

Local pharmacies face health warning...

Pharmacists based in local pharmacies are part of the National Health Service. Income from all the products they sell is an important part of their business plan, but the average local pharmacy earns 90–95% of its income from NHS services, so financial support from the NHS is what keeps them going. From 1 October the government is planning to cut this support by 6% and it is estimated that from 1,000 to 3,000 local pharmacies could be forced to close.

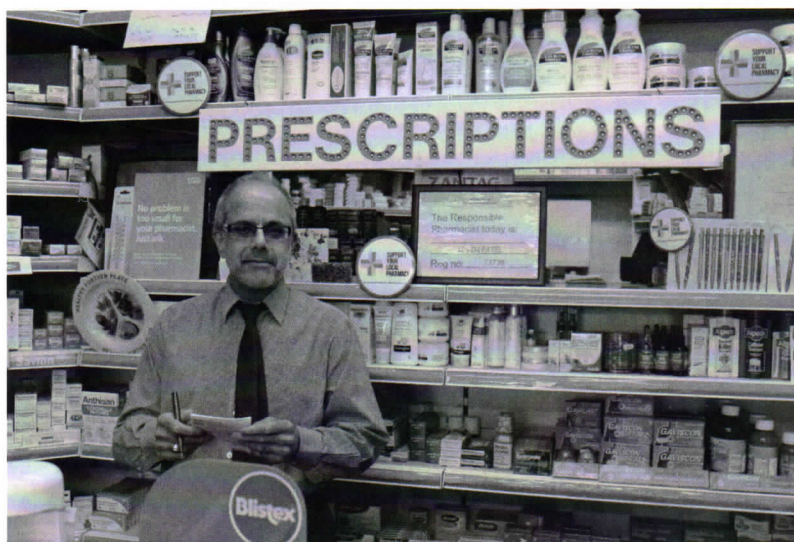
Let's make sure we support our local pharmacies to remain open.

To find out more we spoke to our nearest pharmacists, Kevin in his pharmacy on Charlton Road at the top of Victoria Way and Purvee Patel at Totty's on Charlton Church Lane. They said the funding they receive comes under two main headings: Establishment Payment, a set amount payable to qualifying pharmacies that contributes towards the costs of premises, staff and giving professional advice. Secondly, there is Medicines Reimbursement, an average payment of 90p per item on all prescriptions, (a figure that has not increased for many years), and the cost of the drugs prescribed.

The National Pharmaceutical Association (NPA), sought to negotiate but the government quickly ended discussions and announced the 6% cut from October, though the details are still awaited. "A bit like the junior doctors - take it or leave it," said Kevin, "though I suppose more accurately it's just: 'take it!'" Yet part of their job is to provide advice without an appointment, and be readily accessible for up to 12 hours a day, which helps to relieve some of the pres-

STOP PRESS

The Big Lunch - CCRA residents celebrate this national event from 1pm on 5 June in Charlton Park. Bring a picnic and something to share. Live music..



Kevin, a familiar friendly face, with pen poised in his pharmacy to take your signatures on the NPA petition

sures on GPs and A&E departments.

For people with mobility problems or other disabilities and for a parent with several children and no car, who need support with health problems, their local pharmacy is an absolutely invaluable resource. And, as Purvee said: "We are able to chat informally with patients and get to know them personally over time."

Both Purvee and Kevin spoke about the stress they are under, as is the whole health service, with increasing demands from a growing elderly population with multiple co-existing health conditions.

The government is cutting pharmacies' budgets at a time when it is increasingly encouraging people to consult their pharmacists. It says it wants to develop NHS services that enable more people to stay in their local community and avoid hospital or residential care, yet is putting at risk the services of those very health professionals who are at their communities' heart.

So how can we help the pharmacists? Let people know what's going on. Sign the NPA petition in Kevin's or Totty's pharmacies. Write to your MP, the Prime Minister and Health Secretary. And why not buy a little more in your local pharmacy.



