

## Dates for your diary

Saturday 28 February  
Quiz Night 7.30 – 10 pm  
St. Richard's Hall, Swallowfield Road

Monday 27 April  
Spring Social 7.30 – 9.30 pm  
St. Richard's Hall

Sunday 10 May  
Open Gardens  
watch this space for further details

Sunday 7 June  
The Big Lunch  
Charlton Park

Saturday 4 July  
Community Day  
St. Richard's Hall  
and neighbourhood

Saturday 12 September  
Flower and produce show  
St. Richard's Hall

Monday 5 October  
CCRA Annual General Meeting  
St. Richard's Hall

## Classified Ads

Lewisham Choral Society and Hackney Singers  
present: Mozart Requiem; Brahms Nanie  
Brahms St Anthony Variations.  
Forest Philharmonic Orchestra, conductor Mark  
Shanahan  
Tuesday 10 March 2015, 7.30PM, Royal Festival Hall,  
Southbank, SE1 8XX  
Tickets £12 -£32 from [www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk),  
tel: 0844 847 9910

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## The purrfect read!



**K**ee up to date with all the local news and events on our CCRA Website. Check out the coming year in the 'Calendar' section, the latest social events, interest groups and meetings. Knit and Natter, our newest interest group, is open to everyone who is keen on craft activities. If you can't knit, come along anyway, and someone will help you to learn. All our other interest groups are now in full swing with the new year's programme of events. Try everything from singing, to walking to going on one of Duncan's bike rides. And a new website section for lost and found pets should be coming soon... on <http://www.charltonresidents.org>

## Your CCRA Membership

January is the month all CCRA memberships become due. It's still only £5 for a whole year of benefits. This time we're hoping to use Gift Aid to make the most of your subscriptions, so that anyone who pays tax can authorise CCRA to claim an additional £1.25 on their behalf.

Unsurprisingly, Her Majesty's Revenue needs us to keep proper records of members' entitlement to claim Gift Aid, so we're going to have to ask everyone to fill in a membership form. If we have an email address for you, you'll have received a new membership form to complete. If you were home when we delivered this Grapevine, we'll have offered you another chance to sign up. Please note that even if we're not entitled to claim Gift Aid for you – or that you'd sooner we didn't – we still desperately want you as a member. If we didn't catch you, we've enclosed a membership form for you to complete and return, either to 7 Ellscombe Road or 49 Delafield Road. As ever, if you need help, email [membership@charltonresidents.org](mailto:membership@charltonresidents.org)

Comments, feedback, queries or material for the next edition of Grapevine should be emailed to: [grapevine@charltonresidents.org](mailto:grapevine@charltonresidents.org) by **Monday 23 March**. Alternatively, phone Joy Ogden on 0208 293 3034 or Bob Smith on 0208 853 2697.



## Is skate park plan set in concrete?

**D**id you know that last July the Royal Borough of Greenwich's (RBG) Cabinet members decided that Charlton Park would be a good place to build a new skate park? If not you might want to think about it now.

The proposal was the subject of a heated debate at a meeting in Charlton House on 15 January, when around 80 people packed into a 'Stakeholder Forum' to find out what was going on. The meeting was chaired by Councillor Jackie Smith.

Berkeley Homes bought the old skate park in Royal Arsenal Gardens, Woolwich for development, paying RBG £365,000 towards building a replacement within a two mile radius. The Council said it considered five other sites before the Cabinet decided that 'in principle' Charlton Park was the best choice.

RBG rejected Hornfair Park, which many people thought the obvious choice with its new BMX track, vastly improved lido, changing rooms and tennis courts, saying it had already benefited from the London 2012 Olympic Legacy, and this was a chance to spread the investment across the borough.

Three months after RBG's decision and with little publicity, the Council ran a web-based survey for four weeks, asking people to register their preferred option from the three sites identified within Charlton Park for the 'wheel-sports facility'. Only 74 people responded: 50% (34 people) favoured Site A (close to the Pavilion and Mulberry Close entrance, north-west corner of



the old running track); 15% (11 people) opted for Site B (green area, north of children's play area; 35% (26 people) chose Site C (corner of Cemetery Lane and Charlton Park Lane). On this basis Site A appears to be the favoured option.

