

Dates for your diary

Thursday 27 April

Spring Social

Opportunity to meet your local councillors to question them

St Richard's Hall, Swallowfield Road 7.30 – 9.30

Sunday 7 May

Open Gardens

Full details in Members' Bulletin. If you would like to take part contact events@charltonresidents.org

Sunday 18 June

Big Lunch in Charlton Park

Meet up for music, games, shared food and celebration 12.30 onwards

Saturday 1 July

CCRA's Community Day

Cleaning and greening in our area. Full details in Grapevine 43

Friday 15 September – Sunday 17 September

CCRA's 10th Anniversary Weekend

A cornucopia of events to celebrate our successes. Keep these dates – you won't regret it!

Thursday 5 October

CCRA AGM

St Richard's Hall 7.30 – 9.30

Saturday 14 October

Quiz night

St Richard's Hall 7.30 – 10.00

Dear Editor ...



Last year when smart meters were being fitted locally, we received a general advisory letter, which stated "Once your meter is activated, we'll send you regular comparison bills so you can see how a meter could impact your bill, and find out if you would save money by switching to a meter early." In April 2016 this was confirmed in writing "Your meter was installed on 1 April".

We expected to receive some follow up about usage and charges especially when the 2017-2018 bill came in, but received the usual bill for the flat rate charge. There was no information about comparisons between the flat rate and a charge based on actual consumption as per the smart meter. I telephoned Thames Water and spoke to two staff who tried to help, but I was finally told that our smart meter is "out of scope", meaning that it is too far away from a mast to be able to send a signal. Thames Water is apparently providing more masts, but could not give a timescale.

Name and address supplied

Editor's comment: *Have any readers had similar experiences? We'd love to hear from you – contact details on page 8.*

Charlton Community Gardeners dig in



Charlton Community Gardens group volunteers hard at work preparing vegetable beds and working their magic at Charlton Station. Their very popular plant sale will be held at 5pm on Thursday, 18 May at the station: there are always some treasures and bargains to be found. If you'd like to help the group or for more information visit the website <http://charltoncommunitygardens.org.uk/>.

Classified Ads

Silver Stage Drama for 50+

Fun Drama Classes for 50+ in Charlton House. All levels of mobility, beginners welcome. Contact Tonya 07739 916 536 /french.tonya@yahoo.com /50plus-drama.london

Happy birthday CCRA

Don't forget – in September, CCRA will be celebrating its tenth birthday. As part of the celebrations we're planning to hold a photographic competition. If you would like know more about this competition please contact Peter on 0208 265 5454 for further details. For full details of this and other exciting events in September watch out for Grapevine 43.

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.

Comments, feedback, queries or material for the next edition of Grapevine should be emailed to: grapevine@charltonresidents.org by 22 May. Alternatively, phone Joy Ogden on 0208 293 3034 or Bob Smith on 0208 853 2697



Last chance to change the future of Charlton riverside

Radical changes to Charlton's Riverside are being considered by Greenwich Council in a "Masterplan" destined to alter the face of our waterfront. The council is consulting now on its plan for developing the area and if you want to have a say in shaping its future now is the time to speak. The deadline for consultation ends at 5pm on Wednesday, 12 April 2017.

Send your comments to: Regeneration Team, Fifth Floor, The Woolwich Centre, 35 Wellington Street, Woolwich, London SE18 6HQ or by email to: charlton-masterplan@royalgreenwich.gov.uk.

CCRA's planning group has been studying the plans and will be submitting robust comments. Adequate infrastructure is critically important to protect residents and new arrivals. That means more transport, school places and medical facilities must be provided to cope with the high levels of accommodation planned.

We have scrutinised the masterplan and offer a digest here to help you understand what they are planning for Charlton. We support measures to increase housing, expand educational facilities, provide jobs and increase green space. But we are worried about the frequent use of 'potential' and absence of any guarantees in the draft documents. The Council says it plans to have 35 per cent of affordable housing but developers have consistently called for - and achieved - a cut in percentages, arguing they cannot make enough profit. The riverside could be left, like other parts of the borough, with expensive flats bought up by speculators and left empty.

There is no information on the proposed Waste Depot, and insufficient detail and commitment to provision of doctors, education and community facilities

STOP PRESS

Don't forget CCRA's spring social on Thursday, 27 April at St Richard's Hall from 7.30- 9.30 pm. Come and question your councillors. See page 8 for further details.



