

Breathing easier?

Back in 2015, around the time that plans for the Silvertown Tunnel were announced, CCRA members became increasingly aware of levels of pollution in our area. The links between air quality and ill health – and especially those relating to babies, young children and older people – were becoming known, though not yet widely among the general public. Particulates from diesel and petrol-run transport are the main culprits, with increased traffic levels expected from the new tunnel. CCRA took up the cudgel and decided on a survey of our own to measure the air quality on roads in the CCRA area. A renowned researcher on the impact of air pollution, Dr (now Professor) Ian Mudway was invited to our AGM to outline his work on the subject with particular reference to the impact on urban children's lungs. His research showed that traffic pollution stops children's lungs growing properly, so that by 9 years old, children from the most polluted areas have 5 to 10 percent less lung capacity that may never be regained.

The meeting was well-attended and local residents funded our first survey, which had CCRA members climbing ladders to erect small diffusion tubes on lamp posts in around 30 local places, including outside Fossdene School. The survey showed that levels on the periphery of our area breached the legal EU limit while some inside the area were only just below it. We conducted further surveys in the following two years and

were moved to write with our results to Transport for London, expressing our concerns.

Since then, we have seen the introduction of ULEZ (in 2021 in our area). Many local people now value the use of the Silvertown Tunnel. Throughout the country, local authorities have been required to address air pollution issues, leading to the creation of clean air zones

which penalise old/diesel vehicles and promote EVs. A recent study by Queen Mary University of London indicates positive effects of these measures. The researchers studied children in Luton and London and showed that over 5 years, the lung capacity of London children, which had been significantly smaller at the start of the survey, had increased to a level nearly identical to the Luton group. Although other factors should also be considered, this is strong evidence that clean air zones can help reduce some of the harm caused by pollution during childhood. Link to the BBC news report - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c111r1zne1ro>

These results show that we were right to be concerned about the impact of air pollution on children's health. Overall ULEZ and similar measures have reduced harmful pollutants, improved lung health in children, lowered hospital admissions and decreased premature deaths.

Have we got it right now? Not entirely – continued exposure to air pollution carries a wide range of health risks including asthma, dementia and strokes. And, unfortunately, the recent move by Greenwich Council to establish a Low Traffic Neighbourhood in East Greenwich, while clearly good for that area, has led to increased traffic and pollution in Charlton. The borough has promised mitigating measures to **reduce** traffic in Charlton, but there is as yet no sign of them.



A decade ago, local residents Peter Somerville and Duncan Alexander setting up air quality monitoring devices

**STOP
PRESS:**

CCRA'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND QUIZ NIGHT
Saturday 3 October Full details on page 4

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a house. On the left, there is a white-framed window with multiple panes. To the right of the window is a stone wall. Thick, gnarled tree branches with green and autumn-colored (orange, red, yellow) leaves are draped over the stone wall. The overall scene is in autumn.

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YOUR LOCAL
INDEPENDENT IN
Charlton

Have fun, meet your neighbours... and prove you know your onions!

CCRA's AGM & Quiz Night Saturday, 3 October

It's that time of year again! The one you've all been waiting for, the one we all love... drum roll please... It's the CCRA Annual General Meeting and Quiz Night! Whoop Whoop (I can hear you scribbling it in your diaries now...) Everyone is welcome! Don't be shy, just turn up!

Annual General Meeting – 6:15pm (Doors open at 6pm)

The evening starts with our Annual General Meeting, which is a great opportunity to catch up with friends and neighbours, hear what CCRA has been up to over the past year and find out what we've got planned for the year ahead. If you fancy getting a little more involved in your local community we'd love to hear from you! If you're interested in joining the management team but aren't quite sure what's involved, please email our vice chair at chair@charltonresidents.net. See agenda for the AGM below.

Quiz Night – 7:30pm

Once the AGM is safely out of the way, it's down to business with the quiz! It's time to start swatting up on your local



history and current affairs, brushing up on your general knowledge and digging deep into those completely useless facts you've been storing in your brain for years. Do you know your Sundorne Road from your Swallowfield Road? Can you tell your Charlton House from your Charlton Athletic? And if you don't know the answer, just say "Charlton House". There's always a chance it'll be right!

And to host this year's quiz is the one and only John Galloway of Delafield Road! So, you'd better start researching now because there'll be questions on the local area, national and international

news, food and drink, and plenty more besides. So, whether you're a quiz whizz, a wild guesser or someone who just enjoys confidently shouting out the wrong answer, there should be something for everyone.

