



**Katherine Low Settlement:  
Becoming more 'Community Wise'  
A Summary of Evidence and Consultation Findings**

**March 2014**

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We would like to thank everyone who took part in helping Katherine Low Settlement become more 'Community Wise' – our volunteer community researchers, staff, local people and organisations.

Thank you.

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## **1. About Katherine Low Settlement**

Katherine Low Settlement is a multi-purpose charity that has been serving the communities of Wandsworth since 1924. We are dedicated to tackling poverty and building stronger communities. We run a range of our own community projects to support children and their families, older people, newly arrived communities and unemployed people. We also invite other charities and community groups to operate out of our premises – so together we can meet the diverse needs of the local communities of Wandsworth. Each week we work with 29 charities & groups supporting more than 500 people.

Visit [www.klsettlement.org.uk](http://www.klsettlement.org.uk)

Tweet [@klsettlement](https://twitter.com/klsettlement)

## **2. Introduction**

In 2013 Katherine Low Settlement developed a new three-year strategy and plan. This needed to be informed and built upon an evidence base. To achieve this we conducted research over the spring to become 'Community Wise'. We went about developing an understanding of where people and local communities are currently at, what they want and need, and what we as an organisation might do to support them. What follows is a short summary of what we found.

## **3. Research objectives**

The objectives of the 'Community Wise' research were to:

- develop a comprehensive picture of Battersea
- strengthen our relationships with local people and organisations
- develop a pool of local ideas for change
- assess what services KLS could deliver over the next three years.

## **4. Research Methodology**

Over spring 2013 we first conducted desk research into local and national data sets and reports to get a statistical understanding of Battersea – mainly SW11 and SW8, including the wards of Latchmere, Queenstown and St. Mary's.

We then recruited and trained 25 local people who in turn went out and interviewed 436 local people and organisations. They were asked three open questions about their aspirations and dreams, barriers and their solutions for change (see Appendix 2 for the questionnaire). We analysed the results together with our volunteer researchers. The main findings are outlined below.

## 5. An Overview of Battersea

Battersea covers the north-eastern third of the London Borough of Wandsworth. It is located on the south bank of the River Thames, in south-west London. Battersea stretches eastwards to include the mainly residential neighbourhoods of Queenstown and Nine Elms, near Battersea Power Station; Battersea Park along the riverside, and further westward to include most of Wandsworth Town, Clapham Junction and along to Wandsworth Bridge, near the London Heliport. Its southern borders touch upon Wandsworth Common and Clapham Common.

Katherine Low Settlement is based in the heart of Battersea, focusing its efforts primarily on people that live and work in its nearest wards of St. Mary's, Latchmere and Queenstown, and postcodes SW11 and SW8.

Although in modern times it is known mostly for its wealth, Battersea remains characterised by economic inequality, with four main housing estates (the Winstanley, near Clapham Junction station, the Surrey Lane estate, the Patmore, Savona and Carey Gradens, and Doddington & Rollo estates in the Nine Elms area) being surrounded by more prosperous areas.

