

## It's opening time again

**E**schew Kew and gainsay Greenwich. Why travel miles to enjoy horticulture at its best when you can find it right here on your doorstep? There are many enthusiasts within our part of SE Heaven who tend wonderful gardens of all shapes and sizes often with inspirational ideas to share.

This year, the CCRA will host two of its popular Open Garden fundraising events. During Open Gardens, CCRA members open their gardens for two hours viewing to other CCRA members and their guests, for a nominal entrance fee.

The first of the two Open Gardens events is happening on 19 May and the second is on 15 September. For those of you who have participated in Open Gardens in previous years, either as a visitor or as a host, you will know how enjoyable these sociable events are. It's a wonderful opportunity to relax, meet neighbours and explore local gardens and discuss growing matters. And you don't have to fork out a lot of money.

Would you like to open your garden to CCRA members and their guests this year? A two hour slot on either 19 May or 15 September, between 11am and 5pm, could be yours for the asking! Please contact [secretary@charltonresidents.org.uk](mailto:secretary@charltonresidents.org.uk) or 020 8265 5454 to book a slot and to find out more information. Full details in the next members' bulletin.



## The chutney challenge

**C** CRA holds its first Flower, Produce and Craft Show on 19 September in St Richard's Hall, Swallowfield Road. There will be a range of classes in six main sections, including Flowers/Pot Plants, Flower Arranging, Vegetables, Baking, Jams/Chutneys and Crafts. There will also be a number of classes specifically for younger people up to age 12. We hope to encourage local people to grow their own produce, to promote home-type skills and to have a fun community day for everyone. Entries will be confined to people living in the CCRA area and Associate Members. Details of classes will be available in May, set out in a booklet which will also contain the rules. The Show is on the same day as the second Open Gardens event, so put this date in your diary now and take part in this new event in the CCRA social calendar – call Len on 8858 4920 for more details.

## Charlton riverside masterplan

The riverside face of Charlton could see major changes within the next ten to 15 years under a masterplan commissioned by Greenwich Council. CCRA has contributed to the consultation process and our response is published in this edition of Grapevine.

The plan envisages the riverside area as a new urban quarter connecting Greenwich Peninsula to Woolwich Town Centre and much more. See pages 4 & 5 for details.

### Spring social

**STOP PRESS**

Our spring social is on Monday 23 April from 7.30 in St Richard's Hall in Swallowfield Road. This year's topic is energy saving. There will be music from local musicians and wine and beer and soft drinks. We hope to see you there. It's free for members and non-members. You may like to join us to support our work of making central Charlton a greener, safer and friendlier environment in which to live. See Page 2 for membership details.



# Is this really a clean Bill of Health?

**L**ocal residents turned out in force to raise their concerns about the NHS's future, and the effects on local hospital and healthcare services of the Health and Social Care Bill, the day after parliament finally voted for it to become law. The public meeting, in Charlton House on 21 March, was organised by campaigners from the recently launched 'I love the NHS' group.

The new Act will sanction a radical restructuring of the health service in England, handing control of much of the NHS budget to GPs. It will introduce more private sector competition into services. The government says the changes are essential to cope with the ageing population and expensive treatments.

More than 100 health workers, MPs, CCRA and Charlton Society members and NHS users attended. Dianne Abbott, shadow health minister, gave a national perspective on the changes. She spoke of opposition MPs' fears, raised during parliamentary debates, about the survival of the NHS as a national health service free to all. As the daughter of a nurse, she said healthcare workers go into the profession as a vocation and not as a business provider.

Local GP Eugenia Lee, spoke of the importance of funding for preventative healthcare and how, as

a member of the local commissioning group, she feared it was under threat from conflicting concerns. Local vicar Jeremy Fraser, a non-executive member on the NHS Board, was passionately concerned for the survival of local hospitals.