Site for sore eyes: Riverside changes are on the way.

ties in Riverside to reassure CCRA. Without these the impact on the community's quality of life could be devastating.

CCRA believes there should be more commitment on housing type and tenure to create balanced, stable communities. Plans to make schools into community hubs are difficult to achieve: local schools that act independently do not always welcome such involvement

In the February Grapevine we reported on the Anchor & Hope Lane development application, that we believe gives concern about building heights. The Valley House scheme has permission for seven-storey buildings even though two-storey terraces are opposite. We believe nothing else as high as seven storeys should be allowed along the Woolwich Road and the hub around the southern section of Anchor & Hope Lane should contain no buildings higher than that.

Overall, the borough is committed to making Woolwich a retail centre and Charlton residential, a reversal of recent developments in Charlton and may add to our environmental concerns about increased traffic congestion, with its adverse effects on air pollution, and excessive noise from industrial businesses operating outside typical business hours.

✿ The Big Lunch gathering will now be on Sunday 18 June at Charlton Park. Please note change of date. See page 8 for details.

Getting the hump about the bump!

You are just settling down to sleep; all is peaceful, when an almighty noise shakes your home. Is it a car crash? Has someone kicked down the front door? No it's just another bus going over a speed hump outside your house.

This has been the plight for many residents of Priolo Road since the council installed new speed humps a few years ago. The combination of bus speed, height of the hump, and the fact that it is on a slope, meant the buses consistently struck the top of the speed hump, shaking our homes. It could happen up until 12:30am when the buses stop running, then start again at 5.30am. It went on for years and impacted on the quality of sleep for some people.

After a tireless campaign from residents, raising these issues via twitter to TfL and directly to Greenwich Council, a site meeting was arranged in mid February to look at the speed humps. Although residents were not formally alerted to the meeting a few found out and were able to be heard. As a result, residents were advised by letter on 1 March that two of the three speed "cushions" would be replaced, as they were no

longer "fit for purpose". (Most residents thought they had never been fit for purpose.) This action was taken despite the Principal Engineer of Traffic advising one resident last year, that he had "not observed any issues with the buses in Priolo Road."

Residents have noticed that since the site visit, buses have slowed considerably; perhaps to avoid going over the humps at speed and causing damage to the underside of the vehicles. Action has now been taken and residents of Priolo Road can sleep easier in their beds. Work was scheduled to take place in early April but it's a shame Greenwich Council took so long to listen to residents' views.

If you are experiencing similar problems, or have any other road calming queries, these contact details might be useful: Ben Murphy, Engineer (Traffic), RBG – ben.murphy@royalgreenwich.gov.uk, tel: 020 8921 4320; Darren Little, Principal Engineer (Traffic) - Darren.Little@royalgreenwich.gov.uk, tel: 07903 746108; Alex Djan, Traffic Group Manager, Directorate of Regeneration Enterprise and Skills - alex.djan@royalgreenwich.gov.uk, tel: 0208 921 2105



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Good neighbours do their bit for riding charity

Tireless fundraisers, Michael and Mim of the Old Cottage Café have just raised £300 to help funding for their neighbours in Charlton Park, the Riding for the Disabled (RDA) group.

Some bottles of wine were left from the Christmas Day dinner they organised at the Café for elderly people living in local sheltered housing (see Grapevine vintage 41) and, avoiding a tippie temptation, they raffled it and donated the £300 proceeds to RDA's Charlton Park Group, whose volunteers regularly ride past their door.

Carol Kendall, Trustee/Treasurer of the group, wrote to express her gratitude to everyone at the Old Cottage Café, saying: "With the generosity of folk like yourselves we are able to continue our valuable work in providing riding sessions for approximately 60 disabled children each term time week, free of charge."

She told Grapevine: "We have about 25 to 30 volunteers, aged 16 to 86 - everybody who works at the group is a volunteer - and we spend a lot of time fundraising to keep this place going. It costs around



CCRA member Katrin Bain, from Wellington Gardens, presents the cheque to Carol Kendall of Riding for the Disabled.

£20,000 a year, so when people raise money for us every penny is spent on keeping the horses and the insurance going and we are very grateful."

Michael and Mim also raise money for charity from the sale of second hand books in their Charlton Park haven, which people can read for free while enjoying the café's hospitality.

Keeping us informed

CCRA has over the past few years been interested in Greenwich Council's performance in responding to Freedom of Information requests. RGB has an obligation to handle requests in an efficient and timely manner and is monitored by the office of the Information Commissioners. It is important because it is the way we can hold councils and other public bodies to account.

