

Drain Brains

We are committed to improving our street environment and one issue that keeps coming up, almost literally, is the state of the drains. Some of our management committee met Luke Young from the council, who has responsibility for this service area, and Tony Bigwood who is in charge of Cleansweep, which deals with street cleaning services.

Every drain in our area should be visited each year by a lorry with the glorious name of gulley-sucker. The cleaners remove the drain lid, insert a long flexible tube from the lorry, and the contents - dirty water, silt, leaves and other detritus - are sucked out to the accompaniment of rude sounds.

We - and they - were not sure that the programme had been completed and they agreed to clear every drain in the weeks leading up to our clean-up day.

This has been achieved and should become a benchmark for the annual exercise. We will look at drains as part of our monthly monitoring programme and the council has promised to respond quickly if there are problems. The grille slits on the drain lids, which can become partially blocked, should also be cleared in the weekly sweep, and we will monitor this and include it in future reports.

This spring and early summer have seen many more weeds than usual coming through pavements, at the edge of walls and in gutters. As part of the 2 July clean up, teams of CCRA volunteers cleared many of them. Again, we will be pressing the council to maintain this improved appearance. We revisited and,



Greening in Inverine Road on clean up day on 2 July

where necessary, replanted the three sites that were 'greened' last year and have plans to introduce daffodils and other bulbs in time for spring flowering. We also spotted a guerrilla gardener planting flowers around the base of street trees. The more the merrier.

Anyone interested in joining the 'greening' group should contact 0208 858 7377

Parking mad

Here at the hub of the Grapevine Press empire we eschew the seedier tenets of Red Top journalism in favour of old-fashioned tried and tested values of questing to arrive at the truth. In this issue, by dogged persistence and the expedient of the Freedom of Information Act, we report on the current controversy of doubled parking charges in Charlton and what happens to the money. You turned up in force to a CCRA meeting with local councillors at the end of May and asked a number of questions that we have followed up with the council. You will have another opportunity to ask questions at the annual meeting on 19 September, 7.30pm at St Richard's Hall. Representatives of both the parking services and the enforcement team have agreed to be there. *A full Q and A appears on Page 4.*



Our singers at this year's Horn Fair at Charlton House

Wellington Booted out?



The planning process for the attractive, four storey double properties in Wellington Gardens has been halted and will have to begin again. Technically it's been declared 'invalid' because the application failed to take account of some of the issues related to the proposed development, for example, the presence of several very large mature trees on the site. CCRA encouraged local people to send in objections. They responded by circulating

a petition in Wellington Gardens, and all our local councillors asked for it to be put on a public agenda. It is quite possible that, without our vigilance and this strong response, planning permission would have gone through without consideration of many of the key issues.

Assuming the applicant puts forward amended plans, the process will start again and there will be a further eight weeks' consultation before it is referred to a committee. As we go to press no fresh application has been submitted.

CCRA does not want to see these fine properties remain derelict, but they should be developed sympathetically, properly landscaped and on a scale that the local infrastructure can support.

Work has now begun on the Valley pub site at the top of Elliscombe Road where nine new flats are to be built. CCRA continues to monitor ALL planning issues in Central Charlton with a view to assessing their impact on the local community and environment.

Area Planning Meetings

The Council has re-thought earlier plans to reduce local planning meetings to 'every six months'. The first meeting of the new Woolwich and Thamesmead committee, which includes Charlton, was on 22 June and the next two meetings will be held on 14 September and 16 November. Meetings are usually in Woolwich Town Hall and start at 6.30pm.

A load of Bull

Did you know that the only British Prime Minister to have been assassinated, Sir Spencer Perceval, is buried at St Luke's Parish Church? The official version is that a disgruntled merchant shot him in the lobby of the House of Commons on 11 May 1812. But deep down in SE7 – or SE Heaven as we know it – Grapevine's intrepid sleuths have uncovered the truth. Spencer – Pozzer to his mates – was a Charlton fan and he had been down the Valley of a Saturday afternoon to watch the Lads kick seven shades of shale out of local rivals Millwall. It would have been Crystal (The Scum) Palace but they hadn't been invented in 1812. Naturally Pozzer and his mates adjourned to their traditional watering hole, The Bugle, to celebrate.

Now Pozzer liked a game of 'arrers and was a bit of a dab hand. It was he who slotted the winning double in that famous annual derby Lords v Commons in 1811. The Bugle was crowded post-match, but they took chinks and waited for their turn at the oche. The plan was to go trad – five pints and a jalf at the Viceroy to round it off. But they were destined to miss out on poppadom paradise.

