

Forthcoming social events

Quiz night – March 14th

7.30pm St Richard's Hall

Members £2 non members £3. Bring your friends. Contact Sarah on 020 8244 2405 or Charlton_residents@yahoo.co.uk to register or join a team – or just turn up on the night and we will fit you in.

Spring Event – April 29th

7.00pm St Richard's Hall

The evening will include the photographic competition 'My Charlton' and a chance to catch up on what CCRA has been doing on your behalf.

Open Gardens – June 20th

with a (ticketed) barbecue in the evening.

Classified Ads

The Grapevine currently reaches 800 houses in the local area. If you would like to advertise goods or services cheaply, effectively and locally contact *John Tidy* on 020 8853 0624 or *Jason Palmer* on 07850 775755.

A form can be found on our website, rates are as follows:

- Ads containing up to 15 words plus contact details cost £10 for one issue or £35 for four issues.
- Ads containing up to 20 words, contact details & an image / logo cost £20 for one insertion or £70 for four.

Space is limited so get your ad in soon.

Can we help you to celebrate....?

Happy birthday to Sylvia Warlow of Inverine Road. Sylvia was in hospital for her last birthday so we hope this one was celebrated in more style.

Please let us know if you have a memorable anniversary or event you would like us to announce.

Charlton Central Residents Association

Charlton Central Residents Association (CCRA) is committed to ensuring a safe and friendly community.

Please join us!



Editor's note

The next issue of Grapevine – due to be published in April – is to feature reminiscences. If you have some interesting photographs of the Charlton of the past, or if you were a member of the residents' association which was formed in the 1970s, we'd love to hear from you. You might like to write something for the next issue – a letter or even an article. You might like to send a photo that could be scanned to be included or you might like someone to come and talk to you about Charlton in the old days. Phone us or drop a note to Elaine or Linda – our contact details are shown below.

Membership

Many thanks to all the residents who have renewed their membership. Priolo Road is in the lead with almost 100% renewals.! New style memberships cards will be coming out shortly. We would also like to appeal to all who read the Grapevine to become members today by completing the form included with the Grapevine and help us grow into a vibrant community association.



Use it or lose it!

Don't forget the German Baker has a van in Wellington Gardens every Saturday morning – delicious fresh bread, cakes and German specialities.

For sale slightly used walk-in Medic bath XP, v.g.c.

Easy to use. Needs Plumbing in. Mum (93) used it in her kitchen. Glider transfer seat (helps getting in), thermostatic control lever taps. Sturdy fibre glass with shower attachment. External dims W27", L35", H35".

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Contact: *Brian, 18 Swallowfield Road*

Tel: 0208 858 1935 email: bkriss@mac.com



Dave Picton, Chair Wellington Gdns, 0208 858 4942

Jason Palmer, Vice Chair Elliscombe Road

Len Weir, Secretary Elliscombe Road, 0208 858 4920

Kevin Harrison, Treasurer Sundorne Road

Jacqui Mitchell, Membership Secretary,

Swallowfield Road, 020 8853 1811

or you can email Charlton_residents@yahoo.co.uk

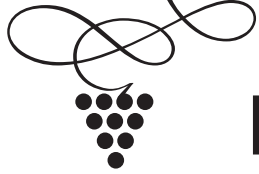
Grapevine's Editorial Team are:

Elaine Picton 12 Wellington Gardens, 0208 858 4942

Linda Pound 26 Wellington Gardens, 0208 858 7377

CHARLTON GRAPEVINE

VINTAGE 5 FEBRUARY 2009
the newsletter of the Charlton Central Residents Association



Law & Order in Greenwich

What's it like on the streets?

Residents may have the impression that Charlton is an unsafe place to live. However, the facts about crime in the area paint a different picture. Central Charlton is officially classified as an 'average' crime area but the figures tell us very little about what it is really like being out on the streets.