Over the last six months RBG has introduced a digital system for dealing with requests. Although this has led to a dip in performance, we look forward to improvements across all council departments. CCRA believes efficiency in this area is dependent on good record keeping and archiving. So we have submitted a request to RBG's Overview and Scrutiny committee to include this topic in their 2017/18 programme. Have you submitted a FoI request this year? How was your experience? Let us know by sending details to info@charltonresidents.org. We'll keep your information secure.

Become a Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator

Charlton Central Neighbourhood Watch (CCNWatch) has over 200 members across all of our streets. Membership is free and comes with access to our regular newsletter UPDATE, and the 'Instant Alert' service.

This is an email communication that lets residents know of immediate local policing concerns such as cold callers and neighbourhood scams.

The backbone of CCNWatch is the street co-ordinators who are locals with an interest in community safety. Our aspiration is to have a Street Co-ordinator for every road, but currently some roads are underrepresented.

If you'd like to: know more about us, become a co-ordinator or join the watch, email your contact details to mail@ccnwatch.org and we'll get back to you with more details.

Air pollution: It takes your breath away!

You can't see it, you can't smell it and you can't taste it. But air pollution is all around us and it's doing us harm. Air quality in London is some of the poorest in the world and Greenwich has several pollution hotspots. Here in Charlton levels of deadly nitrogen oxide are dangerously close to legal limits. Parents are advised to cover prams when walking with children near heavy traffic.

CCRA has been monitoring air pollution levels for two years with special diffusion tubes located on lampposts around our streets. The legal limit is 40 micrograms per cubic metre of nitrogen oxide. Levels above this have been recorded on roads outside our area and inside CCRA's boundaries levels are lower, but only just.

Last year's results were lower than 2015's but this may have been due to prevailing weather conditions. While this may appear encouraging, nitrogen oxide has damaging health effects on the most vulnerable – the very young and the elderly and those with chest and lung diseases.

The result that should concern us most of all in the CCRA area is the one recorded outside Fossdene Primary School where there are two earlier measurements from 2013 and 2014 taken by the 'No to Silvertown Tunnel' campaign. Levels here have risen every year except last year. Concerned by this and worried by additional pollution caused by the new shops on the other side of Charlton Road, governors and parents at Fossdene decided to do a traffic count along Victoria Way. This was done by counting vehicles passing the school's main gate for 15 minutes before

and after a school day for just one day every half term for a school year. The results made for grim reading. Worst was one June morning when a shocking 150 vehicles were logged in just 15 minutes.

There are further worrying developments planned in our area; the Enderby Wharf cruise terminal will accommodate liners which generally use their own diesel engines to power them while at dock instead of using local electricity supplies. Our MP Matthew Pennycook, who chairs the all-party parliamentary group on air pollution and his opposite number in Tower Hamlets, Jim Fitzpatrick, are in talks to see if they can change the shipping companies' minds. In addition, the Silvertown Tunnel and the building of a new IKEA could impact on the environment.

While all these projects offer local employment they could impact on congestion and hence air quality. This is partly due to the fact that, although transport, community impact and air quality will all be involved, there is no single monitoring body with oversight.

We can all help to improve the situation by using our cars less and walking more and where possible, using less polluted side roads.

Doctor Ian Mudway who spoke on air quality at a recent CCRA meeting suggests air pollution is at least as harmful as the effects of inactivity, obesity and alcoholism.

In the meantime CCRA awaits the 2017 air quality survey results which we hope will be available for Spring. We will report back to you when the results are in.

Toxic threat that is a public health crisis

Our MP Matthew Pennycook is a leading campaigner against air pollution. He told Grapevine: "Experts have been warning about a build-up of toxins in the atmosphere for years. Yet, it is only in recent years that awareness of the issue has grown.

"Improving air quality is difficult and the causes and the potential solutions are complex, but neither can be an excuse for inaction. Air pollution is a public health crisis and it deserves a commensurate response.

"It is also an issue of social justice. No one is immune from the impact of toxins present in the air we breathe,

but air pollution disproportionately affects the poorest and most vulnerable.. It is those who live in, and often cannot escape, less affluent areas that bear the brunt and children and the elderly who are most at risk.