As Pozzer stepped up to attempt his favourite out shot on 128 (treble 19, treble 13, double 16) another dart flew from a crowd of Millwall supporters gathered in the corner and struck him in the neck severing an artery. Game over! Pozzer popped his clogs and was taken across the road to St Luke's for burial.

Which is the long way round of saying that a number of Grapevine readers, men and women, have expressed interest in playing darts. If there's enough interest a match can be arranged, possibly at the Bugle. See contact list on the back page for details of the website, on 0208 858 7377.

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Don't suffer in silence!

Anti-social behaviour, by a minority within a neighbourhood, can make everyone's life hell. So what is anti-social behaviour?

It includes:

- rowdy, noisy behaviour in otherwise quiet neighbourhoods
- night time noise from houses or gardens, especially between 11pm and 7am
- threatening, drunken, abusive language or 'yobbish' behaviour
- vandalism, graffiti and fly-posting
- dealing or buying drugs on the street
- litter and fly-tipping rubbish
- aggressive begging
- drinking in the street
- setting off fireworks late at night
- abandoning cars in the street
- motorcycle nuisance
- dogs barking or fouling

Police cuts

Despite earlier election promises, Boris Johnson is cutting 150 police sergeants from Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) throughout London. Greenwich is to lose four. There are also plans to transfer officers from SNTs to other duties for undefined periods. The Charlton team is likely to be reduced or amalgamated with another team but as yet we don't have details.

What should I do if I encounter anti-social behaviour?

Talk to your neighbours and find out if they're affected as well. If you feel comfortable doing so, talk to the person causing the problem; they may not realise how it is affecting you. If this doesn't help then report the problem to Greenwich's anti-social behaviour co-ordinator (020 8921 4411 or email: contact-centre@greenwich.gov.uk). You can also call the local Safer Neighbourhood Team. (020 8721 2734 or 0776 699 2585). It is always good to talk to your landlord or the Charlton Central Residents Association (Linda Pound on 0208 858 7377) or our own Charlton Central Neighbourhood Watch (Brenda Taggart on 0208 853 3354). In an emergency call 999. All complaints are treated as confidential, so don't worry about your identity being revealed. Greenwich Council and Safer Neighbourhood Team will both need evidence of what's happened, so keep a note of problems. You will only have to do this for a short time. Once you have reported incidents of anti-social behaviour you should be kept informed of progress in your case. Don't suffer in silence. Don't let others make your life a misery. By acting together we can reduce anti-social behaviour and make Charlton a safer place to live.

Rail services and the Olympics

The threat of cuts in rail services at Charlton station during the Olympic Games has been lifted following representations from the Council, our MP and local organisations, including the Charlton Rail Users Group, CRUG. The services between Charlton and Blackheath to Charing Cross, due to be cut in the mornings, have been restored.

But residents in neighbouring areas are not so lucky. Woolwich Dockyard station is closing for the entire Games and Westcombe Park and Maze Hill will still be affected. At both there will be no trains into London from midday to 9.45pm and in the mornings no trains from town will stop at the station.



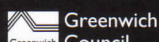
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Parking in Charlton - what the Council said

Q: Is the revenue received from parking permits, visitors' permits, parking meter charges and enforcement, ring-fenced for parking related services?

A: No. The Council is permitted to use money raised from parking on Traffic and Transportation Services.

Q: Are there circumstances when revenue from parking charges can legally be used to fund other services, such as adult social care or children's services or libraries?

A: Income from on-street parking charges must be ring-fenced, by law, and may only be used for Traffic and Transport Services - including associated or environmental improvements. In general, charges are used to repay any funds that have been borrowed to set up or maintain the parking schemes, to contribute towards the provision or maintenance of parking facilities, to make improvements to passenger transport services or infrastructure and to contribute towards other road improvements.

Q: Before the new parking charges were agreed, was the budget for parking services breaking even or making a profit?

A: The service was operating at a deficit.

Q: Is it the Council's intention to use revenue from increased parking charges to fund other services operated or commissioned by the Council?

A: No. Only lawful applications of parking revenue will be considered.

Q: Is there an intention to employ more traffic wardens and if so, how many and where?

A: Yes, six additional traffic wardens were immediately employed to operate across the borough

Q: Is there an intention to give staff involved with parking services a pay rise in the following year and if so by what percentage?

