

# And we say NO to this plan too!

**O**ur fight to stop housing developments that are too high in density and don't offer enough social housing for local people continues. Just as we oppose the proposed development at 40 Victoria Way, we are also against the latest proposals for Charlton Riverside.

At the end of 2016 Rockwell submitted a proposal for a 975-unit housing development behind the houses in Atlas and Derrick Gardens and near the roundabout in Anchor and Hope Lane. It included one 28-storey tower.

A revised reapplication in January is for 771 units in 11 buildings ranging from two to 10 storeys; seven will be either nine or 10 storeys high. The previous application proposed 15% of 'affordable' housing. Council guidelines are 35%. This time the offer is just 5%. Some buildings will contain commercial spaces and one will include some community use, probably a nursery. The developers assume it will take about 70 months to build, but that at least half will be sold off plan, ie before completion.

CCRA thinks the development is far too dense, that offering 5% as 'affordable' is derisory, and that 9/10 storey buildings behind Atlas and Derrick Gardens is unacceptable. There is a

serious housing crisis throughout the country including Greenwich and we support housing developments. But we want to see: new social housing especially for families; private rented properties at reasonable prices locally; help for younger people to buy; and mixed communities including more expensive homes.

The Council's original ideas for Charlton Riverside embraced the same vision and CCRA broadly welcomed them: low rise buildings; not too dense with good community facilities; suitable for families with growing children; a well-planned green and friendly environment. A high proportion of Rockwell's plan is designed simply for investment opportunities. We hope the Council's Planning Board will not approve them.

**STOP PRESS:** Prior to the January submission there was no public consultation. CCRA joined forces with other community groups to press for some meaningful consultation before going to the planning board. At RBG's request, Rockwell agreed to a consultation event, likely to be on the 2 or 3 March. Planning officers expect amended plans to be submitted, leading to fresh consultation with residents. The earliest planning board date will now be 3 April.

  
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# A cause you can Trust

Joy Ogden goes behind the scenes of a local charity shop

Charity shops often reward curious customers with surprises. The Mental Health Activity Trust (MHAT) shop in Delacourt Road has more unexpected treasures than most.

CCRA became involved with the Trust after donating unclaimed items to the shop from our Freecycle event last summer. Our new Chair, Jodie Coughlan, was invited to the MHAT's Award Ceremony to celebrate the achievements and 'give a feeling of belonging' to those helped by its work and those who helped to deliver it.

As well as amazing bargains in its shop, MHAT provides much-needed support to people with mental health problems and since opening nearly four years ago has so far helped 50 people to get jobs with other organisations – ranging from admin with Prada, to lorry-driving.

Toni Hale, the charity's founder and director, was working in a psychiatric unit while studying for a Master's in psychology when she set up the MHAT in April 2012 to help people stuck in the 'revolving door' of patients' discharge then readmission.

She says: 'We are not service users, clients or patients, we are colleagues who work together to achieve our goals, big or small.'

MHAT became a registered company in December 2013 and Toni opened the charity shop in March 2014, in memory of Mark Katnoria, a former patient who had been in the armed services and who spurred her on to start the charity, before tragically taking his own life in 2013. His mother is now a patron of the Trust.

The Trust runs with volunteers and employs some people who have experienced anything from mild to severe mental health problems. It helps them bridge the gap between the start of recovery and a return to the workplace, then to continue that support throughout their working life and beyond. Toni tells them that their mental health problems are not the whole person but just a small part of who they are and adds: 'Giving



Toni Hale: giving people a purpose

people a purpose is the main thing. And giving them the realisation that they do have opportunities.'

The shop closes on Thursdays and has: activities such as gardening and arts & crafts for people with mental health problems; the Lighthouse Project, a drop in, where people can be supported in talking about their difficulties; and an appointment system relating to work issues.

The MHAT has no outside funding and needs help with financial backing and fundraising. If anyone is considering doing a fun run or looking for a cause to support, this might be the perfect choice for yourself boosted by the knowledge that you've made a difference to someone's life.

