

Silent cuts

At the beginning of March, Greenwich Council agreed plans to cut spending by £48.6 million. Most of these cuts will lead to a loss of jobs and services in the next twelve months and are a major part of an anticipated £63 million of saving to be made by 2015.

There has been no consultation and very little information about the detail of these cuts circulated by the council, and the implications are still being worked out. Greenwich Time concentrates on good news stories and smiling children, News Shopper is overwhelmingly 'shopper,' and the Mercury only marginally better. So, in Greenwich, making the biggest cuts ever in public services has been a pretty silent exercise so far.

Grapevine understands that about 230 jobs are going now and that over the next year or so 'management de-layering' will save £7.5 million. There is a general pay freeze and a controversial increment freeze, for several years to come, and a cut of about a third, £2.4 million, in grants to voluntary organisations or businesses.

Though most schools should not experience significant cuts, it will depend on whether or not the cuts in direct grants from central government are fully replaced by the so called 'pupil premium'. Since this only applies to pupils up to 15, in some cases, funding for 16-19 year olds in schools may reduce substantially. Non-school services to children and young people will be affected; a big cut in counselling for young people with mental health problems is still on the cards. Though there are no plans to close any Sure Start Children's Centres it is not clear whether the range and quality of services might be affected.

The impact on social services and on services for adults is also not yet clear. They depend on council funding and health service resources, on voluntary sector input and on large numbers of agency staff. There are proposals to out-source youth services later in the year; the council is already seeking expressions of interest. Grapevine will seek to clarify the position as the year progresses and in particular will focus on services and organisations in Charlton. If you have information which you feel should be passed on we would like to hear from you.



Animals in Maryon Wilson Park - funding in budget only until 2012.

Stop press:

Our local councillors, Janet Gillman, Allan MacCarthy and Gary Parker have all agreed to come and answer residents' questions on Monday 23rd May. The meeting will be held at St. Richard's Hall and will begin promptly at 7.00pm. Come along and put your questions to the councillors – together perhaps we can learn more about the cuts. Council enforcement of decisions is another area that could come under the spotlight.

CCRA Spring meeting and social

On Wednesday 11th May, the focus of CCRA's social at St. Richard's Hall will be local history. The meeting will start at 7.30 and will feature a talk on the history of Charlton by Francis Ward from the Heritage Centre. The local history group have prepared interesting displays and would love to hear from you about your knowledge of the area.

Free entry and music, Drinks available at reasonable prices.

Please note: this event was previously organised for April 11th but through no fault of CCRA has had to be changed to May 11th.

Good health in Greenwich?

Controversial government plans to give GPs control of the NHS budget and to commission healthcare services directly for their own patients are already underway in Greenwich. So, by April 2013 the Greenwich Primary Care Trust (PCT) will have been phased out and a consortium of local GPs will have taken its place with responsibility for commissioning healthcare services for the people of Greenwich.

The first steps towards these new arrangements have been taken and seven local GPs have been elected as members of a consortium shadow board. The following GPs were elected: Ram Aggarwal, Hany Wahba, Robert Hughes, Rebecca Rose, Niraj Patel, Eugenia Lee and Nayan Patel. In a postal ballot, 70% of local GPs voted, using a single transferable vote system. They will work alongside the current commissioner, NHS Greenwich, until 2013 and between now and then responsibilities will gradually be handed over to the new consortium.

Greenwich changes planning rules

Most planning applications to the Council are fairly routine and minor; a rear extension, a loft conversion or permission to fell a tree in a conservation area. These are made known to the community through a notice on a lamp post, an ad in Greenwich Time or on the Council's website. The majority are 'determined' by officers but if a councillor 'calls it in' or there are two objections from local people, details of the application and a recommendation from officers are put on the agenda which anyone can attend and can speak if they request to do so in good time.

As part of the cuts exercise this is about to change. In future a total of **eight instead of two objections** will be needed though local councillors will still be able to ensure items go to public debate. There will almost certainly be fewer applications subject to open consideration as a result. There may well be just one committee looking at minor applications instead of the three area panels which meet regularly at present, and even some of the major applications considered by the central committee may escape public scrutiny.

For a community organisation like CCRA, this curtailment of the chance to publicly question

development proposals in the area is a serious challenge. Within our modest three years of existence we have made a difference and improved several plans. We want to do the same in future but the new procedures will make that task more difficult.

We would like to hear from any members who are interested in planning issues and have some time to devote to working with a small group. Please contact the Chair of CCRA, Linda Pound, on 0208 858 7377.