A: Public sector pay is negotiated nationally. The

Government has frozen public sector pay nationally. The Council has implemented a freeze on increments.

Q: What is the cost of installing more parking meters in 2011/12 and the following years?

A: There are no current proposals to install more parking meters. However, we do plan to consider installation of additional parking pay & display machines. Costs will be dependent on individual parking schemes which are currently being designed.

Q: What surplus can be expected from increased parking-related charges and how does the Council expect to use it?

A: The balance on the parking account will not be known until the end of the financial year. Any surplus generated will enable the Council to move forward on a number of transport-related issues. Immediate service needs include:

i) maintaining and improving parking services; including works associated with the infrastructure of our Controlled Parking Zones such as street signs and road marking and review work.

ii) improving customer access to the service by making more facilities available for in-person and on-line customers.

iii) many of the Council's parking machines are nearing the end of their useful life and we are mindful of the inconvenience of coin only payment arrangements for on-street and car park charges and are investigating additional alternatives.

iv) increased enforcement.

v) a contribution to the overall transport account deficit.

Q: Can the Council guarantee not to make further increases in parking charges for the remainder of the current council term?

A: The Council's Budget Strategy is dependent on the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) for Local Government. A CSR is due to be announced by Government in 2012. Until this is done the Council is unable to comment on what its financial position will be in future years.

Q: What consultation with residents in SE7 was there regarding the increased parking charges? When did this take place and who undertook the consultation? What was the outcome?

A: Local authorities are required to publish details of parking charge increases 21 days before the changes take effect. Public Notices were published in the Greenwich Time on 8 March, 19 April and 17 May 2011. In addition, letters were sent to all resident permit holders giving notice of permit price changes and the respective public notice.

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The Green Room

Garden to Kitchen

Once you've eaten freshly picked organic vegetables, you'll be hooked. Growing your own veg is satisfying just for the delight of seeing the seeds germinate and celebrating your cunning plan to foil the fox (if you live in my street) and certainly in terms of what you harvest.

Waiting lists for all local allotment sites are closed, and the lucky person who got a plot this year at the Highcombe site had been on the waiting list since 1996! So to have home grown vegetables, you need to think creatively about making the best use of your back garden. Combining vegetables, flowers, fruit and herbs will not only help with pollination and crop rotation, but can produce some exciting potager effects—or what Joy Larkcom calls 'the edible landscape'.

As we're talking about Charlton, which has the best clay for making London bricks, the first thing to consider is how to make the soil fertile. The easy solution is growbags. For tomatoes, peppers and aubergines, choose the ideal soil mixture and site them in the sunniest part of the garden. A 14 inch pot or an old sink filled with barnyard manure (in bags from Thompson's or B & Q) works well for courgettes. Last year's old growbag compost, recycled in a deep pot, will produce a splendid crop of carrots. With carrots especially, protect new growth from slugs and snails; broken egg shells and/or slug pellets will do the trick. This year my new venture is a pot with climbing French beans and sweet peas. Use any reasonable container that will give the depth you need for your plants' roots. Jane has lined a wooden box from the greengrocer's with

thick plastic for her next salad crop. Be liberal with liquid fertilisers and pellets suitable to the crops you're creating. And maybe one day there will be communal space enough for all organic gardeners to grow comfrey for home-made fertiliser for us all.

And so to the harvest. Salad crops are fastest to the table, and courgettes or beans will yield a continuous supply. You can eat the male courgette flowers, dipped in a tempura batter and deep fried. In fact, eating flowers is a topic on its own. Nasturtiums provide you with salad leaves and edible flowers, and ultimately seed pods that can substitute for capers. It's said that you can harvest young beetroot leaves three or four times without sacrificing root growth. They are great in salads or stir fries. For me, the best thing is home grown tomatoes with lettuce leaf basil - seeds from the Organic Gardening website. If you have space you might end up with a tomato salad containing yellow and purple fruit as well as juicy red ones.

July's topical tip:

Keep planting lettuce, radishes and salad leaves. Plant some rainbow chard seeds now and once they're about three inches high in the potting-on compost, move to garden soil enriched with manure, where they'll stand through the winter and give you a spinach-like harvest for months. They could be inter-planted among perennial flowers. Try oriental salad leaves too: mizuna and pak choi will survive colder temperatures than lettuce and continue to tingle your taste buds for months to come.



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I heard it on the grapevine...

How happy is my valley?