Open Gardens – members' only event on Sunday 8 May. Full details on website charltonresidents.org and local noticeboards

A small sigh of relief

Planning concessions show council is starting to listening to CCRA

Representatives of CCRA's planning group attended a planning board hearing for the Valley House development on Woolwich Road near Makro. Local action has led to a decrease in the planned height of the new development. CCRA has also secured further action to mitigate poor air quality. The family units originally fronting Woolwich Road will now overlook the rear landscaping and the mechanical ventilation system to the block that fronts Gallions Road is to be extended. A green wall is to be provided. Overall, CCRA welcomes an increased commitment to air quality monitoring in the area.

The council continues to refuse planning applications to build in gardens, as a recent application within CCRA's catchment area has been turned down. You may have noticed building on the Woolwich Road opposite the bottom end of Victoria Way: there was talk of a gym there but current intelligence suggests that Matalan and Frankie and Benny's restaurant are

likely to be sited there.

You might also have noticed that the old Sainsbury's store has been demolished. IKEA say they have done this to secure the site and prevent anti-social behaviour. They also say the ecology park to the rear of the site will remain open for public use throughout the dismantling process and that 95 per cent of the materials from the building will be recycled. A planning application for a new IKEA store is expected later this year.

The air that we breathe

CCRA takes air quality seriously. Pollution damages health and is particularly harmful to the very young and the elderly. You may remember that pollution monitors were placed strategically around the area to help us better understand changes in our environment. We had hoped that results of CCRA's latest air quality monitoring exercise would be available to report back to you. However, analysis is not yet complete – full report in the next issue of Grapevine.



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Boys and Girls Come Outside to Play!

The CCRA's first playing out session was held on Wednesday, 20 April in Sundorne Road. Future sessions will begin around 3.15pm and will be held on alternate Wednesdays. This means that subsequent sessions will be held on 4 and 18 May; 1, 15 and 29 June; and 13 July. The council has authorised us to close the street until 8pm – but it will generally be reopened well before that.

The initiative is well established in other parts of the country. In Bristol, for instance, about 100 streets are regularly closed to traffic to enable children to play outdoors. Bristol University has undertaken research showing that children at playing out sessions are likely to be getting significantly more exercise and activity than they would if they were indoors. Researchers have examined the links between environment and children's level of activity. What's important for health is that children between the ages of five and 18 achieve at least an hour a day of 'moderate to vigorous physical activity' (MVPA). Very few children achieve this – recent figures show just 14% of boys and 8% of girls do so. Playing out sessions support MVPA by creating space for skipping, scooting, hopscotch, cycling and playing tag as well the imaginative games in which children engage when they are with others – being wizards, witches, superheroes and so on.

Greenwich Council supports street closure for playing out sessions in recognition of the health and social advantages for children. We have also been fortunate to receive a grant from Greenwich Action for Voluntary Service (GAVS) which will support us in the early stages by providing resources and enabling us to hire St Richard's Hall. We hope new parents will join in – even if your baby is too young to take part it will be a good place to meet other parents from nearby.

Volunteers from our community act as stewards. They wear hi-viz jackets and carry whistles. Their role is to ensure children's safety by: keeping children within the boundaries of the street closure; diverting traffic simply wanting to use the street to get from one place to another; and guiding drivers who wish to make deliveries or park there. Cars wishing to drive into the closed section of Sundorne Road will be asked to drive at walking speed and a steward will walk ahead of the motorist, ensuring that children are safely on the pavement. To make this scheme work



Volunteers Sarah Roseblade, Linda Pound and Patricia Santome and children look forward to Playing Out again soon.

we need a regular supply of volunteers. If you think you could spare an hour or two on an occasional Wednesday we'd love to hear from you. Just email Linda (lindapound@hotmail.com) or ring on 020 8858 7377.

It is important to remember that parents have full responsibility for their own children. To minimise risk of damage to cars or other children soft balls only will be allowed during playing out sessions. But let's not forget that above all we'd like children to have fun outdoors.

