

Scrutinising RBG for you

Charlton residents are reporting frustration when they approach the Royal Borough of Greenwich (RBG) for Freedom of Information requests. They say such requests are frequently not answered within the required timescale; responses don't always include the full range of information that should be made available and council officers seem unaware of what ought to be included or what council policy actually is.

To make sure its decisions are clear and accessible RBG is required to have an Overview and Scrutiny (OS) Committee and panel, which the council's website says: 'examine the work of the cabinet and hold it to account in order to help ... deliver its community vision'. The OS committee's role is also to improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of public services.

Because of residents' concerns, in February CCRA asked the OS Committee to examine our issues. CCRA representatives then met members of the OS panel, and the OS Chair agreed to investigate our concerns. Another meeting is scheduled for

November. We hope that CCRA is helping to ensure we all have that opportunity to influence and improve services. We'll keep you posted when we know the outcome of the committee's deliberations.

If you want to know more about RBG's scrutiny procedures go to http://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/info/1031/scrutiny/854/introduction_to_scrutiny.

A plan of action

The old Chinese curse 'may you live in interesting times' describes the last six months' planning applications monitored by CCRA's Planning Action Group (PAG). Applications have certainly not been short on 'interest'. As well as reviewing applications, PAG attend planning boards and have contributed to the discussions regarding Valley House, The Old Matalan site, the new Sainsbury's sign, plus developments in Wellington Gardens and Charlton Church Lane. And there are many more. If you care about the built environment and its impact on our neighbourhood - why not join PAG? Contact us on planning@charltonresidents.org

The logo for conranestates, featuring the company name in a lowercase, sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a small graphic of three white dots of varying sizes arranged in a triangular pattern.

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A black and white photograph of a large, historic brick building with multiple chimneys and a central entrance, likely Charlton Church Lane. In the foreground, there is a large, ornate stone archway with classical columns and a pediment. The scene is set in a grassy area under a cloudy sky.

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It's our agm...and much more

Our 8th annual general meeting (AGM) will be held on Monday, 5th October at St Richard's Hall in Swallowfield Road. Doors open at 7pm and business will begin promptly at 7.30pm. You should have already received a familiar yellow CCRA bulletin that details the agenda. .

We have invited Dr Ian Mudway to talk about his work on air quality – a hot topic in our area where there are high levels of pollution. We are delighted he is able to join us, to tell us about his projects and to give a fuller picture of the effects of poor air quality on all of us and how we can avoid the worst of it. Dr Mudway is a lecturer in Respiratory Toxicology at King's College and led the EXHALE (Exploration of Health and Lungs in the Environment) team. The team worked on a four-year study of 8-10 year old children in Hackney and Tower Hamlets, measuring their lung capacity and the related effects of Low Emission Zones. The project was able to offer evidence of the relationship between air pollution and damage to health and lung function.

His expertise was recently called upon for a TV programme about the human remains discovered during tunnelling for Crossrail, where he found children of the 17th and 18th centuries were more susceptible to disease and infection, having been subjected to indoor air pollution. Jill Austen, CCRA member, will also talk about the results of the recent air quality survey undertaken in our area.

We hope you will join us for both the AGM and for Dr Mudway's talk. Tea and coffee will be available and

there will be an opportunity for new members to join CCRA through to the end of 2016 for the annual rate of £5. If you wish to take advantage of this offer or renew your membership for 2016 come early so the official business can start on time..

To build or not to build...?

Strong feelings have emerged on both sides of the Council's plans to build a skate park in Charlton Park next year, with one petition in support and another in opposition. Councillor Gary Parker presented the petition objecting to the scheme, with 730 signatures from 800 interviews with local residents, to RBG's full council meeting in July. Signatories' cited reasons for opposition were lack of funding and consultation over the decision. An RBG cabinet member is investigating the petition, which will be included on the Council's agenda in the next two months, said a council spokesman. Those favouring the skatepark have garnered around the same number of signatures online, from places further afield, such as Bexleyheath, Dartford and even Germany. Many signatories are keen skaters. This petition, which claims there is potential both for great fun for local children and benefits for local businesses, is yet to be presented to the council. For information on the project visit www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/charltonskatepark, ring Project Manager Amy London on 020 8921 5618 or talk to Charlton councillors, Allan MacCarthy, Gary Parker, Miranda Williams at their surgeries. Contact details at www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk

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Boys and Girls go out to play...but first to clean up the streets



Getting down and dirty in a weedy good cause, left to right, Joy Ogden, Lisa Chillingworth and David Plant.

Saturday, 4 July was CCRA's annual Community Day. On a hot, sunny day (one of the few this summer) a record number of volunteers turned up in the morning to clean our streets.

