



# Westcombe NEWS

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March 2014 Issue 2

A community newspaper commended by the London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies

Monthly newspaper of The Westcombe Society: fostering a sense of community

## Council's parking plans on hold

WN  
reporter

Our local traders on Old Dover Road continue to ask what has happened to the parking review which was promised for last autumn. Is the Council cooking up a cunning plan?

The news is this: not so much a cunning plan as “a draft parking strategy” that will deal, in due course, with “overarching principles”, rather than “specific schemes”.

So the traders of Old Dover Road will have to wait as the problem is kicked into the long grass.

What is taking so long? The problem has been going on for years, but it was not until October 2011 that the *WN* reported that the traders had organised a petition calling on the Council to restrict parking in Old Dover Road.

“There are people parking all day,” said one trader. “Some are commuters - you see them walking away with their briefcases. A lot of them work at M&S.”

The petition asked the Council to prevent anyone from parking for longer than two hours – no return within three hours.

In response, Greenwich Council announced, in February 2012, that it was “consulting” on a plan to make people pay for their parking by mobile phone. This would have had the advantage of doing away with the need to maintain pay-and-display machines.

However, there was a predictable outcry against this idea: many of those who drive up to Old Dover Road are elderly, and tend not to have mobile phones.

The result: another petition – this time signed by over 1,400 people – with a number of Labour Councillors, including Cllr Alex Grant, against the plan, and the Council's consultation was withdrawn.

Back to the drawing board . . . As the Council continues to think what to do next, the problem has got worse. In July 2013, a resident wrote to the *WN*:

"a second hand car dealer is in the habit

of parking his cars in Old Dover Road: thus occupying half a dozen or more parking spaces. I understand that it is illegal to park a car on the public highway with a “For sale” notice displayed – so he is apparently within the law to place his cars there, even though it clearly impedes the business of other traders in Old Dover Road by occupying spaces that would be available to would-be shoppers – and there is no doubt he certainly wants to flog those cars.”

It seems there is an intractable problem of enforcement – caused, one supposes at least partly, by the fact that enforcement costs money. Meanwhile local traders continue to suffer.

Cllr Geoff Brighty raised the issue, once again, at full Council on 29th January this year with Cllr Denise Hyland, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Skills, and reports:

“The gist of her reply was that work on a draft parking strategy is nearing completion with public consultation now due to commence this month.

“However, the strategy . . . will cover the overarching principles and not specific schemes. Any proposals for Old Dover Road will be considered in a future round of consultation”.

Commented Cllr Brighty: “This is clearly not going to happen for some time and almost certainly not until after the elections in May.”

Cllr Brighty has arranged a further meeting with Cllr Hyland to discuss Old Dover Road, and the long outstanding matter of parking in Mycenae Road: don't hold your breath! It appears very likely that the parking issue has been kicked where no cars can ever park – into the long grass. Though Cllr Brighty is hopeful for an earlier initiative on parking in Mycenae Road. So we will have to wait for that cunning plan . . .

*“How many times have you driven along Old Dover Road, planning to do a bit of shopping, only to find there's no place to park? And then driven home . . .”*  
WN February 2012



PHOTO: Benjamin Mole

The Fireworks company Fantastic Fireworks staged a unique display on the Thames to celebrate Valentine's Day. The four-minute spectacle consisted almost entirely of romantic red hearts. Nearly 1,000 filled the sky in a fireworks love-fest. They took off from a barge on the Thames between Canary Wharf and the O2.

Fantastic Fireworks managing director Jon Culverhouse said: “We wanted to show that when it comes to romance, London can outdo Paris.”

For more information call Fantastic Fireworks on 0845 272 3550.



Carol Storer is Director of Legal Aid Practitioners Group and was awarded an OBE last month in recognition of her 'services to legal aid'. Carol was a practising solicitor in Greenwich for many years before working at the housing charity Shelter. She's been at LAPG for six years, representing firms and not-for-profit organisations that carry out legal aid work across England and Wales.

Carol told Prince Charles at the ceremony how proud she was of the work her members do. Carol writes regularly on the impact of legal aid cuts on the vulnerable in the community and her concerns about the rule of law in a democracy.

She says: “If people cannot access advice and representation on legal issues, then that impacts on us all. It must not be the case that only the very rich can afford to obtain redress.”

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### News briefs

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#### Flasher on Westcombe Hill

Sid has been busy on Westcombe Hill. Sid (Speed Indicator Device) is a flashing signal installed to encourage drivers to reduce speed on Westcombe Hill. Originally Sid flashed at drivers coming up the hill, but it has now been reversed, to flash at drivers coming downhill as it is likely that those travelling downhill are going faster.

Chairman of the Westcombe Society Marilyn Little says: “The hope is that Sid will slow drivers down. We are waiting for the Council to tell us if it is has had a positive effect on speeding traffic.”

#### Swift work by the Council

The Council isn't always slow off the mark! SID on Westcombe Hill, and associated road markings, were done in record time.

#### New cafe in Vanbrugh Park

Gambardella's is soon to reopen under a new name - *The Scullery*. We can't wait!

#### Film crews again in Greenwich

In February, the arc lamps were out in St John's Park, allegedly to film a new version of *The Inbetweeners*; though a security guard said they were filming *The Long Goodbye*, which seems more than possible, given that *The Inbetweeners* features kangaroos and koalas, not many of which have been seen recently in St John's Park, or indeed Greenwich Park.

#### Legal advice centres

The Legal Advice Centre which was based in Trafalgar Road has closed. However, confidential and free advice for residents on a range of legal issues such as benefits, money, consumer issues, family, housing, education, employment and community care is obtainable in a number of locations. Visit: [www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/downloads/file/1395/where\\_to\\_get\\_advice\\_in\\_royal\\_greenwich](http://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/downloads/file/1395/where_to_get_advice_in_royal_greenwich)

#### Clipper ship update

As reported in our December edition, the clipper ship hull seen on the river Thames mid-October as “Bound for South Australia” was hoisted on to a heavy-lift ship, the *MV Palanpur* and left Rotterdam on 26th November, bound for Norfolk, Virginia, in order to pick up 6 heavy locomotives. The *Palanpur* then recrossed the Atlantic to refuel in Cape Town before proceeding to the North Coast of Western Australia to deliver part of the cargo. She then proceeded south across the Great Australian Bight to reach Port Adelaide early on Feb 3rd. There, the clipper ship, renamed *City of Adelaide* in Greenwich, will be restored.

#### Survey on the pavement tax

The much criticised tax on traders using the pavement is being reviewed in a survey of opinion set to run until March 21st. To take part, visit [www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/forecourtrading](http://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/forecourtrading).

#### Benvenuti!

A warm welcome to ‘Bianco43’, a family owned, independent Italian restaurant recently opened in 1 - 3 Lee Road in Blackheath Village (and at 43 Greenwich Church Street – and Trafalgar Square). Local residents Massimo and Fabrizio, the owners, believe in offering authentic Italian cuisine with ingredients flown in weekly from Italy. Even the pizza oven bricks were brought from Italy. We wish them good luck with their new venture.

#### Action Against Domestic Violence and Abuse

The Council has joined the police, health service and local support groups to launch a major campaign to deal with domestic violence and abuse. Contacts: GDVA's advice line is 020 8317 8273. Open 10.00am to 4.00 pm, Monday to Friday. Everyone should still ring 999 in an emergency.

