

We're CCRA – and we never give up!

We first featured our concerns about the traffic lights at the bottom of Charlton Church Lane 18 months ago and are grateful to a CCRA member for conducting traffic surveys demonstrating the traffic control measures' failings. Following this we met RBG Traffic Group representatives to discuss the situation. Council officers agreed the traffic light phasing is poor, leading to unnecessary traffic jams and bus delays, particularly in peak hours, but they strongly indicated that little could be done without funding.

We continued to press for action and in October 2017, officers outlined some ideas they hope to take forward with TfL to improve the interchange. They indicated that funding is available that would include: ways to improve traffic flow, provide safer crossings for pedestrians and stop inconsiderate parking. While discussions are on-going and final approval still needs to be agreed, RBG are currently examining:

- ✂ a new pedestrian crossing on the station-bus stop line with guard-rails to deter jaywalking;
- ✂ updating signal equipment and timing with a pedestrian 'call cancel' facility;
- ✂ the removal of some small trees to be replaced with more appropriate species;

- ✂ replacing the single yellow line outside the post office with a double yellow line;
- ✂ removing a redundant stop line.

We are grateful to Andy Barker and Alex Djan (RBG's Traffic Group Manager) for their hard work on our behalf and look forward to hearing more from Alex as the scheme progresses.

Silvertown Tunnel decision delayed again

The decision on whether to build the Silvertown Tunnel has been delayed again, this time until May 2018, to allow issues about air quality to be considered further.

We think this gives London mayor Sadiq Khan and his deputy mayor for transport, Val Shawcross, the ideal chance to show leadership and cancel a scheme which threatens to increase pollution and congestion across large areas of south-east and east London.

After six months of planning hearings, the Secretary of State for Transport was due to decide by October whether the tunnel, which would run from the Royal Docks to the Greenwich Peninsula, should be built. But last month Transport Minister Paul Maynard delayed a decision until 10 November. Now he's put it off even longer, setting a new deadline of 10 May 2018.

The advertisement features a black and white photograph of a large, multi-story historic house with many windows and chimneys, situated behind a large stone archway. The archway has classical columns and a decorative pediment. The scene is set in a grassy area with some trees in the background.

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A new chair and a new challenge

Jodie Coughlan is a woman who likes new challenges. Whether it be trekking to Mount Everest, abseiling, sky-diving or taking over as chair of CCRA, Jodie brings a wealth of experience and enthusiasm to her role. She was warmly welcomed to her latest task at our Annual General Meeting in October.

Jodie, who was born and bred in Charlton and has been a member of CCRA more or less throughout its existence, has an impressive list of life experiences. She studied Hospitality Management at university and has worked in Canada and New York. With 15 years' experience in Human Resources, mainly for membership trade organisations such as the Food & Drink Federation but also for trade unions and in higher education, she says: 'I think I've got skills that are really useful and I'm glad.'

She says she is also learning a lot from working with people in CCRA meetings and has some ideas on the organisation's future evolution. Her desire to get more involved with the CCRA had its roots in a charity trek she made for Macmillan Cancer in 2008 to Everest base camp, following her mother's death in 2004 from ovarian cancer. CCRA agreed that she could have a stall at one of its events and, as it was for charity, they didn't charge her. Jodie says: 'CCRA supported me so I've always wanted to be a bit more involved where I could.'

Why did she decide to set off to the world's highest mountain? Jodie, who had never even camped before, says: 'I wanted a challenge and had a thought about Mount Everest base camp so I Googled it.' She found Charity Challenge, which organises treks for individuals or groups, helps with visas, fundraising advice, and has links to local well-qualified trekking guides in the Himalayas. The challenge then is to get fit for a 12-day trek up to the base camp and down again. She said: 'Fundraising is the hardest part!' The round trip lasted for 16 days and she raised £2,000 for Macmillan. In another hair-raising event for Macmillan she abseiled down the side of Valiant House. On that 'very scary' occasion she raised around £500. Since then and 'just for fun' she has done a tandem sky-dive.

Jodie spells out her ideas for CCRA's future; she suggests we could join forces with other local community groups where interests overlap. Having just celebrated CCRA's 10th anniversary, Jodie says: 'I can't see 10 years into the future but in the next two to three years we should think about how we work with individuals or other local groups who share our interests, for instance on planning issues.'



Jodie Coughlan

She also thinks that holding events where people share their skills and talents for a couple of hours might be a good idea. Jodie is involved with updating the CCRA Facebook page and says there are plans to do a residents' survey early in 2018, which will give important feedback.