## Main reason the roads are up

CCRA has met with Forefront Utilities about replacing the old gas mains under Sundorne and Priolo Roads. Work started on 8 January and is expected to take around 10 weeks, leading to the full closures of Priolo and a one-way system in Sundorne.

We are delighted that children can still Play Out during the scheduled work by using a section of Priolo Road (see p7 for dates) and the 380 bus has been re-routed to run both ways

along Wellington Gardens - suspended parking bays along Wellington Gardens should result in an easier flow of traffic. If you have any concerns about these works please tell us, or RBG's Traffic Department.

We hope, in future, when consulting on road closures we can expect leaflets to be distributed to adjoining streets in addition to those directly affected.



# Turbulent times for education

## Charlton's schoolchildren facing an uncertain future

By John Galloway

Greenwich branch of the campaign for state education

In 2017 a Mayor of London report stated that London would need an additional 60,000 primary places and 105,000 secondary places by 2020. With secondary school places already difficult for Charlton children to access, massive new developments planned at 40 Victoria Way and Charlton Riverside, and the predicted shortfall of school places in the borough, the future looks uncertain for our children and families. The Mayor's report also shows Greenwich will have the greatest shortfall in secondary places in London boroughs – estimated to need a further 1500 secondary school places by 2022. A similar number of additional places will be needed in Greenwich primary schools – a shortfall matched only in Havering.

Although RBG has responsibility for making sure there are enough school places for local children, government policy prevents it from opening new schools. Only free schools and academies can open, and they are the Regional Schools Commissioner's responsibility – whose decisions don't always fit with the council's perspective. For instance, there are three girls' secondary schools in the borough, but only one for boys. Despite that Woolwich Polytechnic for boys (which is an academy) has been given permission to open a parallel school for girls next year. Already some mixed schools only have 25% of girls in their intake. Plumstead Manor, a girls' school, has had to become mixed to survive.

Other free schools or academies have been given the go-ahead to open in this borough, but not necessarily where they are needed – such as here in the north of the borough, where rapid housing expansion is planned.



## From loos to luxury

The magnificent but dilapidated summerhouse by Inigo Jones in Charlton Village, long a monument to vandalism, is being restored at last. Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust's first building project is to reclaim it from its last use as public lavatories and restore its former glory as a summerhouse and banqueting building.

Young construction students from local colleges have been working on the first stage of the project, removing all the plumbing, fixtures and fittings. They are hoping to work on the next stages and develop some specialist skills which will be transferable to more modern projects and help develop their careers. Plans for the fully restored building are not yet finalised but might include an exhibition area or a venue that could be hired.

Many of the changes brought about by the academies programme will barely be noticed. Outwardly academies appear little different from local authority schools, but the structures behind them need further scrutiny. Academies don't have to have governors, only directors, with no direct lines of accountability locally – no elected parent representatives, and no local authority members. They are answerable to the chain to which they belong (that might be spread out across the country), and to the Department for Education.

All schools get the same funding per capita, however, academies have the freedom to set wages and working conditions, and may employ unqualified teachers. There have been instances of executive heads earning 'more than the Prime Minister,' of family members hired as consultants, and chains outsourcing services to commercial companies that they, themselves, run.

When an academy has problems, it may be moved to a different chain, as with Corelli College (originally Kidbrooke School), potentially joining the Leigh Academy Trust – and likely to change its name again. There is no mechanism for a local authority to take back control of a school. As residents, and parents, we experience the problem of school places quite personally. The local authority charged with providing them lacks the powers to do so. However, the current system led by an individual civil servant responsible for twenty-one local authorities across the south-east, is proving inadequate to the task.

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# Our right to information

**A Freedom of Information request (Fol) is a vital tool for transparency, accountability and democracy.**

To make sure public bodies operate good practice when handling Fol requests, dissatisfied enquirers can refer their concerns to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) which investigates poor performance. If it upholds a complaint a 'decision notice' is issued which can suggest how improvements can be made.