Their work was made easier with the help of donations from Selco and Wickes (see pictures). Volunteers returned in time for lunch and were able to stay on to play out in Sundorne Road. Children and adults alike enjoyed the sunshine – making music, finger knitting, creating edible jewellery, riding bikes, playing hoopla or having mehndi patterns applied to hands or feet.

Council consultation on regular playing-out sessions have favoured continuing the sessions and CCRA representatives will meet council officers in October to discuss practicalities.



Sundorne Road is closed to heavy traffic and opened up to scooting children playing out.

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Many thanks to Selco Charlton (above) and Wickes, who generously donated gardening equipment to help volunteers to groom CCRA streets.

It Turned out Nice Again

for this year's 4th annual Flower and Produce Show

Residents began arriving at St Richard's Hall in Swallowfield Road as the doors opened at around 8am. The bakers were laden with boxes of scones, biscuits, pies, assorted cakes, bottles of chutney and jams.

Other, green-fingered entrants, brought their pot plants, flower arrangements or fruit and vegetables, while those with an artistic inclination brought along their paintings, drawings, photographs and knitted or crocheted treasures.

The Blackheath and Greenwich Women's Institute judges complimented pupils and teachers from Fossdene School for their impressive contribution to the Show's success. The young winners, whose entries ranged from paintings to poems will receive their prizes from CCRA chair Brenda Taggart and the show's organiser Len Weir at a special school assembly this term.

Why does CCRA organise this event, you might ask? It's all about building a community – encouraging people to get involved by making fun activities available for all the family; boosting our contribution to the green agenda by inspiring residents to grow vegetables and fruit as well as flowers; and sharing our knitting, craft and cooking skills with our neighbours in a bid to make Charlton a more sociable, friendly place to live: a village in the city.



Above Visitors and entrants to the Flower and Produce Show survey the scrumptious cakes, confectionery, jams and jellies. Below Some of this year's winning plants and flower arrangements



CCRA members open their hearts and gardens

Twice a year some of the CCRA members volunteer to designate their gardens to be Open Gardens, where fellow members can visit to admire, chat and swap horticultural hints. This year, at least, they could also bask in the sunshine. Visitors all agree it's a brilliant way to gain ideas to spruce up your own garden and explore newfangled botanical avenues. And it's a great way to meet your neighbours, make new friends and build a thriving village community in a London suburb.



Visit Stefan, the German Master Baker in his mobile shop just outside 84 Wellington Gardens, every Saturday between 8.45 - 9.10 am.

Treat yourself to his delicious breads, cakes and delicatessen.



How happy is my valley?

...A view from the terraces

The new season's underway and Charlton have hit the ground running. No time for dithering as the Boys took on their first few games in dominant form, winning two and drawing two. They have also progressed in cup matches so far. The first league game, at home to newly relegated QPR was tough but Les Garçons took it all in their new stride and emerged 2 – 0 winners.

A narrow defeat at Wolves stemmed the impetus somewhat but I sense head coach Guy Luzon is an impatient man and keen to get into this season and into a rhythm of success. I think he is convinced we can do well this year.

In the summer owner Roland Duchatelet flogged his Belgian side Standard Liege so maybe he had a bit of spondulix to spare, for Luzon was given room to purchase several players. And he seems to have bought wisely. One criticism levelled at Charlton last season was that they were a side small in stature and were troubled by more physical teams. Luzon has taken this on board for some of our seven new signings are taller and beefier. Most notably we bought Danish striker Simon Makienok from Italian club Palermo. The six foot seven frontman is already making his mark and scored his first goal for the Boys against second placed Hull in a thrilling finish. The ever-reliable Gudmunsson crossed and Makienok rose high between defenders to nod it in. In a game dominated by Charlton the scores were

level at full time only for another eight minutes to be added. In the dying seconds Makienok returned the compliment, nodded down a high cross for Gudmunsson to latch onto and head home a dramatic winner. Makienok earns the distinction of being the tallest player ever to pull on a Charlton shirt.

Elsewhere, Luzon has shored up the defence and introduced some exciting mid-fielders who are already making a difference to our style of play. Luzon has made it clear he wants his team to enjoy their football which, in turn is providing entertaining viewing for the fans and paying dividends in results.

There is pace and panache now and self-belief which has inspired the players to drive on to victory. If we keep this energy and commitment going for the duration I believe we can make the play offs. Last year I predicted our final position would be tenth. We finished 12th. Not bad for a side rated by national newspaper pundits as relegation candidates.

There have already been a string of injuries but the squad is strong and when regulars have been sidelined, young Academy players have stepped up and shown their worth. Former Academy hopeful Morgan Fox, now a regular full back, has joined the Wales national squad. Congratulations to him.