Increased private sector involvement in hospital care could squeeze smaller hospitals such as the Queen Elizabeth out of the market, rendering them unable to maintain current services when competing against the combined might of larger providers such as Guys, St. Thomas' and The Maudsley, he said. In future this could mean local hospitals would struggle to be viable, leaving many vulnerable patients with longer trips to find treatment.

Some people recalled that before the inception of the NHS, they had been forced to choose between buying food or medicine. And now there were particular anxieties about services such as mental health and care for the elderly.

Speakers called for action and vigilance once the Health Act comes into force: for the monitoring of feedback from patient groups on care quality; for an insistence on publicly held commissioning meetings, so their decisions can be scrutinised and the effect on local services tracked. Another public meeting will be called in three months' time. Further information is available at: [www.ilovethenhs.org.uk](http://www.ilovethenhs.org.uk).

## Enjoy SE Heaven for a fiver

There's no better investment for your hard-earned cash. It costs just £5 per person per year - less than 10p a week - to join Charlton Central Residents' Association (CCRA).

But that pays for Grapevine, your very own neighbourhood publication, enables us to run meetings, to improve unloved areas by planting and keep you informed about your area. Even if you don't live in our designated area you can become an associate

member.

If you haven't yet joined or renewed your membership ring Duncan, our membership secretary, on 020 8244 7555 or fill in the form below. In addition to Grapevine, members get: regular bulletins; can attend the open gardens event, get free admission to the ceilidh the same evening and attend the barbecue in July. We also plan a supplementary guide to the borough's exciting summer events.



## Charlton Central Residents' Association

I am/ we are joining for the first time I am/ we are renewing my/ our membership (delete as appropriate)

First/ other name \_\_\_\_\_ Family/ surname \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Post code \_\_\_\_\_ Email(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

Data Protection: The information on this form will only be used by CCRA to communicate with you and will not be given to third parties. Please return this form to 7 Elliscombe Road (It's at the Wellington Gardens end) with £5 cash per person or a cheque made out to CCRA.

If you'd like to pay by standing order, please call 0208 244 7555 for a form. Alternatively, visit [www.charltonresidents.org](http://www.charltonresidents.org) where you can download a form.





## Dear Sir,

Please be careful when your little ones are playing outside. This morning Michelle's two children were in their Elliscombe Road garden and saw a fox bite off a squirrel's head. After hearing their screams I ran outside to see the fox a metre from them guarding the rest of its breakfast. The children were frozen to the spot and I dread to think what may have happened had I not gone out. Five minutes later I also found a pigeon's head. Nice morning! Anyway be careful around these animals. They are hungry and do not seem to be bothered by humans. That made me think they might have rabies but then I thought maybe the loss of woodlands in Wellington Gardens had brought them closer to humans.

### KB – Wellington Gardens

Reading Charlton grapevine Vintage 16, residents of Wellington Mews, including me, took great offence to it being called 'Greenwich municipal tip'. Fly tips on public highways or council land are cleared within 24 hours. We have waited 24 years for some council help. Wellington Mews, which was named in 1993, was originally the rear entrance for houses on Victoria Way, built in 1860, and technically the land belongs to them. Greenwich council owns the house where some of the rubbish has been dumped. I have been a member of the Wellington Mews community for over 35 years, long before Grapevine was around and in that time it has been the people who work in, live and use the Mews who have dealt with any problems, including rubbish.

The council has done very little, deeming it to be

private. We tend to overgrown trees and bushes, and have reinstated the entrance gate (the last one went during the war) with our own money and time, in an effort to discourage tipping and car theft. Far from being a municipal dump, the Mews is a great place, a hub of interesting, creative people with good community spirit, which has all but disappeared elsewhere. It has not been wrecked by ugly new buildings and tarmac, and it charms all who visit. The Mews, just as it is, means a lot to many locals.

### TH - Victoria Way

## Growing in Charlton

Charlton Community Gardens Group will meet at 8pm on 10 May in the United Reformed Church Hall, Bramshot Avenue, when the interim steering group will report and outline our proposed constitution. There will be a seed swap and plant exchange. We suggest you plant extra seeds, bring spares for exchange at the beginning of May, the unused part-packet of seeds to swap, or any seeds you collected last autumn, and we'll talk about plants and planting.