CCRA have a particular interest in Fol requests as RBG's past performance has been poor. Fol has been an item for the Corporate Finance and Performance Scrutiny Panel for over 18 months in an attempt to improve practices. Whilst some aspects of performance (response times) may have improved concerns remain about the quality and content of responses. CCRA has learnt that a Fol request submitted last year highlighted some alarming concerns. The enquirer wanted to know

## It's a growing love affair...

Charlton's nooks and crannies are getting a makeover to spruce up our environment. Phase 1 of the CCRA Ward Budget Greening project began in October when 1,000 crocuses were planted in Wellesley Close.

Phase 2 is now underway during which we will landscape a patch of unloved grass in Nadine Street/Gollogly Terrace. We have been consulting local groups and are delighted that the charity Groundwork will be designing our planting schedule. The RBG Parks, Estates and Open Spaces Department will also help with clearing, rotavating and de-weeding.

As a community project we welcome help from anyone and everyone. Please come along and help us green up your environment. Donate an hour of your time or lend gardening equipment. Some people have volunteered to offer a curbside pop-up style café for the planting events, so come along for a cuppa and a slice of cake.

Where are the sites? Inverine Rd, Gollogly Terrace, Wellington Mews, Nadine Street and Delafield Rd. We are also partnering with Charlton and Blackheath Amateur Horticultural Society, who will be passing on horticultural and gardening knowledge, and supporting CCRA with the education and training side of things too. Look out for further information on this.

It's a great opportunity to be involved in this all-round community project and you can follow us for updates, or message us on Facebook – Charlton Central Residents Association and Twitter @ccra\_se7, and share your input on how you Love Your Environment with your own greening tips.

how many planning applications had been made for developments in poor air quality 'hot spots' (nitrogen dioxide exceeding 40mg/m<sup>3</sup>); how many applications were granted and a breakdown of the mitigation measures deployed by the planning department. Given the borough-wide concern about poor air quality this is a very important question.

RBG's response has been less than satisfactory. In a complex 10 month saga (a typical response should take a month to resolve) the requester was essentially told to look this up for themselves and was referred to web-links that turned out to be irrelevant or didn't work. The requester was finally told that RBG doesn't hold this information. This case was then referred to the ICO with the enquirer also raising a complaint with RBG. The complaint was dealt with outside RBG's normal procedures and rules governing complaints, leaving the enquirer exasperated, confused and exhausted. To date the complaint is unresolved. In the meantime the ICO has issued a 'decision notice' to RBG.

What is most worrying about this Fol is that RBG's planning department appears not to record or reference this important information. We can only ask the question – 'why not' given the public's concern about how the borough is going to improve its track record on addressing the poor quality air we are all breathing.

Have you submitted an Fol request to RBG? CCRA would like to know about your experience.

### The Old Cottage Coffee Shop

*A traditional tea shop serving high quality tea, coffee & snacks*

*Open everyday from 10am in Charlton Park*



*Closes 4pm in winter  
and 5pm in summer*

# How happy is my valley?

## ...A view from the terraces

**A**nother slalom slide into the final half of the season sees Charlton's topsy-turvy journey lurch on, testing the loyalty of even the most ardent fans. Usually it's simple enough to blame the manager and the club's inability to fork out for quality players to get us on the promotion trail.

This time it's a bit different. We've managed to retain current incumbent Karl Robinson for most of the season and he's raised us up into the heady regions of the top six – and a possible play-offs place. But current form is faltering and Charlton FC social media is beginning to resonate with suggestions that Robinson may have run out of ideas and might need replacing.

There are cogent reasons for that. In our last half a dozen games we have scored, dominated then thrown points away by conceding late goals, often into the dying seconds of extra time. An ominous pattern you might think, though Robinson offers valid reasons for this.

Among them is the fact that for many months he has had up to eight or even nine of his first team squad out injured. In one January game he could not even field a full bench of subs! Yet the team still forced draws and the odd win to keep us in with an outside chance of promotion. The worst example was the home defeat by Oxford. Les Garçons were leading 2-1 at 89 minutes – and lost 2-3!