I know it's early days (as I write we are eighth) but I share Luzon's confidence in this squad and I have high hopes for the season. COYR's!



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A performance to watch

We should all have seen the advisory 20 mph speed limit notices in our area. However, despite the number of speed humps there remains considerable concern about vehicles exceeding this limit.

The Charlton Central Neighbourhood Watch (CCNW) has recently received complaints about noisy motorbikes, quads and mopeds. They go so fast that it is difficult, but if you can get the registration number of a vehicle exceeding the speed/noise limit please report it to the SNT on 0208 721 2734. Many persistent speeders often have no insurance or are driving illegally so it's well worth making that call.



Community interest groups

CCRA Singing Group

The group resumed after the summer break on Thursday, 10 September. We meet once a fortnight, alternately on Mondays and Thursdays. Remaining dates for this year are: 8 & 19 October, 5 & 16 November, 3 & 14 December. We have our usual evenings of carol singing, which are open to all. We welcome new members, whatever level of experience. Although we 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, contact Chris on 020 8858 7377.

CCRA Music Group ('SE7')

The group meets fortnightly on Mondays, and our remaining sessions this year are on 28 September, 12 & 26 October, 9 & 23 November, 7 December. Our first performance at Cattleya was on 13 September, and we hope to be there about once a month after that. New members are welcome and we would especially like to hear from players of melody instruments – strings, woodwind or brass. If you are interested, whatever your experience or expertise, please contact Chris on 020 8858 7377.

Walking group

September's walk was to Hall Place on a warm and sunny day. October's walk on 4 October is to east London, taking in Canary Wharf, Limehouse, Wapping, Shadwell including "footsteps of Alf Garnet", Cable Street and Wilton's music hall. It will start at 10.30am from Charlton Station. November's walk will be a continuation of the city walk we did earlier this year. Contact Jill for details (jillmo@btinternet.com). Final meeting arrangements will depend on whether trains are running. This walk is organised by a CCRA member who is a qualified city guide and should be full of fascinating detail. There will be a short, new opening section, continuing to St Mary le Bow, and finishing just beyond Pye Corner. It should end between 12.30 and 1pm.

Book group

September and October are, by our tradition, taken up with discussions about the Booker shortlist. We'll meet on 13 October, the day the winner is announced, to see if the judges got it right! If you'd like to join us

contact Zoe on zoe31@hotmail.com.

Local history group

Anyone interested in joining this group should contact: jillmo@btinternet.com.

Knit and Natter

The group has been busy over the summer, knitting incubator blankets for Queen Elizabeth Hospital's neo-natal unit. Our autumn/winter project is to provide small knitted teddies for their Christmas gift boxes. If you can knit, come along and join us. If you can't knit come along and we'll teach you. Forthcoming dates are: Tuesdays: 27 October, 24 November and 22 December. We meet in St Richard's Hall, Swallowfield Road 2 to 4pm. We have wool but donations are gratefully accepted. You should bring 4mm needles (or you can buy them at the session). Cakes and great natter come as standard. Look forward to seeing you.

Charlton Community Gardens

As summer fades, we'll put the raised beds into their winter planting—green manure, onions and garlic and of course, broad beans. Join us from Sunday, 11 October from 2pm to help or to chat about gardening in Charlton. Some of this year's produce was unused but we grow to share: when there's ripe fruit or veg or you need some herbs, help yourself!

The Children and Families event is at the Station concourse, on Thursday, 29 October from 10.30am-12.30pm, when we invite young people to come and garden. It's an opportunity to plant bulbs to take home and grow, perhaps as Christmas presents, and much more.



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Dates for your diary

Monday, 5 October

St Richard's Hall, Swallowfield Road
CCRA Annual General Meeting at 7.30pm
Followed by a talk on the impact of poor air quality
Speaker: Dr Ian Mudway (details on page 3)

Saturday, 17 October

Quiz Night at 7.30pm
St Richard's Hall, Swallowfield Road
Full details opposite

Saturday, 5 December

Christmas Social (time to be confirmed)
St Richard's Hall, Swallowfield Road

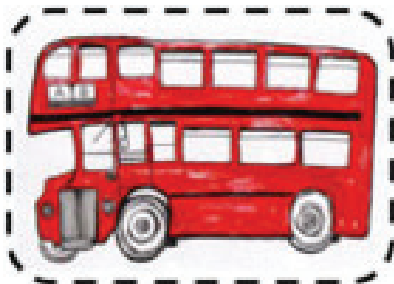
What's on for under 5's in Charlton?