Good Reasons for Street Play

- ✦ Children have a right to play and need it for physical, emotional and social development.
- ✦ Children need to experience free play, following their own ideas and interests.
- ✦ Children need to play energetically but most gardens are too small
- ✦ Most children don't have independent access to parks.
- ✦ Playing in the street increases community cohesion and a sense of collective responsibility for children's wellbeing and safety. It helps children to develop a sense of independence.
- ✦ Children playing in the street helps children to make friends from other schools and of different ages.
- ✦ Streets take up the vast majority of public space in the city and should be for everyone, not just cars!

Follow CCRA on Twitter!



You can now keep up with the latest CCRA happenings, and other news about Charlton and beyond, via Twitter. Also if you are involved in organising events and activities for CCRA you can use our Twitter feed to spread your message.

For those who are new to it, Twitter is a very popular and easy-to-use social media website, whose unique feature is that messages (known as Tweets) are limited to 145 characters. In practice this works out at a couple of sentences at most. You can get a quick idea of what Twitter looks like from a CCRA perspective by going to: https://twitter.com/ccra_se7

However, to get the most out of Twitter you are strongly recommended to join. Setting up an account is very fast. All you need to create a Twitter account is an email address. You will also need to decide what your Twitter user name will be. The address for CCRA is @ccra_se7, but you can call yourself anything you like, or do what most people do and base it on your name. Once you are up and running with an account you can get on with the fun bit and start following other Twitter users, and posting your own Tweets.

Who should you follow? Obviously you will start with @ccra_se7 but who else would you like to see on your Twitter feed? CCRA are currently following about 120 other people or organisations (you can see all of this at the @ccra_se7 homepage). These have been chosen because they may be of interest to CCRA members. Some of these include, for example, TFL and other transport companies, local councillors and our MP, Greenwich Council, community police,

Charlton House, Charlton Community Gardens, local bloggers, other local residents associations and so forth.

However, you can choose to follow anybody you want including, for example, friends and family, work or professional interests, hobbies, sport, food, politics. There is no area of interest that will not have Twitter accounts! My own personal Twitter feed consists of a mix of many interests and social contacts providing an entertaining and ever-changing source of interest. Tweets and Retweets are the lifeblood of Twitter and soon you will find you are Re-tweeting whatever you find interesting, posting your own Tweets, and picking up your own followers.

CCRA members who are involved in organising events and activities please get in touch. You can either pass the information to me (details below) or post Tweets yourself on behalf of CCRA.

CCRA Twitter homepage: https://twitter.com/ccra_se7

CCRA Twitter address: @ccra_se7

To get in touch with suggestions for Tweets or anything else that is CCRA-Twitter related, email: tweets@charltonresidents.org

Being a good neighbour...

Those of us who heard the shocking story recently about a local man convicted of holding his wife a slave in 'domestic servitude' have asked ourselves, 'Could I have helped?' 'What should I do if I see the signs?' And those of us who have been following The Archers' story of hidden and disturbing emotional domestic abuse are asking the same questions. The experts say that, even though we want to respect each other's privacy, where you see something that is simply not allowable whatever the race or religion of the people involved, we should not dismiss it as 'a cultural difference'. We have an obligation to take some action on their behalf to try to protect them – especially if it is a vulnerable person – child or adult. Here are some useful numbers to call for advice if you are worried by what you have seen or heard: call 0808 2000 247 for helpline run jointly by Women's Aid & Refuge; email: womensaid.org.uk Victim support: 0845 3030 900/www.victimsupport.org.uk Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111/www.crimestoppers-uk.org Or if you hear someone screaming for help, just ring 999 and ask the police to check it out.

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Pots and pots of beautiful ceramics, made by talented CCRA members Sarah Roseblade and Jane Loftin

Calling central Charlton artists

The world of art is thriving in Charlton. Whatever the medium, residents within the CCRA area seem to have it covered. Some have a space at the increasingly popular Second Floor Studios and Arts centre down by the Thames Barrier. Elliscombe Road architect and abstract landscape artist Jeremy Hull is one of many who produce works from the Centre and he will be exhibiting at the "Open Studios" event that runs there from 2 -5 June.