Contact details:

play your part in making central Charlton cleaner

Contact Cleansweep

Cleansweep is responsible for clearing dog fouling; fly tipping, overflowing litter bins and graffiti. It is also responsible for dealing with lighting and street sign issues. Contact them on 0208 921 4661 or by emailing cleansweep@greenwich.gov.uk. LBG's website (www.greenwich.gov.uk) offers the possibility of reporting problems online. Issues related to doorstep collections of household rubbish can be reported on 0208 921 4661. (If you live in Frank Burton Close or Coombe Lodge, these arrangements do not apply to you. However if you have problems of this sort, Cleansweep should be able to advise you about who is responsible.)

Contact Asda

Report Asda's abandoned trolleys on 0208 858 3313.

Contact local councillors:

Janet Gillman	janet.gillman@greenwich.gov.uk
Allan MacCarthy	allan.maccarthy@greenwich.gov.uk
Gary Parker	gary.parker@greenwich.gov.uk

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Dancing in the street?



A street party is a great way to get to meet neighbours and Street parties have been held nearby for many years, it is time for us to have one. The party can take many different forms, but a key theme is the more people that are involved in helping arrange and participate the more fun and easier it is.

To get the party ready we are asking for residents to help with the planning and organising for the day. There are many things to decide and do to make this street party in our area a great success, such as when; where shall we hold it; what shall we eat, what shall we do? Now is a great time to plan a Street Party for 2012: Greenwich has made it easier, there is lots of help from groups that have helped many other parties. It could be timed for July when we normally hold our community day or for September after holidays, linked to the Olympics – or when you decide. There are many other things to get right, so please help make this your party and a party that will be remembered for years to come. Without your help the party can't go ahead – we need lots of volunteers to form a working party. The more people we have to help, the better party and the easier it will be for everyone. To get involved email: info@charltonresidents.org or phone Jason on 020 8305 0872 by April 30th.



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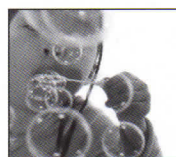


You can make a difference!

CCRA grew out of the desire of a group of local residents to make Charlton a better place to live. Grapevine's lead story in January on council services gave rise to a record mail bag for the editor! One reader suggests that the only way to get results is to be very persistent. She, with invaluable support from our councillor Janet Gillman, has had some success in getting Asda to remove abandoned trolleys from our streets – making streets safer for us all. She suggests that all of us who want a cleaner, greener and safer Charlton should:

- "Ensure that problems are reported promptly to the council. The more people report a problem, the more likely it is that some action will result.
- Keep a note of who you spoke to and when. Follow it up if you do not get a response, quoting as necessary.
- Provide hard impartial evidence of problems. Photographs, especially if timed and dated, of fly tipping, dog waste and litter left behind after an alleged cleansing are particularly useful. Keep local councillors informed about your actions."

CCRA is about to launch a monitoring scheme, reporting to the council at regular intervals. Full details of how you can be involved will be reported in the next Grapevine.



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Incidents in the central charlton neighbourhood watch area

There have been a lot of rumours around about serious incidents which have recently taken place in our area. Charlton is described by police statistics, as an 'average' crime area and violent incidents are rare. Recent events have been described by the police as 'non random'. This means that they may be gang related, that there is no suggestion of any racial motivation and that no members of the general public were involved. Some arrests have been made but enquiries are 'ongoing'.

The police have asked us to reassure residents that they are not in danger from knife carrying youths. Both crimes were at targeted victims and residents should go about their everyday business, visiting the shops in Charlton Church Lane, as they would do normally. Over the last few weeks the Safer Neighbourhood Team tell us that they have conducted extra patrols in the area to reassure residents. Together with representatives from the Charlton Society, representatives of CCRA and its Law and Order Group are to meet with police very soon. This will be on our agenda.

Community payback – community projects

What happens to someone who has committed a crime? Courts have the powers to sentence offenders of certain crimes to between 40 and 300 hours of Community Service. The scheme is called Community Payback and is run by the Probation Service. Offenders have to undertake work that is demanding and unpaid and the scheme is aimed at giving something to local communities and forcing offenders to repay the community for the wrong they have done.

Do you have something that needs doing in your neighbourhood? Projects can be varied and may include street clean ups, graffiti/rubbish removal, gardening and even painting of derelict or run down buildings. The tasks should benefit the community as a whole as well as specific regions or even individual buildings and residents. For more information on the Community Payback scheme visit: <http://www.communitypayback.com/>

If you have a specific project in mind why not contact Brenda (b.taggart@ioe.ac.uk) or Annie (thegalloways28@hotmail.com) members of the Law and Order Action Group?