Project manager Amy London outlined the Council's aim to build a modern concrete skate park suitable for various wheel sports and all ages and skill levels, including wheelchair users. It would be in an open, visible, safe and well lit area close to public transport and local amenities, and open for extended periods. She showed photographs of a pristine Brighton facility to illustrate the concept. RBG's new skate park will be built from sprayed concrete, which is resistant to intentional damage, reduces noise and the council will 'ensure that' graffiti, where it occurs, will be 'removed promptly', she said.

Following the presentation, some of the audience were in favour of having a skate park facility in the borough, but most felt that Charlton Park was the wrong place for it.

The Council's failure to consult was the main complaint from local residents. They had many questions regarding supervision, graffiti, drug-use, noise and anti-social behaviour, the loss of green space, the impact on the Old Cottage Coffee Shop and the outdoor gym. The Council's recurring response was that most questions would be answered after 'the feasibility study'.

The Forum's next meeting is planned for the end of February, after the feasibility study has reported its results. Contact Amy London on 020 8921 5618 or amy.london@royalgreenwich.gov.uk if you want to be involved.

## STOP PRESS

Don't forget it's time to renew your CCRA membership for 2015. Further details on Page 8 or go to <http://www.charltonresidents.org>.



Quiz night, Saturday 28 February. Doors open 7pm. Prompt start at 7.30pm. All welcome. See page 8.

# Watchdogs with an eye on planning

Our vigilant watchdogs, the Planning Action Group (PAG) continue their diligent monitoring of applications that could impact on central Charlton. They meet regularly with Ward Councillor Gary Parker and with the Council's planning and enforcement department.

Swift action by PAG in December ensured there will be a public airing of proposals for Valley House on the Woolwich Road if the Planning Department recommends these be given further consideration. While the need for additional housing in the Borough is recognised, we have raised concerns that the proposed building with a height of nine storeys - twice the height of the adjacent retail units - would be visually intrusive and have a detrimental impact on the skyline.

These proposals might set a precedent that could open the gates to buildings of increasing heights. This would undermine the original plans for a riverside village feel with low level terraced housing. Readers might also be aware of plans for converting 51 Charlton Church Lane (former Conservative Club) into flats, including additional development at the rear of the property. The developers have expressed a wish to meet with CCRA to explain their proposals in more detail. If you have views on these or any other local planning matters, please send them to the Editor who will pass them on to PAG. We would be delighted to hear from you.

# Sainsbury's deliver the answer

Traffic congestion problems at the new Sainsbury's store in Charlton Church Lane are being resolved due to pressure from CCRA.

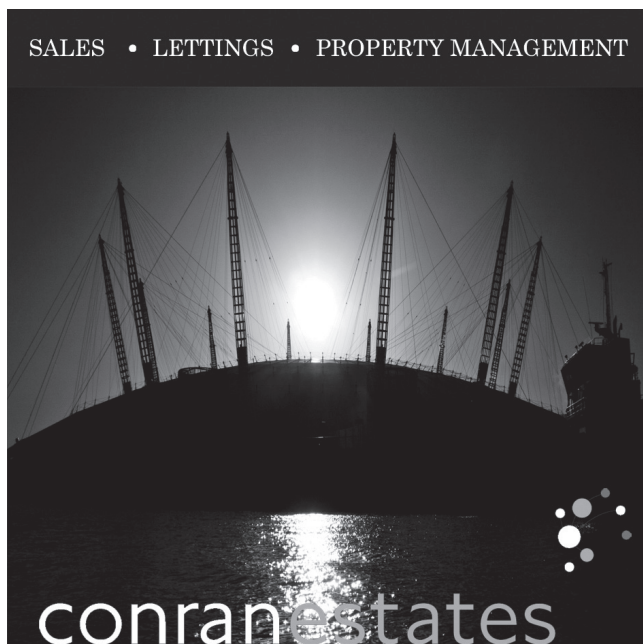
Deliveries are mostly being made on the main road instead of at the designated loading bay in Floyd Road. A store spokesperson suggested this was due to health and safety issues.