The art, craft and design show will feature a "Secret Postcards" sale on Friday, 3 June. Up to 600 cards will be up for sale at £20 each. Artists will be designing up to two each and buyers find out who their artist is after purchase. Seventy five per cent of the proceeds go to four nominated charities.

And now central Charlton's potters are throwing out an invitation to like-minded artists to join them. CCRA members Sarah Roseblade of Elliscombe Road and Jane Loftin of Priolo Road, who dabble in Ceramics at Greenwich Community College, hope to gauge interest in adding an 'open studios' style event to the CCRA social calendar.

They say: "We thought it might be nice to open our houses on a day or even a weekend of 26 and 27 November, so that we can show off our efforts and perhaps sell a few pieces as Christmas gifts. We wondered if there are others who enjoy making crafty things who would like to join in? No matter what your craft is as long as you live in Charlton in close proximity to the CCRA area we could coordinate a list of participants and enjoy an event in the spirit of the popular Open Gardens event in summer."

If you are interested please email Sarah and Jane at handmadeincharlton@gmail.com with your name, address and details of the things you make.

CCRA neighbourliness

It's a sign of the times

You may have noticed smart new Neighbourhood Watch signs in our streets, placed there by Charlton Central Neighbourhood Watch (CCNWatch) members. Are you a member of the Watch? If not, why not? The Watch is free to join and members receive the UPDATE newsletter on community safety issues plus INSTANT ALERT emails that warn residents about local scams and villains. To join today email your contact details to mail@ccnwatch.org

Care about where you live?

In CCRA we are committed to preserving what is good but keen to make changes that benefit the community. Our Environment Action Group is currently focused on monitoring air quality and maintaining high standards of street cleanliness. Do you have an environment issue you feel strongly about? From trees to transport, if you care about our environment then contact chair@charltonresidents.org or secretary@charltonresidents.org and tell us about your passion.

Street Monitoring

How clean and safe is your street? Rubbish dumped? Dog Fouling? Littered? Broken pavements? Unsafe trees? We are reintroducing our 'street monitoring' scheme and looking for one monitor in each street who can spare an hour a month to help us keep RBG 'on their toes'. Please get in touch with chair@charltonresidents.org or secretary@charltonresidents.org if you can help.

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How happy is my valley?

...A view from the terraces

By the time you read this Charlton's seasonal fate will have been decided. The odds are very much in favour of relegation, though, with six games to go, a miracle could still happen. Head coach Jose Riga pulled us back from the brink two seasons ago and now back in charge again at the Valley, he has re-energised the team and restored self-belief enough that we have actually won three of our last five games.

With some tough matches ahead the likelihood of getting enough points to stay up is doubtful. Our fate also depends to some extent on how teams above us fair. Currently we are second from bottom and one point below MK Dons. We can overtake them but the target is Rotherham who are seven points ahead and enjoying something of a renaissance.

I suspect we have left it too late and are faced with the prospect of First division football next season. So far we have played 41 games. We have drawn 12, lost 20 and won just eight, giving us 36 points. We have scored 36 goals and conceded 70, keeping a clean sheet just nine times. Few clubs in the championship have such a bad record.

And yet, Ipswich manager Mick McCarthy, not known for his liberal praise, said after the nil nil draw at Portman Road on 5 April that he couldn't understand why Charlton were second from bottom. He thought we were worth more than that. All credit to Mr Riga who has worked hard to re-invent the side

into a credible fighting force.

But the real reasons for our plight are only too obvious for Addicks fans. Internecine war has all but destroyed the club. Owner Roland Duchatelet and his chief executive Katrien Meire have turned the Charlton into a disaster area. Spending on players is pared to a minimum; we are gifted players from other clubs in Europe owned by Duchatelet only to discover they are not up to the job here. There has been such a turn round in squad personnel that the few regular players must wonder who will be alongside them when they next take to the pitch. Loan players come and go. None of this is conducive to a settled side. Fans are at war with the owner. In March they made a solemn procession to the ground carrying a coffin symbolising the death of the club. Twice now they have stopped games by throwing beach balls onto the pitch while chanting for the owner to go. He knows how unhappy they are yet appears to care little for their input. It will be interesting to see how many season tickets are renewed.