#### Congratulations to Greenwich Primary Schools,

According to National test results nine of them are among the best in the country – including Sherington.

#### Run to the beat

The organisers of Run to the Beat have decided to up sticks and go elsewhere – possibly Wembley.

#### Friends of Mycenae Gardens

The Annual General Meeting is at 7.00 pm on Tues. Mar 11th at the Greenwich Steiner School.

### Westcombe Society

#### Daffodil Tea Sat 15th March

2.00 - 4.00 pm for Senior Citizens. If you haven't had an invitation and would like to come, please contact Caroline on 020 8853 0948.

Nearly New Sale Sat 29th March  
Children's Clothes, Toys and Equipment at bargain prices. 2.00pm to 3.30pm.  
Entrance 50p. If you would like to book a table or rail, please contact Joanne on 07709 571777.

Quiz Night Friday April 4th  
Main Hall of Mycenae House at 7.30 for 8.00 pm. Teams of 6. Get a team together or come on your own and help make up a team. Please book in advance.  
£5.00 entry per person for Members and £6.00 for Non-Members.

Fish 'n' chip suppers or simply chips can be ordered too. Please ring Caroline on 8853 0948 to book your place/table and a meal if required. Prizes + a Raffle!  
Please note: Bookings for this popular event end on 29th March!



# COMMUNITY NEWS

## WESTCOMBE NEWS

**ALL EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO:**  
**Neville Grant**, The Editor  
wnews@westcombesociety.org  
Tel. 020 8858 8489

**ALL MATERIAL TO BE SENT TO:**  
**wnews@westcombesociety.org**

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**News Editor:** Geoff Garvey  
**Environment Editor:** Maggie Gravelle

**Reporters:** Denise Scott-McDonald

**ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**  
**Emily Norton** All queries and comments to: 020 8853 2756  
environment@westcombesociety.org

### DISTRIBUTION

**Myles Dove & Barbara Henley**  
**Jean-Jacques and Maureen Aune**  
*Volunteer distributors please phone 020 8853 3740, we need your help!*

### ADVERTISING MANAGER

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All adverts payable in advance by cheque to **The Westcombe Society**.  
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*To access back-numbers (in colour) go to: [www.westcombesociety.org/westcombe-news/](http://www.westcombesociety.org/westcombe-news/) Westcombe Society's Blog: <http://westcombe.blogspot.com>*

### Westcombe society membership

**please send this membership form to:**  
**peter Lewins, 221 Westcombe hill, se 3 7Dp**

**Name.....**

**Address.....**

**.....**

**t el.....**

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## Westcombe Society

The Helpers and Newcomers party at Mycenae House in February was most enjoyable.. Marilyn Little thanked all our volunteers and said how grateful we were for their support in whatever capacity.

She re-iterated that more volunteers were always needed and to spread the word amongst neighbours and friends. She added that volunteers had a lot of fun helping at the various events, and the effort was not onerous. We were also delighted to welcome a number of newcomers to the area.

Marilyn then went on to say that the Executive Committee had unanimously agreed to nominate Myles Dove for an RBG Civic Award for the sterling work he has done on the Environment Committee in the past together with his ongoing leadership of the graffiti busting team and, with the help of his partner Barbara, his role as

the organiser of the delivery of the *WN* throughout our area. Congratulations Myles!

Marilyn went on to thank Dave Riddle for looking after the Westcombe Society Website for very many years and for his support of the Society for many years before that: we were well aware of the effort involved having been involved with the development of the new website. She presented Dave with a pastel drawing of Greenwich Park.

We were fortunate in having representatives of the AHOY sailing training centre in attendance with a display of their activities. They were given a donation by the Society earlier this year which enabled them to purchase some new sails.

Our Charity of the Year has been South London Special League who provide sports facilities for disadvantaged and disabled youngsters

and adults in SouthEast London.

Sharon Brokenshire, the organiser, was presented with a cheque for £3,000 which will pay for a Specialist Sports Camp at the Waterfront Leisure Centre at Easter and will also purchase new equipment. Sharon was effusive in her thanks to the Society and described how much the SLSL would benefit.

The evening was further enhanced by the lovely music provided by Helen Saunders and her fellow musicians.

Finally I must thank Patricia, Maureen, Tessa, Joanne, Caroline and Jean-Jacques for organising such a successful event.

**Marilyn Little**



**WE ARE ASKING OUR READERS TO SEND IN THEIR NOMINATIONS FOR THIS YEAR'S CHARITY OF THE YEAR. IT MUST BE A LOCALLY BASED CHARITY THAT SUPPORTS/HELPS THOSE LIVING IN AND AROUND THE WESTCOMBE PARK AREA. PLEASE CONTACT MARILYN LITTLE WITH YOUR NOMINATION OR FOR MORE INFORMATION ON 0208 853 1312.**

## Letters to the editor

**Any views expressed are those of the writers only, and are not necessarily those of the *WN* or the Westcombe Society.**

**From: G. Bailey**  
**Westcombe Pk Rd**

I refer to Mr Allman's republican rant against 'the Windsors' in last month's *WN*.

The cost of the monarchy compares most favourably with the costs of Heads of State in other countries.

Head of State expenditure has massively reduced in recent years, from £87.3 million in 1991-92 to £41.5 million in 2008-09. Our monarchy is a bargain, costing the taxpayer just 69 pence per person per year. For that we get the Queen, a lot of pageantry, plenty of free celeb. stories (if you like that sort of thing) and massive tourist revenue. We also, crucially, have a non-political Head of State, a true mother of the nation. What price President Cameron? President Miliband, perhaps? Or even as a compromise candidate, President Clegg? One thing is certain, we will never have a President Trotsky.

**From: George Martin** **Colfe's School**

Thank you very much for publishing my first article in *The Westcombe News*.

I very much appreciate you also using my photograph and putting my name under the article, it was very exciting to see my name in print. Thank you very much!

**From: Mrs R.G. Marston** **Coleraine Road**

The Westcombe News continues to impress with contributors from 14 to 80+(?) I would be grateful if you could forward the enclosed appreciative letter to George Martin. I remember asking you to do the same a few years ago to another youthful journalist. Great credit to the *WN* for making it the leading article!  
*Ed: The WN welcomes contributions from all sectors of the community, including especially the younger generation. The other student referred to by Mrs Marston was from John Roan, and gained entry to a University Course to study sports journalism partly on the strength of his contributions to the WN. And getting one's name in print (of course, for the right reasons!) is a great way of enhancing one's CV. So, the WN belongs to the community, not to the editor!*

**From: Sophie & Michael Howard** **Humber Road**

Readers should be aware that Ikea submitted an outline planning application for a new store on the site of the existing Sainsbury's on the Peninsula Park just before Christmas.

The public consultation period has now passed, but the application will not be heard before April and it is still worth submitting comments to the Council.

The plan is to bulldoze the award-winning sustainable Sainsbury's building and ecology park, and replace it with the ubiquitous

industrial blue Ikea box, which will be twice the height of the existing store – and similar in size to those in Lakeside and Croydon.

Ikea claims that traffic will be slightly less than to the existing Sainsbury's store, based on an assumption that 40% of visitors will use public transport, although Ikea will give no incentive to do so. On the contrary, the application is for a full-service Ikea store with the usual flat-pack furniture – difficult to handle on a bus!