Our local head of police, Commander Jarrett, arranged for two CCRA members, separately, to join our local Response Team for a weekend night shift, a regular shift being 6pm to 6 am! So donned with 'stab' vests we went to find out just what happens in Greenwich. First off, we were introduced to our 'units'. Policing usually involves two constables per car, one who will always have an advanced driving credential. When the blue siren blares and you are speeding along the Woolwich Road at what feels like 90mph this is very reassuring! All the officers had a wealth of experience in dealing with the public before coming into the force and many were from diverse, multi-cultural backgrounds.

During the course of two shifts we attended the following incidents: a road traffic accident, a burnt out car, a missing person, an argument at a petrol station, inappropriate use of a MSN chat site, a GBH and 4 'domestics', as well as cruising around keeping an eye on known trouble-spots. All of the incidents were incredibly interesting and very different. Despite the perception of crime being mostly 'street' incidents, typical 'action' on Friday and Saturday nights is of a 'domestic' nature. The majority of the 'domestics' we observed were parents (drunk) trying to manage the behaviour of their children (young adults, also drunk). What struck us was how incredibly calm and caring the Met officers are. Going into volatile and highly emotive situations they remained polite (in the face of provocation), reasoned (in the face of chaos) and utterly professional. To summarise the evening, most



crimes that occurred on our watch happened behind closed doors and were largely fuelled by alcohol. Thank you to Commander Jarrett, Inspector Craig Anderson for making the arrangements and all the officers at Plumstead who gave us such an insight into policing our borough.

If you want to report a crime ring 999 for emergencies, the Safer Neighbourhood Team are on 0208 721 2734 or 07766 992585, Local Police (ask for Greenwich) on 0208 855 1212 or Crimestoppers (all calls dealt anonymously) 0800 555 111.

Door-step sellers

The Charlton Safer Neighbourhood Team has asked us to highlight the dangers of door-step sellers. Several groups of sellers have been knocking on doors, selling tea-towels and other cleaning goods. They produce identification suggesting they represent a charity called 'The Organisation for the Homeless and Unemployed People'. The police have said this is a bogus charity so giving to them will not help support genuine homeless and unemployed people. In addition these doorstep sellers have been aggressive, persistent and unpleasant to residents. If you buy from them you risk being targeted again and if you listen to their 'spiel' and then don't buy they can become very aggressive.

The advice from the police is NEVER buy from door-step sellers. Do not engage in conversation with them. Before they begin talking you should tell them politely but firmly that you never buy from door-step sellers and then close the door. If they persist don't hesitate to report this to our Safer Neighbourhood Team on 0208 721 2734 or 0208 284 9849.

Local Survey – see page 2 for details

Local Survey

A light blue questionnaire is enclosed with this issue. Please complete and return it. You need to include your name and address to be entered in the PRIZE draw of £50 Boots vouchers. If you want more questionnaires please ring Linda 0208 858 7377. If we get a good response our arguments for improvements to local services will carry more weight. Thank you for your help.

Planning applications

We are developing a regular dialogue with the Council about local planning applications. CCRA has been granted "strategic consultee" status which means we should get early information about new applications. The Council has recently updated its planning website. You can search this by entering the relevant postcode. <http://onlineplanning.greenwich.gov.uk/acolnet/planningonline/acolnet.cgi.gov>

CCRA's role is twofold. Firstly, to ensure we have full, clear and early information about what's happening around us and secondly, to influence some plans for the better. We want your views but will not automatically take a view on every application. However, where there is strong opinion or significant agreement we will try to represent those opinions accurately.

At present we are interested in the following activities:

Charlton Church Lane (opposite the station, corner of Floyd Road). Approval given on appeal in February 2007. Work now underway. Plans are for three terraced buildings, in similar style to the remaining adjacent properties, with three retail units and nine flats.

Wellington Mews, Wellington Gardens (land with trees on the corner). History of previous applications going back to 1979. Currently being looked at as potential development. No applications or discussions with the Council to date.

Valley Pub, Elliscombe Road (top end). Pub closed in October 2008. Planning application submitted on 31 October and rejected as incomplete. Council awaiting re submission.