Entry is £3 for CCRA members and £5 for non-members. There's a licensed bar, and with CCRA prices for a G&T, glass of wine or a cold beer, it's definitely cheaper than therapy... and considerably more fun! There'll also be prizes for the winning team and a raffle with prizes up for grabs, so even if your general knowledge lets you down, there's still hope! You might just win the raffle!

Come as a team of six or come on your own! Everyone's welcome! No-one gets left out! Got a team of six? Fantastic! Get your team together and come along. But if you're on your own, or just coming with a friend or two, don't worry. We'll make sure you're teamed up with some fellow quizzers on the night.

So come along, meet your neighbours, have a drink, have a laugh and see whether you really do know your onions. We'll see you there!

Agenda for CCRA AGM on Saturday, 3 October

The AGM is held to ensure the good governance of your Association. It is at this meeting we report back on the year's activities, present the accounts and elect officers and management team for the coming year. The meeting will proceed as follows:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Welcome and introductions. | 49 Delafield Road a minimum of 48 hours in advance. | 48 hours in advance, or stand on the night. |
| 2. Apologies. | | |
| 3. Minutes of the 2025 AGM. These are available on the website (charltonresidents.net), or from the Secretary 07939 090 676. | 8. Election of Officers: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer(s), Membership Secretary (ies). If you wish to stand for any of the above write to chair@charltonresidents.net or post to 49 Delafield Road a minimum of 48 hours in advance or stand on the night. | 10. Resolutions: These require a two thirds majority and written submissions must be sent to chair@charltonresidents.net or posted to 49 Delafield Road a minimum of 48 hours in advance. |
| 4. Matters arising. | | |
| 5. Report from the Interim Chair. | | |
| 6. Report from the Treasurer including the statement of accounts. | 9. Election of Management Team (MT). Please consider joining the MT to support the Association. If you wish to stand, write to chair@charltonresidents.net or post to 49 Delafield Road a minimum of 48 hours in advance, or stand on the night. | 11. Any other business. |
| 7. Any proposed changes to the Constitution. These require a two thirds majority and must be submitted to the chair@ charltonresidents.net or posted to | | Everyone in the CCRA area can attend the AGM and the rest of the evening but only paid-up full members can vote, make nominations or submit resolutions. Those attending may join the Association on the night. Associate members are not eligible to vote. |

Data centre scheme gets bigger and bigger

The plan for a data centre on Charlton Riverside is going ahead. Tyburn RWC LTD, a property company based in Holland, has submitted an application (26/2370/EIA) to the council asking whether a full environmental assessment will be needed alongside a planning application to be submitted at a later date. It is the best indication so far of the scale of what is now being planned.

Where?

It would be right at the centre of Charlton Riverside, on land once belonging to Stones Foundries, behind Atlas and Derrick Gardens and next to sites on which Hyde Housing have permission to build hundreds of new homes.

How big?

When plans were first discussed last year it was suggested the data centre would be 20 metres high. The new plan refers to the height of the data centre, excluding a flue, as 45m, equivalent to about 15 storeys. There would be other buildings including internal plant, substations and an office block up to 32m. The complex covering 75,000 square metres (about the size of 12 football pitches) would be surrounded by a 3m high security fence – described by ‘The Standard’ as HUGE.

What about the environmental impact?

The preliminary submission to the council is hundreds of pages long, with several consultancy reports (probably AI assisted). It reports on a loss of heritage buildings and the sparse wildlife on the site, and on noise and dust during the building phase. It suggests that when completed the complex would have ‘potential for significant adverse affects’ on sunlight, daylight and overshadowing, there are warnings about air quality and

in respect to climate change, emissions are ‘likely to be significant’; all matters of serious concern – widely experienced in USA where big data centres have been operating for some time.

But there was no reference to the 24/7 hum which keeps people awake and stressed or the increase in temperature in surrounding areas. There is a suggestion that these could impact almost the entire Charlton Riverside area, spreading across the Thames, and including the whole CCRA area apart from the top of Elliscombe Road. Nor should we lose sight of the fact that data centres consume vast amounts of electricity, which in turn create a great deal of heat and therefore require cooling systems using large amounts of water.



Geoffrey Moffett / Unsplash

What is a data centre?