At the next meeting we will discuss whether to hold a competition for the best edible windowbox: do you have a ledge wide enough for a mini garden of lettuces, herbs and peppers or a mix of flowers and edibles? More than 35 people at our February meeting, discussing the community garden and its contents, voted for vegetables, a community orchard and seasonal events. Hope to see you on 10 May, or contact us at [charltoncommunitygarden@gmail.com](mailto:charltoncommunitygarden@gmail.com) if you can help distribute flyers.

### Having problems **RENTING?**

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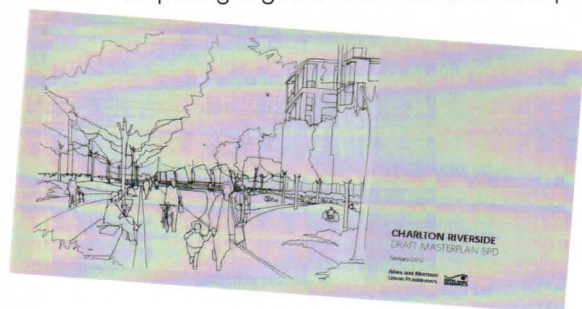


# Improving troubled waters

## CCRA's response to the Charlton Riverside Masterplan

**C**CRA likes the Charlton Riverside Masterplan's aspiration to improve and revitalise a largely unattractive stretch of land, particularly as some parts have recently been developed in a random and uncoordinated way.

But we are disappointed that the planners describe the area as a "missing piece of the jigsaw" between Greenwich Peninsula and Woolwich. They focus entirely on pulling together the west and east parts of the



borough without acknowledging the importance of also linking north and south or recognising the significant barrier between these two parts of Charlton presented by the Woolwich Road. This lack of cohesion needs to be tackled in terms of community and transport or there will be a real missed opportunity.

We welcome the plan's recognition that new schools are needed in this part of the borough. But they are needed *now*.

We want to see pedestrian-friendly links between old and new Charlton and a proper evaluation of the contribution of existing local businesses as employers, to ensure that important elements of our community are not needlessly swept away. We strongly support the stated commitment to establishing local jobs.

Charlton desperately needs better air quality to combat the already high levels of pollution in this area. We are pleased to see an increase in parkland but more green measures will be needed. Both the housing and retail developments will attract substantially more traffic and we are sceptical about how the Council proposes to manage this. We would therefore strongly support the greater use of river transport, the revitalisation of the waterfront transit scheme and we think that better use could be made of the Angerstein railway line. Charlton Station will have to be significantly improved to deal with the influx of new com-

muters.

We want to see good quality, low density, low rise housing supported by sustainable employment opportunities. We hope that this will remain a core part of the plan and will not be undermined in time by the possible temptation to build 12 or 14 storey apartment blocks.

While there is some merit in setting up a more coherent retail zone, local residents have been expecting new retail developments in the next year or two and the plan appears to put these in doubt with the potential for planning blight.

We would like see an unimpeded river walk. A continuation of Charlton Church Lane across Woolwich Road could provide a major integrated artery for the whole of Charlton. Transport changes along the lines suggested and architecture sympathetic to the largely Victorian appearance of the area would improve the sense of linkage.

Lastly, but not least, the sightline from the river to St Luke's Church in Charlton Village is of historic value and interest and must be preserved.

We hope that our comments will be considered seriously and that we and the considerable numbers of other stakeholders and landowners will continue to be consulted and kept abreast of developments. Charlton is more than its riverside.

## Wellington Gardens: our vigilance continues

**M**any of you will have noticed that work has begun on this development. At the area planning meeting last autumn, CCRA was charged with being the eyes of the council in ensuring that the developer complied fully with the planning conditions imposed on him.