Traffic around the area is already hugely congested. Most visitors to Ikea will drive there at the weekends when traffic is already at its heaviest, unlike the current fairly even distribution of local traffic to Sainsbury's. Ikea expect a significant number of these to travel from north of the river, adding to congestion in the Blackwall Tunnel. In addition, a very significant number of people are likely to travel from areas west and south-west of Greenwich, through Blackheath village or along Trafalgar Road. Please express your concerns to the Council by emailing the planning department on [planningapps@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:planningapps@royalgreenwich.gov.uk)

**From: Ed Hill**

**Foyle Road**

John Tukey's famous advice is "Far better an approximate answer to the right question than an exact answer to the wrong question".

My figure of 2 million fewer visitors caused by the Greenwich Park Olympics is an approximation based on Royal Parks data, and the figure of 10,000 cubic metres of acid grassland destroyed is based on LOCOG figures for the area of the acid grassland doused in chemicals, 23,000 square metres, assuming an approximate depth penetration of half a metre.

Why is our community newspaper not campaigning for complete transparency from Royal Parks, English Heritage and the Greenwich Planning Department, and getting replies to the dozens of questions they refuse to answer -eg.  
1. What happened to the Roman mosaic?  
2. If Royal Parks has discussed the serious stress caused to trees and wildlife from visitor numbers, why are we not being told about this?  
3. Why can we not be told which chemicals have been used on the acid grasslands?

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The question arises as to whether Greenwich Park is safe in the hands of Royal Parks. I think we need to create a community land trust to protect it as a matter of urgency.

**From: Gordon Baker** **Foyle Road**

The only difference I have noticed in the Westcombe Park area following the privatisation of Royal Mail is that several pillar boxes have been re-painted. This is most welcome. Some of them were in a disgraceful state of disrepair. Anthony Trollope, who is credited with introducing them, must have been turning in his grave. I don't know if he also introduced the little brass tokens showing the next collection but they still seem to be used only sporadically. Has anyone else noticed any other differences?

**From: Trevor Allman** **Coleraine Road**

How would you like to adopt a fox cub? Well, The Fox Project does a Cub Adoption Scheme.

Whilst you won't get an actual fox, as much as we'd all love one, you will get four updates and photos on how the fox cub you've adopted is progressing up until its release back into the wild. The cost is £20.

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The Fox Project office on 01892-824111, or via e-mail at [fox@foxproject.org.uk](mailto:fox@foxproject.org.uk)



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# LOCAL NEWS

## IKEA Update

The EU is taking legal action against the UK government over pollution levels in areas including London – and Greenwich.

However, Greenwich Council has brushed aside the problem, which has come to a head recently, as locals expressed serious concerns about pollution caused by traffic: there are claims that the plans for a new Ikea in East Greenwich will attract significantly increased traffic.

The Council has decided that an environmental impact assessment is unnecessary: as the site is already a retail park, they say that it is “unlikely to give rise to significant environmental effects”.

Ikea claim that their plans will actually improve air quality; it is hard to see how this can be true, given that a high percentage of its sales involves the collection of large flat packs.

The Twentieth Century Society's request that English Heritage should list the 1999 “eco” Sainsbury's is unlikely to succeed, as the award-winning building is not old enough. If Ikea's plans go ahead, the building will be demolished.

## Greenwich Inc: the story continues

Question marks continue about Greenwich Inc. the company owned by restaurateur and bar owner Frank Dowling. According to *Propel* magazine, the company transferred ownership of some of the profitable outlets to companies in Scotland without any payment to Greenwich Inc.

This means the liquidator only saw the failing businesses, as the others had been hived off. The liquidator found that Greenwich Inc owed HMRC £3,920,502 in VAT and £2,108,696 in PAYE – and, meanwhile the staff were not paid for November. (No P35s were submitted for the tax years 2011-12 or 2012-13. )

## From welfare into work

The Royal Borough of Greenwich's award winning employment scheme, Greenwich Local Labour and Business (GLLaB) has supported 100 local residents into jobs in just one month.

GLLaB is a brokerage service between local employers and local people looking for work – which to date has helped more than 16,000 local people to find jobs or access training.

Under the scheme, local people affected by the government's reforms to the welfare system are helped into work. The unique employment scheme – the first of its kind in the country – offers six month's work with the council to local families most impacted by the reforms, so they can come out of the benefits system.

## Police news

A local resident has been targeted by an ongoing scam reported in the *WN* in 2012 – and August 2013.

This involves a phone-call supposedly from your Bank saying that your card has been compromised/cloned and that they will be sending a courier to collect it.

The caller invites you to call the number on the reverse of your card – but they keep the line open so that in fact you are speaking to one of their colleagues. They ask you for your security details before arranging to pick up your cards.

This will never be the approach your Bank would take. Never give out any security details such as your PIN number.

The other scam that has been in the news is stickers on your letter-box. This is thought to be the way a gang will identify properties suitable for break-in within an area. If you find a sticker, remove it and inform the police on 101.

Better news, however, is that burglaries in the area are down. According to our outgoing Borough Commander, Greenwich is among the safest boroughs in London. **ActionFraud hotline: 0300 123 2040.**

The *WN* has learnt that Greenwich Inc went for advice about the potential insolvency well over a year ago, and, even though it was at that time advised to call in the liquidator, it continued to trade for over twelve months, which in itself could be an offence.

After the outlets were transferred to the Scottish companies, a meeting of creditors was called to place Greenwich Inc into creditors' voluntary liquidation, but Mr Dowling failed to attend. On 17th October last year Royal Borough of Greenwich presented a winding up petition against Greenwich Inc.

All-in-all, an unholy mess.

## BHSGs plans

Blackheath High School is putting in plans to improve the facilities at the school including a new Sixth Form Centre, new Art/DT/ Music Wing replacing the current building, a new Main Entrance Building and exhibition space, a new Learning Resources Centre sunk into a new lower ground floor, and enlarging some classrooms and a PE changing room for P.E.

The Headmistress, Mrs Lisa Laws, says: “Our immediate focus is to engage with parents and local residents about these proposals.

“To share our draft plans we would like to invite all those interested to a public exhibition at Blackheath High School, Vanbrugh Park, on the dates below.”

**Friday. 28th Feb.  
4.00 - 8.00 pm  
Saturday. 1st March,  
10.00 am -1.00 pm**

## New bee-keeping course at Woodlands Farm

Woodlands Farm is offering a new course – an introduction to practical bee-keeping. It is aimed at both aspiring beekeepers and those seeking a real insight into the wonderful and intriguing world of the honey bee.

The course includes both fully illustrated ‘theoretical’ and ‘hands-on’ elements, covering the basic theory and equipment required, the life cycle of the honey bee, and the work involved over the beekeeping season, including at least two additional sessions working with the hives in the Woodlands Apiary. The course is for a maximum of twenty participants, so those interested should apply early!

## Westcombe Woodlands

Meanwhile, in the Westcombe Woodlands, volunteers had to abandon work plans in February because the ground was too wet.

The next Volunteer Days are on on Sunday 2nd March and Saturday 5th April, all from 10 am until 1 pm – the meeting point is in the Maze Hill cul-de-sac at 9.50am. Please bring tools if poss!

“Coffee, fruit squash and biscuits will be provided – but there are no toilet facilities on site,” said Frank Smith.