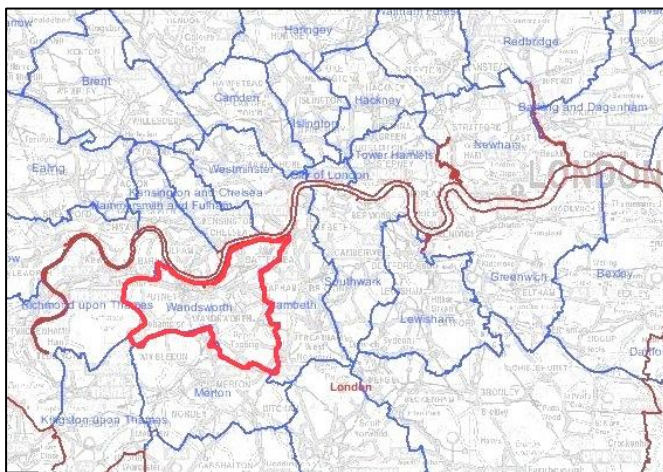


Fig 1. London Borough of Wandsworth

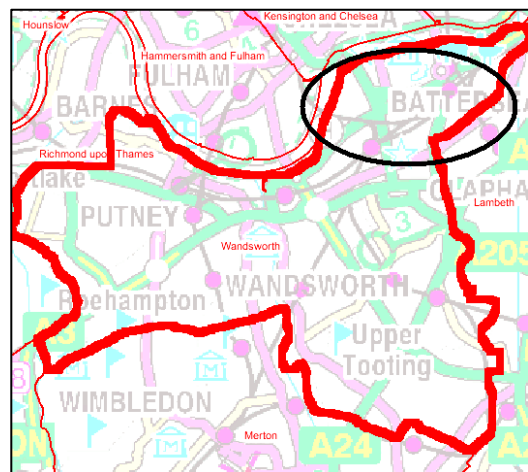


Fig 2. Battersea, Wandsworth

### Population

There are 48,245 people living in the three wards of Battersea (Office for National Statistics, 2013; Census data, 2011), in 22,391 households. The residents tend to be young, and follow the trend of Wandsworth, being predominately in the 20-44 year old bracket, though St Mary's Ward has a slightly older population. A significant difference with London is the high percentage of one person households in the three wards. Around 35 to 40 per cent of all residents are living alone. There is a significantly higher percentage of lone parent households in Latchmere (17.3%), compared to Wandsworth (9.5%) and London (12.6%).

### Older people

There are 26,911 older people (aged 65+) living in the Borough, of which 4,302 (15.9%) live in Battersea (Ward Level Key Statistics Analysis, Census 2011). Many elders experience a number of factors which impact on the quality of life including poor health – living with long term health conditions e.g. diabetes, CVD, strokes, mental illness e.g. depression, dementia, high blood pressure

/ cholesterol, or recovering from illnesses, breaks and falls. They are isolated and home bound, be that they are widowed/er, have few friends, with little or no support from their families, some of whom have been forced out of the area because of the rising cost of living and accommodation. Most are living in poverty, relying on their state pension and housing benefit to get by (DWP, 2013).

### **Ethnicity**

Most residents in the three wards have a White ethnic background (71.7%). More than half of all residents in Wandsworth are originally from the United Kingdom (53.3%). A further 15% have another white background, including residents from Eastern European countries. Caribbean and African ethnic groups are overrepresented in the three wards compared to rest of the Borough and London in general, in particular in Latchmere and Queenstown (Census, 2011).

### **Deprivation**

Half of all households in Wandsworth are deprived in at least one dimension (49.5%) – the Census’ deprivation dimensions are indicators based on four household characteristics – employment, education, health and disability and housing. In Queenstown and Latchmere this percentage is much higher, respectively 60% and 64.8%. More than ten per cent of all Latchmere households are deprived in three or four dimensions (10.3%) (see also the London Poverty Profile, 2013).

### **Health**

Compared to London, St Mary’s Park, Queenstown and Wandsworth have relatively good health, scoring good on the ‘subjective well-being scale’. However, almost one fourth of all households in Latchmere consists of at least one person with a long-term health problem or disability (23.1%).

### **Unemployment**

The three wards also experience higher levels of unemployment and economic inactivity than the borough and London. Almost one fifth (18.4%) of Latchmere residents are unemployed or economically inactive, compared with 14% for the borough overall. Almost one third of all households in Latchmere do not have an adult in employment (29.5%), compared with 21.4% for Wandsworth (Office for National Statistics, 2013; Census data, 2011)

Note: For more information about Battersea please visit the following data sources:

Office for National Statistics	<a href="http://www.statistics.gov.uk/hub/index.html">http://www.statistics.gov.uk/hub/index.html</a>
Demographics of Wandsworth – Census, 2011	<a href="http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/census">http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/census</a>
Poverty in Wandsworth – London Poverty Profile, 2013	<a href="http://www.londonpovertyprofile.org.uk/indicators/boroughs/wandsworth/">http://www.londonpovertyprofile.org.uk/indicators/boroughs/wandsworth/</a>
Health in Wandsworth – JSNA, 2012	<a href="http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/jsna">http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/jsna</a>
North Battersea Community Audit – Wandsworth Care Alliance, 2013	Contact: Jason Edgington <a href="mailto:Jason@wandcareall.org.uk">Jason@wandcareall.org.uk</a>
Big Local SW11	Contact: Robert Musgrave <a href="mailto:robertatprovidence@hotmail.com">robertatprovidence@hotmail.com</a>
Battersea’s History	<a href="http://www.batterseasociety.org.uk">www.batterseasociety.org.uk</a>
For general information about Battersea there is always Wikipedia	<a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battersea">http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battersea</a>

## 6. Findings from the Interviews

The statistical data could only tell us so much about Battersea. To really understand the communities and people living in the area we had to get out there and talk to them. What follows is a summary of more than 430 interviews we had with local people, charities, faith groups, statutory agencies and businesses in the area.

There was a common thread running throughout the interviews of people aspiring to the universals in life: of wanting a safe environment for their children to grow up in, good schools, a better house to live in, to get on with their neighbours and feel a stronger sense of community, live a healthy life, and to work and prosper.

### Jobs and Self-Employment

The overwhelming response from the interviews was that local people want to work (part and full time jobs, return to work, increased hours, work experience, apprenticeships, volunteering as a route back to work, secure and permanent jobs) or to set up their own businesses. They see this as the primary route for themselves and their families to improve their financial and living situation, combat the rising cost of living and get out of poverty. *“[I want] to be able to work and earn a living”* (Interview 99); and *“[I want] to be able to work part time, to take the pressure off my partner bill wise”* (Interview 10); and *“[I don’t] have enough money”* (Interviews 22, 57, 93, 96, 108, 130).

### Training and Skills

In order for local residents to work and/or set up their own businesses they recognised that they need support to develop their skills and increase their confidence gained through study, courses, certificated / accredited classes, training, going to college – various different things people wanted to study e.g. ESOL, dress making and sewing, IT, book keeping – all of which will help people to get into work. *“I’m looking to upgrade my skills or add new ones to enhance my chances of getting a job”* (Interviews 10, 54, 132).

### Childcare

Alongside this people said they needed somewhere safe, affordable and flexible for their children to go whilst they are up-skilling and working. *“Offer a crèche while I’m doing a course or working”* (Interviews 12, 145); and *“I would love to have access to flexible and affordable childcare”* (Interview 17).

### A Sense of Community

Local people also want a sense of community – to belong, to be involved, for people in the community to know and care about each other. Residents want opportunities to build relationships and networks with all people from the community – rich and poor, old and young. *“Help us to know our neighbours”* (Interviews 2, 52, 53); *“build community cohesion in the area”* (Interview 109); and *“meet other people here”* (Interviews 21, 41, 82, 85, 97). Residents, particularly older people and those newly arrived communities, wanted support to tackle social isolation. *“I would like help to make new friends and feel more positive”* (Interview 80 – his wife died recently). They came up with

a (long) number of imaginative and practical ways to do this by KLS running positive activities including:

- Start volunteering and/or do more voluntary work (Interviews 12, 85, 87, 130)
- Swimming lessons (Interviews 92, 96, 131)
- Dad's groups (Interview 99)
- Fitness group (Interviews 132, 142) and keep-fit with crèche (Interview 113)
- Intergenerational events (Interview 113)
- Cookery Group (Interviews 121, 132)
- Music groups (Interviews 122, 123, 124, 135, 136, 139, 143)

## **Elders**

Older people told us about the joys and challenges of growing older. Some had health issues that they were dealing with *"I want to get more mobile after my serious fall"* (Interview 2); and aspired *"to be independent as I've had 3 strokes"* (Interviews 34, 37). They had some great ideas about *"improving my mobility to do more exercises e.g. armchair exercises"* (Interviews 22, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40), and *"socialising with a cup of tea and a chair"* (Interview 31), *"dancing (ballroom and line dancing), coffee groups with games, quizzes and talks, days out but not too far to walk"* (Interview 41, who's aged 88); so that they could *"keep healthy and enjoy a productive retirement"* (Interviews 30, 31, 35).