"Cleaning up the foul air requires action from government at all levels. No individual locality can solve this problem alone. Local air quality strategies will have to work in tandem with action at a national level if they are to be effective in bringing about cleaner air in Charlton and nationwide. We can all do our bit by walking and using public transport wherever possible."

Acting your age at Charlton House

If you are aged 50-plus and looking for ways to perk up your brain, nourish your soul and make new friends in the process, try the new drama classes set up by a local resident in Charlton House.

Tonya French of Elliscombe Road says: "I came up with the idea of drama classes for people aged 50+ after teaching drama to younger people and volunteering for the charity Friends of the Elderly. Research has proven the importance of keeping the ageing mind active and encouraging social interaction to alleviate loneliness. Drama is a great way of achieving this. It not only stimulates the imagination but brings people together in a fun environment. It releases the inner spirit we sometimes suppress as adults."

Her classes are open to all abilities and aim to provide a way to experience drama in a relaxed atmosphere. Members participate as much or as little as they wish - no one is made to do anything they don't feel comfortable with. People with all levels of mobility are welcome (venues have step free access). The sessions include a range of drama exercises and techniques. Tonya, also a qualified therapeutic counsellor, says: "I call it keep-fit for the mind and soul." We have anything from five to 14 participants, who range in age from 50 to 90, with all levels of mobility.

She adds: "There's been a great atmosphere every week with a lot of laughter, and that's what I try to focus on. It has instantly generated friendships and everyone goes off for coffee afterwards."

Classes run for one hour per week, during academic term times and cost £5 per class (see p8 small



(Left to right): Alka, David, Wendy, Octavia and Rose take centre stage in 50 plus DRAMA at Charlton House

ad for details). Participants are enthusiastic. Anne-Marie, a carer working with the elderly goes on her day off. She says: "I really enjoy coming because it gives me a sense of wellbeing."

David confessed he was "a bit worried" when his daughter suggested it but he agreed to try it out. He says: "Immediately I was able to mesh with people and gradually, over the weeks, I've become more and more confident in actually doing things I never thought I could."

Selka enjoys just watching everybody and acting; For Maria it revives happy memories of her own moment of fame in the 90s in the musical Cavalcade; Rose says: "It's just fun – it's like playing. I think you forget how to play when you grow up." And Wendy says: "Time passes really quickly – you tap into something you didn't even know you had. Lovely crowd, lovely teacher."

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Rooftop pavilion for new IKEA

Trees have now been felled for the proposed Ikea building in Charlton. Negotiations with Greenwich council have secured agreement on mitigating any potential negative impact of the store and providing some wider benefits for the community.

As with most Ikea stores there will be a restaurant and a crèche. But Greenwich Ikea will not be the standard blue box. It will incorporate a rooftop pavilion, biodiverse garden and multifunctional community spaces.

Ikea says it understands residents' concerns about traffic and is developing a sustainable transport plan, to include 90 cycle spaces, 20 electric car-charging points and financial contributions towards sustainable transport.

How happy is my valley?

...A view from the terraces

Where would we be without Ricky Holmes? Currently he's our top scorer (9 goals) and the one player guaranteed to inject genuine threat and excitement into a game. He was out with injury for three months and has returned fighting fit and determined to see Charlton back on the winning track.

Despite his ability to find the net consistently he has had to suffer the frustration of often being on the losing side. I watched his brilliant hat-trick on a cold, windy night at Shrewsbury. But he left the pitch disconsolately as a resurgent home team came back from 2-1 down at half time to win 4-3.

Snatching defeat from the jaws of victory is becoming an unfortunate habit with Charlton. And all too often they have let in a late goal to see away sides grab an equaliser.

Away at division leader's Sheffield United last month Ricky Holmes scored after three minutes but we couldn't prevent them from coming back with two second half goals.

As I write there are seven games to go and the situation is worrying. We've played 39, won 10, drawn 17 and lost 12, giving us 47 points. We are currently 16th out of 24. Fifty points is reckoned to be safety so one more win would do it. But as any long-suffering fan will tell you, that is no guarantee.

We have had more than our share of injuries and

are currently without several key players. Talented youngster Ezra Konsa is the latest player to suffer. The 18-year-old centre back's hamstring strain also kept him from playing in his first England Under 20's call-up. Chris Solly is out again and Lewis Page has just had surgery to a damaged hamstring which will keep him sidelined beyond the end of the season.

Never easy for a manager always having to shuffle the pack. It doesn't add up to a consistent side, though Karl Robinson seems to have done enough to keep Charlton up and himself in a job for next season.