**Please call Frank Smith on 07989 445057 regarding any queries on the day.**

**If you have any advance queries please call Carolyn Watkins (020 8856 4656), or email westcombewoodlands@hotmail.co.uk**

## Our local Age UK

Age UK Bromley and Greenwich provides services and activities across both boroughs and has a reputation for quality and innovation. We are committed to enabling older people to maximise their choices and maintain their independence.

We provide a range of services that includes information and advice, shopping, toe nail cutting, IT classes and much more.

Age UK Bromley & Greenwich relies upon support from individual donors in order to be able to continue to deliver its vital services. To donate please visit <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/bromleyand-greenwich/how-you-can-help/> or call us on 020 8315 1850.

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Community House, South Street, Bromley  
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[info@ageukbandg.org.uk](mailto:info@ageukbandg.org.uk) or visit  
[www.ageukbromleyandgreenwich.org.uk](http://www.ageukbromleyandgreenwich.org.uk)**



The course supervisor is John Large.

The timetable is as follows:

**CLASSROOM:**

**Wednesday Evenings, 7pm to 8.30 pm,  
Woodlands Farm, 8 consecutive weekly sessions, from 23 April to 11 June 2014.**

**Maximum 20-30 on course**

**APIARY: Groups of six - 17/18 May and 14/15 June, weather permitting.**

**COURSE FEES:**

**£120.00 includes use of protective clothing, gloves & hive tools (but not stout footwear) for the ‘hands-on’ apiary sessions.**

**Apiary only days: £30**

**TO BOOK CONTACT:**

**The Woodlands Farm Trust on 020 8319 8900 or email [woodlandsft@aol.com](mailto:woodlandsft@aol.com)**

## New byelaws

The Royal Borough of Greenwich has been reviewing the byelaws which govern ‘pleasure grounds, parks and open spaces’ in Greenwich.

The new byelaws would manage the potentially detrimental impact of such things as model cars etc; metal detectors, overnight parking, nuisance busking, and public performances. Smoking in children's play areas would be prohibited. The consultation period ends on 5th March 2014.

**Any objections should be made by letter addressed to: Department for Communities and Local Government Byelaws Section, 3/J1 Eland House, Bressenden Place, London SW1E 5DU or by emailing [byelaws@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:byelaws@communities.gsi.gov.uk)**

## Calls for local controls on Pay Day Lenders

The Royal Borough of Greenwich is campaigning for councils to be given greater powers to act against the spread of Pay Day Lenders which can charge more than 1000% APR interest rates on loans to people on low incomes or benefits.

Councillors unanimously welcomed recent government announcements to limit the excessive charges and fees on loans, but also argued that more should be done to protect families from becoming crippled by debt. At present, local councils have few powers to deal with payday lenders.

The bishop of Woolwich, the Rt Rev Dr Michael Ipgrave recently visited Greenwich and Bexley Credit Union in Woolwich, and praised its work.

There are reports that Archbishop Welby has set up a task force to explore the possibility of the church developing its own credit union. Justin Welby once declared his intention “to compete Wonga out of business.”

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90 Mycenaehouse Rd, Blackheath Standard, SE3 7SE 400yds to Westcombe Park Train Station Free Parking.

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# FEATURES

## Our local children's centre

WN reporter

Hidden away the bottom of Invicta School's playground is one of Westcombe Park's most valuable resources: Invicta Children's Centre.

Located in what was once the school's caretaker's house, the Centre is a Mecca for young Mums and their pre-school children (and some Dads too!)

This is where the under-fives come to have fun – and to learn to socialise; and where Mums and Dads also come, to get the kind of help and support that we all need when coping with young children.

The Centre is a fully integral part of Invicta Primary School which is led and managed by the Schools Governing Body with Marie Corbett as Head of Centre, and the day to day coordination of family services is led by Sue Spinks as Family Support Worker.

Sue is supported by a play worker, Karen Thomas, and the Early Years Team, and the Inclusion Team at the school, with much partnership working. This enables



families to make smooth transitions between the Centre and Nursery. For example, many families receive handover support between Sue and the school's learning mentor, Alison Webber.

Sue Spinks is a trained nursery nurse with a very well-informed insight into what makes children – and families – tick; and many of the problems, some of them quite serious, which young parents face, particularly in these days of changes in the welfare system.

One young Mum said: "Sue isn't just the day-to-day co-ordinator: she is a true friend, someone you can confide in."

We are lucky in Greenwich which has thirteen of these Sure Start child centres round the borough – and despite the cuts, all remain open. (In Bromley the cuts have meant only three left). One reason for this is that so many of the Mums help out as volunteers, thus making the children's centre a genuine community effort.

So what goes on? An amazing range of activities, including days for Mums and Babies, "Stay & Play" or Learn Together sessions for 3 - 4 year olds, World Book Day on March 7th, and the "Giant Wiggle" for under fives organised by Action for Children on 19th March. (includes a "Big Munch" - lots of food!) £1.00 per child, the money going to the charity.

There are also education visits by health visitors, sessions on oral health, and coping with baby "emergencies".

Sue also runs courses for parents, these include "Positive Parenting", and "Education for Boys". And much, much more. Want to find out how much more? Contact:

**Sue Spinks, Family Worker, at Invicta Children's Centre Invicta Road Blackheath, SE3 7HE. Tel: 020 293 5037**  
**"We are in the Blue Bungalow at the bottom of the school playground. Come and find us soon!" says Sue.**

## From images to art

These days many of us like to think that we are "pretty good" at taking photographs. Well, being snap-happy with our mobile phones is one thing; creating a photographic work of art is quite another.

If you want to see what professional photographers can make of the infinite number of images all around us, go along to "The Cave" in March or April.

The Cave is the Meeting Place and Exhibition space for the London Chapter of the Royal Photographic Society. It's at Linear House, Peyton Place, Greenwich, London SE10 8RS.

On show there from March 5th is an exhibition "The Best of 2013". RPS London Members will be showing their very best single images from 2013.

**The exhibition opens on Wednesday March 5th, and runs until Friday 18th April. Free! Weekdays 9.00am - 5.00pm. Information: Contact Norman Smith 0208 854 1561 07710 472495**

## Greenwich Open Studios

The Greenwich Open Studios group was established in 1977 when a number of Greenwich artists banded together to become one of the first groups in London to open their homes and studios to the public.

They are professional visual artists whose work ranges from the traditional to the contemporary. Some have been members for more than twenty years and others have joined more recently.

'Open studios' takes place annually in June and group exhibitions are also held occasionally at venues in Greenwich and elsewhere.

The work produced is of very high quality, and features a range of styles and media, including pastels, oils, water



ABOVE: *The Waste Barges* at Greenwich by Basia (Karnika) Burroughs

colours, mosaics, computer art, sculpture, textiles – in short, too many to be able to list here.

**Their current exhibition is at the Upstairs Gallery in the Discover Greenwich Visitor Centre in the Old Royal Naval College (next to the Cutty Sark), and runs until March 23rd. – open 10.00 am - 5.00 pm every day. And it's free!**

**More information:**  
[www.greenwichopenstudios.co.uk](http://www.greenwichopenstudios.co.uk)

## Who is Gladys E. Reed?



The National Maritime Museum is asking us to help to solve the mystery of this WWII Wren artist.

The upcoming *War Artists at Sea* exhibition at The Queen's House, featuring Gladys E Reed's evocative sketches of WRNS (Women's Royal Naval Service or Wrens) at work, might be the key to unearthing more information about who she is and her life story.