Sainsbury's appears to have recognised the difficulty created by its delivery arrangements and is making more use of the designated loading bay. CCRA has written to Sainsbury's, thanking them for acting on residents' concerns but we support the council's plan to introduce 'no loading' restrictions on the main road. We are also in the process of arranging a meeting with IKEA to discuss CCRA's contribution to making sure the store's impact on the community is a positive one.

# Quiz night returns

Another of our popular quizzes takes place on Saturday 28 February at St Richard's Hall. Doors open at 7pm and the quiz will run from 7.30 to 10.00pm. CCRA members £2 / non-members £3 Soft drinks, beer and wine available at very reasonable prices. To register or join a team, email [events@charltonresidents.org](mailto:events@charltonresidents.org), contact Chris on 0208 858 7377, or you can just turn up on the night and we'll fit you in. Maximum team size eight.

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# Out to play!

Remember the fun you had playing marbles or hopscotch or just spending time with other children in the street? Would you like to make it possible for your children to play outside?

A national organisation called Playing Out has helped parents across the country to organise regular sessions when a local street is closed and children enabled to play in the street. Greenwich already has two streets that are regularly closed for children to play.

They might play hopscotch, hide and seek, marbles or just enjoy spending time with other children. Playing Out has a very helpful website: (<http://playingout.net/>) with useful guidance on organising playing out sessions.

If you're interested, come along for an informal meeting at 26 Wellington Gardens for tea or coffee and a listening ear – together we can make this happen. Come on Wednesday, 25 February at 8pm. If you can't make it then, drop a line to [events@charltonresidents.org](mailto:events@charltonresidents.org) and we'll get back to you.



## Knit and Natter

Knitters in Bromley and Greenwich recently contributed 5,570 little hats to the Innocent Smoothie Big Knit campaign. If you buy a Smoothie wearing a hat in February it might be one of the 200+ hats made by CCRA's Knit and Natter group. For each hat bought, Age UK receives 25p to support our elderly citizens during winter months. The group is planning more projects to support important charities. Further sessions are arranged for spring on Tuesdays from 2-4pm on 10 Feb, 3 and 24 March and 14 April in St Richard's Hall, Swallowfield Road. If you would like to join the group, please note, we have plenty of wool but bring your own needles if possible. See the CCRA website <http://www.charltonresidents.org/> or email [chair@charltonresidents.org](mailto:chair@charltonresidents.org) for more details.

# There's something in the air...

As we reported in our last issue (Grapevine vintage 31), many parts of Charlton and Greenwich have consistently experienced levels of air pollution above the European legal limit since Greenwich Council began testing in 2005.

A team of CCRA volunteers will be out and about early in February putting up NO<sub>2</sub> diffusion tubes ordered from the Network for Clean Air to test air quality measuring nitrogen oxide. The Westcombe

Society is undertaking a similar exercise in its area and other groups on either side of the river are also negotiating to become involved. CCRA plans a total of 15 tubes that will be removed for analysis early in March.

Greenwich Council is monitoring air quality at the same time so we will be able to compare their findings in other streets with ours. We hope to be able to report findings in the next Grapevine.





CCRA's annual Christmas Social was held on 6 December. The hall was filled with the comforting aroma of mulled wine as well as with friends and neighbours enjoying the company, the retail opportunities and the music. Our own band SE7 played, local singers sang and at the end of the event there was an opportunity for everyone to join in on a few verses of well-loved carols and seasonal songs.

## Neighbourhood Watch - more than just a window sticker!

Neighbourhood Watch window stickers are a great way to publicise that this is an area where neighbours care about their community. But being part of CCNW is so much more. The Watch gives advice on scams, house, vehicle and personal safety as well as liaising with our local Safer Neighbourhood Policing team. We encourage neighbours to look out for each other and vulnerable members of our community. Our Street Coordinators monitor community concerns and provide 'intelligence' that is often crucial in combating crime. It cost nothing to join and members receive regular UPDATES and INSTANT ALERTS so they are constantly kept up to date with community safety and policing issues. To join CCNW email [brendataggart@gmail.com](mailto:brendataggart@gmail.com) with your address and contact details.



## Sick and tired of cold callers?

Members of the Charlton Central Neighbourhood Watch (CCNW) have been alarmed by the number of Cold Callers in our area over the last few months. Whilst some may be genuine traders, you just don't know who you are opening your door to.