Data centres are buildings that house rows of computers, servers, and networking equipment. Think of them as giant, secure storage and processing engines driving the internet. Every time you stream a movie, send an email, or use an app or AI, the data comes from or passes through a data centre. Data centres house specialized computers which run continuously alongside backup generators and cooling units to ensure round the clock internet connection.

When?

They’re looking for planning approval by next year, constructing one building at a time, over 5 years, from 2028 to 2033 when it would start to be used. The Government deems data centres to be ‘critical national infrastructure’ and changes in planning law from this October may allow decisions to be referred straight to government or mayors. The Mayor of London already has those powers, so we can expect a detailed planning application towards the end of this year. If so, local people will still have a chance to comment, lobby their representatives and attend a planning board meeting.

Dave Picton writes:

Artificial intelligence, (AI) has increased demand for more data centres. AI has some invaluable uses but I do not share the view that it should be at the very centre of our future economy. I do not support the call for large data centres all over the country. They should be well away from people’s homes because they could seriously harm their health and wellbeing; they should not be in anybody’s backyard. In my view that in itself is good reason to oppose what is being planned.

Any complex of this size would absolutely dominate Charlton Riverside. It would destroy all hope of creating an urban village (see page 8) with low to medium rise mixed provision for new homes and modern jobs, the vision in the Masterplan which was produced nine years ago. Potential developers and home buyers will not choose to build or purchase properties in the shadow of such massive 15 storey structures. I hope when the full details are known Charlton residents will reply with a resounding NO.

Making plans for Charlton

On 15 August at St Thomas's Church nearly 40 local people gathered on a hot afternoon to discuss and comment on the most recent (regulation 19) version of the Local Plan. The Charlton Society had arranged the meeting ahead of the consultation period which ended on 6 September. Previous stages of the consultation had led to the current version, which incorporated responses from groups and individuals in Charlton, while this consultation invites comments about whether the Local Plan is legally compliant and sound.

The Local Plan is designed to provide an overview that "will guide how the borough grows and changes over the next 15 to 20 years. It will help decide where new homes, jobs, shops, schools, community facilities, and infrastructure should go, and how the borough protects the things that make Greenwich special." Conversation at the meeting largely focused on proposals for the Riverside area.

Tom Creswell, Greenwich's cabinet member for Planning and Development gave a brief overview as did Cllr David Gardner on behalf of the Charlton Society and Lakshan Saldin on behalf of Charlton Neighbourhood forum. Tom outlined new rules to reduce the number of family homes lost to houses of multi-occupancy (HMOs), though there were concerns about whether suggested limits would be adequate. He also stressed that the Local Plan would not supersede other consultation opportunities – it was just a framework. He said "It won't happen exactly as it is written now because it isn't detailed. There will be space to go into detail when specific sites come forward."

When asked, Tom noted that the data centre proposal didn't appear to fit with the local plan proposals for Charlton Riverside to offer 1,000 jobs and 8,000 homes as this proposal covered a large site with limited job opportunities and no housing. (See page 5 for more on the proposed data centre.)

David and Lakshan, though happy with some of the changes in the current version, were still concerned that there appeared to be now more options for higher rise buildings, little green space in Charlton Riverside and not enough genuinely affordable family housing. They expressed particular concern about the loss of the wording regarding it being an urban village incorporating low and medium rise housing, very different in character from the Peninsula for example. They questioned whether there would be sufficient transport, school places and doctors' surgeries? There was also concern that the local plan might not ensure that Charlton Riverside developments become an integral part of Charlton as a whole.

There were interesting contributions regarding community space - from how the very recent national changes to rules about community assets affect the White Swan (and how this could be reflected in the local plan) and other unprotected community spaces such as the football ground and churches. Other key themes included the importance of heritage; of connection and connectivity; local centres; diversity; a holistic approach to the use of the river; greening, wild spaces, the green chain walk, and ambition on climate and carbon.

More on Charlton Riverside – but is it what was planned?

1 A big press release from the Council in August announced a 'new partnership' between the Council, the GLA and TfL, to 'guide the long-term transformation of the area'. After developments in Greenwich Peninsula and Woolwich, 'this is a major step towards London's next great riverside neighbourhood'. In our February 2020 edition of Grapevine, Charlton Together expressed its frustration at slow progress on an infrastructure plan and said 'we are urging Greenwich and the GLA to get together in some form of close partnership'. It's been a long time coming but is to be welcomed. However, it has the feel of a repeat of what has happened on the Peninsula and Woolwich, not a Charlton urban village.