Against all this the players are expected to perform in one of the toughest division in European football. Not surprising then that they struggle. Yet in the last month they have beaten high flying Middlesbrough and Birmingham with some high quality skills. Cold logic says we are down, but my Addicks heart is saying we can survive. Congers fished. COYR's!

**The German Master Baker will be visiting
Wellington Gardens (opposite No.84) in his
mobile shop**



Alternate Saturdays between 08.45—9.10am

Squeeze din!

A packed White Swan in Charlton Village heard the magnificent sounds of iconic band Squeeze on 6 April.

It was the worst kept secret in Charlton. The classic pop group, which once boasted Jools Holland as a member, staged a concert at the pub without publicity - and filled the venue. Word flew round the district and fans came flocking. The gig was an opportunity for the band to rehearse for their upcoming tour of Japan and a great chance for local fans to see the band in a home setting. Lead guitarist/singer Glen Tilbrook was born in Woolwich and lives and records in Charlton and even supports the Charlton Football Club! The music was great and the band received a huge ovation.

I heard it on the Grapevine

Community interest groups

Book Group

We now have around a dozen members, meeting about every six weeks to dissect and discuss good reads recommended by our members. We don't always get it right, but we certainly enjoy getting there. We try to select books from different genres, and a few in advance for those who like to race on ahead. In October we will be focusing on the Booker shortlist, definitely something to get your teeth into. Unfortunately our Membership is currently closed, but if you would like to go on the waiting list, or even set up your own Book Group, do contact Zoe on zoe31well@hotmail.com.

Walking Group

The March walk was rather different from our usual ones as we were asked to trial a War Memorials walk on behalf of St George's, the Garrison Church. Taking in a number of relevant sites we finished up at St George's, which has a new memorial to Greenwich servicemen who have died in service since WWII. April's walk was especially interesting as we enjoyed the expertise of a guide to Fleet Street and its environs with its interesting history and architecture. The next walk will be on Mayday (1 May) to Scadbury Park near Chislehurst. We shall meet outside Fossdene School at 10am. In June, Ann Dinsdale will lead a 'Suffrage Walk' (meeting at Charlton Station at 10am) around Greenwich and Blackheath to get us back to Charlton Park in time to join the rest of CCRA in the Big Lunch. All walkers welcome - just turn up!

Knit and Natter.

Come along to St Richard's, Swallowfield Road on 19 April, 31 May, 28 June, 26 July. All sessions run from 2-4pm. with your own crafting project or join in with our charity knitting programme. All are welcome - just turn up.

CCRA Singing Group

Our group meets once a fortnight, alternately on Mondays and Thursdays and the remaining dates for the summer are: 12 & 23 May; 6, 16 & 30 Jun; 11 & 25 Jul. We are also performing at the Spring Social on 25 April. We are always happy to welcome new members, whatever your level of experience. Although we occasionally perform, the group is really about singing for our own pleasure, and there's no pressure to attend every session. If you are interested in joining, please contact Chris on 020 8858 7377.

CCRA Music Group ('SE7')

The group continues to meet fortnightly on Mondays, and our sessions for the summer are 16, May; 20 Jun; 18 Jul. We will be performing at CCRA events including the Spring Social and the Big Lunch, as well as our evenings at Cattleya. 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 in joining the group, whatever your level of experience or expertise, please contact Chris on 020 8858 7377.

Charlton Community Gardens

The broad beans in the community garden at Charlton station are flowering. Summer and harvest must be just round the corner! During the Easter holidays more than 25 children came with their parents to our Children and Families Event to plant more red-flowered beans in the gaps in that raised bed and to build bird houses and bug hotels for their own gardens. Our website (charltoncommunitygardens.org.uk) has pictures of the busy bees--litter-picking was a favourite activity along with making seed bombs.