Could you nominate a neighbour?

Members of the Central Charlton Neighbourhood Watch (CCNW) Scheme already keep an eye on their neighbours and their property, particularly when a resident is elderly, living alone or with a disability. The Charlton Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) would like to support this activity by asking all those living in the CCRA area to 'Nominate a Neighbour'.

The 'Nominate a Neighbour' scheme, which has been successful in many areas, is coming to Charlton. The scheme targets support for residents who may be more vulnerable and in need of information and reassurance about how to avoid becoming a victim of crime. Those nominated, if they have agreed, will receive regular visits from the SNT to check they are up to date on matters that affect their safety and security. This also gives residents a chance to air any concerns they have about bogus callers, anti-social behaviour etc. and for the officers to double check that their security measures are up to the job.

If you would like to nominate someone – or even feel you would benefit from extra support yourself - then please contact members of our Neighbourhood Watch. Nominations may be made to either the co-ordinators of the Central Charlton Neighbourhood Watch: Dhesi/ 0208 858 5534 & Tamara / 0208 333 1657 Annie /0208 305 1484 & Brenda / 0208 853 3354 Harjit / 0208 473 8908 & Len / 0208 858 4920 or to the Safer Neighbourhood Team direct– Sgt Musgrave: 0208 721 2734 / 07766 992585

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Charlton Athletic:

the agony and the lack of ecstasy - a supporter's lament.

"The horror! The horror!" - the dying words of Conrad's anti-hero Kurtz in his compelling novel Heart of Darkness made me wonder whether he was a Charlton supporter. Those were exactly the sentiments that came to mind as I girded my chilly loins and headed to The Bugle for a post-match inquest after the Boys had slumped to ignominious failure yet again. Yet another lacklustre performance, another defeat snatched from the jaws of victory (we were one up after five minutes!) and another reason to question why on earth I keep going back. But what can you do?

Football is an undefined passion. It gets in the soul and it won't go away. No matter how crap they perform Charlton are my team and lemming-like, I must follow them til they either plunge over the precipice of lost league status or, hope upon hope, experience a renaissance which leads them back to the glory of the premiership. Last season, I watched one frustrated pensioner lean over the barrier and throw his season ticket onto the pitch in a gesture of utter disgust. Just before the final whistle he discreetly asked one of the stewards to get it back. Eighty minutes into a recent 3 - 0 drubbing a drunken Charlton fan was escorted from the ground and one wag near me shouted: "Lucky sod!" I know how he felt.

It's a long time since the glory days. You have to go back sixty years to when men in cloth caps and mufflers packed the terraces to see their team winning the big prizes. These days the trophy cabinet at Floyd Road has the hollow ring of empty vessels. We even fell half way through our attempt at that glittering prize the Johnson's Paint Trophy. Success is measured in more prosaic terms. Winning three games in a row; that's a result. But not quite so thrilling when you lose the next four. So what do we do? We change managers. I've lost count of the new names who've taken charge since Curbs departed. On mature reflection, I realise how good he was to get us back into the premiership, keep us there for several years and even achieve top half status one season. I always rated him. If the Pope knew he had engineered a Boxing Day rout of Chelsea (4-2) do you think he would beatify him? Surely that result was a miracle. I like the sound of Saint Curbs, patron saint of lost causes. And what happened a few weeks later? Chelsea nicked our superstar prodigy Scott Parker who had masterminded that fantastic win. Good to see he's finally getting the recognition he deserves.

But that's the lot of the lowly club. You get a good young player, nurture him and just as he's about to deliver the goods for you along comes a bigger club which wafts celebrity and spondulix in his face and off he goes. Despite all that, in a few months time I'll be heading down to Floyd Road to renew my season ticket and come August I'll be putting on the Charlton socks, T-shirt, scarf, top and beanie, taking my seat in the old East Stand and yelling with the rest of them: "Come On You Reds!"

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(Fridays) & Charlton (Tuesdays)

I heard it on the grapevine...

How happy is my valley?

There is really not much to say at the moment about Charlton other than HELP! Being a Charlton supporter has always been a labour of love and it is certainly not for the faint hearted, but nothing seems to be going right at the moment and just when you thought things were bad we go 11 games without a victory. Chrissy Powell was my favourite recent Charlton player, along with Richard Rufus, and it was quite emotional seeing him return as new manager to a happy Valley in January with the largest crowd for a long time. Chrissy will see us right I thought! But not even his return has been able to halt the steady decline of Charlton. Where will all this end? On paper we have a reasonable squad for this league and in most games we have a lot of possession, but too often the players seem to be strangers to each other, and they generally lack invention. We have done enough not to get relegated but that was not the ambition after Powell's opening four game winning run. We will have to wait and see what the new owners can do over the summer months.

