things fixed
2 said the cost of heating and hot water
2 said they want to move to another house
2 said they had problems with vermin
1 said they had problems with their windows
1 said they have a problem with asbestos.



Get involved!

Email: hello@social-life.co

Tel: 07975738097

Taskforce meetings

Now we have a clearer picture of what it is like to live here, we are starting a series of taskforce meetings with residents, talk about the estate's future.

We are looking for a committed group of residents to take part.

We would like people to come to all of the meetings, so that they can follow the discussion, be informed, and help shape the options.

Come along to the kick off meeting on Tuesday 10 December to find out what it's all about.

The meetings will be at the Rotunda, the dates are:

Tuesday 10 December, 7-8pm

Thursday 9 January, 7-9pm

Saturday 25 January, tbc

Tuesday 4 February, 7-9pm

It would be wonderful if you could be one of the taskforce. If you are interested, **please get in touch.**