The developer began work before he had met prior conditions but prompt action by CCRA ensured that the work was halted until prior conditions were met, including the completion of a wildlife survey.

Our action has also led to the clearing of the large amounts of debris that had been carelessly disposed of and the erection of a hoarding to minimise the eyesore and improve safety.



# The developers return, 30 years on

**P**lanners will soon present a planning application to the council to build a number of houses on the piece of land between Wellington Mews and the rear of the gardens of 111-113 Victoria Way.

CCRA contacted residents in surrounding streets and only one of the 30 who responded supported the plans. This land has never been built on and has been home to a range of wildlife. Many people were concerned about the potential loss of green space and CCRA contacted the council to ensure that no trees with preservation orders were being felled. Nearby families are particularly concerned about drains and sewers. Those opposite the proposed development are concerned about loss of light

There is widespread concern about increasing the number of people in the area and its impact on parking and drains. Many people are alarmed that this could create a precedent for building in Wellington Mews itself.

The developer's agent has indicated to CCRA that he is willing to hold an open meeting in April to tell residents about the plans. He expects the application

to go to the area planning committee in September. We will tell you the date when we know, so you can go along and have your say.

## We are not a-mews-ed!

*David Collis, who led and organised the Wellington Mews Environmental Group in the fight against development 30 years' ago, recalls the struggle.*

In 1983, we discovered that a developer was making moves to acquire gardens backing onto Wellington Mews. I visited the relevant houses in Victoria Way and Elliscombe Road and built a sizeable petition against the proposals. This sparked the birth of the Wellington Mews Environmental Group and regular meetings. The Council agreed to fight on our behalf and consulted the Department of the Environment, who wrote a report in favour of keeping the mews as it was. Eventually there was a public enquiry at Woolwich Town Hall, with barristers fighting their respective corners. Highly vocal residents turned out in force and judgement was given against the developers. Thirty years later it seems the mews is yet again under threat.



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# *I heard it on the grapevine...*

## **How happy is my valley?**

**C**an we really do it? Seven matches to go (as I write) and we are still eight points clear at the top. But can we still snatch defeat from the jaws of victory? Just when we Valley stalwarts were beginning to think we were home and dry, the Boys faltered. Two home defeats followed by a dismal draw. One point from a possible nine and the following pack hot on our heels. Surely we can't blow it now? Then on Tuesday we restored some equilibrium with a well-deserved 3-0 home win against Yeovil, the form team of the division. The manner of this win was in sharp contrast to the worst defeat of our campaign – a 4 - 2 defeat against Notts County. Then, at half time, 4 - 0 down, stunned supporters pondered on what had gone wrong. It all fell apart; no fire power up front and the best defence in the division imploding. Only days earlier keeper Hamer had dithered over a clearance, slammed the ball straight into an advancing forward and the rebound went in the back of the net. What had he learned? Nothing apparently for he and the defence failed to respond to each other on a pass back, a forward nips in and chips Hamer for another goal. Awful football.

Powell stuck with the same players for three of these bad games then, rightly in my view, shuffled the pack. Johnny Jackson was out injured anyway so he dropped Taylor and gave some of the other squad members a chance.

They responded magnificently. Yet it was loanee Dany N'Guessan who set the home crowd alight with

a seventh minute goal. And yes, folks, he came from Millwall! (For the stats nerds, is this the first time we've had two Frenchmen in our side?) A renaissance BWP notched his 21st of the season with a fine header and Darel Russell popped up to get on the end of a smart move started by Yann Kermorgant for the third. In only his second start of the season Leon Cort played a blinder in defence to earn Man of the Match; Hamer redeemed his early stutters with a fine save late on; my Man of the Season Chris Solly was his usual industrious self and Danny Holland deputising for skipper Jackson, was a tower of strength in the middle. Then, a crucial away match at Huddersfield and we lose one nil and have a player sent off.