The sense of shared experience is very evident in these evocative drawings, which show the skill of a trained artist as well as the bond between Gladys and her fellow Wrens. Often drawn under difficult conditions, the drawings show a compelling spontaneity.

Not much is known about Gladys E Reed and her life story, though we know

she joined the Wrens in 1943, and went on to present her work to the National Maritime Museum in 1947, receiving 10 guineas honorarium.

Unbelievably, The Museum cannot access her service records, held by the Ministry of Defence, because these are accessible only to next of kin – or on presentation of a death certificate.

This is part of the limited information we know about Gladys E Reed. If you have any information, or similar drawings within your family collections, please contact [collections@rmg.co.uk](mailto:collections@rmg.co.uk) to aid us in solving this mystery.

**'War Artists at Sea' opens in the Queen's House on the 15 Feb. The works of Gladys E Reed will be on display from 15th March.**

## Remembering Bob Dylan

A treat for us all in Mycenae House on Friday 21st March: the Bob Dylan experience (pictured) perform the music of Bob Dylan.

The performance features the songs that have made Bob Dylan a legend over his 50-year career. From his earliest to his latest recordings, the group play the classic songs that have inspired countless fans and musicians alike across the world. Check it out on:

[www.thebobdylanexperience.co.uk](http://www.thebobdylanexperience.co.uk)



## Why not host the Marathon?

Where do all the Marathon runners come from? The answer is, from all over the country – and even further afield. Many find it a struggle just to reach the starting line in time for the event, let alone reach the finishing line.

Greenwich Cystic Fibrosis have come up with an answer that helps the runners, raises funds for the charity – and enables residents to meet runners before the event.

Local organiser Sacha Bright writes: "The Cystic Fibrosis Trust is 50 years old this year, and is trying harder than ever to find a cure. Last year we were really successful with our fund-raising through offering accommodation to marathon runners, and we would like to do even better this time. The idea is simple.

"Bed and breakfast is offered to the runners at £50 for a single or £75 for a double and this is given directly to the CF Trust. (In fact, many of the runners do not want breakfast, as they have a special food that they bring with them.)

"The date of the London Marathon this year is Sunday 13th April so runners would be staying on the night of Saturday 12th April. If you think would be willing to join in and offer a bed we would be really delighted, so please let us know. Last year all of our hosts and runners told us that they really enjoyed the experience."

**Contact: Carolyn Bosworth-Davies  
 Tel No 020-8318-3078  
 Mobile 07585 705230 and 07802 183638**



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# WHAT'S ON

## ARTS

**THE QUEEN'S HOUSE, NMM**  
**War Artists at Sea Until February 2015**  
**BLACKHEATH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY**, St Mary's Church Hall, Cresswell Park, Blackheath 4th Thursday of every month, 2.00 for 2.30. Next meeting: **27 March Caroline Rayman: The Mistress in History: the influence of royal favourites from the 12th to 20th centuries** Non-members £5 on the door. [www.artsinblackheath.org.uk](http://www.artsinblackheath.org.uk) or ring 83187550  
**GREENWICH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY** King William Court, the University of Greenwich **NEXT LECTURE: 10th Mar 2014: The City of Kyoto and the Cult of Beauty** 8852 7873 Non-members £8.00  
**WEST GREENWICH LIBRARY, Greenwich High Road** Penny Matheson exhibits a new series of paintings celebrating runners, mothers and chicks **Until Mar 8th, every day except Wed and Sun.**  
**MADE IN GREENWICH GALLERY** [www.madeingreenwich.co.uk](http://www.madeingreenwich.co.uk)  
**March 11th 7.30 pm** Greenwich University Poets  
**April 2nd: OVID** with Graham Fawcett and Frederica Daniele  
**THE ART HUB at Bermondsey Project Space STREET.TRIPTICK at Bermondsey Project Space, at 46 Willow Walk, SE1** featuring three Greenwich artists and Art Hub Members: Gordon Furn, Adrian Morris-Thomas and Fritz Duffy who present a kaleidoscopic trip through the vibrant urban metropolis. <http://bermondseyproject.com/>  
**THE FRIENDS OF CHARLTON HOUSE** Annual Art Exhibition 28th Feb, & 1st & 2nd March. 10.00 am - 5.00pm Sat, 2.00 - 5.0 pm Sunday.  
**GLOBAL FUSION MUSIC & ARTS**  
**Free workshops** Fortnightly Tuesday & Friday evenings 7.30 - 8.30 at Mascalls Meeting Rooms off Victoria Way Charlton SE7 7TT: Tai Chi. Singing, Drumming, Writers' Group, African Dance Info: 020 8858 9497  
**BLACKHEATH ART GROUP** are exhibiting their work at Mycenae House until the end of march.

## CHILDREN & FAMILY

**GREENWICH THEATRE**  
**Crooms Hill, Greenwich Box office: 020 8858 7755.**  
**Tomten Sun 2 Mar 2014**  
When all is quiet on the farm, when everyone is asleep, when the snow covers the ground and stars twinkle in the frosty sky – that's when Tomten wakes up. He watches over everyone on the farm without them ever knowing. But sometimes you can see his footprints in the snow, so you know he is real. **Age 3+**  
**BLACKHEATH HALLS**  
**LITTLE BO PEEP**  
**SAT 15th MAR 15.00h**  
Little Bo Peep has lost her sheep and doesn't know where to find them. Recital Room. 45 minutes plus 15 minutes to "Meet the Puppets" £7.00 Ages 4 +  
**SE LONDON DADS GROUP DADS ALERT:**  
**Regular stay-and-play for dads and children under five @ Sherington Children's Centre, 14 Sherington Road every Wednesday from 9:30 - 11:30am. Contact: [www.SELondonDads.org.uk](http://www.SELondonDads.org.uk) or email: [info@selondondads.org.uk](mailto:info@selondondads.org.uk)**  
**THE FRIENDS OF GREENWICH PARK**  
**'Drop In' at the Wildlife Centre** The Centre is near the south end of the Lake in the Flower Gardens, and opens on the last Saturday of every month 1.00 - 3.00 pm Information on wildlife in the Park and wildlife-related craft activities for youngsters. Guided tours.

## The Pointer School (Blackheath)



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W. [www.pointers-school.co.uk](http://www.pointers-school.co.uk)

## THE WESTCOMBE SOCIETY

**Daffodil Tea Sat 15th March – 2.00 - 4.00 pm**  
**Children's Nearly New Sale Sat 29th March**  
**Quiz – Friday 4th April – evening, main hall**  
**Easter Egg Hunt Sat 19th April**  
**AGM – Friday 16th May – evening**  
**Summer Picnic – Saturday 12th July,**  
**Macmillan World's Biggest Coffee Morning Friday 26th September - 10.00am to 2.00pm, main hall**  
**Children's Nearly New Sale Saturday 27th Sept.**  
**Members' Evening – Saturday 11th October –**  
**Chrysanthemum Tea Saturday 25th October**  
**Quiz Friday 7th November – evening, main hall**  
**This proposed calendar of events is dependent upon helpers. Please ring Joanne on 07709 571777 if you would like to help out on any of these events!**