Players are coming back now and the team reflects a stronger unit giving some hope of continued success, especially with Jay Dasilva and Tariqe Fosu-Henry in the squad. This is set against the second of Robinson's setbacks – the continued

uncertainty over ownership. Belgian boss Roland Duchatelet let it be known in December that he was, finally, willing to sell. Since then there has been mounting speculation as to who wants the club. Several consortiums have expressed interest and it now looks like it's down to two; an Australian group and one being put together by newly-appointed Scotland manager, Alex McLeish who has been seen at the Valley.

Predictions were for an announcement at the end of February but it has gone ominously quiet.

Meanwhile, Robinson was prevented from bringing in players during the January transfer window, so the club lost out on much-needed new blood, especially in the striker department. We did get loanees, notably Stephy Mavididi from Arsenal. His appearances so far have been of real quality starting with a spectacular solo goal in his first outing at the Valley in January. My prediction for this season is top ten but not top six. There are still 13 games to go and, being Charlton, anything could happen. Crongers fished I'm proved wrong. COYR's!



## Beware! Dark nights mean dark deeds

Over Christmas we saw the usual spike in burglaries, but we may not be over this. Darkness is the burglars' friend so we need to put in as many preventative measures as possible. Close your curtains once it gets dark so a passing thief cannot see into your home. Double check side gates, accessible windows and garden sheds to make sure they are securely locked at night. Finally, untrimmed hedges prevent natural surveillance – so clipping back your garden foliage could save you from a sneaky thief.

Visit: <http://ccnwatch.org/> Supported by Charlton Central Residents' Association Visit: <http://www.charltonresidents.org/> Follow us on Twitter @ccra\_se7

## New drive to beat cold callers

Central Neighbourhood Watch is about to launch its NO COLD CALLERS / NO ROGUE TRADER zone. We are working with RBG's Trading Standards to finalise the design for stickers and street signage. See the next Grapevine for details and when the sticker comes through your door please display it so we can clear these rogues from our streets.

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# *I heard it on the Grapevine*

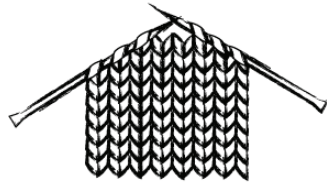
## Community groups

### Knit and Natter

The Knit and Natter group sadly report the passing of Brenda Haslam. Brenda loved her knitting and her creativity, enthusiasm and expertise

made her a much loved member of our group. It was Brenda's thoughtfulness that was the driver for our next project, knitting Fiddlemuffs for dementia sufferers. She will be greatly missed and we extend our deepest condolences to her daughter Annie and the family.

The group meeting on Tuesdays 2pm to 4pm in St Richard's Hall, Swallowfield Road on the following dates: 27 Feb, 27 March, 24 April, 29 May, 26 June and 24 July. All are welcome.



### Walking group

Christmas was coming and the first snows fell but CCRA walkers were undeterred – we sought out the glitter of the West End. Starting in Green Park we noticed the geese were hardly bothered by the dusting of the snow on the grass, then moving on to Lower Regent Street we noticed the memorial to Sir John Franklin and his expedition to find the North West Passage. Our expedition continued up Regent Street with its array of Christmas lights. Then through Christmas shoppers and some quieter back streets to have a late lunch in St Martin-in-the-Fields and a perfect view of the Trafalgar Square Christmas tree.

We started the new year off with a short local stroll following the Green Chain Walk from the Plumstead Common Adventure Playground, along to the main Common and down to the Ravine - or Slade Ponds - which has seen a huge amount of cleaning and clearing from a group of local volunteers, including the addition of a reed bed and weir system. Continuing across Winns Common, via the empty paddling pool and a Bronze Age burial mound, we descended steps onto King's Highway to find a splendid café. From the outside it didn't promise much but, having tasted their fare, it has elicited a demand from group members for more Plumstead walks!