91 Swallowfield Road (land to the rear bounded by Priolo Road and Victoria Way). Permission sought for a four bed, three storey detached dwelling. Permission refused on 10 November 2008. No details to date of appeal or resubmission.

Olympics 2012 update

CCRA attended a public meeting, addressed by Sebastian Coe and council leader Chris Roberts, about preparations for the Olympic Games. The broad plans are clear but many details, including planning approvals and final budgets, are still to be resolved.

Plans for the horse riding events in Greenwich seem well advanced. The main arena will be in the large flat area at the bottom of the park. This area is likely to be closed to the public for much of 2012. The cross-country course, reaching most of the park, will only be used on 31st July. Some restrictions will be placed on public access for a couple of weeks beforehand and a few days afterwards. There were promises to restore the park to its former state.

The Dome will be used for gymnastic, trampoline and basketball events. Plans for a second venue near the David Beckham Academy now look doubtful. The shooting events on Woolwich common are still likely to go ahead.

Planning applications will be submitted and considered this year. Consultation on the transport plans is due very soon and include a proposal for a fast route between the Stratford and Greenwich venues for athletes and officials. This is likely to include the Blackwall Tunnel, which as we know, has regular problems. However, the main games are to be held between 27th July and 12th August which coincide with school holidays when traffic flow is generally easier.

Off your trolley



Many of you complained about abandoned trolleys so we asked ASDA for an explanation. Their spokesperson said that most of their trolleys had locking devices to prevent them being taken beyond

the magnetic strips at their exit areas. However a new batch had been delivered without these devices fitted. The offending trolleys were removed.

More appeared after Xmas so we again approached ASDA who said all their trolleys are now fitted with a locking device. ASDA apologises for any inconvenience has asked the company it employs to remove them from our area. This should have happened by the time you receive this edition. However, if you do spot dumped trolleys then please contact *Julie or Kevin at ASDA on 8858 3313.*



‘My Charlton’ Great photographic competition



Grapevine is always looking for good photographs to include in our newsletters. A local resident is helping us create a visual library of life in Charlton and what this means to you. We have begun by taking a range of photographs of everyday street life. CCRA would like to encourage local residents to be part of this exciting project by taking photographs of our area and entering them in our competition.

The theme is ‘My Charlton’, with three entry categories:

Under 12 for Children,

13–19 for Teenagers and

20+ for Adults

Photographs must be submitted as a print – 13x18 centimetres or 5x7 inches. They can be black and white or colour. You may enter more than one photograph. In addition they may be emailed as an attachment to Charlton_residents@yahoo.co.uk. Each entry must include your name, the category you are entering, your address, contact details and the title of the entry. If you are also submitting online you must include the same information in your email.

Entries can only be accepted from residents within CCRA's designated area. All entries will be displayed and judged at the social event on 29th April in St Richards Hall. The winner in each category will receive a £20 Jessops' voucher.

If you'd like to take part in this competition, please send your photograph(s) to *Linda Pound* at *26 Wellington Gardens (0208 858 7377)* by March 31st.

Why Charlton Central?

Oscar Wilde said that it was better to be talked about than not talked about. So, it was with some interest that the CCRA noticed a couple of local blogs, not only highlighting the existence of the Association but critical, in one case, about the authors not being allowed to join as Members because they lived outside the boundaries. You may be interested in accessing both these blogs, which comment on a range of local issues in Charlton and the surrounding area. They are *The Last Bus Home* and *Charlton Average*.

So far as the comment about the area covered by the Association is concerned, it is indeed true that Membership is currently restricted to a group of ten roads (some 800 properties) in the Charlton area south of the railway line. The reason for this is because the aim of the Association is to create a safe and friendly community, present a unified voice on local issues and promote social links between residents. Though the area covered may increase in time, at the moment we want to keep things small but beautiful with a “village feel”. Sorry, Last Bus Home, for any inconvenience caused!