Letters to the editor



EGGSTRAORDINARY!

I too have noticed eggs in my garden. Your correspondent lives in Priolo Road while I live in Wellington Gardens. I and my neighbours have noticed exactly the same phenomenon. But are these eggs also appearing in other local streets? I'd love to find out how they get there and where they come from? Write into Grapevine if you too are also finding eggs in your garden.

C. Harrison Wellington Gardens

NO CUTS FOR COUNCILLORS IN THE BIG SOCIETY!

Why do our councillors continue to receive substantial allowances when cuts are being made to so many services, particularly in the voluntary sector? Recently, I discovered that our three councillors between them netted allowances of £50,328 from April 2009 to

March 2010. Even worse, Greenwich's 51 councillors claimed allowances of £945,377 for the same period. I am not suggesting these were fiddled because it was quite obvious that these were fixed basic and responsibility allowances. However, these sums are quite ridiculous when the Council is making cuts of £63 million to local services but with no sign of cuts to these allowances. What do others think?

Name and address supplied

One a penny, two a penny, hot cross buns!

Have you thought about making your own hot cross buns? Mikolaj (info@mylondonchef.co.uk) suggests that making hot cross buns is cost effective, simple and great fun to do with children. Here is his recipe. Why not have a go this Easter?

For 18 buns:

450g strong plain flour,
1 level tsp each of ground cinnamon,
nutmeg and mixed spice;
0.5 tsp salt,
25g fresh yeast or 5g dried yeast,
55g caster sugar,
150ml milk,
85g unsalted butter,
1 egg, lightly beaten,
85g raisins,
55g candied peel, chopped.



Paste for the cross: 80g plain flour, 2tbsp sugar, 100ml water

Glaze: 2tbsp brown sugar, 3tbsp milk, 1tbsp marmalade

Sift the flour, salt and spices into a large bowl and mix in the yeast, sugar, raisins and peel. Melt butter, stir in milk and heat until tepid. Whisk into egg, add to flour mixture, form a dough and knead on a floured surface for 10min until smooth and elastic. Divide into 18 buns, cover with a damp tea towel and leave in a warm place till doubled in size (around one and a half hours).

Mix the paste, bung it in a piping bag (or a plastic freezer bag with one corner snipped off) and pipe a cross on each bun. Bake at 180C for 10min, reduce the heat to 150C and bake for a further 15min. Lightly brush with the glaze while still warm and cool on a rack.

Grapevine would love to receive details of the recipes that you use for celebrations. If you have a favourite why not share it with us? Just jot it down and deliver to Linda at 26 Wellington Gardens or email to chair@charltonresidents.org.

Local community interest groups

Book group Recent reads include Oystercatchers by Susan Fletcher and Caribou Island by David Vann. On the 16th May, the group will be discussing The Hare with Amber Eyes by Edmund de Waal. The June meeting will be on Monday 20th. For full details contact Diana on 0208 893 6431.

Gardening group This is a call to all green fingered residents to green central Charlton. We'd love you to help refresh the unloved green spaces in our area including the patches on Nadine Street, Wellington Mews and Inverine Road. If you can offer any time at all to help please contact Martina on charlton-gardening-group@googlegroups.com. Or phone Linda on 0208 858 7377 who will pass your message on to Martina.

Summer time with CCRA means the open garden event. Whether you have a small or a large garden, formal or informal, it would be great if you would include it in this popular event. If you are willing to open your garden to CCRA members on 11th or 12th June please contact Liz on 0208 265 5454. See the next members' bulletin for places to visit and times that they are open. General enquiries to Charlton Gardening Group online at <https://groups.google.com/group/charlton-gardening-group/> or by emailing charlton-gardening-group@googlegroups.com.

Music group A regular core of members continues to play through a wide range of music – jazz standards and some less well known pieces, South African tunes, Turkish songs, Latin American pieces. The group meets on alternate Mondays. New players are always welcome, whatever your level of experience – please contact Chris on 0208 858 7377.

Wine appreciation On Saturday May 21st: the focus will be Plonk versus Prime - a horizontal tasting session. Likely start time 7:30/8pm. Cost approximately £15 per person. As usual places reserved upon request. Enquiries about this or future events to charltonwine@yahoo.co.uk or by phone to Elizabeth on 0208 305 0872.