She is currently recovering from a knee injury and is not planning any major charity treks in the near future. But she is full of surprises so who knows what exciting times lie ahead for CCRA... Watch this space!

More news from the AGM

CCRA held its tenth annual AGM on Thursday, 5 October. Jodie Coughlan was elected as chair and the new management committee has been able to welcome a number of members joining the committee for the first time. Brenda Taggart, chair for the past three years, has become vice chair. Katrin Bain is our new treasurer and Sonja Nolte our new secretary. Jacqui Mitchell, one of our founder members, has rejoined the management committee in her previous role as membership secretary. For a full list of committee members see CCRA's website (charltonresidents.org).

Members of Charlton Community Gardens gave a fascinating talk about the history of allotments in the borough. The talk was illustrated by some great pictures that they'd researched at the Heritage Centre. They also gave news of the orchard that they are establishing in Charlton Park and are asking CCRA residents and members to join them in helping to protect the young trees from damage.

Second thoughts on Charlton Riverside

Opinion by Dave Picton

The first proposals for Charlton Riverside looked exciting. Grapevine, in April 2012, said: "CCRA likes the Charlton Riverside Masterplan's aspiration to improve the area. We want to see good quality, low density, low rise housing we hope this will not be undermined in time by the temptation to build 12 or 14 storey apartment blocks."

By this February Grapevine was reporting on plans from Rockwell for the Anchor and Hope Lane sites. "The development is predominantly for high rise, stepped buildings. Of nine buildings only two would have six storeys. Others would have up to 16 storeys and a 'landmark building' would have 28 storeys". This is not acceptable to the council but, so far as I know, they have not yet substantially modified their high rise plans.

Now we have a second proposal from the Komoto Group - the Herringham Road site -, which is on the riverside just upstream from the Thames Barrier. Their original proposals included a 20-storey tower but after discussion with the council, the local M.P. etc. they have modified it so there is nothing over 10 storeys, the new planning upper limit.

The top priority in London is to increase social housing and other homes at genuinely affordable prices to rent or to buy. In particular, there is a need for family homes for young people who grew up in South East London and can find nowhere locally to bring up their own children. In guidance on housing design, published for consultation as recently as 2010, for new residential properties Greenwich

suggested "Family housing should normally have direct access to a private garden. Schemes with predominantly family housing should, as far as practicable, be within reasonable walking distance of nursery and primary schools, local shops, play areas and amenities". Amen to that. But just look at what's actually been built in the borough since 2010!

In the centre of Woolwich, Meyer Homes have submitted a planning application for a 27 storey residential block and eight others up to 16 storeys. Our fears about original plans being undermined by skyscrapers are being realised, even sooner than we might have expected.

Charlton Riverside should be

seen as a chance to do something significant about this. But the area between Anchor and Hope Lane and Warspite Road is a very cluttered brown field site. Some of it contains scores of outdated workshops, small factories, yards and offices, and probably contaminated land. Piecemeal housing in the middle of this could be a disaster. But that's the way things are going. Developers are seeking to buy up parcels of land big enough to turn a good profit. They should contribute towards the cost of social amenities but they are not going to take responsibility for delivering the regeneration of the whole area. Nor should they; that is a public responsibility. The vision for Charlton Riverside could evaporate into a dozen or so separate developments with no coherent pattern and inadequate social amenities.

The development of Greenwich peninsular is not sufficiently focussed on solving the real London housing problems. But it did start with a reasonably well-planned framework for roads, parks, shops, and schools as well as housing. The same now needs to happen on Charlton riverside. A major part of the site should be cleared before development starts and key parts of the infrastructure put in place. Greenwich Council, City Hall, and central government are all now giving at least lip service to a programme of publicly led social and affordable housing. It's time to pause the current process, to engage all three tiers of government to secure public resources and develop an infrastructure plan that incorporates all the facilities a new community needs

Grapevine welcomes your comments on this article.

An application from Fairview for the other half of their site in Victoria Way might be put out for consultation before the next Grapevine. Look out for it on RBG's planning site

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Congratulations and celebrations



Clockwise from top left: Dave Picton, founder member of CCRA and chair from 2008 to 2010, blows out the birthday candles.

Photographic competition judges and winners (left to right) Chris Harrison (2nd prize); Barbara Smith; John Clark; Liz Somerville (1st prize); Barry Cole; Jim Free (3rd prize)

Local MP Matthew Pennycook wishes CCRA well on its birthday.