## **Health**

Unsurprisingly most people we spoke to wanted to live a healthy life for themselves and their families, through good living, exercise and eating well.

We did speak to a number of people in poor health, be that with long term conditions, disabilities, and mental ill-health. There were a wide range of suggestions, for example, *"support us with a carers group and information and contacts... and help set up more services for mentally ill people"* (Interview 9). More research and work is needed into this wide area.

## **Young People**

The younger generation were raised as a group to focus on. Interviewees talked about raising young people's aspirations, ensuring they get the best possible start in life with a good education, better schools, positive and fun activities for them to get involved with, and a nicer and safer environment for them to grow up in. *"There should be more for the kids to do"* (Interview 1). *"I have concerns about the quality of further education for my children"* (Interview 133). *"[I want to] bring my kids up in a safer area"* (Interviews 109, 114, 115, 118, 119, 146).

## **Affordable, Safer Neighbourhoods**

Living in a safe and affordable area was expressed as an important issue by people we interviewed. They were concerned by the lack of choice of housing, poor quality accommodation and overcrowding, and the cost of housing and rents. *"The housing market is regulated by estate agents and properties sold by the number of bedrooms regardless of their size"* (Interview 91). People want better housing and more affordable housing *"to have affordable housing for all"* (91, 146). One idea



was to *“reduce rent prices in Wandsworth, other councils charge much less for rent”* (Interview 81). Racism was also cited as a problem locally (Interviews 101, 110, 111, 130).

Some people felt unsafe in their neighbourhood, that there weren't enough police and that crime was high. *“Some of the estates around the area are no go areas even for the police. This holds back regeneration”* (Interview 109). People didn't really suggest many ways to address these problems beyond creating that sense of community through positive activities (see above).

## **7. Conclusion**

This Community Wise research has given Katherine Low Settlement a keen insight into local people's lives – their dreams for the future, the barriers and problems they currently face and their ideas for change. It clearly shows that the people of Battersea want to work and set up their own businesses. To achieve this they recognised that they must improve their skills through training and that they must have somewhere safe and affordable for their children to go to whilst they do so. Local residents also want an increased sense of community. They want more local friendships and relationships and positive activities that will bring them together. Importantly local people said that Katherine Low Settlement can play a pivotal part in making all this happen.

This evidence has played an important role in shaping our thinking and discussions as we developed our new three-year strategy and plan. A copy of which is available upon request.

## Appendix 1 – Katherine Low Settlement’s ‘Community Wise’ Questionnaire

Katherine Low Settlement (KLS) is a multi-purpose charity in Wandsworth. It was founded in 1924. KLS is dedicated to fighting poverty and isolation. We serve the local community by building communities. We also provide a home for services and activities that meet the needs of local people. Visit: [www.klsettlement.org.uk](http://www.klsettlement.org.uk) and Twitter: @klsettlement.

To determine local needs, KLS must have information on the most important demands and problems of residents living in Battersea. So, we feel it is important to speak to residents. After this we will develop together future ideas with local residents and professional people who live in the area.

1. What are your dreams, goals and aspirations for the future?

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2. What barriers and issues stop you achieving your dreams?

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3. What ideas do you have to achieve your dreams?

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4. What can KLS do for you?

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5. About you - can you share your:
  - a. Postcode:.....
  - b. Age:.....
  - c. Gender: .....
  - d. Ethnicity:.....
  
6. We would like to keep in touch with you to ask you about KLS services. Would you be interested in this? May we have your contact details?
  - a. Name: .....
  - b. Phone number: .....
  - c. Email address: .....

Thank you for sharing this information with us!

Comments:

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Name of interviewer:.....
Date of interview:.....