### CCRA Singing group

We started up again on Jan 15 following a well-earned rest after a busy Christmas period which saw us raise £580 for Greenwich Food Bank over two nights of carol singing, as well as performing at the CCRA Christmas Social. Our regular sessions this year will be fortnightly on Mondays for the foreseeable future. We always welcome new members, so if you are interested, please contact Chris on 020 8858 7377.

### CCRA Music Group ('SE7')

Members of the group played alongside other musicians at a very successful Burns Night Ceilidh in January, and the group as a whole will provide the music for the CCRA Family Ceilidh on 10 March. We also hope to resume our monthly Sunday evenings at Cattleya soon. Our group meets on alternate Mondays, and we welcome new members. If you are interested in joining us, whatever your level of experience or expertise, please contact Chris on 020 8858 7377.

### Book Group

The next meeting is on Wednesday 28 February when we'll be discussing Daughter of Time by Josephine Tey, which was written in the 1950s and investigates the murder of the princes in the tower. The April read will be a more recent publication The Underground Railway. If you're interested in joining us contact zoe31well@hotmail.com.

## Playing Out - helpers wanted

Playing Out gives children in our area the chance to get together to play in the street and make new friends. Every two weeks around 20 children come to Sundorne Road to scoot, draw, play football, invent games and have fun. For each session we need five volunteers. Two stewards on each end of the street make sure no car gets through before the children are safely off the road and one in the middle looks after tea and coffee and cars that might want to leave Sundorne Road during the Playing Out session. For the spring and summer season we are looking for volunteers to join the stewarding team. We are a friendly group and you don't need to be available on all dates. Playing Out takes place in all weather so it helps if you have a raincoat. If you've got a few hours to spare on Wednesday afternoons, please email Liz at: [playingoutse7@gmail.com](mailto:playingoutse7@gmail.com) Playing Out takes place Wednesdays, fortnightly from 3.45pm until 5.30ish at the top part of Sundorne Road. Upcoming dates are: 7 and 21 March, 4 and 18 April. Dates are also published on the CCRA Facebook page.



## Dates for your diary

### Saturday 10 March

Family ceilidh, St Richard's Hall

6.00 – 9.00

Full details below

### Tuesday 17 April

Spring Social, St Richard's Hall

7.30 – 9.30

Launch of Rogue Trader scheme

See page 6

Full details in next issue

### Sunday 3 June

Big Lunch, Charlton Park

### Saturday 7 July

Community Day

### Sunday 10 June

Antiques Roadshow at Eltham Palace

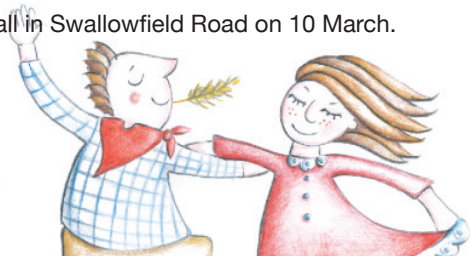
### Mondays 26 February – 26 March

Good food in Greenwich – Taste of health cookery club

Free cookery classes at Mascalls Meeting Room, Mascalls Court, Victoria Way 11-1.30

## You say Barn Dance, we say Ceilidh

Come along and dance with friends and family on Saturday 10 March – good exercise and great fun. Our resident caller Chris Harrison will enable you to put your best foot forward and keep in step. If you don't feel like dancing enjoy good company, live music from SE7, and a curry supper, with reasonably priced drinks on sale. All this for just £4 for members and £5 for non-members. Children up to and including 11 admitted for just £1. Under-threes free. This toe-tapping event begins at 6pm and goes on until 9pm. We look forward to seeing you at St Richard's Hall in Swallowfield Road on 10 March.



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## Dear Editor

I was particularly interested to read in the last issue of Grapevine about the proposed development of Charlton Riverside and the news that the council has considered plans to build in this area. I know something of this area: I was brought up there before the Second World War. It was



a populated area with factories on the riverfront, but houses were small with outside loos, and what was not bombed was knocked down and the residents moved out. That was many years ago and since then gradually with time, small factories and workshops moved in and set up their business in different parts.