Charlton Toy Library is based at Charlton House and offers a toy, book, child safety equipment loan service as well as stay and play sessions, music and crafts. Open Tuesday, Thursday and Friday mornings 9.30-12.30. Membership is £14 for 6 months. First session is free: a great venue for your little ones' 1st or 2nd birthday party. www.charltontoylibrary.co.uk

The Big Red Bus Club is at the end of Charlton Park by the Cemetery Road entrance.

They offer stay and play sessions in the afternoons everyday 12.30-3pm and it's a free drop in club where you can play inside and out and

enjoy a cuppa with other parents and carers. www.thebigredbusclub.com



Classified Ads

Grapevine reaches more than 1,000 homes and retail outlets, in our designated area and beyond. To advertise, contact grapevine@charltonresidents.org.

Rates for individuals and small businesses:

Small ads up to 15 words plus contact details cost £10 for one issue or £30 for four issues

Panel ads containing up to 20 words, contact detail and an image/logo cost from £30 for one insertion or £100 for four.

Quiz night

Another of our popular Quiz Nights will take place on Saturday, 17 October at St Richard's Hall. Doors open at 7pm and the quiz will run promptly from 7.30 to 10pm. CCRA member £2/non-members £3. Soft drinks, beer and wine available at very reasonable prices. Please note that because of our licence you cannot bring your own alcohol to this event. To register or join a team, email events@charltonresidents.org contact Chris on 020 8858 7377 – or you can just turn up on the night and we'll fit you in. Maximum team size eight.

Ending a growing problem

This was the summer of our discontent as vegetation took over the nooks and crannies of streets and pavements. It was ended



when RBG's Waste and Street Services Department contracted specialist external contractors, who applied weed treatment products throughout all the streets in our Borough. Further treatments will be applied to counter any resurgence. Dead weeds will be brushed up in the regular fortnightly sweep.

Words of advice

The Council now undertakes online consultations. Currently, they are seeking our views about their plans for Local Flood Risk Management, Waste Management and Planning applications. Type 'consultations' in the search field on RBG's web page to find what's current.

Sign up to Streetlife

Some residents have received an invitation to join Streetlife and CCRA checked whether it was a genuine organisation with Greenwich's Trading Standards. We were assured it is a useful social media site that aims to bring local communities together. It's free to sign up and once you've joined you can seek advice from neighbours about local traders, local events and so on. Try it out – you might find it helpful. If you're looking for an upholsterer or a plumber, someone near here might have the answer.

Comments, feedback, queries or material for the next edition of Grapevine should be emailed to: grapevine@charltonresidents.org by Monday, 9 November. Alternatively, phone Joy Ogden on 0208 293 3034 or Bob Smith on 0208 853 2697



Crumbs! Now it's the... Great CCRA Bake Off



... let them eat cakes!

The village truly arrived in the city on Saturday, 12 September when CCRA held its 4th Annual Flower and Produce Show in St Richard's Hall. The good people of the CCRA area grew, baked, preserved and crafted with flair, expertise and fine attention to detail, providing a record number of entries from residents. This year's event was enriched by over 300 entries in the children's categories from Fossdene School, through from the nursery to Year 6.

The Hall in Swallowfield Road was filled with produce of the highest calibre, presenting Blackheath and Greenwich Women's Institute's nine judges – each with their own specialist area - with a real challenge. But compliments flowed from all who gathered after judging to taste the many entries in the popular bread making, cakes and preserving sections.

Greenwich and Blackheath WI President Carol Singleton and Vice President Emma Taylor helped in the judging and presented certificates and prizes:

STOP PRESS

CCRA's popular Quiz Night is back! Join in the fun on Saturday, 17 October, 7.30pm at St Richard's Hall, Swallowfield Road. For full details see page 8.

each first prize winner receiving a copy of the local group's own Cookbook of tried and tested recipes.

Said Carol Singleton: 'It's a wonderful thing to bring the community together in this way and to help them get to know their neighbours. And it's so lovely to include the school.'

Emma Taylor added: 'This is the WI's centenary year and being part of an event like this is very close to our hearts.'

Len Weir, chief organiser, said: 'This annual event continues to grow in popularity. We congratulate all the winners and urge those who may not have received a certificate this year to start practising now for next year.'

CCRA Chair Brenda Taggart commented on the 'very high standard of children's entries' and said: 'I am looking forward to increasing our partnership with Fossdene in the future. Events like this help to demonstrate to children the importance of community involvement'.

Brenda and Len have been booked to present prizes and certificates in a special assembly at Fossdene.

Congratulations from CCRA to all who entered and we look forward to planning the 5th show, same time next year.



AGM Monday, 5 October at 7.30pm + national speaker on air quality. See page 3 for full details.