Research, conducted by CCRA last year, showed that notices on your door can reduce 'junk mail' and 'cold callers'.

CCNW has these door stickers available. If you are a member of the Watch and would like a sticker contact [brendataggart49@gmail.com](mailto:brendataggart49@gmail.com).

If faced with a 'cold caller' ask for identification, ask them to call back later and in the meantime either contact their organisation to verify or call

RBG Trading Standards on 020 8921 8223, or email [tradingstandards@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:tradingstandards@royalgreenwich.gov.uk)

**PLEASE**  
**NO Leaflets**  
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**NO Cold Callers**  
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## The Old Cottage Coffee Shop

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## Carol singers raise £480

Carol singers were out in force on two evenings in the lead up to Christmas. Thanks to the generosity and goodwill of local residents they raised a whopping £480. Half will go to our local food bank and the other half to a fund being created to help maintain St Richard's Hall, which is such an important aspect of community get-togethers.

# Get on the right track with CRUG

**C**harlton Rail Users Group (CRUG) aims to improve services and facilities for people using our station and the Charlton station transport 'hub'. We engage with Transport for London (TfL) and Network Rail, and other passenger support organisations. CRUG was the inspiration for Greenwich Line Rail Users, providing the operational model. CRUG holds public meetings where users can talk to South-eastern trains and we are working hard for further engagement with Network Rail and TfL.

CRUG succeeded in getting the monitors moved on Platform 1 so that five- and six-car trains stop nearer the station entrance and we don't have to run half the platform's length to catch a train before the doors slam shut.

We have also discussed bus routes with TfL, and the problems and dangers of getting to stops serving the station. Anyone who has arrived to find the rail service isn't running may have been frustrated trying to reach the stop for the first bus going the right way. With three possible options (on Charlton Church Lane, Woolwich Road, and Anchor and Hope Lane) it's easy to see why people do the 'dance of death' at the main road junction.

We proposed to TfL that buses travelling westward along Woolwich Road should turn left and loop through the area outside the station. The 472 route now does this, but only for the morning peak on Monday to Friday. We continue to lobby for this to apply over a longer period and at weekends.

As part of CRUG you can influence our long term transport needs. For instance, for the next 18 months

Charing Cross trains will not stop at London Bridge. Then, for the following 18 months Cannon Street services will go straight through. Changing at London Bridge will be challenging. The Thameslink service is also being diverted from London Bridge. CRUG is monitoring the situation and working with other organisations to apply pressure to ensure passengers have satisfactory alternative travel arrangements. Check at the station for information on our next public meeting. We need to know if you are affected and if alternative arrangements don't work for you. CRUG is managed by volunteers and if you would like to join contact John Tidy. Email: [John@PMcentre.dircon.co.uk](mailto:John@PMcentre.dircon.co.uk) or text 07973 691815

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# *I heard it on the grapevine...*

## How happy is my valley?

A new year, a new manager. Same old. Same old. I'm sorry to see Bob Peeters go. I thought he was doing a good job in difficult circumstances. Whenever I heard his post match interviews, the subtext seemed to be: 'Without more money to strengthen our small squad, we will struggle'. With a string of injuries, he was forced to bring in talented but inexperienced youngsters. Recently we've played with as many as seven Academy graduates on the pitch and on the bench, most notably Joe Gomez, a serious prospect for the future.

But for owner Roland Duchatelet, football is about ruthlessly balancing the books. His strategy to swap players from his several teams around Europe has a ring of fiscal sense. But it's not working. Now we've signed ex Celtic striker Tony Watt from . . . Standard Liege, and he had a good debut against Brighton even if we did lose at home.

Chris Powell could be forgiven a wry smile over Peeters' plight. If you can't buy and select your players, then what point in managing? That's why Powell quit. He's doing very nicely thank you at Huddersfield, and rumour has it he's trying to lure our talismanic captain Johnnie Jackson to join him.

Poor Jose Riga, the man who steered us from certain relegation, also got unceremoniously dumped for his efforts. So who wants to take up the poisoned

chalice next? Guy Luzon, apparently. Another Duchatelet reject who once managed, guess who, Standard Liege. He should have been in the dugout for his first outing away at Watford on January 17 but work permit difficulties prevented that. Just as well as we suffered a 5 – 0 drubbing, our worst of the season. So far. Israeli-born Luzon caused a fans riot at Liege after a string of poor results so he doesn't come covered in glory. And there are rumours several of the first team squad who played under him at Liege have already expressed dismay. Loyal fans, too, are worried over the choice, pointing out that a head coach with English league experience is what's needed.