Bob Smith, Grapevine co-editor, studies the photos entered in the competition

Mid-September was a busy time for CCRA. A celebration of 10 years of community action was kicked off with a sumptuous buffet. Live music was provided by SE7 and our local singing group. Speeches were given by: Janet Gillman, a former councillor who has given much support to CCRA over our ten years; Dave Picton, former chair of CCRA; and Matthew Pennycook MP. Our former MP, Nick Raynsford was unable to attend but sent a message of congratulations. A photographic competition, on the theme of 10, was judged by local resident Barbara Smith, John Clark and Barry Cole.

On the following day, CCRA's 6th Flower and Produce show was held and included a wide range of entries, including entries from every class at Fosdene Primary School. A team of diligent and hard-working members of the Blackheath and Greenwich branch of the Women's Institute were the judges. Special mention should go to the judges tasting a record number of jams and chutneys. The day was rounded off with a fantastic barbecue provided and cooked by Wendy Barrington and her family. To complete the weekend's celebrations there was a popular Open Gardens event and an evening at Catleya with entertainment provided by the SE7 band of local musicians.

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How happy is my valley?

...A view from the terraces

It's a dubious tradition at Charlton that we start a slide into ignominy around Christmas and end up in mid-table obscurity or worse by season's end. This year we appear to have bucked that trend and are playing with a determination, flow and consistency that suggest good things to come.

Manager Karl Robinson has tutored a classy squad during his tenure and even when first team players get injured others are ready to step up and do their bit.

If I had one criticism it is that we don't score enough goals when we are dominating and don't always finish the job.

Our home game against MK Dons on 18 November was a classic example. Josh Magennis, back from international duty, rose to a perfect corner from Jake Forster-Caskey and nodded home in the fifth minute. Thereafter we totally dominated our opponents for 45 minutes and should have been two or three up by the break. It was a similar story for most of the second half but the Dons fought back to one all. Then in the 87th minute we were ahead again only to see victory snatched away by a last minute penalty.

We need to be in the top two at the close of season to get automatic promotion, otherwise it's a one in six chance in the play-offs. A 2-2 draw instead of a win could be crucial if it goes down to the wire.

Robinson was spitting bullets after the match and put the blame squarely on the ref's shoulders. "He cost us the game," he said.

We have played 16 matches now and are fifth with 31 points and a game or two in hand over the teams above.

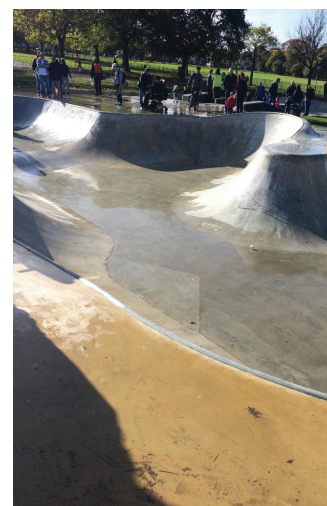
With this kind of consistency I expect us to be there or thereabouts at season's end.

A quick mention for Joe Gomes, ex of this parish, now at Liverpool, who played for England against Brazil last month and was named Man of the Match. Well done Joe. Also look out for Ezri Konsa, another homegrown talent who is playing regularly for our first team. Another genuine talent, he could well move to Spurs in the January transfer window and net the club a cool £4million.

Skateboarders arrive in Charlton Park

The new Skatepark opened on Saturday 21 October attracting children of all ages. Members of CCRA were among those watching as well as local MP Matthew Pennycook, Cllr Gary Parker, and the Friends of Charlton Park group.

On the first day youngsters could make their own skateboards and take lessons. Fans of the arena say it provides much needed amenity space for local youngsters, and some we spoke to confirmed they were happy the skatepark was so close to home. Skateboarding is now an Olympic Sport and will feature for the first time at the 2020 Tokyo games. Who knows, one of the new Charlton enthusiasts might be there!



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NO Cold Callers/ NO Rogue Trader Zone

Last year we had worrying reports of neighbours being disturbed by cold callers. Whilst some can be legitimate, many are not. Their sole purpose is to con residents out of money. Sadly some of our neighbours have fallen for their trickery. This is especially worrying as they tend to prey on the vulnerable or elderly.

CCNWatch is taking action to combat this fraud. We have secured funding from the Council to set up a NO COLD CALLER / NO ROGUE TRADER zone in the CCRA area. We are working closely with RBG's Trading Standards Department to agree the design for door stickers and street signage that will make clear we do not tolerate such behaviour. The campaign launches after Christmas.

I heard it on the Grapevine

Walking group

Our walks often enable us to view the changing seasons - August found us strolling through Hampstead Village and Heath to Kenwood House. In September we took full advantage of the Kentish countryside with a walk from Keston to the source of the River Ravensbourne, the Wilberforce Oak and Darwin's village of Downe. We were especially grateful to some walkers who offered transport there and back.

