



employment, health and addiction problems. Last year over 2000 homeless people took part in activity, training and employment programmes, and 200 were helped find full time work.

Most of the Endell Street hostel residents are former rough sleepers. The hostel is at the forefront of efforts to reduce rough sleeping in the area. Three years ago, 3 times as many people slept rough in and around Covent Garden.

The hostel provides a safe place for rough sleepers to go, where they get 24-hour support and help to find a suitable home. People like Paul and Natasha, a couple who were evicted from their flat with two days notice and, in an attempt to alleviate the misery of life on the streets, began to use drugs. They slept out for years before getting a place in this hostel – one of a few which accept couples.

Here, Paul and Natasha got help to tackle their drug addiction and were later found a flat in South London, where they set up home. They are

just two of over 80 people for whom the hostel helped find a new home last year. As Natasha says, “St Mungo’s got us where we are now. Without their help we would still be on the streets taking drugs”.

For further information telephone the hostel manager on 020 7240 5431.

*Charles Fraser, Chief Executive*

## The Lilac Project: A Community Residents’ Perspective

The Lilac Project was a long time coming, but finally came into operation in September 2000. It ran until the end of March 2002.

Its essence was a radical new approach to the West End drug problem, involving close co-operation between the various agencies involved, and across borough, police sector and health authority boundaries – the police, the treatment services and environmental planning and local residents.

Despite a disorganised start, mainly due to poor oversight by the Home Office, there were rapid results. Within the (admittedly narrow) confines of the Lilac area the evidence of drug dealing and use declined markedly (especially discarded needles). Public spaces became safe for children again. Those outside the area were understandably concerned not to have been included, and suffered a definite displacement

effect, as users and dealers moved further into Covent Garden and Bloomsbury.

The lesson is that this sort of cross-border and multi-agency co-operation, listening to the actual concerns of residents, rather than simply meeting their own targets, is essential not only for this part of London, but the whole of London (otherwise we just shift it from place to place).

The problem will not go away, until the reasons why people seek such powerful and destructive anaesthetics for their woes go away, but with serious investment and long-term planning, it could be contained. All those involved with the project wish to continue working for this and community representatives were invited to become part of the continuing dialogue.

*Richard Haggis  
Chair, 2001-2002*

## Burleigh Mansions Residents’ Association

Recently we held our tenth annual general meeting. A very good turnout of tenants spent most of the time commiserating with each other about the disturbance of the continuing remodelling and refurbishment work to our block. This has brought noise, dust, dirt and inconvenience into our lives for over two years.