## COMMUNITY

**CANCER RESEARCH LUNCH**  
**Thursday 6th March** at The Clarendon Hotel, Montpelier Row, Blackheath SE3 0RW **Aiden Kent & Ocean's Four** play **The Rat Pack** To book lunches call Wendy Templeman on 020 8265 0335 by Monday 3rd March Cost £8.50.  
**BLACKHEATH SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY**  
**Mycenae House, 90 Mycenae Road. March 21st. 7.45 pm The Tooth, the Whole Tooth, & Nothing but the Tooth** **Dr Dharaka Nathan on the evolution of the dental repertoire**  
**INDUSTRIAL HISTORY SOCIETY**  
**11th March Edward Sargeant on Frederic Eliot Duckham (Blackheath resident) and the Millwall Docks** Meeting at The Old Bakehouse, Bennett Park, SE3. Please use the car park behind the station. Meetings start at 7.30 and non members £1.  
**BLACKHEATH & GREENWICH UNA**  
**International Women's Day** Tues 11th March 7.00 pm at The Studio, Age Exchange, Bennett Park: Dr NooralHag Nasimi and Rabia Nasimi give a talk on **The Role of Women in the Future Afghanistan.** Followed by questions & discussion. All welcome.  
**BLACKHEATH BRIDGE CLUB** duplicate sessions in Mycenae House Mon. & Thurs. 7.15 pm & on Wed. at 1.15 Tel. 8851 2609  
**WESTCOMBE WRITERS' CIRCLE** 1st. Thursday each month, 2.30-4.30 at Mycenae House. 8858 5088  
**BLACKHEATH & GREENWICH WOMEN'S INSTITUTE:** First Wednesday of every month at 7.30 pm at Sunfields Methodist Church, Old Dover Road, SE3 8SJ [eileenflanagan194@btinternet.com](mailto:eileenflanagan194@btinternet.com)  
**GREENWICH MERIDIAN CHOIR** If you are interested in joining the choir as a regular member, (rehearsals are Thursday evenings during term time), contact **Jean Valsler on 0208 8527548** or email [brookjean@btinternet.com](mailto:brookjean@btinternet.com)  
**BLACKHEATH QUAKERS: 50 YEARS FREE TALK series continue.** Quaker Meeting House, Lawn Terrace, SE3 9LL  
Booking: ring 07582 729 185 Light refreshments available from 7.00 pm; talks start at 7.30 pm  
**Fri 21st March Quakerism: a faith for the 21st century:** Paul Barker, Recording Clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting, on what Quakers have to offer  
**LIVE JAZZ AT MYCENAE HOUSE** Candlelit jazz, special guest on the second Friday each month. Bar & Food available. 8pm. £10/ £8  
**ENGLISH FOLK MUSIC 9.00 pm every Tuesday** at the Lord Hood pub, Creek Road; jazz Thursdays  
**FRIENDS OF MYCENAE GARDENS AGM** 7.00 pm on March 11th at the Greenwich Steiner school

## AGE EXCHANGE

**BOOK SALES:** on the second Saturday of every month (except August & December) 10.00 am - 4.00 pm.  
**LUNCHTIME CONCERTS** on the last Saturday of every month by Trinity Laban students. Admission free, but there is a retiring collection in aid of Age Exchange & Blackheath Village Library. Next concert: Wed 20th April 1.00 - 2.00 pm

## LOCAL COUNCILLORS

**Labour:**  
**Cllr. Alex Grant** Tel. 8855 7292 E-mail [alex.grant@greenwich.gov.uk](mailto:alex.grant@greenwich.gov.uk)  
**Surgeries:** 1st. Friday of each month, 7.00 - 8.00 pm, Mycenae House, 3rd. Sat. of each month, 3.30-4.30 pm, St James Church Hall, Kidbrooke Pk Rd.  
**Conservative:**  
**Cllr. Geoff Brighty** Tel. 8921 5663 (Town Hall) or 8858 9731 (Home) [geoffrey.brighty@greenwich.gov.uk](mailto:geoffrey.brighty@greenwich.gov.uk)  
**Cllr. Alex Wilson** Tel. 07783 611607 [alex.wilson@greenwich.gov.uk](mailto:alex.wilson@greenwich.gov.uk)  
**Surgery:** 1st Mon. of the month 6 - 7.00 pm Blackheath Library, Old Dover Road.

## THEATRE & OPERA

**THE GREENWICH THEATRE** Crooms Hill, Greenwich, London SE10 8ES 020 8858 7755  
**THEBES Sat 1 March** From Oedipus to Antigone, the story of Thebes remains a fascinating exploration of fate, morality and chaos, two and a half thousand years after the saga was originally written.  
**LINEUP Monday, 3 March** LineUp is a bimonthly night showcasing some of the best in new playwriting.  
**THE UNREMARKABLE DEATH OF MARILYN MONROE Thu 6 - Sat 8 March**  
Monroe as we've never seen her before: alone in her bedroom, no glitz, no glamour, no masks...  
**BEULAH 11 - Sat 15 March** the Flanagan Collective, formed in 2010, puts on with their original show 'Beulah', based on William Blake's work, with two performers switching between 10 instruments. "This is the best show I've ever seen at the Edinburgh Fringe," exclaimed James Hadrell.  
**ANNIE JR [Blackheath High School GDST] Monday, 17 March** by pupils of BHSG  
**DRACULA Tue 18 - Sat 22 March**  
"I can give you your forbidden, secret desire – the soft bitter touch of my kiss, the surrender, the chance to live and love for ever."The time is 1897....  
**HUGLESS DOUGLAS Sunday, 23 March**  
Join Douglas in this happy new show, full of laughter, sing along songs & plenty of opportunities to join in!  
**THE CITY AND IRIS Sun 30 March**  
Today seems just like any other morning at work for Iris. But when her glasses break in a seemingly innocent accident, she finds herself departing on a strange journey through the city she thought she knew.  
**MOMO Tue 1 - Sat 5 April** Musical version of Michael Ende's fantasy novel is a thrilling fusion of dazzling songs, puppetry and storytelling.  
**THE SPACE 269 Westferry Road London E14 3RS 0207 515 7799 / [www.space.org.uk](http://www.space.org.uk)** Nearest stn: Mudchute (DLR) Buses: D3, D7, 135 10% disc. on food for ticket holders when available  
**BRONTE 2nd March, 7pm £10 | £7.00**  
**THE MUSICAL DETECTIVE AGENCY 4th - 8th March 7.30 pm £14 | £9.00**  
**DARK MATTER 11th-15th March 8.00 pm £8 | £6**  
**THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES 16th March 6.00 pm** One night only benefit production  
**ANOMALY 20th – 22nd March, 8pm £8|£6.00**  
**BUTTERFLIES DONT DO MATHS 25th – 29th March, 8pm £14 |£12**  
**THE RED BALLOON**  
**1st – 4th April, 4.30pm 5th April, 11am and 3pm 6th April, 3pm £10/£8 Concessions**

The Centenary Company

**26-29 March 2014**  
Wed-Fri: 7.30pm  
Sat: 2pm & 6pm

**Greenwich Theatre**  
Crooms Hill, London SE10 8ES  
[www.greenwichtheatre.org.uk](http://www.greenwichtheatre.org.uk)  
Box office: 0208 858 7755

**Tickets £13, £15.50, £18.50**  
Concessions: £2.50 off top price  
Sat family ticket £48 | All Wed tickets £13

## COMMUNITY DANCE

**BLACKHEATH HALLS:**  
**Wed. 5th March 2.00 pm £5.00** TEA DANCE in the friendly atmosphere of our Great Hall.  
**BOROUGH HALL, ROYAL HILL, SE10 8RE 020 8293 9741 / [info@greenwichdance.org.uk](mailto:info@greenwichdance.org.uk)**  
The beautiful 1930s Art Deco Borough Hall is the perfect setting for social dancing. Live music.  
**Sat 15th. March 2.00 - 4.30pm £8 | £6**  
**Sat 26th. April 2.00 - 4.30pm £8 | £6**  
**CANCER RESEARCH** keep fit & in shape plus Line Dancing at Kingswood Hall, Kingswood Place, off Dacre Park SE13 Donation £5.00 for Cancer Research Every Wed. 10.00 - 12 noon

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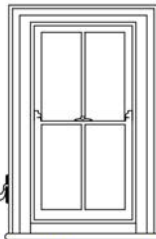
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# FOCUS ON HEALTH

## ‘Better information, better care’ Your choice: over to you!

By now, in a mass mail-out to households, readers should have received a somewhat flimsy leaflet from the NHS called *Better information means better care*. It is all too easy to discard as junk mail, so, everyone, better read it!