Number thirteen: unlucky for some, especially if you're an Addick. For that's where we ended this time. A mediocre position born out of a lacklustre season. It was a roller coaster ride with occasional highs, especially in the early months. Ironical that Phil Parkinson was chosen as manager of the month last year with Charlton riding as high as second place and looking good for promotion. It was so rosy then, but a series of defeats and dismal performances saw Parky booted out to be replaced by Valley favourite Chris Powell. The former England and Charlton winger came in on a fanfare of optimism. He was a surprise selection, as Charlton is his first post as manager and veteran Dennis Wise was being tipped for the job. The Boys responded with four straight wins and we dared to hope. It didn't last and we failed to win for another seven games, ending the season appropriately enough with a nil-nil draw. Over post-match beers back at the Buge we all agreed there is much to be done if we are to see a renaissance. There will be changes, that's for sure. I don't believe the current squad is strong enough to lift us to promotion. In a letter to wavering season-ticket holders the management stated that they were determined to set Charlton back on the road to success. I see winger Kyle Reid has gone, Racon has moved to Millwall and I doubt defender Kelly Youga,

sidelined for virtually the whole season through injury, will be kept on. Other top salaried players are being asked to take a pay cut. There is some promising talent in the youth programme. Young Player of the Year Callum Harriott looks a good prospect, as does injury-prone midfielder Ben Davisson whose contract has been extended for a year.

If it isn't stating the obvious, we need a stronger defence that doesn't haemorrhage goals; we need someone of the calibre of Nicky Bailey to play that key central role of playmaker and we need support for striker Bradley Wright-Phillips. We need wingers who can drive down to the by-line and whip in sharp crosses. What we don't need is Llera's long, floated crosses which so accurately pick out the opposition's backs; precision passes to the other side; being caught in possession whilst dithering.

Some years ago my family bought me one whole share in Charlton plc, so I literally have a vested interest in their future success. I wonder whether that entitles me to a share in the decision making? Maybe I'll ring up Chris Powell on Friday evenings before a match and discuss team selection. Maybe I should be there for the half-time team talk. And if it's going really badly, perhaps I'll take my kit along...

Player of the Year: Jose Samedo. Runner-up, Johnnie Jackson and third, Rob Elliott.

Cookery Corner

Charlton Mess!

The best summer pudding in my opinion is Eton mess (or Lancing mess - opinions are divided about which educational establishment first devised it). Here's an interesting variation - one which children will enjoy making.

INGREDIENTS (Serves 4)

400g of fresh strawberries, 1 tbsp of icing sugar, 1 tbsp of vanilla essence, 400 ml of cream, 2 big meringues, 4 pieces of shortbread

METHOD

Wash the strawberries, hull, chop into quarters and place in a bowl. Break the meringue into tiny pieces. Pour the cream into another bowl and lightly whip. Half way, add sugar and essence. Don't overdo it: it should still be soft. Add the strawberries and meringues to the cream. Mix together and serve. Crush biscuits and sprinkle over dessert. A scoop of strawberry sorbet makes a tasty option.

Now, it can be called Charlton Mess. Enjoy!

Local community interest groups

Book group The next meeting will be on Monday 25 July. The group will be reading *Dirt Music* by Tim Winton. Contact Diana on 0208 893 6431.

Gardening group A grand beginning has been made on greening some of our open spaces. We worked on a site in Nadine Street, a strip of land in Inverine Road and another on the corner of Wellington Mews. Much was achieved on our Community Day but more needs to be done. Another meeting is planned for October - a better time of year for planting. In the meantime if you live near to any of these sites and could water the plants when necessary that would be great. If you have any spare plants to brighten the Inverine Road strip why not just plant them? A bit of guerrilla gardening could do wonders for our area! Enquiries to Charlton Gardening Group online at www.groups.google.com/group/charlton-gardening-group/ or by emailing charlton-gardening-group@googlegroups.com or phone Linda on 0208 858 7377.

Singing & music groups We have worked together a lot recently, so a combined report seems appropriate. Our main project since Easter has been our performance at the opening of the Horn Fair on 19 June. Our own contributions included a three-part arrangement of a song about the Horn Fair and a song called *The Antigallican* which, although not about our local hostelry, seemed somehow appropriate. The band contributed arrangements of two folk tunes whose titles have local associations – *Horn Fair* and *Greenwich Park*. In addition, Robert Clay provided a song called *The Tale We Are About To Tell*. All this and more went into an opening extravaganza for the Horn Fair, involving a procession, on-stage performances and a big circle dance. In addition the singers performed the 'local' songs at the local history CCRA social in May and at the ceilidh on the Clean-Up day on 2 July. The Music Group meets on alternate Mondays. The Singing Group is also fortnightly, alternating between Mondays and Thursdays. Both groups welcome new members. Dates for autumn will be available soon. Contact Chris on 020 8858 7377..