Singing group The group continues to thrive, and our repertoire so far this year has included classical, folk and popular songs, as well as trying out some barbershop harmonies. We will be preparing some songs, perhaps with a local flavour, for the Spring Social. The group meets fortnightly, alternating between Mondays and Thursdays. If you would like to join us, please contact Chris on 0208 858 7377.

Local history group If you're interested in joining this group please contact Jill on 0208 853 4366. The Spring meeting and social (see page 3) will focus on local history.

Getting out and about?

Doreen Gunning organises regular coach trips on behalf of the Ex-A.E.I. Club. CCRA residents are welcome. From April to October there is an outing every month organised by Doreen Gunning. On April 17th a trip to Hastings is planned, in May they will off to Eastbourne and in June to Broadstairs for Dickens' Day. Doreen is also organising a "Help the heroes night" dance on Saturday 14th May at the Meridian Sports and Social Club, Charlton Park Lane. Full details and tickets from Doreen on 0208 853 0075

Poets' corner

The picture shop contains a study, golden lad by water's edge.

Languid time, summer sun starting its set. Autumn seeming worlds away.

But still the hint of buzzing flies reminding him to stir and move.

The larger world is not asleep; its own Mayflowers it means to prove.

(Poem by Berry D, inspired by a picture by Maxfield Parrish. For more information about this artist see www.parrish-prints.com)

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Dates for your diary

Spring meeting and social Living history in Charlton

Wednesday 11th May

St Richard's Hall

Please note change of date

7.30 – 9.30 pm

Meet your councillors

Monday 23rd May

St Richard's Hall

7.00-8.30 pm

Open Gardens

Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th June

If you are able to open your garden please contact

Liz on 0208 265 5454

Further details available soon

Community day and evening ceilidh

Saturday 2nd July

Full details available soon

Local news in brief

Sadly Cliff May of Delafield Road has passed away. Cliff was a true gentleman with a keen sense of humour who always stopped to say hello to neighbours and was always willing to help out. His lovely wife Val looked after Cliff with such care in the past few years and his funeral was very moving, a fitting tribute by Val to her dear husband. He will be missed by all who knew him in CCRA and our thoughts are with Val.

Congratulations to Jean and Dick Stork on becoming great-grandparents. Their great-grandson, born in February, has made Jean's father a great-great-grandfather – a rare occurrence!

Classified Ads

Grapevine currently reaches 1000 homes and other outlets in the local area. If you would like to advertise goods or services cheaply, effectively and locally contact Sarah Roseblade on 0208 2442405 or sarah.roseblade@ntlworld.com. A form can be found on our website, rates for individuals and small businesses are as follows:

- Ads containing up to 15 words plus contact details cost £10 for one issue or £35 for four issues.
- Ads containing up to 20 words, contact details & an image/ logo cost £20 for one insertion of £70 for four.

Space is limited so get your ad in soon

Small ads

Charlton-based dog walker

Need someone to exercise or feed your pet?

Call Alex on 07818 160997.

References available.

CCRA membership

We are delighted to have signed up a significant number of new members. However, some well-established members have yet to pay their subscription for this year. If you are one of these please contact Duncan on 0208 244 7555 – or any of your neighbours who are CCRA committee members. It is only £5 - less than 10p a week. The money helps us to cover the cost of Grapevine – keeping us all informed.

Shopping at Bluewater?

You may have heard from members of the Central Charlton Neighbourhood Watch (CCNW) about the perils of leaving your handbag hanging from hooks in the loos at the John Lewis Store, Bluewater. This warning went out in a recent CCNW UPDATE. The source of this information was the Charlton Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT). We have since received a unreserved apology from Sgt Adrian Musgrave about this article. It is fictitious and has been circulating for a number of years on the internet. In addition David Eastman (Security/ Custom Confidence) at John Lewis in Bluewater has confirmed the fictitious nature of the article and would like to reassure all those who visit their store that it is physically impossible to snatch a bag from their cubicles. We have received reassurance from the SNT that in future all information circulated to residents will be double checked for authenticity.

Comments, feedback, queries or material for the next edition of Grapevine should be emailed to grapevine@charltonresidents.org by Friday 3rd July. Alternatively phone Linda Pound on 0208 858 7377.

Charlton Central Residents Association



Charlton Central Residents Association (CCRA) is committed to ensuring a safe and friendly community.

Please join us! Don't forget to check out the website - www.charltonresidents.org.