Basically, a giant database, Care.data, is being set up with anonymised records to help aid medical research and the monitoring of performance. The database, which was to be launched after April, will enable experts to assess diseases, examine the efficacy of new drugs on the market and identify infection outbreaks as well as monitor the care patients get.

The programme has since been put back to the autumn, amid concerns that information about Care.data has not been adequately publicised.

The NHS leaflet points out that information about what happens in hospitals is already available, but it has been difficult to link those records with the patient information held by GPs.

Sharing the information about the care patients have received will help health workers to understand the health needs of everyone, and help improve the quality of treatment and care.

It will also help researchers by helping to identify patterns in diseases, responses to different treatments, and the effectiveness of the services. In addition it will help decisions about how to manage NHS resources.

### So, is there a problem?

The patient watchdog, Healthwatch England, has expressed serious concerns, citing issues of confidentiality.

There is a proposal currently under discussion which could give access to patient information to non-NHS bodies, such as private firms and drug companies: but the NHS has repeatedly denied that there are any plans to sell this information.

There are concerns that the information contains so much data it might be possible to identify some patients. And as some drug companies also deal in health insurance, the worry is that some people might have to pay more for life insurance.

There are laws strictly prohibiting obtaining personal data, but there are doubts about enforcing safe-guards in this post-Snowden era, especially if TTIP (see below) impacts on our health service.

### What do the professionals think?

So far, both the BMA (British Medical Association) and Royal College of GPs have remained largely supportive, but a recent survey of 400 doctors by the GP magazine *Pulse* found nearly half were unhappy about the plans. This is because GPs will be handing over the raw data, which includes NHS numbers, dates of birth, postcodes, as well as other personal information such as gender and ethnic origin. This would be the first time ever that such records have been released from the safety of a GP surgery, but the NHS has given assurances that it would be anonymised.

However, as one doctor in Greenwich put it, “the principle of confidentiality between doctor and patient is sacred; it is important that it should not be eroded.” Who wants the intimate histories of their mental and physical health revealed?

Others take a different view. Dr Clare Gerada, former chair of the Royal College of GPs, says that there is a lot of scare-mongering going on: speaking on the BBC *Newsnight* programme in February, she said that hospitals had stored such data for years, and none of it was likely to be given out except for bona fide research reasons.

If you are concerned about such issues, then you may contact your doctor and “opt out”: and your file will remain inviolate in your doctor’s surgery. But the danger is that if enough people opt out, it could thwart what many see as an important NHS scheme to garner vital clinical information.

***If you have not received the NHS leaflet Better information means better care, copies are available in your local surgery. If you are happy for your information to be shared, you need do nothing.***

***If you are not happy to share your information, speak to your GP practice.***

US regulation. The coalition government’s Health and Social Care Act has been prepared in the same vein – to ‘harmonise’ the UK with the US health system.

Cooper argues: “This will open the floodgates for private healthcare providers that have made dizzying levels of profits from healthcare in the United States, while lobbying furiously against any attempts by President Obama to provide free care for people living in poverty. With the help of the Conservative government, and soon the EU, these companies will soon be let loose, freed to do the same in Britain ...”

**Pro:**  
“... it will help to improve the quality of treatment and care provided.”

**Con:**  
*How can we be sure that our data is in safe hands?*

## QEH: a sign of the times?

**Our gas water and energy supplies are increasingly falling into the hands of private companies – often foreign owned. The same is happening now to our health service. Is that what we really want - or need?**

**Here is a typical case study, on our doorstep. . .**

Staff at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Woolwich are concerned for their jobs as Greenwich Clinical Commissioning Group (Greenwich CCG) puts the Phlebotomy Department and Anti-Coagulation Department out to tender.

The GMB union, the union for staff in the NHS, has issued a statement requesting assurances from NHS Trust that staff currently running the service will keep their jobs – whether that is at the hospital or in the community; and that their terms and conditions will be protected.

**WN  
reporter**

### Greenwich CCG

Greenwich CCG is the body responsible for commissioning health care services in the borough of Greenwich. For the bidding Greenwich CCG is using the “Any Qualified Provider” model. This means that any organisation that fits the criteria to provide the service can make a bid for it.

The website of NHS Greenwich CCG states that it is responsible for securing safe, high quality and effective healthcare services for the population of Greenwich. Procurement is one of a range of mechanisms for securing safe services that meet the needs of the population whilst improving health outcomes and reducing inequalities. Greenwich CCG has said that they want the new service up and running by April, with bids being welcomed until the middle of February 2014. The timing seems unduly hasty: what’s the rush?

Nadine Houghton, GMB Regional Organiser, said “Greenwich CCG has said that they want to improve the service and that more funding is being made available

to do this. GMB absolutely welcome this and our members in the department completely agree that waiting times are too long, and patients very often have too far to travel. GMB also agree with the CCG that a more community focused model will provide a better service.”

### The GMB Union

The GMB union is concerned that changes to the service may lead to job cuts and changes to terms and conditions of employment. They say that this certainly will not achieve the desired changes.

It points out that many of the Phlebotomists at QEH have been there for years and currently work under huge pressure to provide the best service possible despite short staffing numbers and high volumes of patients. Cuts and job losses would further de-moralise the staff.

The GMB want assurances that the staff currently running the service will keep their jobs – whether that is at the hospital, or in the community, and that their terms and conditions will be protected.

Those who work in the department are also concerned that they themselves have not been consulted about the proposed changes. They should have been because they are on the front line and know the service better than anyone – why aren’t their opinions being sought on the best way to make improvements?

Sadly, according to one doctor the *WN* spoke to, all too often in the NHS, the managers are not good at consulting with the staff – indeed if they do consult the staff it is only because news of their plans has got out, and they then feel that they have to.

Contact Nadine Houghton, GMB  
Organiser Southern Region on 07714  
239 227 or Michelle Gordon on 07866  
369259

## Volunteers wanted

CSV are a registered charity organisation seeking to recruit volunteers from the Greenwich borough to support families who are currently involved with child protection (CP) and children in need plans (CIN). All the families will have an active social worker. We work in partnership with the Greenwich Local Authority and we are funded by the Department for Education.

Volunteers will help in various ways. They can provide support to families who have been victims of domestic violence or drug/alcohol abuses. They can help the families to connect with services and activities within the community and in general provide a listening ear and non-judgmental shoulder.