Wine appreciation Enquiries about future events to charltonwine@yahoo.co.uk or by phone to Elizabeth on 0208 305 0872.

Local history group If you're interested in joining this group contact Jill on 0208 853 4366. Watch this space in September for details of forthcoming meetings.



Dear sir...

It was great to see residents working together to spruce up our streets recently. I have experienced the opposite recently, with someone who persistently dumps huge piles of branches and tree stumps outside my back gate in Wellington Mews and shows no signs of shifting them. The rest of the Mews is becoming

blocked with fly-tipped loads and though the Council is taking it seriously and being helpful, it's a private road so it might take some time and some legal action before it's put right. If any readers have had similar problems could they please report to the Council, to make them take some action. Meanwhile, if anyone has a wood-burning stove and would like some extra firewood, you know where to find it. **JO, Elliscombe Road**

Kia Ora! Five years ago my wife and I left Elliscombe Road to live and work in New Zealand and we have just returned for our first visit in two years. Staying with friends in Charlton we were delighted to see Grapevine and really pleased to see how much community spirit has grown up in the area. The streets seem cleaner as well. Walking down to the station it was good to stop and chat to old friends. We look forward to going back to our new home across the other side of the world but will be taking fond memories of Charlton back to Taranaki with us. See you all again in two years time. E noho ra. Ki tonu taku waka topaki e te tuna. **Nick and Lyn Adderley**

I would like to say thank you to all those who visited my garden on the 'open day'. We enjoyed all your comments. My son Theo had great fun being the doorman, refreshment server and 'welcomer'. Thanks to Martina's father for the tip on how to keep the foxes off my lawn. No it didn't work and I have the video to prove it! **WB Wellington Gardens**

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Dates for your diary

Monday 19 September

St Richard's Hall

CCRA annual general meeting

7.30 pm

Charlton House

Friday lunchtime concerts

22 July The Harper Wind Trio play Jacob, Mozart, Franck, Ibert and Dubois

29 July Leonistas Ensemble (oboe and strings) play Bax and Britten

5 August Harry Cameron-Penny (clarinet) and Jonathan Musgrave (piano)

12 August Charlotte Derry (soprano), James Williams (baritone) and Suzy Ruffles (piano)

19 August Olga Stezhko (piano) plays selections from Scriabin, Debussy and Prokofiev

26 August Takuya Takase (clarinet) and Yukiko Shinihara (piano) play selections from Reinecke, Ravel and Finzi



Demolition work has finally begun on the Valley pub site

Grapevine bears fruit

Grapevine and the CCRA grow from strength to strength. It seems that with each publication another interest group has formed and new members have joined. In order to cope with the increasing volume of news and features, Grapevine will be published more often. We hope to bring you another three copies a year. As we go to press membership has now passed 200! Our aim is to reflect the news and views of the area and act as a watchdog to ensure Charlton residents are fairly served by those who represent us. We also enjoy a vibrant social life. We welcome new members. For details, contact Duncan Alexander, membership secretary, on 0208 244 7555

Classified Ads

Grapevine currently reaches 1000 homes and outlets in the area. If you would like to advertise, 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 up to 15 words plus contact details cost £10 for one issue or £35 for four issues.
- Ads up to 20 words, contact details & an image/logo cost £20 for one insertion or £70 for four.

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.

Small ads

Charlton-based dog walker

Need someone to exercise or feed your pet?

Call Alex on 07818 160997.

References available.

Flat to rent

Unfurnished, 2 bedroom flat to rent in Brockley, SE4. Pleasant secluded garden; all mod cons. Expected to be ready in Sept. 2011.

Rent £900 pcm. Contact Dania on 07894702272.

Winter home for plant

Does anyone have a conservatory or greenhouse which could "look after" my solanum jasminoides over the winter so the frost does not kill it?

Contact Dania on 07894702272.

Comments, feedback, queries or material for the next edition of Grapevine should be emailed to grapevine@charltonresidents.org by Monday 19 September. Alternatively phone Linda Pound on 0208 858 7377, Bob Smith on 0208 853 2697 or Joy Ogden on 0208 293 3034.