The pressure to build housing, as we know, is enormous, but to build housing in between factories and workshops, with our other problems, could be a disaster, as has been proved in other areas and as Dave Picton pointed out in his article (Grapevine Vintage 45).

**J. Stride: Elliscombe Road**

## Lewisham Choral Society presents The Dream of Gerontius by Edward Elgar



Saturday  
17 March 2018, 7.30 pm  
Great Hall, Goldsmiths,  
University of London,  
SE14 6NW

Tickets £16, £14 (concs), £5 (students),  
£2 (16 years & under) - from [lewishamchoralsociety.org.uk](http://lewishamchoralsociety.org.uk)

Conductor: Dan Ludford-Thomas  
Forest Philharmonic Orchestra  
The Bromley Boy Singers

Comments, feedback, queries or material for the next edition of Grapevine should be emailed to: [grapevine@charltonresidents.org](mailto:grapevine@charltonresidents.org) by 19 March. Alternatively, phone Joy Ogden on 0208 293 3034 or Bob Smith on 0208 853 2697

## We object!

### In our view council green light for 330 homes is unfair

A controversial plan to build 330 homes on the old warehouse site at 40 Victoria Way looks set to go ahead. The Royal Borough of Greenwich (RBG) planning board approved the proposals in January, despite objections by local people concerned about the impact on the area. Fairview Homes submitted a proposal to RBG for the redevelopment of the site in March 2017 following some public consultation. Having received unfavourable feedback on density, height and massing, road safety, affordable homes and infrastructure, Fairview submitted a full planning application in December.

CCRA, and other local groups opposed to the scheme, advised residents on making objections. On the evening of 9 January 2018 this plan came before a well-attended meeting of RBG's planning board. Despite 125 objections ahead of the meeting and a number of representations on the night, the Council's panel still voted 6:1 in favour of granting planning permission for demolition of the existing warehouse and redevelopment to provide 330 units across the site. Jodie Coughlan raised CCRA's objections, particularly the adverse effects of such a large development on the community. She offered practical solutions to the problematic vehicle access to the site, currently planned as one entry/exit on Victoria Way. The application will now go to The Mayor's Office for ratification. However local groups are considering further action via the Planning Inspectorate.

CCRA's Planning Action Group will be active in liaising with other local groups as the Victoria Way site has massive implications for future developments in and around the Charlton area. We will continue to meet regularly with RBG's Planning Department to make sure we feed in the local perspective to planning. We are particularly concerned with the consultation process and the erosion of local democracy. RBG must listen to local concerns in balancing new developments and over-development.

## STOP PRESS

Come along to our family ceilidh, 6pm to 9pm on Saturday 10 March at St Richard's Hall. Ticket includes food, reasonably priced drinks, live music and an all round good time. Full details page 8.



### They're Christmas crackers...

When Michael and Mim spread the word they were hosting another Christmas Day dinner at their Old Coffee Shop in Charlton Park, 14 older people who might otherwise have spent the day alone, came from sheltered housing in nearby Beacham Close. The local community provided food, drink and volunteers, Makro donated the turkey, the Co-op gave mince pies, Marie played Christmas songs on her guitar and everyone had a memorable, merry time.

### A New Year and a new voice!

The New Year is no longer quite so new and I hope that 2018 is rising to greet you in all the ways that are important to you and your families.

Each day I am reminded of the inspiring people living in our community - how they care for the area we live in, and care about what happens here.

Already this year, residents have been involved in local planning issues and are preparing the greening and planting of local plots of unloved land in spring. If you enjoy walking, singing, making music, reading - or maybe knitting and natter - check out page 7, where you'll find groups of like-minded local people to share your enjoyment.

Every year brings something new, but our warm welcome to residents who contribute to our community remains constant and we hope that even more of you will decide to be involved. If you haven't already done so, please renew your membership - still only £5 a year.

Jodie Coughlan, Chair - CCRA



**Make a date in your diary for the Spring Social: Tuesday 17 April St Richard's Hall, Swallowfield Road 7.30 to 9.30 pm.**