VOLUNTEERING IN CHARLTON

Did you know that 73% of people living in England volunteered in 2007? The percentage of people in England giving money to charity is even higher.

So, whether you are already volunteering, supporting an organisation financially or might want to do so in the future, why not give locally and support a charity in Charlton?

Some people suggested that there might not be a lot going on in Charlton so a local resident set out to explore volunteering opportunities in the area and was impressed by the variety of charities working in the community. This article might inspire you to give time or money locally.

Charlton Toy Library

Based at Charlton House, Charlton Toy Library is used by over 600 local families. Members can take part in play sessions for children under 5 as well as borrowing toys, books and safety equipment. The toy library also has a van which offers a mobile lending service. It is a registered charity, run by a voluntary management committee, and relies on grants and donations to



CCRA was pleased to present Charlton Toy Library with £210

offer its services. Debbie Langley, the toy library manager, said that it is comparatively easy to secure grants for toys but it is a real struggle to fund the running costs, like utility and phone bills, office supply, diesel for the mobile project van and staff costs. Cash donations help fund the running costs and keep the toy library open. In addition toilet rolls, bathroom cleaner, antibacterial wipes, kitchen cleaner, baby blankets and cushions are always welcome. And why not bring your Christmas and birthday cards and ribbons to the toy library where they are given a new lease on life as part of hand made cards? The toy library is now registered for Gift Aid so if you are a member or make a donation and pay income tax, please take the time to fill in a short form so that the toy library

can claim tax money back for your donation. This year CCRA's volunteer carol singers supported the toy library and raised an impressive £210.

The toy library is looking for volunteers to check and disinfect toys during opening hours (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 9.30am–12.30pm). All volunteers will have to be CRB (police) checked and will receive initial training. This role is especially suitable for somebody who can work on their own initiative, does not have to bring their children with them and can commit to a regular time slot of a minimum of an hour a week during term time. Volunteers are also needed to run story time or singing sessions or to join the management committee.

If you can offer any of the above or would like more information about Charlton Toy Library please contact the manager *Debbie Langley* on 020 8319 0055 (if you get answer phone please leave a message) or debbie@charltontoylibrary.co.uk.

Riding for the Disabled Association

RDA has a base in Charlton Park next to the playground. The organisation offers free riding lessons to disabled and special needs children and young people, Monday to Friday mornings during term time. It all started in 1974 when a teacher from Charlton Park School borrowed a pony and started offering riding lessons. Since then RDA Charlton Park Group has grown to a fully self-funded organisation that relies on volunteers to run the organisation, offer riding lessons, fundraise and look after the three ponies. The organisation needs to raise in excess of £12,000 per year to cover the running costs, a big part of which is insurance. In addition to the daily riding lessons an annual summer camp is offered. Volunteers take six disabled children to Sevenoaks, where they live in caravans together and go on two rides a day.

RDA Charlton Park Group is looking for volunteers on weekday mornings between 9am and 1.30pm to get the ponies ready for riding, guide them during the lessons and take them back to Maryon Wilson Park afterwards. As the work is with children all volunteers will have to be CRB (police) checked, which will be done by RDA. The volunteers receive in house training as well as tea, coffee, soup and biscuits. So if you have a regular morning or two to spare during the week, please get in touch with *Kay Campbell* on 020 8317 1528.



One of the RDA's 500 member groups organised a guided ride in the New Forest!

The organisation is also thankful for cash donations and unwanted Christmas presents that might be suitable for a tombola. In order to comply with Health and Safety Regulations the fence of the riding ring had to be boarded up. Charlton Park RDA is looking for organisations or individuals who can supply and fit perspex to one side of the riding ring.

If you can offer any of the above or would like more information about RDA Charlton Park Group please contact chairwoman Kay Campbell on 020 8317 1528.

Other volunteering opportunities

Volunteering on weekday mornings might not be suitable for those working, so I searched local notice boards and the internet to see what else is on offer. If you are looking for volunteering opportunities and do not know where to start www.do-it.org is a good first point of call. It is a national database for volunteering opportunities. You can enter your postcode, area of interest and availability to receive suitable offers. At the time of writing 47 opportunities were available within one mile of CCRA's area. Pretty impressive, isn't it?