First choice keeper Henderson, already out for several weeks, now needs a shoulder operation before he can return. In his absence, homegrown youngster Nick Pope stepped in and, despite some first class saves, let in goals, which cost us games. He's now on loan to Bury, and we've signed a new keeper from . . . Ujpest - Duchatelet's Hungarian side!

When Cocquelin was on loan from Arsenal his talent showed through as an inspired playmaker, and we did well. Arsenal must have been impressed too, for they promptly grabbed him back, and since November we have struggled. We need another one like him.

## Get on the ball

If you enjoy reading about football in Grapevine then perhaps you might be interested in playing? CCRA are interested in getting a team together for friendly kick-about and the odd competitive game with local community groups. Interested? Let us know by emailing [secretary@charltonresidents.org](mailto:secretary@charltonresidents.org) with your contact details and we'll get back to you.



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# Community interest groups

## Book group

The Book Group continues to thrive, with lively discussion on a wide range of books. Our next book will be *H is for Hawk* by Helen Macdonald. This autobiographical novel combines managing grief with a detailed account of rearing and training a goshawk. When her father dies and she is knocked sideways by grief, she becomes obsessed with the idea of training her own goshawk. She buys Mabel for £800 on a Scottish quayside and takes her home to Cambridge. Then she fills the freezer with hawk food and unplugs the phone, ready to embark on the long, strange business of trying to train this wildest of animals. Contact Zoe on [zoe31well@hotmail.com](mailto:zoe31well@hotmail.com) for meeting details.

## Walkers group

Walks are normally on the first Sunday of the month, meeting at 10.30am at Charlton Station (except in April which is Easter Sunday). On 1 February we plan to go to Severndroog Castle - the tearoom and viewing platform is now open and entrance is £2.50 for adults, £2 for children and £6 for families. The March walk, on Sunday 1st, is a guided walk entitled 'Greenwich: Park, Palace and People'. As well as looking at some of the popular sights and a bit of their history, we'd encounter a spy; an innocent victim who met a ghastly end in the park; a terrorist; the man who might have saved Nelson at Trafalgar; the actress who played 'Polly Peachum' (Beggars Opera); and the early childhood of a Hollywood script writer. And if we think Planning today is iniquitous, just wait until you hear what might have been the fate of one of our most well-known buildings if the railways had got their way back in the mid-19C. Please note that the walk will begin at 10.30 am as usual but from Bus Stop Q (380, 54 & 53 services) at Maze Hill and will end in Greenwich Town Centre. If you'd like to meet up with other walkers go to Charlton Station at 10.10am. Please email me on: [jillmo@btinternet.com](mailto:jillmo@btinternet.com) if you would like to receive a monthly email about our planned walk.

## Local History Group:

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 11 February. Any potential new members can contact me on [jillmo@btinternet.com](mailto:jillmo@btinternet.com) for more details.

## CCRA Singing Group

The Singing Group's regular sessions have resumed after the Christmas carol singing. The spring dates are 5, 16 February; 5, 16, 30 March. New members are always welcome, whatever your level of experience. Although we do give occasional performances, the group is really about singing for our own pleasure, and there's no pressure to attend every session. If you are interested, please contact Chris on 020 8858 7377.

## CCRA Music Group ('SE7')

The band performed at a very successful Christmas Party at Cattleya with lots of seasonal singing from a full house! We will meet on 9, 23 Feb; 9, 23 March and perform again at Cattleya in February and March. We are always interested in gaining new members and would especially like to hear from players of melody instruments – strings, woodwind or brass. If you are interested, whatever your level of experience or expertise, please contact Chris on 020 8858 7377.

## Charlton Community Gardens

Work continues at Charlton Station. You can lend a hand at the regular 'gardening parties' on the first Sunday in every month. Just turn up at the station on Sunday 1 March from 2pm to 4pm. We'd love to see you - and don't forget you'll be able to help yourself to the produce that results from everyone's hard work.



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