



## Development of the Social Council

### 60 Year Timeline

**We are 60 years old!**

**This year of 2020, KCSC is celebrating its 60-year anniversary. This document takes you through the timeline from its origins to current day. We hope that you will celebrate with us as we look back at how we began.**

#### **1960**

Notting Hill Social Council (NHSC) was established in 1960 and was set up to improve the quality of life for people in North Kensington and Notting Hill. It was an organisation set up to support residents to fight for social justice in relation to housing, health and to fight for prominence of issues facing the black and other newly arrived communities in the borough. NHSC was based at 7 Thorpe Close under the Westway. Its mission was

*To improve the quality of life of people in North Kensington and Notting Hill through supporting and development community and voluntary action, building on the strengths of a vibrant and multi-cultural area of London*

#### **1968**

Chelsea Social Council was founded in 1968 to address the amount of social deprivation which was widely dispersed in the south of the borough. It began in Earls Court for a time but it was deemed too far north for its purpose. It then moved to St Luke's Crypt in Chelsea where it remained until the merger. Its mission was

*Working to reduce inequalities in the borough through enabling and empowering communities, groups and individuals to act to meet their needs*

Key services delivered by both organisations included:

Advice and Information on setting up and running a voluntary organisation/community group

- Training and development support
- North and South specific forums
- Representation and voice
- Management development and support
- The Borough Voluntary Organisation Forum

Back then Kensington and Chelsea were the only borough in London to have two Council for Voluntary Services (CVSs). Although not originally set up as CVSs their roles evolved into that role over time. Both had their own constitutions, Boards, membership, staff and historical traditions but eventually began to work together to deliver a joint annual workplan.

#### **1970s – 2000**

During this period both Social Councils were operating separately with Chelsea Social Council's focus in the South of the borough and Notting Hill Social Council in the North. Continuing to provide advice and information to support the development of voluntary and

community organisations, advocating and representing on behalf of the sector and running voluntary organisation forums.

By 1999/2000 Chelsea and Notting Hill Social Council had produced a joint annual plan which showed how both organisations were working together. Both organisations were jointly delivering local forums, training and producing joint newsletters.

## **2001**

In 2001 the acting Director of NHSC produced a report recommending a merger which was accepted by both organisations. The benefits of a merger were seen to be:

- More effective handling of borough wide issues
- Less confusion to beneficiaries about who to approach
- Having a critical mass so that if staff numbers are down solutions and fill-ins can be coordinated more effectively
- Better coordination of fundraising and possibly of attracting more funding
- One body for the statutory sector to liaise with

The merger was welcomed by the council and £15,000 was allocated for consultancy to implement the merger.

## **2002 - Launch of KCSC**

On June 5<sup>th</sup> 2002 Kensington and Chelsea Social Council was officially launched. The Chair of KCSC at the time was Ciran McKinney and the Launch event was celebrated by performances from local organisations.

## **2006**

In 2006 KCSC moved into the Lighthouse, a building owned by Terence Higgins Trust and which was originally a hospital opened in the 1980s for people with HIV. In 2013 the Lighthouse was sold to the Museum of Brands and KCSC has remained a core tenant within the building since that time.

Whilst the organisation has gone through challenging times it has continued to exist and thrive even during difficult economic times. Since 2011 we have developed a reputation in managing health grant programmes funded by West London Clinical Commissioning Group and continued to deliver organisation development support funded by RBKC. Funding from Trusts and Foundations has enabled KCSC to conduct research into areas such as child poverty and housing inequality.

## **2017**

In response to the Grenfell Tower fire, KCSC has committed to focussing on community development which enables us to work more closely with residents alongside our voluntary sector colleagues. With a real desire to return much more to our original roots engaging in and galvanizing social action and amplifying community voice.

Since 2017 we now have a dedicated role that works closely with residents, resident associations and social action groups to understand the issues facing residents and to provide support and advice, link residents that want to set up their own services to our organisation development team as well as facilitate discussions with decision makers.

## **2020 and Beyond**

Our three year strategy developed in 2017/18 soon comes to an end and the strategic planning process which usually takes place was halted in 2020 by the Pandemic. In March the country found itself in lockdown and all the usual ways of working suddenly had to change for everyone.

What the pandemic did was shine a light on social and economic issues that existed before and was now further exacerbated by these extraordinary times. KCSC now has the opportunity to look again at why we exist and what where we need to prioritise our efforts for the next 3 years in a new strategy.

We are thankful for 60 years of existence in the face of much adversity. In a better world the need for charities would not exist and the Social Council would not need to either, but the reality is that there continues to be a need to fight for social justice and deliver social action. As long as there is a need we hope KCSC can continue to support its community.