There's a possible 21 points still available so we could see the Boys hit the magic 100 points for the season, though Brighton got there last time with 92. In the final analysis I'd take second place just to get over the line without having to face the play-offs. But I think we'll make it as champions though it's going to be closer than any of us Valley faithful would like. Currently, there are nine points between us and the third team, Sheffield United, who of course will have to face the trial of play-offs if status quo remains.

Two or three more games should, if all goes well, make it mathematically impossible for us to avoid promotion. But Chrissy Powell's Red Army has never made it easy for fans, so it may well go to the wire. I intend to be there on the final game of the season at the Valley against Hartlepool where I hope to see our manager lift the trophy that will symbolise our elevation to the Championship to take on the likes of Millwall and Palace. Come on You Reds!

## **Sign of hope**

With Charlton FC rapidly approaching promotion to the Championship any artifact connected with this record-breaking side is going to be sought after. Which is why The Valley pub sign from the now demolished boozer in Elliscombe Road will be a valued soccer treasure. CCRA still has the sign after the successful e-Bay bidder dropped out at the last minute. We would like to try again. Does anyone have any other suggestions as to the best way to sell the sign and bring in some much needed spondulix for your residents' association? Any thoughts can be emailed to the website.



## **Rotary Club of Greenwich**

Meet every Thursday  
at Charlton Football Club, Floyd Road, SE7 8BL  
12.30 for 1pm Luncheon

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For more information  
please ring Fred Nunn 0208 8586 410





# Local community interest groups

## Singing

The singing group met regularly during the spring and sang the usual wide range of songs, which includes folk songs, popular songs, medieval chants and madrigals. We look forward to performing at the CCRA Spring Social on 23 April, and possibly at other public performances during the summer. Summer dates are: 16, 30 April; 16; 17, 28 May; 14, 25 June; 9 July. Sessions start at 7.30 and take place at 26 Wellington Gardens. If you would like to join us, please contact Chris on 020 8858 7377.

## Music

On Sunday 11 March, the group fulfilled its role of playing music in the community with a performance at Cattleya, our local restaurant. The evening was very successful and we would like to thank all those who turned out to see us. We hope to do this again soon. We will perform at the Spring Social on 23 April and provide music for the Ceilidh on 19 May. We meet on alternate Mondays and welcome new members on any instrument, whatever your level of expertise. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Chris on 020 8858 7377.

## Local History

The group is still working on its research into the Peopling of our CCRA area at the time of our houses' construction – and is finding some surprises – but more of that when we have the bigger picture! For details of our next meeting, please call Jill on 0208 853 4366.

## Art

Calling all budding artists – if you are interested in forming a drawing/painting group to meet one evening a month, please contact Julia on [juliamundy@hotmail.com](mailto:juliamundy@hotmail.com).

## Wine appreciation

The next events are now being arranged. As usual, all welcome and places set on a first come basis. 26 May, Fuori come un balcone: A selection of fine Italian wine mainly from central Italy, a taste of cuisine from Tuscany and a selection of amari from the sweetest to the bitterest for those who dare! 7 July, Picnic wines; 29 September, wines within walking distance.

For details please email: [charltonwine@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:charltonwine@yahoo.co.uk)

## Book group

For more information, contact Diana on 020 8893 6431.

## By the way...

### Home education

*Are you home educating or thinking about home educating your child(ren)? We have just started to home educate our 4.5 years old son and 2 year old daughter and would like to meet other local families to play and go on trips with us. Please get in touch with Katrin: [k.bain@gmx.de](mailto:k.bain@gmx.de) or 07981 456 470*

### Noise abatement

Residents report a spate of noisy all night parties in the neighbourhood – if you're troubled by anti-social noise you should contact the council on 020 8921 8921. They need to know the address of the noisy residents (which might be difficult to pinpoint) and the nature of the problem. You also need to give your own name, address and phone number. See the council's website [www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/info/412/pollution\\_control-noise/656/noise\\_complaints](http://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/info/412/pollution_control-noise/656/noise_complaints)

### Missing bins

Wellington Gardens used to have a bin at each end – one to encourage minicab drivers to put their food wrappers there rather than the kerbside and one near the bus stop. For a while there was a yo-yo effect – sometimes they were there, sometimes around the corner, sometimes missing altogether for a while. But now they have definitely gone – sold for scrap metal or enhancing someone's back garden? We're not sure but the council have promised us new ones – as soon as they have some more money in the coming new financial year. This time we are reassured to hear that they are to be screwed down!