2 A document entitled *Charlton Riverside Delivery Framework* has been prepared for the council by London based architectural consultants. Among many appropriate recommendations there are some discouraging suggestions. It encourages tall buildings both along the riverbank and along the north side of Woolwich Road, some up to 20 storeys, (up from an already unacceptable height of 15 in the draft local plan), and instead of 8,000 new homes a figure up to 10,000 is put forward. Describing new schools, it says they will be 'urban schools' with less outdoor space than current regulations require and 'any new school will have residential on top'. Definitely no village atmosphere there. We hope these recommendations have not been adopted as council policy.

The Old Cottage Coffee Shop

A traditional tea shop serving high quality tea, coffee and snacks

Open every day from 10am in Charlton Park



We love Charlton

Thanks to all the neighbours who showed our streets some love on Community Day in July. Volunteers of all ages, from all around the area helped to make our streets greener and cleaner – litter-picking, cutting overgrown suckers from trees, reporting fly-tipping and helping to tidy communal spaces. It was particularly good to see young 'community champions' caring for our neighbourhood with great enthusiasm. Thanks to the council for once again providing us with necessary equipment. Just a reminder that litter picking doesn't just have to happen on Community Day. If you're interested in organising a regular litter-pick in your street email chair@charltonresidents.net and we can provide you with advice and equipment.

Many of you have commented on some stinky drains, which is why we like to make sure the gulley sucking is done annually. It hasn't happened yet but we will be contacting the council to make sure our local drains are clear to take the rain (whenever it comes). Watch this space.

Following the clean-up, neighbours met in Charlton Park for a picnic. The weather was great and the communal food was even better. Thanks to all who contributed. A special thanks to Cllr. Jo Van den Broek who joined us for the afternoon.



Time for a trim

We all love our hedges/bushes but if they grow over your boundary onto the street then they need to be cut back. Under Section 154 of the Highways Act 1980, landowners are legally required to cut back any overhanging/obstructing foliage. This can be particularly important if your hedge is near a lamppost or other street furniture, creating an obstacle course for wheelchair or other vulnerable pavement users. The council has statutory powers to force residents to be responsible and failure to do so can incur hefty costs if the council has to intervene. You can report overhanging hedges via the FixMyStreet platform or calling 0208 854 8888.



Are you new to the CCRA area?

If you have recently moved into the area and would like to get to know what is going on to support community safety, think about joining Charlton Central Neighbourhood Watch (CCNWatch). It's free to join and you'll receive updates on the work of our local police, information on how to protect your property and other aspects of community safety, Charlton is an area of relatively low crime compared to similar areas in London. To join or for more information email mail@ccnwatch.org.





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How happy is my valley?

... a view from the terraces

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On the Grapevine ...

Book group

We don't usually meet in August but this year there were enough of us around to make it worthwhile. August's read was *Prophet Song* by Paul Lynch which won the Booker Prize in 2023. We had previously read *The Bee Sting* by Paul Murray which had been a close contender that year and which we had enjoyed. *Prophet Song*, most of us agreed, was interesting and well-written but disturbing. The dystopian world it portrays leaves the reader with the unsettling sense of 'that could happen here'.

September's read is *Plainsong* by Kent Haruf – despite similar titles, completely dissimilar to August's book. In October and November we continue our eclectic literary journey reading *The Artist* by Lucy Steeds and *The Summer Book* by Tove Jansson respectively.

If you like reading and are interested in joining us do contact me on 020 8858 7377.

Singing Group and Instrumental Music Group ('SE7')

Both groups are taking an extended summer break and will resume later than usual. Dates for the singing group are: 5, 19 October; 2, 16, 30 November; 14 December. We will be doing our usual carol singing in December. SE7 will be back at Cattleya in late September or early October and approximately monthly thereafter. Both groups are about making music for enjoyment and we always welcome new members. If you are interested in joining either group, please contact Chris on 020 8858 7377.

Charlton Community Gardens

Along with the gardens at Charlton station, the group also tends 2 orchards in Charlton Park, one next to the Old Cottage Coffee Shop (OCCS) and the other by the playground. We are delighted that the orchard project team has again been invited to the RHS London in Bloom awards ceremony in September where we will learn if we have managed to achieve another gold award. We meet near the OCCS alternate Wednesdays at 9:30am, so come and have a coffee and a chat sometime. Hopefully the trees are now well enough established to survive the drought; we haven't watered them for a couple of years, we'll see how they look in the spring.