Off the pitch rumours continue to ricochet around the Valley and on social media about the possibilities of Roland Duchatelet selling the club. A forty per cent drop in season ticket sales this season underlines the deeply felt disillusion among fans who see his continued ownership and style of operation as the font of all that is rotten in the state of Charlton football. We would all like to see a change for the better at the Valley and congers that the summer break may bring good news. COYR's!

* Charlton fans were deeply saddened to hear of the death of PC Keith Palmer in the terror attack at the Houses of Parliament last month. PC Palmer was a loyal fan and season ticket holder. A red and white scarf was placed over his regular East Stand seat in tribute.



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Don't be conned by cold callers

The last few months has seen an increase in cold callers operating in our area. One man knocks on doors, sometimes late at night, claiming to be a neighbour in trouble. He is polite, has a convincing hard luck story and asks for money that he says he will return.

But he's never seen again. Other conmen pretend to be from utility companies, RBG's offices or local building firms.

Never entertain cold callers, no matter how convincing. Genuine traders don't ask for money on the doorstep. If you want work done then get their trade card, ask them to return at an agreed appointment and in the meantime check them out with RBG's Trading Standards on tradingstandards@royalgreenwich.gov.uk or ring 020 8921 8223.

I heard it on the Grapevine

Walking group

You may think CCRA's Walking Group is unstoppable but the weather forecast did just that in February and our Rotherhithe walk was postponed until March. We started the walk in Southwark Park where a memorial garden to the first woman mayor in London introduced us to Ada and Alfred Salter - an inspirational couple who set their mark on the area at the turn of the 20th century and are commemorated in the names of a road, a school, statues and plaques, an annual Quaker lecture and a play. We continued along the Thames to St Mary's Church, with its connections to the Pilgrim Fathers, passing the Brunel Museum, then through the 'green corridors' of the new Rotherhithe. A steep climb took us up Stave Hill, an artificial mound with great views and a relief map of the former docks on the top. Light rain led us through more green areas to a welcome pub on Greenland Dock.

Our next walks will start at 10am from Charlton Station on the second Sunday of each month. Depending on favourable reccies, summer walks may include Hammersmith Riverside, Wanstead Park, Highgate and a coastal walk. All are welcome to join us (at their own risk) and are advised to wear comfortable shoes, suitable clothing and bring water. Unless in more rural areas, there are usually places en route with toilets and take-away drinks and we always finish at a café or pub for well-earned recuperation! Please contact Jill on jillmo@btinternet.com to be included on the email list.

CCRA Singing group

We've been meeting regularly this year and have enjoyed singing our usual wide range of songs including popular songs, folk songs and songs from different musical traditions. We're looking forward to singing some of these at the Spring Social on 27 April. However, although we do give occasional performances, the group is really about singing for our own pleasure, and there's no pressure to attend every session. New members are always welcome and there is no auditioning process. If you would like to join us contact Chris on 020 8858 7377.

CCRA Music Group ('SE7')

Our group played for the CCRA Family Ceilidh on 27 February, and has also entertained at Cattleya on three occasions so far this year. We'll be playing at the Spring Social on 27 April and resuming our Cattleya evenings in May. 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 in joining the group, whatever your level of experience or expertise, please contact Chris on 020 8858 7377

Knit and Natter

The Knit and Natter group are planning to contribute to this year's Age UK Innocent Smoothie campaign. We will make little hats for Smoothie bottles and each knitted hat will attract a donation to Age UK. The money is used to support the elderly over the cold winter months. If you'd like to contribute to this good cause come along to any of the following sessions to pick up some patterns. You can also find some patterns on <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/get-involved/events-and-challenges/the-big-knit/knitting-patterns/>. We'll be meeting on the following Tuesdays at 2.00 pm in St Richard's Hall, Swallowfield Road: 18 April, 23 May, 27 June, and 25 July.

CCRA membership

Is that CCRA Membership form still on your hall table? Is it still on your 'to do list'? Well now is the time to join CCRA or renew your membership. It's simple. Just write a cheque or put a fiver in an envelope and pop it through the door of 7 Elliscombe or 49 Delafield (together with your name and address). Without membership money you wouldn't be reading this Grapevine. So if you like to keep up with local news then £5 for 6 copies of Grapevine alone is a fantastic bargain. Pay up today - you know it makes sense.

The Old Cottage Coffee Shop

*A traditional tea shop serving high
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and 5pm in summer*