In October we walked through Regents Park to find the Regents Canal and followed it to Camden Lock. The plan was to walk another stretch of the Regents Canal in November but some of the route was blocked so the short stretch we did from Limehouse to Three Mills yet not reaching the canal convinced us we should do the rest of the route again, hopefully next spring.

During wintertime we meet at 10.30 on the second Sunday of each month usually at Charlton Station, anyone wanting monthly information please contact Jill on jillmo@btinternet.com.

Singing group

We have been meeting fortnightly, alternating between Mondays and Thursdays, and our final session this year will be on 4 Dec. However, this is not the end of our activities for the year, as we will be singing at the CCRA Christmas Social on 9 Dec. We will follow this with two nights of carol singing around our area, on Monday 11 Dec and Tuesday 12 Dec. Join us at 26 Wellington Gardens 6.45 for a prompt 7.00pm start. The group will resume in January (dates to be announced soon) If you would like to join our group contact Chris on 020 8858 7377.

Music Group ('SE7')

The group meets on alternate Mondays, and we have also played about once a month on Sunday evenings at Cattleya, in Charlton Church Lane. We will be providing music for the CCRA Christmas Social on 9 Dec. We are always interested in gaining new members and would especially like to hear from players of melody instruments - strings, woodwind or brass. Music reading is not essential. If you are interested please contact Chris on 020 8858 7377.

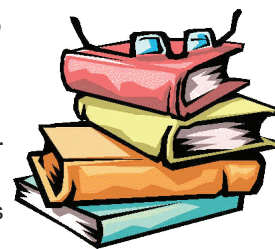
Knit and Natter

The Knit and Natter group have been working hard to provide the Queen Elizabeth Hospital's neo-natal unit with items for the Christmas babies gift stockings. We have been producing blankets and delightful snowmen. The group is currently experimenting with 'fiddle-muffs' to support the opposite end of the age spectrum: the elderly with dementia. Come along to our monthly sessions,

relax and enjoy excellent natter, tea and cake as well as learning/improving your knitting. Meetings are the following Tuesdays - 28 November and 19 December in St Richard's Hall Swallowfield Road - 2.00 to 4.00 pm. Watch the website for the spring dates.

Book Group

The next meeting is on Wednesday 6 December. The group will be discussing *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr. This book won the Pulitzer Award in 2015 and is described as 'a captivating and devastating elegy for innocence'. At this meeting the group will plan dates and books for the coming year. If you are looking for a New Year's Resolution, why not join the Book Group. We are also looking for someone to take over the 'admin' in terms of setting dates and encouraging members. For more information contact zoe31well@hotmail.com.



Playing out

Playing out in Sundorne Road with torches and flashing balls in the twilight is great fun! Why not bring your children along? Sessions begin after school around 3.30 or 3.45 and last for an hour or an hour and a half - depending on the temperature. Even if you don't have young children you could act as a steward - whistles and hi-viz jackets supplied. The next session will be on Wednesday 13 December. In January and February there will be just one session each month. For further details contact playingoutse7@gmail.com.

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Dates for your diary

Saturday 9 December

CCRA Family Christmas Social

4-7pm St Richard's Hall, Swallowfield Road

See Stop Press on page 1

Monday 11 December

Tuesday 12 December

Carol singing

6.45pm from 26 Wellington Gardens

Warming refreshments for all singers.



Dates for 2018 to be arranged

Check CCRA's website (charltonresidents.org); our twitter account (@ccra_se7) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/centralcharlton) for details of past and future events.

Strength in numbers

The more members we have the more influential our voice in dealing with the council and local developers. Help give CCRA a louder voice in 2018. January is the time to renew membership. You can do this at the Christmas social or just go to www.charltonresidents.org/membership. Queries can be sent to membership@charltonresidents.org.

Classified ads

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Lewisham Choral Society presents Fantasia on Christmas Carols by Ralph Vaughan Williams plus a sparkling selection of carols for choir and audience.

Saturday 16th December 2017, 7.30pm

St Mary the Virgin, 346 Lewisham High Street, SE13 6LE

Tickets £10, £5 (students), £2 (16&under) from lewishamchoral-society.org.uk or on the door.

Correction Re the article entitled Welcome to Rev Liz Newman in the September 2017 edition. Please note: CCRA has had strong links with St Luke's Parish, (not St Thomas's Benefice) who own and manage St Richard's Hall in Swallowfield Road.