The station garden has been something of a challenge with this year's drought as we use rainwater collected from the canopy. But thanks to the fire service who have been several times to fill up our container, we've managed to keep the tomatoes and beans going. We're considering more permanent planting in future as it seems drier summers are here to stay so if you have any thoughts or suggestions come and see us there – details of our sessions on the noticeboard in the garden.

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We held another successful Family Learning Event in August when 11 accompanied children coloured animal masks, made paper flowers and potted up a pelargonium to take home. Join our mailing list if you would like to be updated on future events.

■ We no longer have a live website, but you can contact us via email charltoncommunitygardens@gmail.com



One of the orchards before the drought



Charlton on the move

Having spent August lounging on the sun bed, now is the time to get physical. Charlton on the Move is an exercise class for over 60s which is the perfect way to start the week. It includes a one hour work out which includes stretches, balance and co-ordination. The exercises can be repeated at home to keep you toned and supple. Where: St Richard's Hall, Swallowfield Road. When: Mondays – 11.00 to 11.30 meet up / 11.30 – 12.30 exercise / 12.30 – 1.00 light bite. Cost: £36 for 6 sessions which includes a qualified instructor, hall hire and refreshments. If you are not sure if this is for you, why not come along to a free taster session. Join our jolly group for a great start to the week. For more information contact: secretary@charltonresidents.net.

Christmas is coming!

Calling all makers! By the time this Grapevine hits your mat, we hope we will have seen the end of the summer heatwaves and the air has more of an autumnal chill. As we approach winter, your thoughts might turn to Christmas – at least they will if you are a maker, crafter, artist or someone who looks forward to selling seasonal goods at local fayres. CCRA will be holding our 2026 Christmas Fayre on Saturday 5 December in St Richard's Hall, Swallowfield Road.

If you would like to book a table at the Fayre, now is the time to contact secretary@charltonresidents.net and reserve your place. Standard tables cost £5 and we advise booking early as we sell out fast. Put the Christmas Fayre date into your diary now whether you are buying or selling and come along to a very special local event.



THUMBS UP



...to CCRA's intrepid gardeners who have brightened up our streets with colourful floral displays throughout this heatwave and without the use of hosepipes.

THUMBS DOWN!



...to the never-ending traffic blight caused by the Woolwich Road upheaval that continues to make life a misery for Charlton residents.

Dates for your diary

Saturday 3 October

CCRA AGM and Quiz Night
St Richard's Hall,
Swallowfield Road
6.15 for AGM and 7.30 for quiz
Full details on page 4 of this issue

Saturday 5 December

Christmas Fayre
Full details in next issue

Monday 14 & Tuesday 15 December

Carol singing around CCRA
neighbourhood
*Dates TBC. Full details in next
issue*



GRAPEVINE

Grapevine reaches 900 homes and retail outlets in our designated area and beyond. Email comments, feedback, queries or material for future issues to grapevine@charltonresidents.net by **Monday 2 November 2026**. Alternatively, phone Joy Ogden on 020 8293 3034 or Bob Smith on 020 8853 2697.

TO ADVERTISE, contact grapevine@charltonresidents.net.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION on CCRA events check your local noticeboard, our website (charltonresidents.net), Twitter/X (@ccra_se7) and Facebook (facebook.com/centralcharlton).

A bitter blow for the Anchor

Beerless and cheerless, the Anchor and Hope, an iconic listed pub on Charlton's riverside, is a forlorn shadow of its former self. Shuttered and left to decay it looks like the end of another pub in our area. Some say it's due for demolition, but there's a rumour that there may be plans to revive it. We are anchored in hope of the latter.



Car alarms can be alarming

Residents, who have been disturbed and deafened by car alarms have asked us, 'what do I do if this happens outside my house?' Firstly, check for signs of a break in/attempted theft (broken windows/forced doors). Is anyone acting strangely near the car? If there is an active attempted theft of the vehicle/catalytic converter then phone 999 immediately. Do not put yourself in danger by confronting thieves. If it appears to be a false alarm, check with neighbours who may know the owner. If the noise is persistent then call the council's noise nuisance/environmental health teams. The council can legally enter or tow a vehicle if the alarm persists for a set period (usually an hour). Contact noise nuisance on 0208 921 8921 and/or environmental health on 0208 921 8152.