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## Dates for your diary

### Monday, 23 April

#### CCRA Spring Social

7.30 St Richard's Hall, Swallowfield Road

Talk and information on energy saving

Music from local musicians

Wine, beer and soft drinks available

### Saturday, 19 May

Open Gardens – members only. Further details inside and in forthcoming members' bulletins

Ceildih – free to members, £1 for guests

Local musicians

Wine, beer and soft drinks. Raffle

7.00 – 9.30 St Richard's Hall, Swallowfield Road

### Saturday, 7 July

#### Members' barbecue

Only £10 per head – food and drink included

Entrance by ticket only – available on 020 8858 4942

## Classified Ads

Grapevine currently reaches 1000 homes and other outlets in the area. If you would like to advertise goods or services cheaply, effectively and locally, contact Sarah Roseblade on 0208 244 2405 or [sarah.roseblade@ntlworld.com](mailto:sarah.roseblade@ntlworld.com). A form can be found on our website.

Rates for individuals and small businesses:

- Ads 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 and an image/logo cost £20 for one insertion or £70 for four.

## Therapy can help

Cognitive-behavioural therapy can help with a range of problems. Contact psychologist Jon Gowlland at [jon@southlondontherapist.co.uk](mailto:jon@southlondontherapist.co.uk) or 07980 639090.

Friendly, confidential, Charlton-based service.

Comments, feedback, queries or material for the next edition of Grapevine should be emailed to:

[grapevine@charltonresidents.org](mailto:grapevine@charltonresidents.org) by 4 May.

Alternatively, phone Joy Ogden on 0208 293 3034

or Bob Smith on 0208 853 2697.



[www.charltonresidents.org.uk](http://www.charltonresidents.org.uk)

## Law and Order Action Group

### They've got your number

Our local police team reports a growing problem with number plate thefts in Charlton. Rates have more than doubled nationally in the last five years, with at least 40,000 cases last year.

Stolen plates are used to: change the identity of stolen cars before sale; to disguise cars used in activities like ram-raiding or leaving petrol stations without paying; and to evade congestion charges, parking and speeding fines.

Contact the Police immediately if your number plates are stolen. If they are used to change another car's identity you can expect to start receiving penalties for things like parking, speeding and congestion charging. You may even be suspected of committing crimes yourself.

To discourage number plate thieves you may want to try 'anti-theft' screws (available from Halford's) for fixing your plates.

### Beware of Olympic fraud

We have been alerted to the fact that a few companies/individuals are fraudulently claiming to be associated with London 2012 in an attempt to con people into paying them money.

These fraudsters are making direct contact with individuals and offering services connected to the Games. If you are contacted by someone claiming to be from London 2012, or saying they can help you gain some connection with the Games, please beware, particularly if they ask for money. If in doubt, contact London 2012 (<http://www.london2012.gov.uk>) before dealing with them.

## Just the ticket!

From 23 April, an open bookcase in the Charlton station ticket office will allow residents and commuters to swap books. It's free and no membership is required: you can take a book, bring a book, then return the original book or supply a different one.

The London book swap (<http://londonbookswap.wordpress.com/>) aims to encourage reading and book swapping by having a London-wide system in place for the Olympics' opening ceremony. It has the backing of London Mayor Boris Johnson. Charlton residents have already donated some books including popular fiction, science fiction and children's books. So take your kids. The official launch will be on 27 April from 9-9.30am with MP Nick Raynsford.

**Charlton Central Residents Association**