The next Gardening Party is on Sunday, 8 May from 2-4pm and the empty bed has had green manure, ready for planting up. Do bring the children along to help us fill the bed with seeds and seedlings.

The annual Plant Sale is scheduled for Thursday, 19 May from 5pm, with lots of vegetable seedlings, especially tomatoes and chillies, and some flowers. This is our main fund-raising event and we'd appreciate your support.



The Old Cottage Coffee Shop

Charlton Park

Winter time opening hours
Mon and Tues 10:00-2:00 (school term)
Wed-Sun 10:00-4:00
All day breakfast now available

Dates for your diary

Wednesday 4 May

Playing out

Sundorne Road, 3.30 onwards, See page 3

Saturday 8 May

Open Gardens – members' only event

Full details on charltonresidents.org or local noticeboards

Sunday 5 June

The Big Lunch

CCRA residents will meet up in Charlton Park from 1pm as part of this national event. Bring a picnic and something to share. Live music

Saturday 2 July

Community Day (see below)

Saturday 10 September

CCRA Flower and Produce Show.

Full details nearer the time

Forthcoming events

If you are interested in what's happening across the road (in this case the Woolwich Road) then CCRA's Annual Community Day is an event not to be missed. To be held on Saturday, 2 July the morning will focus on 'cleaning and greening' around the area as usual. In the afternoon, members of RBG's Planning Department will speak about the new site allocation plans for Charlton and the Peninsula: Asda replaced by a school? New retail outlets replaced by flats? A new waste disposal site on your doorstep? Come and find out what's going on and have your say.

It's also time to plan ahead for CCRA's 6th Annual Flower, Produce and Craft show. Taking place on Saturday, 10 September the show will feature our many popular categories focused on growing (so get that compost out), baking (so now's the time to try a new bread recipe) and crafting (get out threads and wool). This year's show will feature a new and very special award so look out for the full schedule to be sent out soon.

Beavers, cubs and scouts

All three groups now meet on Mondays. Beavers meet at Alexandra Hall, Bramshot Avenue on Mondays at 5.30pm. Cubs follow on at 6.45pm. Scouts meet at St Richard's Hall, Swallowfield Road at 7pm.

We need you to...

... renew your membership.

It's not too late and it's only a fiver for a whole year. That money helps to pay for the Grapevine you are currently reading. We rely on your membership fee to help pay for printing. If you enjoy Grapevine (and we know many of you do) then join up and continue to enjoy this 'good read'. Just pop £5 and your contact details into an envelope and push it through the door of either 49 Delafield or 7 Elliscombe.

...tell us what you think.

CCRA began life as an organisation devoted to promoting neighbourliness. This is an important aspect of what we do. Events like February's fantastic ceilidh and the forthcoming open garden event put neighbours in touch with one another. Increasingly, however, we are being consulted as an area 'amenity' group. Our views are eagerly sought by the council, other community groups, developers and others with an interest in our area. Members of our Management Committee are committed to listening to residents who want to talk about local issues. We seek to promote healthy debate through articles in Grapevine, our Action and Interest groups, public meetings, bulletins and personal contact. For more details, go to our website (charltonresidents.org), email us at info@charltonresidents.org or secretary@charltonresidents.org or tweet us (@ccra_se7). If you feel strongly about an issue - let us know loud and clear! Become active in your association. If we don't know your views we can't represent them.

In Memoriam

Sadly we mark the passing of Hedley Senior, long time resident of Delafield Road. Our thoughts are with Pearl his wife and their family.

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 1 issue or £30 for 4 issues. Panel ads single column 8cm x 8cm cost £40 for 1-4 issues or £35 for 5+. Other sizes, please enquire.

Comments, feedback, queries or material for the next edition of Grapevine should be emailed to: grapevine@charltonresidents.org by Monday, 6 June. Alternatively, phone Joy Ogden on 0208 293 3034 or Bob Smith on 0208 853 2697.