## **Appendix 2 – An article about ‘Community Wise’**

*[This article featured in the Battersea Society’s ‘Battersea Matters’ magazine, Winter 2013 edition – Reproduced with Permission. Visit: [www.batterseasociety.org.uk](http://www.batterseasociety.org.uk)]*

### **Katherine Low Settlement is becoming ‘Community Wise’**

**Aaron Barbour, Director of KLS, outlines the results of recent research**

‘Look, to be honest it’s difficult. I don’t get out, except to the shops. I sit around too much just watching TV. My wife died recently and it’s hard.’ This is what John (names have been changed) told me earlier in the year, as we at the Katherine Low Settlement went out into the community to understand what is going on locally, so that we can target our services at those who need them most.

Katherine Low Settlement is a multi-purpose charity dedicated to fighting poverty and isolation. We have been serving the communities of Battersea since 1924 by providing our own services for children and families, older and vulnerable people and newly arrived communities. We also open our community centre for other charities and community groups to provide their own activities and/or their back office, so together we can meet the diverse needs of the communities of Wandsworth.

#### **Questions**

When I came into post earlier in the year I wanted to develop four areas: a comprehensive picture of Battersea; strengthen our relationships with local people and organisations; develop a pool of local ideas for change; and assess what services Katherine Low Settlement could deliver over the next three years. To achieve this we conducted research over the spring to become ‘community wise’. First we undertook desk research to get a statistical understanding of Battersea (mainly SW11 and SW8 including St. Mary’s, Queenstown and Latchmere wards). We then recruited and trained 25 local people (including some Battersea Society members – thank you) who in turn went out and interviewed 436 local people and organisations. They were asked three open questions about their dreams for the future, the barriers and problems they currently face and their ideas for change.

There was a common thread running throughout the interviews as people aspire to the universals in life: wanting a safe environment for their children to grow up in, good schools, a better house to live in, to get on with their neighbours and feel a stronger sense of community, live a healthy life, and to work and prosper.

#### **Cost of living**

The overwhelming response from the interviews was that local people want to work (part and full time jobs, return to work, increased hours, work experience, apprenticeships, volunteering as a route back to work, secure and permanent jobs) or set up their own businesses. They see this as the primary route for themselves and their families to improve their financial and living situation, combat the rising cost of living and get out of poverty. ‘I want to be able to work and earn a living’ and ‘I want to be able to work part time, to take the pressure off my partner bill wise’ because for many people it was a case of ‘I simply don’t have enough money’.

To do this people recognise they need to develop their skills and increase their confidence, gained through learning and training. People wanted to study a variety of things, for example, ESOL, dress making and sewing, IT, book keeping, all of which will help them get into work. Local residents also told us they need somewhere safe, affordable and flexible for their children to go while they are training and working, 'Could you offer a crèche while I'm doing a course or working?'

People also want a stronger sense of community – to belong, to be involved, for people to know and care about each other. Residents want opportunities to build relationships and networks with all people from the community – rich and poor, old and young. 'Help us to know our neighbours', 'build community cohesion in the area', 'I just want to meet other people here'. As John (above) said people, particularly older people and those in newly arrived communities, want support to tackle social isolation. 'I would like help to make new friends and feel more positive'. Residents came up with a (large) number of imaginative and practical ways for the Settlement to run positive activities including: swimming lessons, a dad's group, keep-fit with crèche, intergenerational events, cookery and music groups, and opportunities to volunteer.

### **Dancing**

We spoke to many different people of all ages and backgrounds. A number of elderly people, for example, told us about the joys and challenges of growing older. Some had health issues that they were dealing with 'I want to get more mobile after my serious fall', and aspired 'to be independent as I've had three strokes'. They had some great ideas about 'improving my mobility to do more exercises e.g. armchair exercises', whilst 'socialising with a cup of tea and a chair', 'dancing, coffee groups with games and talks, days out but not too far to walk'; so that they could 'keep healthy and enjoy a productive retirement'.

Our 'Community Wise' research has given us a fascinating insight into local people's lives – their dreams for the future, some of the problems they face and their solutions for change. This evidence will play an important role in shaping our thinking as we develop our new three-year strategy and plan, which we will launch in 2014 as part of our 90th birthday celebrations. All of which will enable us to support more people like John.