Find out more at [www.csv.org.uk](http://www.csv.org.uk)

## TTIP or Treat?

Waiting to be signed up to by the EU (pre-empting whatever our own Parliament may have to say) is the proposed EU-US “TTIP” the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, which is currently being negotiated by Brussels.

There are serious concerns about its implications for the NHS: the danger is that TTIP could give permanent legal backing to the competition-based regime introduced by the coalition.

As Benedict Cooper wrote recently in the *New Statesman*, a key element of the TTIP is ‘harmonisation’ between EU and

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Planning applications can be viewed in the library, or at the Woolwich Library on the lower ground floor of the Woolwich Centre, 35 Wellington St. They may also be viewed on [www.greenwich.gov.uk/planning](http://www.greenwich.gov.uk/planning)

Sun-in-the-Sands roundabout

Despite objections from the Westcombe Society, other local amenity societies, some councillors and residents, the proposed large illuminated advertising sign at the Sun-in-the-Sands has been given the go-ahead.

The original application to RBG was turned down last year on the grounds of safety and environmental impact.

However, TfL took the decision to appeal and the inspector has granted the application. The inspector imposed some restrictions concerning the brightness of the advertising and the frequency of the image changes. However, he took the view that because accidents were currently low on this stretch of road, the sign would not create a hazard.

Consequently we can expect a large, bright, 12mx3m, electronic advertising panel on the A102 before too long. Drivers, keep your eyes on the road . . .

What exactly is acid grassland?

BARBARA MORRIS explains



Acid grassland is the product of soil and the processes that occur between the plants and the soil flora and fauna specific to the location.

Lowland Dry Acid Grassland meadows is a scarce ecological habitat these days. It is a valuable habitat for many forms of wildlife, including a unique range of plants and insects such as the Thames Terrace Invertebrates. It has priority conservation status from Natural England and the EU.

Acid grassland is a very fragile environment which is easily damaged by over-use. There currently seems to be no proven method for restoring it once it has been damaged. It benefits from minimal mowing - and when mown, should not be cut short. When reseeded, it needs more time to get established.

In Blackheath, acid grassland can be recognised by fine, wiry grasses; at some times of year, grasses have feathery heads. It sustains harebells, and a range of rare and uncommon clovers, with a unique range of insects, which in turn attract birdlife.

Ed: The WN has learnt that the findings from two trial plots on Crooms Hill in Greenwich Park will inform an ongoing programme of works in 2014/15 to improve the acid grass in that area. More details in future issues of the WN.

Charlton Community Gardens

In Westcombe Park Station, the gardens have been maintained, informally, by anonymous “guerilla Gardeners”.

In Charlton, things are arranged on a more formal basis. Charlton Community Gardens (CCG) was set up in 2012 with the aim of bringing unloved and unused spaces back into productive community use. The garden at Charlton Station is CCG’s first garden and was started in April 2013. It is being developed as an organic, demonstration garden to show that food can be grown in small spaces as well as provide habitats for wildlife.

CCG has been supported with a grant from the National Gardens Scheme/ Royal Horticultural Society Elspeth Thompson Bursary, and has been given use of the station area by Southeastern Railways.

A series of open meetings and the inter-

Massive disruption

is about to ensue for rail travellers on the North Kent Line during the redevelopment of London Bridge Station. EMILY NORTON outlines below the response of the Westcombe Society’s Environment Committee. As reported in February’s WN, this disruption will take place from January next year. You have been warned!

The loss of a direct service to Charing Cross in the morning peak during the refurbishment of London Bridge Station will have serious results for rail travellers on the North Kent Line from Westcombe Park, Maze Hill, Greenwich and Deptford.

Charing Cross trains are already more overcrowded than Cannon Street services – which underlines the need for the direct service. It is already evident that the loss of direct Charing Cross trains, apart from in the morning peak, results in the vast majority of passengers on daytime services having to change trains at London Bridge.

We continue to urge Southeastern to reconsider and maintain/reinstate Charing Cross services throughout the day.

Mission impossible

Should the current proposals for services during the London Bridge rebuild go ahead, the consultation document does not give any indication as to how passengers from the Greenwich Line will be able to make many of the journeys they currently need to make, such as:

- \* Journeys to and from Waterloo East, Charing Cross, Blackfriars, City Thameslink, Farringdon and St Pancras and other stations on Thames Link including Gatwick and Luton airports
- \* Journeys to and from other stations on services out of London Bridge
- \* Journeys to and from South West stations on services out of Waterloo

It is obvious that during the London Bridge rebuild the loss of the ability to change trains at London Bridge will result in massive inconvenience.

Additional costs

It is also clear that many of the above journeys, especially within the Oyster system, will incur an additional cost if passengers have to use the underground or a bus for part of their journey. We therefore urge Southeastern to make arrangements with TfL to ensure that passengers do not incur additional costs because of the London Bridge rebuild on top of being severely inconvenienced.

In order ensure that passengers do not have to pay more on top of the inevitable inconvenience of the London Bridge rebuild we suggest that arrangements are made for the following:

- \* Southeastern tickets to be valid on underground and bus services linking London Bridge and Cannon Street with Waterloo East, City Thameslink, Charing Cross, Blackfriars, Farringdon and St Pancras
  - \* Oyster-users to be charged the same price for a journey from Deptford, Greenwich, Maze Hill or Westcombe Park to London Bridge, Cannon Street, Waterloo East, Charing Cross, City Thameslink, Blackfriars, Farringdon and St Pancras (and vice versa) even if part of the journey has to be made by bus or underground.
  - \* Oyster users not to be charged extra for using the underground or bus for any part of journeys from Deptford, Greenwich, Maze Hill or Westcombe Park to stations on other mainline services out of London Bridge and Waterloo (and vice versa).
- Given the amount of inconvenience caused, it is clear that ticket prices should not be increased for journeys from Greenwich Line stations until the London Bridge rebuild is complete.

Alternative routes

The consultation document does not give a clear indication of what is happening to the Charing Cross services that currently pass though Charlton and Blackheath stations. We urge Southeastern to maintain these services at least at the same level.

We also request that the time-table is arranged so that travel to and from Maze Hill, Deptford, Greenwich, and Westcombe Park to Waterloo East and Charing Cross via Charlton is a viable alternative.

We would also like consideration to be given to a price structure that allows passengers from the Westcombe Park area to use buses to Blackheath at no additional cost.

The consultation document is not clear on what the hours of operation will be for Cannon Street station, both mainline and underground. Cannon Street underground station also needs to stay open at all times that the mainline station is open.

It is vital that services on the Greenwich Line are maintained at least at the level they are today – including early morning, late evening and weekend services.

Finally, looking ahead to the period when Greenwich Line trains will not be able to stop at London Bridge we would like to remind Southeastern that arrangements need to be made for passengers to access the London Bridge area throughout the rebuild so that access to the hospitals in the area is maintained. This is particularly important as many of these passengers have limited mobility, and medical needs.

A fuller response, submitted by GLUG (Greenwich Line Users Group) can be found on the Westcombe Society website [www.westcombesociety.org](http://www.westcombesociety.org). Contact Mike Sparham: [greenwichline@outlook.com](mailto:greenwichline@outlook.com) Or you could contact: Mike Gibson Public Affairs Manager Southeastern, 3rd Floor, Friars Bridge Court 41-45 Blackfriars Road, SE1P 8NZ 0207 620 5430 | 07768 293 651



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