Volunteers wanted included life skills classroom

facilitators, handy man/woman, telephone counselling, driver and receptionist. You can even volunteer without leaving your house by either fostering a cat for *Cats Protection* (08702 099 099) or offering dinner, a bed for the night and breakfast to a young person. Volunteer Centre based at Forum@Greenwich (www.volunteerscentre.greenwich.org.uk, telephone: 020 8853 1331) supplies offers to the do-it.org database and can also be contacted directly.


The Friends of Maryon and Maryon Wilson Park organise regular park clear-up days. Look out for the next dates on their message board in the animal enclosure at Maryon Wilson Park or send an email to fam&mwparcs@talktalk.net

And last but not least CCRA is run by volunteers. If you want to get involved take a look at www.charltonresidents.org.uk, email charlton_residents@yahoo.co.uk or ring Dave Picton 020 8858 4942. CCRA is also completely self-funded and relies on your membership fee to provide this newsletter, organise events and to represent the views of the neighbourhood in contact with the council and the police. Social events organised over the Christmas period also contributed to CCRA's funds. Katrin and Andrew's open house raised £31 and the raffle at the Festive Social raised £172. SO if you're not a member yet please join CCRA now – you can contribute to making this a safer and friendlier community!


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I heard it on the grapevine...

Voice of the Valley

They say a week is a long time in politics. A few weeks in the Championship has seemed like a lifetime for this Charlton supporter. My previous piece talked about 'heady days' at the Valley as a big money takeover looked imminent. Since then we have dropped to the bottom, yes the bottom, of the Championship, the big money names have disappeared citing the 'credit crunch' – quite how it would affect billionaires remains to be seen, although it will affect supporters ability to attend of course. Half yearly accounts show that the Board appear to be struggling to keep the club afloat. Alan Pardew has departed Charlton after a lacklustre start to the season but still received a big payout if press reports are to be believed. Pardew has been replaced by his number 2 Phil Parkinson and Charlton midfield hero Mark Kinsella who are desperately trying to stop the slide, but the turmoil has impacted on the players who seem to play well but whose heads go down if they go a goal behind. Refereeing is just not good enough! Our results in the league are dire with 19 games since the last win and League One next season looks a distinct possibility. Doom and gloom at the not so happy Valley.

Ah but then along comes a reappearance of Jonjo Shelvey who, still too young at 16 for a proper contract, showed the passion and fight needed to turn results around. This was followed by a win in the third round of FA Cup. Jonjo will go far, showing good technical skills and an ability to read a game far beyond his years. Maybe the Norwich result will break the deadlock for Charlton and we will march, nay gallop, up the table to reach the play-offs then back into the Premiership? Who said I am ever the optimist!

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Letters to the Editor

Residents support the Big Clean-up

We would like to add our support to the idea of a Big Clean-up. We have been trying to obtain some similar action from Greenwich Council since 1998. Although there has been some success, all too often promises made have simply lapsed. A concerted effort from local residents, designed to show the strength of feeling on cleaning issues, is one we would welcome. CCRA has certainly had a positive impact in the neighbourhood and would be the ideal body to approach Greenwich Council.

There are long-term problems with wheelie bins. Some houses keep their bins permanently on the footpath and nothing the council do seems to make any difference. Unfortunately the team on the collection lorries do not properly return bins to the property but simply push them in the general direction of the house from which they were collected. This often means that wheelie bins are left in potentially dangerous places.

Is the term Cleansweep a joke? Refuse collections leave litter and the sweeping up often occurs before collections are completed. This often means that some items seem to remain in place for weeks.

There has recently been less dog waste. However it remains a problem, particularly in wet weather and is often inadvertently spread by bikes, and buggies. Cleansweep cannot be on hand all the time – but we are supposed to have twice-weekly cleaning and this should include removal of dog waste.