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: £10 for 1 issue, £30 for 4. Panel ads single column 8cmx8cm: £40 for 1-4 issues, £35 for 5+. Other sizes please enquire.



Purple for hope ...

Twenty volunteers of all ages, met for a Planting Party outside Wellesley Close, Wellington Gardens to plant 1000 purple crocus bulbs on 29 October. By spring we should have a beautiful display of colour.



The Planting Party kicked off Phase 1 of the Ward Budget Grant from Greenwich Council for Greening our local area. The volunteers cleared up 20 bags of fallen leaves, then, within two hours had planted the crocuses and several bags of daffodils. They were sustained with refreshments supplied by Wellington Garden residents.

The crocuses were sourced by Charlton Community Gardeners who planted purple crocus bulbs at Fairfield Health Centre last year, as part of a worldwide campaign to eliminate polio. The gardeners were especially pleased that young people were involved because the campaign is aimed at children in developing countries vulnerable to polio. The purple crocuses represent the colour of dye used on children's fingers to show they have been vaccinated. Our crocuses were part of almost seven million planted across the UK and Ireland for the Rotary's national campaign. Charlton Community Gardens would welcome details of other suitable sites in our area. Please contact Charltoncommunitygardens@gmail.com with your suggestions.

CCRA Christmas

Join us at St Richard's Hall on Saturday 9 December from 4-7pm for our Christmas social – timed to enable the whole family to come along and to offer a pick-me-up after a hard day's Christmas shopping. There will be delicious mulled wine and mince pies, live music, carol singing and craft stalls.



Keep up the Christmas cheer on Monday 11 and Tuesday 12 December when residents will be out and about in our area singing carols. Proceeds go to local charities. Come and join us - no experience necessary. All singers warmly welcomed and there's food and drink when the singing ends.

Comments, feedback, queries or material for the next edition of Grapevine should be emailed to: grapevine@charltonresidents.org by 15 January. Alternatively, phone Joy Ogden on 0208 293 3034 or Bob Smith on 0208 853 2697



A Christmas carol with CCRA



CCRA's annual carol singing will take place on Monday 11 December and Tuesday 12 December. Proceeds will go to local charities. Full details on page 8

Festive food for thought

When you're shopping for Christmas dinner this year, spare a thought for people forced to resort to a food bank.

Conran's Estates, 46 Charlton Church Lane, have made it easier to help them by becoming a collection point for Greenwich and Lewisham Food banks run by the Trussell Trust Charity. Conran managing director Simon Hughes told Grapevine they are aware of the growing numbers of people turning to food banks to survive. While helping at Lewisham Food Bank he was touched by the plight of one man trying to keep his family together. He was a businessman who suffered misfortune and could no longer work. He has three young children and his wife, a full time teacher, has taken on two extra part time jobs to keep the family together. "This man was desperate, and had to resort to the food bank to feed his family," said Simon. Simon added: "I have three young children and I will be taking them to the food bank to show we can make a difference and because I'd like them to see that life isn't always easy."

STOP PRESS

Don't miss our Christmas social on Saturday 9th December at St Richard's Hall. Doors open at 4pm – raffle, tombola, live music and refreshments including mulled wine available until 7pm. Post-shopping pick me up?

Conran's staff are also taking shifts at the local food banks, using their Conran's van to get produce from collection points to the warehouses.

Items particularly needed are: tinned meat, fruit juice, tinned veg, tinned fruit, noodles, UHT milk, nappies, sanitary goods and toiletries. Christmas gifts for young children would be welcome, such as colouring books or small toys.

Off the rails! 10-day train shutdown

First the bad news: for the entire holiday season, from 23 December until 1 January inclusive, there will be no South-eastern rail services from Charlton into central London: no trains to Cannon Street, Charing Cross, Waterloo East, or London Bridge, so no service of any kind at Westcombe Park, Maze Hill, Greenwich or Deptford. Charlton Station will not be closed; there will be a service to Blackheath and Lewisham with onward links to Victoria.

We're used to having no national rail services on Christmas Day and Boxing Day, but this is unprecedented. It includes two shopping days before Christmas and New Year's Eve celebrations. The reason is the completion of work at London Bridge and the Thameslink programme improving north-south travel across the Thames. The promise is this will be the last major closure affecting working days but there will still be remaining work at weekends and evenings.

Now the good news! From 2 January, trains to and from Cannon Street will stop at London Bridge. It appears the tube will run every day except Xmas day, including all night at new year. There are no replacement buses but you can go from Charlton to Woolwich Arsenal and towards town on the DLR.

❁ Everyone at Grapevine would like to wish all our readers a joyous Christmas and a peaceful New Year.