Further problems occur around the litter bins which seem to be favourite spots for people to dump abandoned trolleys, old furniture etc. Although this rubbish is usually removed once reported, this anti-social behaviour is unhelpful. We support the idea of a big clean-up and look forward to hearing further details.

Wellington Gardens residents

The Chair comments: CCRA representatives recently walked the area with local councillors who are supportive of the idea of a big cleanup weekend and want to talk to us further about what the Council might do to help when we have responses to our survey. We have provisionally set aside the weekend of Saturday 4 July and will let you have further information in the next edition of Grapevine.



CCRA social events

St Luke's Players

CCRA is sad to learn of the tragic and unexpected death of George Zammit. An immensely popular man, he will be sadly missed by all who knew him and our thoughts are with his children and wife Gwen.

As many of you know, Gwen is the producer of St Luke's Players who, earlier this month, performed 'Pirates', a rip-roaring adventure set on the high seas of the Caribbean in the days when buccaneers ruled the waves. Scripted by Gwen, it was a tale of adventure in which the dastardly Captain Red Rufus and his crew of ruffians eventually got their just desserts at the hands – or tentacles – of a truly terrifying giant octopus.

The evening opened and concluded with comedy sketches and a wide variety of musical acts. The adults were well accompanied by a vociferous chorus of children on memorable numbers such as 'I got Rythmn'. These star performers bore a striking resemblance to some of the pirates in the play and their versatility and ability to sing, dance and act (and sometimes all three at once) was commented upon by many members of the audience.

The entertainment was punctuated by food, drink and hefty portions of chocolate cake which was much appreciated by the audience but did nothing to dampen their enthusiasm. The St Luke's Players received rapturous applause at the end of the night and all went home looking forward to next year's production!

Invitation to Ex-A.E.I. club outings

Doreen Gunning of Nadine Street organises regular monthly coach trips and has invited interested residents to join in. On Sunday 29th March there is a trip to the Thriplow Daffodil Weekend, leaving Charlton House at 9.30 a.m. The event looks very exciting with a range of music events including a swing band and a steel band, a flower festival, crafts and stalls serving refreshments. The total cost for this event will be £19 for each adult, which includes a £4 entrance fee.

On Sunday 19th April there will be a trip to Hythe and Deal. The cost of this trip will be £15 for adults and £6 for children over 5 years of age. Under fives go free. For this trip the coach leaves Charlton House at 9.00 a.m. Planned trips for the summer months include Hastings, Broadstairs, Colchester, Eastbourne and Portsmouth – further details in the next Grapevine or from Doreen.

The Meridian Club – in Charlton Park Lane where the Ex-A.E.I. Club is based – holds many other events

including short mat bowls. On February 21st for example 'the Dualers' are performing. Tickets are just £10. If you are interested in any of these or similar events contact *Doreen* on 0208 853 0075 for full details.

Ongoing events

Book Club's first meeting

The CCRA Book Club got off to a fine start in January, when 6 members met up to compare favourite reads. With wide ranging tastes varying from the classics to 'sword and sorcery' and a healthy dose of chick lit, there was plenty of common ground to be shared, and the prospect of unfamiliar choices to widen those reading horizons. Topped off with a few glasses of wine and some Charlton chat, the evening flew by very pleasantly.

The group will meet again on Monday 2 February at 8pm, having chosen to read *Crow Lake* by Canadian author Mary Lawson: 'an enthralling tale of family relationships and lingering misconceptions'. For further information, contact *Diana Browne* on 0208 293 6431.

Singing Group

After its successful meetings last year and its debut performance at CCRA's December Festive Social, the Singing Group is continuing to meet once a fortnight at 26 Wellington Gardens from 7.30 – 9.00pm.

Forthcoming dates are:

January	Thursday 29th
February	Monday 9th, Thursday 26th
March	Monday 9th, Thursday 26th

Newcomers are still welcome but come soon – before long we may have to establish a waiting list!

For details ring *Chris Harrison* on 0208 858 7277.



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